

Rabbi's Report –Board Meeting January 19, 2017

- I am still waiting for a go-ahead on the Temple Directory.
- I was in touch in the last couple of weeks with several congregants (and immediate past congregants) facing health challenges. They appreciated the contact and I will definitely be checking up on them again.
- The series on the book WISE AGING has met for 3 sessions and we have had lively and substantive discussion. A session is planned for January 25, and there might be more.
- Rhonda and I attended the Chanukah candlelighting at San Jacinto Plaza in El Paso on December 28. Our presence was greatly appreciated. I gave an introduction/invocation, led blessings with Rabbi Royi Shaffin of B'nai Zion, and joined the Temple Mount Sinai Choir in their presentation of Chanukah songs. Rhonda took some great photos, and she had spearheaded the decorations put on our large dreidel for the event.
- Our choir took part in the service on 12/30. They will be joining Robyn Helzner for a song this coming Monday.
- My column in the Jewish voice appeared in the January issue. My monthly column in the Las Cruces Bulletin appeared in the January 6 issue. I also submitted photos of our Chanukah candlelighting and the December 25 breakfast at Camp Hope to the local press.
- There are four B'nai Mitzvah coming up in 2017: Sadie Carvlin on February 18, Mateo Garcia-Bryce on June 25, Casey Rosenberg on July 29; and Michael Bruder on December 2.
- I continue to convene a monthly Third Thursday clergy breakfast, and I serve on the steering committee of the Las Cruces Interfaith Coalition for Compassion (ICC), and on the NMSU Interfaith Council as Executive Advisor. The Clergy breakfast group will soon embark on a book discussion series, and the ICC will be doing the same thing.
- On January 26, I will be performing a 30-40-minute live online concert for "Harmony in Unison," an online anthology on Facebook of concerts organized by Jewish singer/songwriters Stacy

Beyer and Beth Schafer. Facebook users can join the Facebook group to hear concerts from various performers 5 days a week.

- Rhonda and I visited the "Fractured Faiths" exhibit at the New Mexico History Museum on December 27. No photography was allowed, but I hope to share impressions of the exhibit in my D'var Torah tomorrow night.
- I will be attending the Central Conference of American Rabbis convention in Atlanta, GA on March 19-23. It will not involve a Friday night. My brother will be attending also, so we will share room expenses at the Hotel.
- I neglected to have the board designate my 2017 parsonage allowance (the IRS asks for Calendar Year, not Fiscal year, and seeks a designation before the new year starts) at the December 2016 meeting. Parsonage allowance is the amount of money for a clergy person that is devoted to renting and maintaining a home. This amount is noted on the W-2 but excluded from taxable income (same for all clergy who own or rent a home). I am directing the board to designate my parsonage allowance for 2017 to be \$19,000. Please note that I can only take as tax excludable what I actually spend on housing-related expenses. It would need to be clear that this covers the year starting on January 1.



EL ALCALDE Oscar Leeser de El Paso enciende la Menora con la ayuda del rabino Roy Shaffin de Bnai Zion de El Paso y del rabino Larry Karol del Templo Bet-El de Las Cruces