

## ANNUAL MEETING 2010 – ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

Good evening, fellow congregants and members of the Temple Sinai family.

A year ago, when I was first installed as your President, my theme was one of optimism. I recounted how we as a congregation had gone through some difficult times, but had pulled together and emerged stronger and more committed to our collective future as a result. Fortunately, my feeling of optimism was warranted, because many good things have occurred over the past year, and we foresee many more even better things on the horizon for the upcoming year. It's worth taking a few moments to reflect on some of these "good things".

Looking back over the past 12 months:

- First and foremost, of course, has been the resounding success of Rabbi Fine's first year with us at Temple Sinai. It has been my great privilege to work closely with him, and to learn from him, as he has taken command of the pulpit and a myriad of other responsibilities. There is no question that he has truly become "our Rabbi" in every sense of the term.
- This past March, we enjoyed the wonderful tribute to Cantor and Rayna Aronson, when over 300 people filled the social hall to celebrate this remarkable community *simcha*.
- We have had, by my count, 11 new single members or families join the synagogue, which I think is a terrific sign and cause for even more optimism.
- We have seen the growth and continued success of familiar annual events, such as the Party Expo and the Golf Tournament, which showcase Temple Sinai to the community at large.
- We have seen the inception of important new activities, such as the Musical *Havdalah*, the Gan Sinai vegetable garden, and our redesigned Web site, which are intended to draw us closer together as a congregation.
- We have taken a leadership role in collaborative events that involve the broader North Shore Jewish audience, including the Purim Festival and the *Chagenu Shavuot* celebration, both of which attracted hundreds of attendees.

These are all "good things", and should give us reason to be pleased and proud of Temple Sinai. At the same time, your professional and lay leadership foresee a number of new or improved offerings in the upcoming year, which we hope will also be perceived as "good things" – to name just a few:

- Rabbi Fine and Cantor Aronson continue to innovate and refine the Shabbat services to increase their energy and broaden their appeal.
- We will become more proactive in planning our internal program calendar to ensure we have a variety of events which appeal to audiences across the spectrum.

- We look forward to expanding our involvement in *Chagenu* and other community-wide events, to capitalize on the very positive feedback we received after *Shavuot*.
- We expect to upgrade membership communications with better email and with social networking tools.
- And finally, we have a group, again spearheaded by Rabbi Fine, which is in the process of creating an integrated and comprehensive series of programs for the youth of Temple Sinai, which we believe promises to be an exciting and timely initiative.

That is not to say that the past year has not been without its challenges. Like most individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations, Temple Sinai has been affected by the difficult economic environment, forcing us to do a better job of managing our budget and cash flow. Furthermore, even though we have emerged from the emotional turmoil of the last few years, the financial repercussions have taken longer to work their way through our system. To be candid, we are in the midst of the most significant and acute financial challenge in recent memory: We will finish FY2010 with a budget deficit which approaches 1 month's operating expense. This magnitude of deficit is unprecedented and has put an enormous strain on our bank reserves as well as our financial officers – as one example, we struggled to meet payroll in May and June. We cannot overstate the seriousness of our collective financial situation, and are counting on the understanding, commitment, and cohesiveness of the Temple Sinai family to help us turn it around.

Through the actions of the Finance Committee and Board of Directors, we are actively addressing our financial affairs on 3 fronts:

- First, we are very carefully managing our expenses, in an effort to be as efficient as possible without compromising services to our membership.
- Second, we must increase our revenue. After keeping membership dues steady last year, we are implementing a 6% increase in dues for the coming year, as well making the most of our other current and potential sources of revenue.
- Third, we see this as a terrific opportunity to re-institute and reinvigorate the sound fiscal policies that have served the synagogue and the congregation well in years past. These policies will help us manage our cash flow and bottom line throughout the fiscal year, and relate to structuring dues payments, the High Holiday seating process, the use of credit cards, and the like. You will be receiving more details about these items within the next few weeks. We also ask your patience in dealing with the office on these matters for the time being, as we are temporarily short-staffed since losing our bookkeeper in April.

Despite the current difficult situation, your leadership team is confident that we have turned the corner and that the upcoming fiscal year will be a solid one for us. Thanks to the actions I've just outlined, the Board of Directors has just passed a balanced budget for 2011, based on conservative and very realistic assumptions. Your understanding, assistance, and support will be crucial to our success as we enter the new fiscal year, and your leadership team extends its appreciation to you in advance.

I'd like to conclude by extending my sincere thanks to all those people who have, in one way or another, provided special support that has helped me – and the entire congregation – make last year the success that it was:

- Rabbi Fine, for his leadership, partnership, and especially for so often providing me with the balance I've needed.
- To Cantor Aronson, for being who he is.
- To the outgoing Directors and Officers, for their participation and service to the Temple.
- To the remaining and incoming Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs – I look forward to spending another productive year with you.
- And to our employees, the folks who really make this place run: Bob Myra, Robin Dale, and Taube Goodman.

Thank you, and good night.