

Remarks from David Faigin. Rosh Hashanah Morning 2022

Shana Tovah, and hello to everyone at home. Thank you to David for inviting me to speak with everyone for a few minutes this morning to talk about membership.

It seems the world is in transition as we start 5783. Transitioning from our norms of distancing, and connecting more virtually over the last two years. Transitioning in our awareness of where we want to go in the future, new norms of engagement, of connecting to what matters to us, and connecting to the various ways that we live in hybrid spaces and hybrid roles. Membership engagement now, has to do with continuing the well-established spirit of welcoming and inclusivity that temple Beth El has always expressed. It also has to do with a renewed spirit of welcoming all of us back, back into physical presence, back into enrichment in our personal and collective Jewish lives, back into finding where the spirit of service to others joins with our spirit of belonging in this community.

As the chair of the newly created membership committee, I get to have the wonderful experience of helping guide the newest of our many committees here at Temple Beth El. Our committee works closely with Rabbi Asch to connect, to welcome, and help new members *and established members* find new meaningful avenues of engagement. Many of you might not know that we now have 12 different committees helping the congregation grow and thrive, many of which David highlighted in his remarks last night. These committees are all engaged in the vital work of helping keep the Temple moving forward and connecting us to each other and our Jewish life. If you're sitting here today, or connecting from home, and you're wondering right now to yourself, "I wonder if joining in on one of those committees will enhance my feeling of connection and bonds with the congregation and other members?" or "Hey, I wonder if I might have some skill, or brilliance, or joy that I could bring to one of those committees that could enhance the overall awesomeness and vitality of the temple community and world at large?" Whether this is your first Rosh Hashanah with Temple Beth El, or your 25th, I am here to assure you the answer to these questions is: Yes!

Besides helping with a committee or volunteering in some way, you might also consider trying out something new for yourself at the temple this year. Never dropped in for some Torah study? Always go to Friday night but rarely for Saturday morning? Any holidays or rituals that you've always been curious about but haven't attended the service or celebration? Membership can be about a lot of things. Our presence. Our terumah. Our kugel recipe. Our ideas. Our dissenting opinions. Our loving friendships. It can also be about mixing it up a little. Who knows what that might spark; in yourself, or in our community?

This community has been built together; and alive for almost a century because it was built through people finding what membership means to them, through commitment and engagement. All those who met to pray, who welcomed a new family at services, who met to make decisions to create the community and walls that we are sitting within right now. I am so grateful to all of them, and all of you, who poured your time, energy, and love into this

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community and have made it what it is today. My family and I walked through the doors that you built. Literally. Todah.

Someone could have told me over coffee, or from the Bimah at the High Holidays, that there are transformative gifts one receives from engagement as a member at TBE. That your time, caring, ideas, and presence, generates deepened resources for everyone, and surprises of growth you couldn't see coming. But now that I have lived it. I really know this is true. My wish is that TBE members current and future get to experience all the gifts that membership can bring. Shana Tovah Umetukah. May you all have a sweet new year.