

Cantor Vera Broekhuysen
Annual Report, May 3, 2017
Temple Emanu-El, Haverhill, MA

This year, my first as an ordained cantor and my first with you all, has been an auspicious beginning to the work that I feel so blessed to do here. I've had the privilege of working with the Temple Emanu-El Makheila, honing our sound and musicianship and exploring some new repertoire. This year's tri-choral collaboration for our MLK Gospel Shabbat was an exciting first with our regular partnership with Calvary Baptist Church and Music Minister Joe DeVoe enhanced by Bradford Christian Academy High School Choir's participation. We're looking forward to an even closer involvement with them in this upcoming years' service. Our Temple Emanu-El members this year have been Martha Chazanoff, Sheldon Cohen, Alex Hogan, Sandra Kassin-Deardorff, Stacy Karlin-Smith, Doreen Robotnick, Josh and Tirzah Shalek, Sue Shwom, and Alana and Doug Zimon. Seeing the choir grow and stretch this year has been a real *m'chayyeh* – a life-giving pleasure – and I can't wait to see what our second year of singing together will bring. We are always looking for new voices to join our ranks, so let me know if you are interested in raising your voice with us this upcoming year - no choral experience or sight-reading necessary, just an eager voice and a willing spirit!

We've especially enjoyed our ongoing opportunity to work with pianist David Collins, who adds so much to our sound and flexibility, both in services and during rehearsal. If you are interested in helping the choir benefit from his talents at more of our rehearsals, by sponsoring some extra accompaniment time, please talk to me.

My work with talented b'nei mitzvah and adult students on trope, the cantillation of Torah and Haftarah text, has been deeply satisfying and I am very proud of what they've achieved – Josh, Max, Harry, Juliana, Jocelyne, Alana and Sandra, *yashar kokh'khem*, great work! In religious school music class, we've experimented with rounds, lots of drumming, and also learned some new tunes to familiar b'rachot and songs. Education Director Debbi Lévasseur and all the phenomenal Religious School faculty have set a very high bar indeed, and integrating the music we do in class with the larger school curriculum has been productive. As an educator, I also value the opportunities I've had this year to teach two adult education sessions on the liturgy of Shabbat morning, and to delve into our weekly Torah portions with the Shabbat Shi'ur on Shabbats when I've led the service.

Our new Shabbat In Song morning services – Reform-style services in which we *daven* or pray from *Mishkan T'fila* – were a great success this winter and spring. I'm glad for the opportunity that the Religious Practices Committee created for me and for our congregation, to experiment with these shorter, musical services. I am excited by our Temple's varied, vibrant prayer life, and I hope that Shabbat In Song continues in the coming year.

In a complex year, I am also grateful for the unmixed blessing of Rabbi Korinow's welcome and mentorship. Friendly, frank, knowledgeable and supportive, Rabbi Korinow has been the best co-clergy I could have hoped to find, and I will always be grateful for my time with him. It is difficult for me to picture the Temple without him (and if it's hard for me, I can't imagine how hard it is for longtime members!). With the rest of the Temple, I look forward to Rabbi Ilene Bogosian coming to us in July, and helping to counsel us through the process of filling Rabbi Korinow's mighty big shoes.

Personally, of course, this year has had a particularly sweet start in it. As a congregation, you helped Mike, Jonathan and I usher our youngest son Benjamin into the world and into the Jewish community after his birth on Sh'mini Atzeret. Thank you for welcoming us so warmly into your midst as I have become your Cantor. In the rhythms of lifecycle events - in the education and celebration of our youth - in the weekly Shabbes services, and special Festival observances - in our ongoing pursuit of justice and *tikkun olam*, repair of what needs setting right, in this world - you have helped me take my place among you. I greatly appreciate the trust and affection you've shown me, and I will continue to serve you and G-d with, as our Torah says, all of my "heart, soul and might."