

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

May 5, 2019

Dear chevre,

First and foremost, I am so glad and grateful for the opportunity to spend the next four years together with you as spiritual leader of this community. My deep thanks President Loren Goldstein, the Executive Committee, and the entire Board of Directors.

This year we've again been blessed by the tireless work of our professional staff – Nancy LaFleur, Debbi Levasseur, Cheryl Hill, Sheila Brown and Don Kumis. Our volunteer Communications Director, Paula Breger, has produced beautiful publicity and programs and handouts, in unbelievable volume and unmatched quality. Our Committee Chairs – David Belsky of Social Action, Lisa Desberg of the PTO, Laura Flieder and Rona Gofstein of Youth, Andi Hannula of Religious School, Fred Feldman of Religious Practices, Jenn Lampron of Membership, Kevin Miller of Dues, Judd Nathan of Building & Investment, Karen Newborn of Adult Ed, Sharyn Russell of Chesed, Eva Valentine of House – and their committees continue to enliven, enrich, cultivate and invigorate our community life.

Thank you to Rav Mona Strick for your year of faithful, joyful, thoughtful work with us as our rabbinic intern. Our community will miss you, and we wish you all the best in your rabbinate!

Many of our members began to share Torah with us in new ways during our services this year. Our trope class this fall graduated Fred Coltin, Fred Feldman, and Jenn Lampron. Naomi Kapanga-Ndjibu and Scott Hannula gave d'vars. Yashar kokh'khem – great job! Next spring, I'll offer a 5-session class in leading Shabbat morning services starting on March 3rd and meeting on Tuesday nights. I am excited to continue to expand our lay service-leading participation in the year to come, so please talk to me if you're interested in giving a d'var, learning to lead, or learning to leyn! It's absolutely wonderful to see the feelings of ownership and investment in our services that grow from taking on these mitzvot, and I hope you'll consider doing so as well.

It was a thrill to bring Sofer On Site to our Temple in February, to make a second Torah scroll kosher – we hope to bring soferet, scribe, Julie Seltzer, in the fall to teach a workshop in our Religious School on sofrut, scribal arts, and make a third Torah scroll fully kosher. The cost to do this would be \$1200, of which the Religious School Committee has committed \$500. If you are interested in helping to bring Julie to us for a day of learning and repair, please let me know!

Just this past March, we welcomed asylum seeker Marius into our Merrimack Valley Interfaith Sanctuary Network. With the network's support, Marius has moved to Lowell from El Paso, retained legal counsel, and begun the process of applying for the asylum he so richly deserves. Come meet Marius and hear his story at Temple this upcoming Thursday, May 9th!

Our Temple musical life this year was phenomenal. Ellen Allard's April weekend with us showered us with playful, spiritual song that we're still singing, at her evening concert and her morning with our Religious School. (Thank you Jackie Berman, Andi Hannula, Rachel Hanson, Debbi Levasseur, and Nancy LaFleur for your committee work to make that possible!) **Our benefit concert, "Light and**

Restoration,” with Koleinu will be at 4pm today, upstairs, so I hope to see you all come back for it! This upcoming year, I hope we'll be able to create another exciting, intensive musical experience for our community, by bringing either a Klezmer Kabbalat Shabbat service (with Hebrew College singers and a full klezmer band) or a Concerti di Salamone Rossi Ebreo Shabbat with Jewish music from Renaissance Italy. One of these can only happen with community financial support, so again, please let me know if you would like to generously contribute to such a weekend. I'm also delighted that we have budgeted to bring pianist David Collins to more rehearsals of our choir this year, which will greatly enhance our learning and enjoying new music.

In March we ran a successful Taste of Judaism class with the URJ's curriculum, which brought 8 people into our Temple who'd never been here before to learn a little about Judaism and to appreciate what we do, and 5 members to the table to learn with them. This fall, I will co-teach an Intro to Judaism course, on Tuesday nights, starting on September 10th. The course will also be taught by Rabbi Goldstein of Andover, Rabbi Perry of Chelmsford, and Rabbi Sparr of Lowell. This 18-week course is an exploration of the beliefs, history, culture, ritual practice, and sacred texts of Judaism. There will be a small fee for the course (to cover coursebook and some refreshments). Please help us spread the word!

Last July we had our first Tisha b'Av observance at Temple, in conjunction with Temple Beth Israel of Andover. This year, too, we'll observe Tisha b'Av on the evening of Saturday August 10th. We'll also come together in new ways: on Sunday December 22nd, at 4:30, a Community Candlelighting will sing and spin and nosh us into the first night of Chanukah. On Sunday February 9th, we'll have a community Tu Bishvat seder right after Religious School. And we're hoping to hold a community Pesach seder on Saturday April 11th so that we can celebrate the holiday all together. Please talk to Loren and Jenn if you're interested in joining the committee to make a Temple seder happen!

We dealt with two heavy blows to the Jewish world this year, Pittsburgh and Poway, bookending a winter that brought our own Temple some sad losses. We readdressed the security of our Temple (on which David Belsky reports), and are planning to train with the Haverhill PD on May 19th. Sunlight, friendship and education are the best disinfectants for hate that festers – and so we came together several times, including Sukkot and Bradford Christian Academy coffeehouses and Open Mosque Day, with neighbors and friends for shared comfort and celebration. **(For pure joy, come to the Greater Haverhill Clergy Association-sponsored interfaith music celebration at Groveland at 7pm on May 23rd.)** We hope to increase these opportunities to learn and eat and enjoy one another's company, in interfaith settings. Our friendships and our faith are our best defenses.

We are strong together, friends. We are vibrant and diverse and when we come together, we create a unique and beautiful Jewish practice. May our holy community continue to go from strength to strength – chazak chazak v'nitchazeik.

Bivracha, in blessing,
- Cantor Vera