



The whole value of a benevolent deed
lies in the love that inspires it.

Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 49B

Temple Beth-El, the oldest Jewish congregation in San Antonio, was founded in 1874 and immediately became a charter member of the Union for Reform Judaism. In so doing, we laid the foundation for Reform Judaism in San Antonio and South Texas.

TEMPLE BETH-EL IS MORE THAN JUST A SYNAGOGUE.

Most people know Temple Beth-El as an iconic landmark.
To many, it is much more than an edifice.
It is the heart of Reform Jewish life and community in San Antonio.
Vibrant. Empowering. Uplifting.
Dedicated to enhancing the lives of those it touches.
Passing on traditions and teachings to future generations.
Caring. Active. Involved.
Taking steps to aid those in need from every walk of life.
Nurturing personal growth.
Comforting in times of despair. Sharing in times of joy.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SENIOR RABBI.

In ancient times, the High Priests tended the *Ner Tamid*, the eternal flame, in the inner sanctum of the Temple in Jerusalem. God had commanded: "A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar, not to go out." And so, morning and night the priests dedicated themselves from generation to generation to fulfill this holy task.

For over 140 years, our synagogue has been at the center of Jewish life in San Antonio. At moments of historic importance, at times of community crisis, and at celebratory occasions, people have gathered at Temple Beth-El to find strength, connection, joy and community. Our leaders, volunteers, clergy and staff have done their part as well, to keep the *Ner Tamid* alive.

As a congregation we strive to fulfill the core values of our Jewish tradition, enabling each and every member to discover a sense of sacred purpose in their lives. By engaging in Jewish study, spiritual seeking, and performing acts of loving kindness, we make our world more whole and more holy together.

This is what a *Brit Kehilah*, a covenant of membership, implies: A sense of mutual respect. A yearning to connect to something greater than ourselves. A desire to impact the world around us for good. A longing to join together and commit to an inspired future of Jewish living and learning.

For over six generations our congregation has grown and evolved by building on the traditions of the past while celebrating all the future has in store. The gift of Jewish community we possess should not be taken for granted. With your participation and dedication to Temple Beth-El, our *Ner Tamid* will surely continue to burn bright.



RABBI MARA NATHAN the first woman to serve as our Senior Rabbi, began her tenure on July 1, 2014. She comes to our congregation with a commitment to sacred community building, worship innovation, and a passion for teaching *Torah* to learners of all ages.

KEEPING THE ETERNAL LIGHT BURNING BY BEING A SHINING EXAMPLE.

Beyond *Shabbat* and High Holy Days worship, the clergy, staff and congregants of Temple Beth-El are dedicated to serving our members and the community year-round with a myriad of spiritual and life-sustaining programs and services. We are able to accomplish this mission of growth and caring thanks to the generous contributions of both time and money from our members. Here are highlights of the Temple's *mitzvot* (good deeds), *simchas* (joyous occasions) and acts of *tikkun olam* (creating a better world around us) for the past year:

- 46** Events including the Women's Seder, Purim Carnival, and our 140th Congregational Picnic
- 69** Life events including Bris/Baby Namings, *B'nei Mitzvah*, Weddings, and Celebrations of a Life
- 20** Conversions to Judaism
- 25** Scholarships to camp and Israel
- 450** Guests at High Holy Day services
- 790** Clergy counseling and pastoral sessions
- 4200** Meals served to low-income children at Beth-El Food and Fun Summer Camp
- 1950** Donations received
- 510** Volunteers helping the community
- 104** Hospital visits
- 527** Nursing home and long-term facility visits and calls
- 1560** Meals on Wheels delivered



TEMPLE
BETH-EL
IS A
VIBRANT
GATHERING
PLACE.

DR. BARRY MENICK It's very difficult to be a Reform Jew in the world today because most of us are assimilated into modern culture. We don't practice our religion with the same rigors and daily rituals as more Orthodox forms of Judaism. A Reform Jew often has to work harder to maintain a Jewish identity. We rely heavily on the Temple to give us that structure in our Jewish lives.

ASHLEY ROSEN As a part of Temple Beth-El, I've gained so many relationships and feel much closer to God and to Judaism. Temple is really important to me, and I can't imagine my life without it. When I'm older and have a family of my own, I'll be able to use the values I've learned here at Temple and pass them on to the next generation.

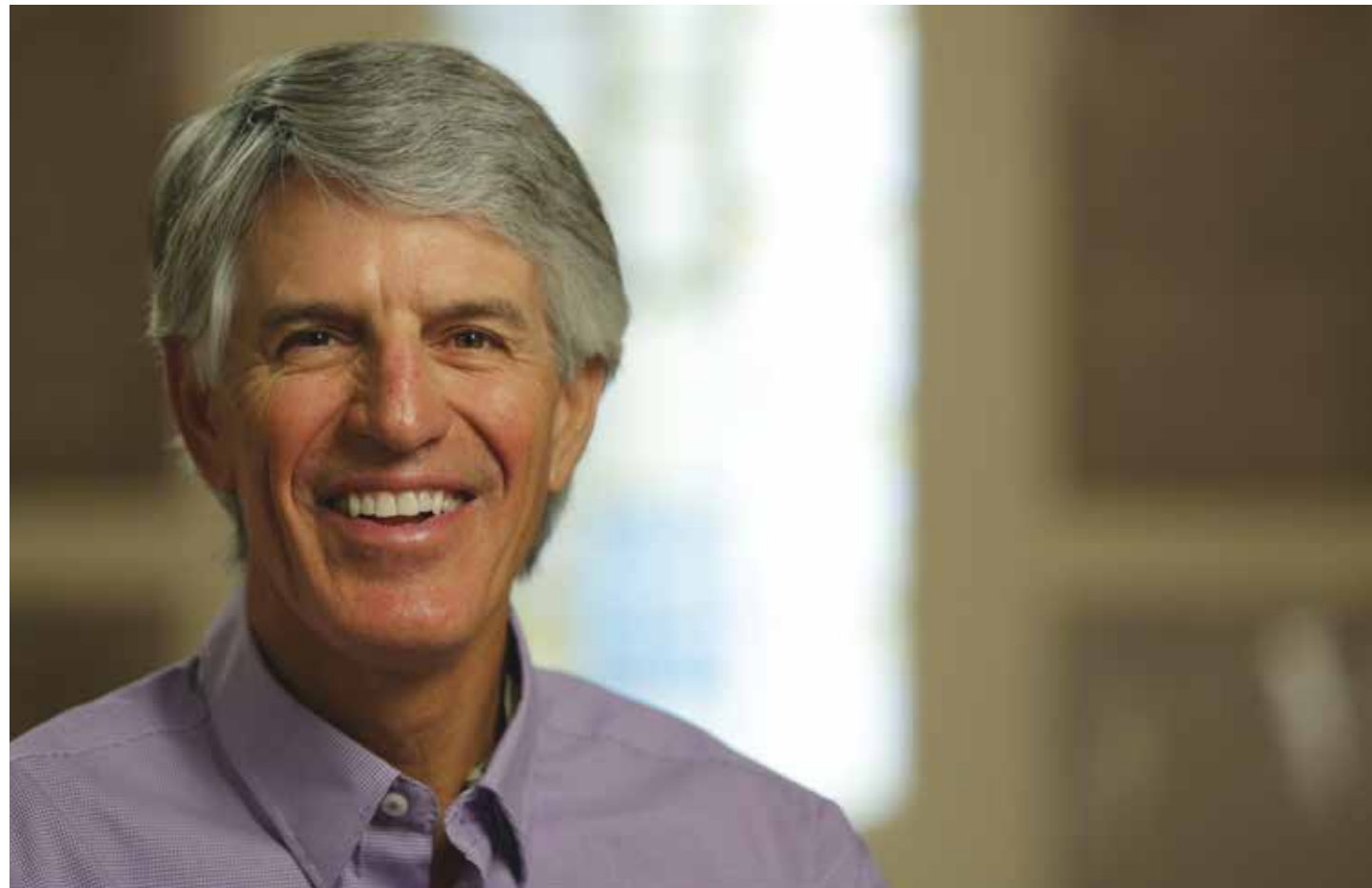


TO SUSTAIN
TEMPLE BETH-EL
REQUIRES
AN ANNUAL
CONTRIBUTION
FROM EACH
HOUSEHOLD
OF \$2600.

FISCAL YEAR 2015/2016 BUDGET

Operational Revenue	Amount	% of Total
Commitment	\$ 1,475,000	58%
Education	130,065	5%
Fundraising Activities	50,000	2%
Cemetery	61,400	2%
Rentals	328,175	13%
Security Fee	35,000	1%
Transfer from Endowment	432,537	17%
Miscellaneous Revenue	42,930	2%
Total Revenue	\$ 2,555,107	100%
Operational Expenses		
Ritual	\$ 642,890	25%
Education	241,001	9%
Program	94,496	4%
General Services & Administration	891,169	34%
Building & Maintenance	539,620	21%
Cemetery	68,063	3%
Rentals	106,012	4%
Total Expenses	\$ 2,583,251	100%
Deficit	\$ (28,144)	-1%

Rob Kaufman Being associated with Temple Beth-El, and the great work we do in the temple community and the community at large, is extremely rewarding. Being Jewish is unique because of our history and how important the teachings of Judaism are to the world. It's critical we do whatever it takes to perpetuate the Jewish faith. Being a member of a congregation like Temple Beth-El is a major way we can help Judaism survive and thrive.



EVERYONE
HERE
WAS SO
WELCOMING.

Maureen Weissman When my then-future husband and I started getting serious, he said it was important to him to marry a Jewish girl. I told him that I wasn't sure it was right for me, but that I'd check it out. I started taking classes at Temple Beth-El, and I loved it. Everyone here was so welcoming and supportive. When I started learning about the sense of community and how they helped others, I believed in my heart that I've been Jewish all my life.

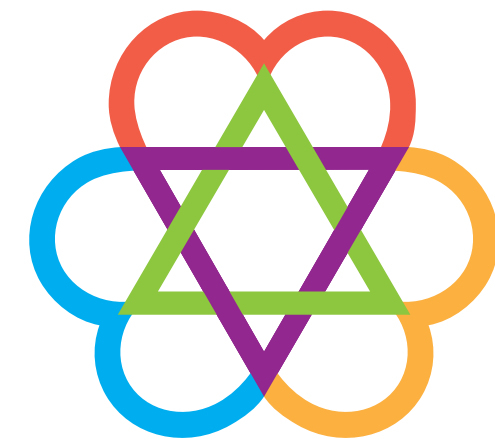


SUPPORTING THE
TEMPLE SHOULD
BE A PERSONAL
DECISION,
ONE THAT COMES
FROM THE HEART.

After much research, counsel and prayer, Temple Beth-El's Board of Trustees is introducing a new commitment policy designed to better fulfill our sacred mission and stimulate membership giving and growth.

The new policy moves away from our traditional dues system and replaces it with a personal pledge system. Now, your pledge (an investment in the Temple's future) is up to you. It is designed to build membership by adopting a policy that is more closely aligned with contemporary Jewish culture and values. And to give congregants the free will to give more and increase their support. In fact, we hope it will inspire 100% of our members to increase their commitment dollars. Your personal contribution creates change and impacts lives while shaping our financial future.

How much should you pledge to support the works and programs of Temple Beth-El? It's simple. Give to your heart's content.



**Give
to your
heart's
content.**
**Support the future
of Temple Beth-El**

A close-up portrait of an elderly woman with short, wavy grey hair, wearing glasses, a red top, and a blue beaded necklace. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a warm, golden-brown color.

AT TEMPLE BETH-EL I FEEL CLOSE TO GOD.

ANNA RADO Even after living through 18 months in the Auschwitz concentration camp, I still believe my life is blessed. I come to the Temple and I feel like I'm close to God. It's important that we do our share for the Temple. I've been a member of Temple Beth-El for 58 years. They don't make synagogues and temples like this anymore. It's beautiful.



DR. MEL COHEN Temple Beth-El offers so many different ways to get involved. But the programs don't happen by themselves. It's important for each member of the congregation to take ownership of the Temple. At its inception, the Temple was established by donations made from the heart and not by any form of dues. I think moving from a dues structure to one where contributions are given out of love is a wonderful thing. Because what we give is just a small part of what we get back.

Instead of paying an assigned dues amount, each member household has the responsibility to fairly assess its own commitment level and to give accordingly. Members are now asked to contribute based on what the household determines is consistent with their ability to support, sustain, perpetuate, and strengthen Temple Beth-El.

The sustaining contribution level is \$2600, which reflects the actual cost per member household to maintain our Temple programs and facilities. As a guideline, Temple leadership has created recommended annual contribution levels:

Ner Tamid (Eternal Light) Levels

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • \$25,000 and above | <i>M'lachim</i> (Angels) |
| • \$18,000 to \$24,999 | <i>Adumim</i> (Pillars) |
| • \$10,000 to \$17,999 | <i>Shomrim</i> (Guardians) |
| • \$5,000 to \$9,999 | <i>Manhigim</i> (Leaders) |
| • \$3,600 to \$4,999 | <i>Bonim</i> (Builders) |
| <hr/> | |
| • Sustaining Level | \$2600 – \$3599 |
| • Suggested Minimum | \$1200 |
| • Sugg. Min., Under 30 years old | \$180 |

In gratitude for their exemplary support, all who donate at the *Ner Tamid* levels will be publicly recognized unless anonymity is requested.

This new policy is a much-needed change for our congregation, and we are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Together, we can ensure that Temple Beth-El has the resources to thrive. Together, we can do much more. Together, Temple Beth-El can shine even brighter for generations to come.

If you have already made your commitment for the year, this is an ideal time to reconsider your Personal Commitment Pledge and give to your heart's content.

To hear the complete comments of the congregants featured on these pages and to learn more about the new policy, go to givetoyourheartscontent.org.

HOW
DOES
THE
NEW
POLICY
WORK?



www.beth-elsa.org