

Temple B'nai Jeshurun Des Moines, Iowa



Temple B'nai Jeshurun

Annual Report - June 7, 2020

**Celebrating 147 years:
1873 – 2020**

Temple B'nai Jeshurun

***Virtual* Annual Meeting**

June 7, 2020

1:30 p.m.

AGENDA

Opening Prayer	Rabbi David Kaufman
Call to Order and President's Report	Bill Grund
Financial Report	Linda Cohen
Nominating Team Report / Election of New Officers and Board Members	Dana Dickson
New Business and Closing Remarks	Bill Grund



Our Mission: The mission of Temple B'nai Jeshurun is to be a Reform Jewish congregation that is a welcoming, supportive and inclusive community.

Our Vision: We seek engagement with Judaism through spirituality, worship, community, social action and education to create richer and more meaningful lives.

Nominating Committee Announces Slate of Candidates to the 2020 - 21 Board of Trustees

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 1 of the Bylaws of Temple B'nai Jeshurun, notice is hereby given to all Congregation members in good standing that the Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 7, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. Pursuant to Article VIII Section 2 of the Bylaws, the Nominating Committee hereby publishes the slate of candidates for election to the Board of Trustees for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2021. The slate shall be presented to the members for approval at the Annual Meeting.

Proposed Slate of Officers:

President	Bill Grund
Immediate Past President	Alan Adato
VP and President Elect	Dana Dickson
2 nd Vice President	Open
Treasurer	Linda Cohen
Secretary	Audrey Porter

Ex Officio by Virtue of Position:

Brotherhood President	N/A
Sisterhood Co-Presidents	Rebecca Shaffer

Honorary Members:

WRJ	Sally Frank
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Vision Leaders:

Worship	Mark Davis
Music	Laura Sparks
Membership	Sarah Mansfield
Social Action	Rachele Hjelmaas
Education	Ryba Epstein
IT / Communications	Samantha Kemp Carlin
Finance	Open
Building and Grounds	Ben Swartz

RABBI'S REPORT

Wow, what a year! We had the 2019 annual meeting in June. Then in July, I was able to go to camp and on a vacation trip, before realizing that something wasn't right with my health. It turns out in fact that it was very wrong. I needed a quadruple bypass in at the end of August and the rest of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 were focused on rehabilitation.

For the first time since my first year in rabbinical school, I was a Jew in the pews for the High Holidays and not, at least for most of the services, on the bima, though I did offer sermons on Yom Kippur from my experiences and did help arrange the liturgies for the holidays with Ira and Laura. It was difficult for me not to be up there leading, but nice to be able to experience our wonderful services from a different perspective. I greatly appreciated all the love and support that I received throughout the period of my surgery and recovery.

In January and February, normally relatively slow months on our calendar, we started to get back to normal and then, of course in March, our world changed. We moved our programming online after Purim, including classes, Shabbat services, B'nai Mitzvah, memorial services, and our Passover Seder. Attendance online on Zoom and Facebook Live has been relatively good with a minimum of 30 distinct viewers on Zoom, no few of which include multiple people, and often dozens of viewers on Facebook Live.

Communication with congregants has been by phone, email, text message, Facebook message, and through conversations on Zoom. We all miss the ability to hug one another, especially during these difficult times and I know that when we finally can do so, those hugs are going to feel really good.

Our B'nai Mitzvah students have had the option of choosing what to do. Some have chosen to delay most or all of what they had planned. Others have done most all of what they planned to do online instead of in person. Some students will help us lead Shabbat services at some point in the future when we're once again able to gather in numbers. Since last annual meeting, I have helped lead five B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies, four of which have been conducted online, with another online in the coming weeks.

Funeral services are difficult right now. Family and friends cannot gather in person, but we're doing our best online. In some ways, technology has brought us closer together, allowing family members in distant states or who could not attend for other reasons to be able to feel a part of the proceedings. Once we are through this pandemic, that outreach and connection through technology is likely to continue and be a lasting positive legacy of this time for religious institutions. This past year, I conducted eleven funerals.

This spring, we have been adapting programs that we have had already scheduled to the COVID environment, conducting them online and having to reschedule or modify them. Now, as we head into the summer and look ahead to fall, we will be programming for this environment and you will begin to see new opportunities that will accommodate social distancing and other limitations and requirements needed to maintain everyone's health and safety.

This coming year will be my 18th year as the rabbi of the Temple and my last. My family and I have enjoyed being a part of this community and look forward to maintaining our connections and possibly our presence in Des Moines in the years ahead, even as I pursue new opportunities. Hanna will be entering her junior year at the University of Iowa, Ellie will be heading off to

Annapolis to the US Naval Academy, and Avi will be entering his senior year at Valley High School.

During the past several months of social distancing and isolation, I have also helped to bring Iowa's Jewish professionals together for a weekly Zoom conference during which we have shared what is going on in our congregations and communities. It has been particularly helpful during this health crisis. And when I was invited to speak at the invitation of the Governor and White House at the Faith Leaders program with the Vice President, I was able to represent the perspective of the Jewish community of Iowa. I did not know that by wearing a mask, I would end up making international news and then being invited onto CNN to talk about masks and peer pressure.

In recent days and weeks, our nation has been shaken by the killings of unarmed black men, most recently that of George Floyd while being restrained by police officers in a way that shocked the consciousness of our nation. I have reached out to the leaders of the African American community, offering my support and that of the Jewish community. I also was given the opportunity to offer the opening prayer at the vigil for George Floyd on Sunday, May 31st at Union Park.

Things are difficult right now, but we know that times ahead will get better and better. Someday soon we'll be able to gather once again in numbers and hug when we do. We look forward to that day.

Rabbi David Kaufman

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR MISSION: The mission of Temple B'nai Jeshurun is to be a Reform Jewish congregation that is a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive community.

OUR VISION: We seek engagement with Judaism through spirituality, worship, community, social action and education to create richer and more meaningful lives.

I've been thinking a lot about the Mission and Vision of our congregation of late, and I sincerely hope that in the pages of this Annual Report you will see how our committees working in conjunction with our staff have been fulfilling this mission.

The word that really sticks out to me in our Mission and Vision statement is "community" and I want to commend Rabbi Kaufman, our Vision Leaders, our volunteers, and our staff for continuing to build our community in these most difficult times. None of us thought we would be spending a large portion of 2020 meeting with people virtually, but for the time being it is our reality and it's been really amazing to see our community connect this way.

Even with the virtual connections we have been able to make I feel our congregation still has a strong desire to come back together as a community when it is safe to do so, and I want to highlight some of the things that we have done this past year to let you know we will be ready when we can come back together.

First, I want to let you know we have been working hard to be good stewards of the financial gifts you have given us. Last year we ended our fiscal year with a surplus and used some of that money to payback what we owed to our endowment for previous years deficits and some of it went to make improvements in our kitchen. The Homeland Security grant we were awarded was used to replace several of our doors, add video surveillance, and add other enhanced security features. Our Endowment Investment Committee noted in early 2020 that stock investments were growing exponentially, and we pulled money out of the stock market and invested in more stable investments to have a more balanced endowment. Much as in 2008 having balanced endowment has helped us weather these uncertain financial times. We also were able to obtain a Payroll Protection Loan and much of that loan will be forgiven, which has helped us even as some of our revenue has gone down.

We have currently "moth balled" the sanctuary and social hall, which has significantly cut down on our energy bills. Charles has done a lot of deep cleaning and painting during this time so hopefully everything will look better than before when you return. We are also in the process of improving our audio/video equipment in the sanctuary so that we will be better able to provide modern streaming and recording options. In this way we will be able to connect with our community in more ways than ever before.

There are still many things that are unclear as we move forward, but I hope you feel as I do that we are prepared for what will come and that we will continue to be a community that creates richer and more meaningful lives for its members.

David Muenchrath

B'NAI MITZVAH COORDINATOR

Each year when I pause to think about all I have experienced and accomplished as your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator since our last Annual Meeting, I am amazed! Why am I amazed you might ask? If you know me, you know that when it comes to computers, I am illiterate!! Who would have thought that the words Facetime, and Zoom would be part of my everyday vocabulary? The 2020 Annual Meeting marks the end of 33 years as your B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator. I feel so blessed to be a part of this congregation and to work alongside Rabbi Kaufman, David Muenchrath, Erin Plank and Charles Stanton.

B'nai Mitzvah we celebrated this year:

Avery Lehman	November 2, 2019
Rose Walsh	April 18, 2020
James Flugge-Smith	May 2, 2020
Cooper Bernstein	May 9, 2020
Josie Ellis	June 6, 2020
Madi Sobotka	June 20, 2020
Jeri Sobotka	June 20, 2020

Those celebrating next fiscal year will be:

Maureen Pletcher	August 22, 2020
Sam Goldman	September 5, 2020
Miley Gallick	October 17, 2020
Ellie Mollison	October 24, 2020
Alina Barkley	November 14, 2020
Alex Zeff	April 24, 2021
Oliver Young	April 24, 2021

I have also had the pleasure of working with students who will celebrate their B'not Mitzvah at the Ames Jewish Congregation:

Madisyn Buck	August 22, 2020
Lily Rosenberg	November 7, 2020
Mira Starobin	May 15, 2021

I again would like to thank all the participants that chanted Torah for Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah. Hopefully—as they say during the Holidays—NEXT YEAR IN THE SANCTUARY.

Wendy Beckerman

SISTERHOOD

This has been a year of transition for the Sisterhood. We have had a slight decline in membership however our programs and participation in programs have been consistently high and monthly meetings continue to average eight. Monthly meetings are now held by Zoom. Special thanks to David M. for arranging all our Zoom needs.

Until we joined the Temple in supporting sheltering-in-place, our on-going programs remained as popular as ever. Those programs are: Book Club, Mahj and More with Shabbat supper, Monday Breakfast Group, and WEDO Lunch. We tested new programs... Monthly Shabbat Film Nights

with supper - alternating a documentary with a fun entertaining film. They were well attended. Special thanks to Jane Tew and Samantha Kemp-Carlin. We hosted a Lilith Salon on Rosh Chodesh with a Havdalah celebration. This was enthusiastically received, and we look forward to hosting on a quarterly basis once Temple attendance is safe. Special thanks to Samantha Kemp-Carlin and Sally Frank. Silvia Klein formed a popular craft affinity group which continues to meet by Zoom. A number of programs were put on hold.

Our Tikkun Olam projects include: socks delivered to the Central Iowa Shelter; personal hygiene items delivered to the Ronald MacDonald House; and clothing items delivered to the Youth Emergency Shelter. We are finishing up knitting baby blankets for a women's shelter.

Our Temple gift shop, managed by Nancy Chavannes, is well-stocked with a changing variety of Judaica. Shopping for year-round items and for Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah is by appointment with Nancy.

In February, the Sisterhood welcomed a new president, Rebecca Shaffer. Working together, the Board developed a logo; created an ambitious membership drive strategy; created an open calendar of projects, programs, and events; wrote a new statement of purpose; and has begun a By-laws review.

Women are the heart of our Sisterhood. Participation keeps us vital. Thank you to all who joined and participated in programs, projects, and events. Thank you to dues-paying members for your important financial support. Consider sending in your dues this July, the Sisterhood is your essential connection to the women of TBJ!

Rebecca Shaffer
Sisterhood President

WORSHIP

The Worship Committee continues to meet on a regular basis, even with the new COVID-19 pandemic, we have call in meeting s when necessary. The committee continues to assist Rabbi Kaufman and the Temple President in the coordination of congregant participation in High Holy Days services, and other matters as brought before us.

The ongoing success of this committee would not be possible without the assistance of the entire administrative TBJ office staff, who continue to do a wonderful job.

Mark Davis

MUSIC

In June of 2019, Ira Lacher, Sam Miller, and Laura Sparks completed their tenth year providing music for Shabbat services, holidays, and life cycle events, with Ira and Laura serving as cantorial soloists, Sam as guitar accompanist, and Chuck Kuba regularly enhancing the music with his bass.

Summer of 2019 started off with unexpected challenges, as we got word in August that Rabbi Kaufman was in need of bypass surgery. Ira and Laura, along with Sally Frank, Steve Schoenebaum, and Wendy Beckerman, took over worship leading and singing for all services during the months of September and October while the Rabbi recovered. Ira Lacher agreed to fill

in for the Rabbi's part in leading the 2019 High Holiday services, with Laura Sparks taking over the bulk of the Cantorial singing. Chuck Kuba again directed our choir, making it his sixth High Holiday season conducting our musicians from the Temple and from the wider Des Moines area musical community.

From the point of Rabbi Kaufman's return, happily in time for Sukkot, we enjoyed a period of normalcy, with Ira, Sam, Laura, and Chuck providing music for regular weekly Erev Shabbat services, monthly Family Shabbat and Classical Reform services, holidays, B'nai Mitzvot, special events, and themed music services, including a joyful Chanukah Shabbat service in December featuring members of our choir, and an Electric Music Shabbat service in March put together by Sam Miller featuring an instrumental combo including himself and Chuck Kuba, and guest drummer Tony Stevens.

In January 2020, after a decade of dedicated service to the Temple, Ira Lacher decided to take an indefinite leave of absence from his role as Cantorial Soloist. Laura took over the Erev Shabbat services she wasn't already singing, and Brian Field volunteered to sing for the monthly Classical Reform service led by Steve Schoenebaum opposite the concurrent Family Shabbat service. Tara Starr showed a much-appreciated willingness to begin working on Erev Shabbat music in preparation to help and fill in as needed.

In March 2020, we were faced with the unprecedented challenge of safely providing music for worship amidst the rising global pandemic. We began streaming services via Zoom and on the Rabbi's Facebook page, first as a group from the chapel, then as individuals from our respective homes, and currently with the Rabbi broadcasting from his home, while Sam and Laura make music from the Temple. In April, the Rabbi and Laura prerecorded a Passover seder as a resource for people who wanted to use it to follow along during their own home Seders, and Laura offered some online singalong song sessions. As guidelines change and as we figure out technology options, we will continue to adapt and improve our programming and resources to help congregants stay connected and engaged.

Looking ahead with hope for a return to communal music-making, and wishing good health to all,
Laura Sparks

Laura Sparks

MEMBERSHIP

This year, the Temple welcomed five new member families. In keeping with our long-term goals of improving new and current member engagement, we have continued congregation-wide programming like Havdallahween and have worked on updating our media and communications. Of course, COVID-19 has put a hold on the in-person events that we were planning for the spring. As we adjust to this "new normal," we would like to focus on how our community can stay engaged with each other through virtual events and activities. If you have an idea for a virtual activity or small group, please contact Vision Leader Sarah Mansfield.

Sarah Mansfield

SOCIAL ACTION

Temple Social Action volunteers participated in the 12th Annual Meals from the Heartland Hunger Fight event on August 29, 2019, packaging meals for delivery to malnourished people in Iowa, across the United States, and around the world. Our team packaged 18 boxes containing 3,888 meals. Volunteers also participated in the Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Community Home Build on October 20, 2020, a community-wide initiative that brought different religious faiths together to build a home in the Des Moines area for a family in need.

Social Action and Caring Committee volunteers continue to reach out to many of our own Temple members during the COVID-19 pandemic through phone calls, texts, e-mails, cards, and Shabbat care package deliveries complete with challah, grape juice, Shabbat candles, chocolates, and face masks. We've reached over 100 of our Temple member families through these special outreach efforts!

A BIG thank you to all of the following wonderful Temple volunteers who assisted me with these community volunteer activities: Wendy Beckerman, Juli Margolin, Jeff Margolin, Sharon Goldford, Bill Grund, Dana Dickson, Nora Dickson, Samantha Kemp Carlin, Caedyn Krahling, Linda Cohen, Ann Balentine, Marla Shapiro, Marla Sobel, Rebecca Shaffer, Jill Musin, Howard Musin, Judy Deutch, Larry Deutch, Sherida Josephson and Ruth Robinson.

Rachele Hjelmaas



IT / COMMUNICATIONS

It's been a busy year for IT/Communications at Temple B'nai Jeshurun. We have continued with our long-term goals of maintaining and updating the Temple website, increasing social media visibility, and working to develop branding around the use of our new logo. One of the highlights this year was helping to coordinate the Temple delegation's trip to the URJ Biennial in Chicago and sharing our experiences with the rest of the congregation. As COVID-19 has challenged us to engage as a community in new and different ways, we continue to work with Rabbi and Temple staff to facilitate streaming of services and other activities. We are actively working to find improved ways to stream our services from the sanctuary both during the pandemic and afterward. If you have an idea regarding IT or Communications at the Temple or want to become more involved, please contact Vision Leader Samantha Kemp Carlin.

Samantha Kemp Carlin

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

This year's report will be fairly brief. In the kitchen we completed the replacement of our ovens, stove, and refrigerator. We were able to accomplish this by removing shelving that constituted the old Sisterhood Gift Shop, and going through those double doors. This made the removal and installation of the equipment much more feasible. We are expecting to purchase a new icemaker in the coming months.

A plan to accomplish re-roofing of the Temple will be accomplished by virtue of establishing the necessary funding over a five year period which has already begun.

Overall all we are in line with the 2019/2020 budget which was approved as part of the total budget. There are a number of things that we listed as possible projects and prioritized with attention to costs and keeping within our budget. Some of these are deemed of low priority and will be postponed until after our current conditions are more stabilized. A significant item that is still awaiting our attention is that of tuck pointing our building. We are estimating a probable expense of around \$5000 to \$10,000. David is waiting for bids to come. This is one expense that we see as a necessary item of maintenance.

Another project that will be highly visible in due time will be a garden that will be approximately 67 inches long and 10 inches wide. This has been planted by the congregation that rents our space on Sundays and will be maintained by them. This is located on the west side of the building on the vacant ground that lies between the Temple and the first residence next door. We believe that it will be a very nice enhancement as well as something that some of our own congregants may wish to participate in.

We also completed the replacement of both the Grand Avenue and parking lot doors. We were successful in obtaining considerable grant funding in the neighborhood of \$70,000 to accomplish these projects, making our facility far more secure. Included in this project was the installation of electronic controls and video surveillance equipment.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Swartz

TREASURER'S REPORT

For the majority of this fiscal year we have been very close to our budget figures. Of course, during this Covid virus era our income fell down starting in April and also in May. A few of us have made phone calls to people who have not yet paid their dues for this year or previous years asking if that could be done before the end of the fiscal year in order to try to get back in balance. There are two ways that we can help to balance the budget and come in fairly close to what we budgeted and that would be number one not paying back the endowment for money that we have borrowed. Number two not putting money into our capital building fund for future repairs. Neither of these is a good solution but may be necessary or maybe do half-and-half if we cannot get the income we need. There are two ways that we can help to balance the budget and come in fairly close to what we budgeted and that would be number one not paying back the endowment for money that we have borrowed. Number two not putting money into our capital building fund for future repairs. Either of these is a good solution but maybe necessary or maybe do half and half if we cannot get the income we need by the end of June.

Our dedicated budget committee worked to create the new budget in January and February and the board approved the budget in March. Of course now we know that there is some chance that the income levels that we budgeted may or may not be real for the upcoming fiscal year depending on how hard the Covid virus hits the income of our members. It's not really possible to adjust the budget because we don't know what the future holds.

Our executive director has done a fabulous job throughout the fiscal year working on maintaining our expenses at the level they need to be and also working on most of the figures during the budgeting cycle. We are very lucky to have David and appreciate his work.

Since we have not had a finance director during the past year I chaired the investment committee for the endowment and we met in person once in January as usual with an update from Norm Mandelbaum, our stockbroker. We adjusted the portfolio to rebalance it and also met through email proxies when Norm felt it was important to make another adjustment as the Covid virus began to affect the market. Thanks Norm for your dedication to our well-being.

It is important to note that because of the Covid virus we were not able to have a fundraiser this year and that makes it all the more important for anyone who still owes dues for past years or for the 2019-2020 fiscal year to please pay your dues before the end of June. Thank you!

Linda Cohen

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

When I began my term a year ago, I remember my genuine sense of excitement. I was privileged to follow in the footsteps of so many wise and talented people before me. I sensed it would be challenging, but at the same time very fulfilling. Even though I was right about those two thoughts, it's very clear that I didn't know what I didn't know...

A year later I'm amazed at how many moving parts there are to make the Temple the home that it is to all of us. Equally as impressive is the cast of individuals that make our ideas realities. We have an incredible staff that is committed to the success of the Temple. Supporting the Board and Rabbi Kaufman are David Muenchrath, Erin Plank, Wendy Beckerman and Charles Stanton. Thank you!

You also have an incredibly dedicated Board of Trustees who work tirelessly on your behalf. I'm grateful for these individuals that have been so giving of their time, and occasionally personal resources, all for a volunteer position. I suspect it has something to do with their passion for the Temple.

As I look back, there were more than a few items of note that we experienced together:

- In August 2019 Rabbi Kaufman underwent heart bypass surgery. We are relieved that the surgery was successful and the Rabbi is in the process of a complete recovery. We all pray for his continued good health.
- Because the Rabbi was temporarily on the sidelines we went with a modified High Holy Days format. I believe we all agree that that for this event Ira Lacher and Laura Sparks really hit the ball out of the park. Our musicians and vocalists were the perfect complement to the program. Job well done!
- After 30 years of service to the Temple we finally replaced the tired and marginally functional kitchen appliances. Included were: a stove; conventional ovens; convection ovens and refrigerator. A new ice maker is on order. Thank you to Norman Mandelbaum, Irv Stone and two anonymous donors who helped bridge the budget gap and make this project a reality.
- After careful consideration and discussion the Board of Trustees decided not to renew the contract of Rabbi Kaufman. It is the Board's intention to honor the terms of his existing contract which runs through 6/30/2021. A search committee will be formed and we will work in conjunction with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). In the near future there will be more on that as the search progresses.
- In March 2020 our world changed as we all became acutely aware of COVID-19. That would eventually evolve into a discontinuation of in-person events and activities at the Temple, and moving to online streaming. The Temple Board and staff continue to monitor the situation, which changes sometimes on a daily basis. We will return to in-person events only when we are confident that we can protect and ensure the safety of our congregants and guests.

- In phases we have improved security at the Temple. The door at the entrance near the kitchen was replaced with a stronger door. The doors off the Grand Avenue entrance were replaced with stronger and automatically opening doors. Motion sensors were placed in the sanctuary to provide more protection for our precious Torahs. We purchased panic buttons for all of our staff, and a limited number for visitors. We will also be making individualized entry cards to member families.

As one can see, it was a busy year. The new fiscal year looks full of promise and challenges. It has been my privilege to serve the Temple. Thank you!

Bill Grund
Temple President



David J. Kaufman, Rabbi

David Muenchrath, Executive Director

Wendy Beckerman, B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator

Erin Plank, Office Manager

Charles Stanton, Maintenance Engineer