

I want to thank the members of Congregation Beth David for the trust they have shown by electing me to lead the Congregation this year. I pray to HaShem, blessed be His name, that I have the wisdom, strength and patience to do the job that is needed.

We recognize the members of the board who are stepping down. Our thanks go to Susan Koerner and Lauren Gabrilowitz for their service to the synagogue. We will miss them at our meetings and hope to see their return at a future date.

Continuing service are Past President: Sara Nelson, 1st Vice President: Robert Babat, now 2nd Vice President Robert Fricklas, now Recording Secretary Joanne Malise, Corresponding Secretary: Lorrie Adler, Treasurer: Dr. Robert Curhan and Board Members Stephen Garfinkel, Morris Levin, Margalit Aharon, Jack Strashnick, Marc Ladin, and Carl Levin.

We welcome new members to the board: Shelly Parness, Hebrew School President, Richard Karnes, and South County Jewish Collaborative President Richard Winkler. I look forward to our year working together to serve the needs of our community.

Ethan Adler will now lead us in the Shehecheyanu prayer.

In the time I have been a member of this Congregation I have met many of you and yet, when I look at our membership list I see many names that I cannot place with faces. I hope that this year, I will get to know many more of you. I very much want to work to see that Congregation Beth David meets the needs of our community, but I need to hear from you to better understand what that means. Some of you have gotten to know me well, but even if you hardly know me, please feel free to call me and chat.

Our primary impetus for writing new bylaws was to associate a religious school with our synagogue. This step is absolutely necessary and overdue. As it says in the Shulchan Aruch, the catalog of Jewish Law,

“Every community is required to appoint teachers; a city without a teacher should be put under a ban until the inhabitants thereof appoint one. If they persist in not appointing a teacher, the city should be destroyed for the world exists only through the breath of school children.¹”

However, our new bylaws give us a framework to not just associate a religious school with our synagogue, but to lead us to a more active and vibrant community. We have already come to agreement with the groups under the umbrella of the South County Jewish Collaborative on a basic plan for a building that will be the new home of our congregation and all elements of our local Jewish community once it is built. I have been asked if we have the money to build this building and my answer is I believe our members do. Of course, it is still in their pockets for now. I expect that the Jewish Collaborative will be contacting all members of our community this year to ask for a pledge of monetary support for this project. I ask that each of you respond based on your ability.

The great rabbi Hillel said, “Al Tifrosh Min Hatzibu”, Do not separate yourself from the community. He also taught, “Im Lo Achaav, Eymatai”, If not now, when? These two teachings can serve as our guideposts as we embrace our communal spirit to reach our goals.

If we are to increase our activity and build a building we will need your help. Everyone has something to give and we need your time and expertise too. I very much want to hear your ideas about what we need to do and you should expect that I will ask you what you will personally do to help make these things happen. I know that when we all work together, we can make miracles happen.

¹ Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 245:7