

Temple Emanuel

5773/5774 2013/2014



ANNUAL REPORT

We Stand with Israel



Av, 5774—August, 2014

Dear Friends:

Does America kill American Judaism softly? That is the provocative contention of Ari Shavit in his book My Promised Land. He observes that his late great grandfather has descendants in England, America, and Israel. The descendants in England and America have all disappeared from Judaism and the Jewish people. No trace of Yiddishkeit remains in either family line. Only the descendants who live in Israel continue to be Jewish.

Shavit's conclusion, quoted below, is true in his own family's case:

With no Holocaust and no pogroms and no overt anti-Semitism, these islands kill us softly. Enlightened Europe also kills us softly, as does democratic America. Benign Western civilization destroys non-Orthodox Judaism. (p. 386)

The Pew Study suggests that broadly speaking he may be onto something as it describes more than two million American Jews who are disengaged from their own Judaism.

But while he may be right generally, he is wrong here. Judaism thrives at Temple Emanuel. This Annual Report shows men, women and children in our shul leading passionate and engaged Jewish lives.

Those who take our classes (Gate of Torah), come together and reach out to God in our services (Gate of Prayer), visit or learn about Israel (Gate of Israel), create a 25-hour sanctuary in time (Gate of Shabbat), do their small part to make the world better (Gate of Redeeming Our World), keep loneliness at bay by deepening bonds of friendship (Gate of Community), and transmit a legacy to the next generation (Gate of Teaching Jewish Values to Our Children), are all declaring, by word and deed, that their Judaism matters. Judaism is urgently relevant to our lives.

The reason we are thriving is our Annual Appeal, which makes possible all the activities in our Seven Gates which reach our wondrously diverse community in diverse ways.

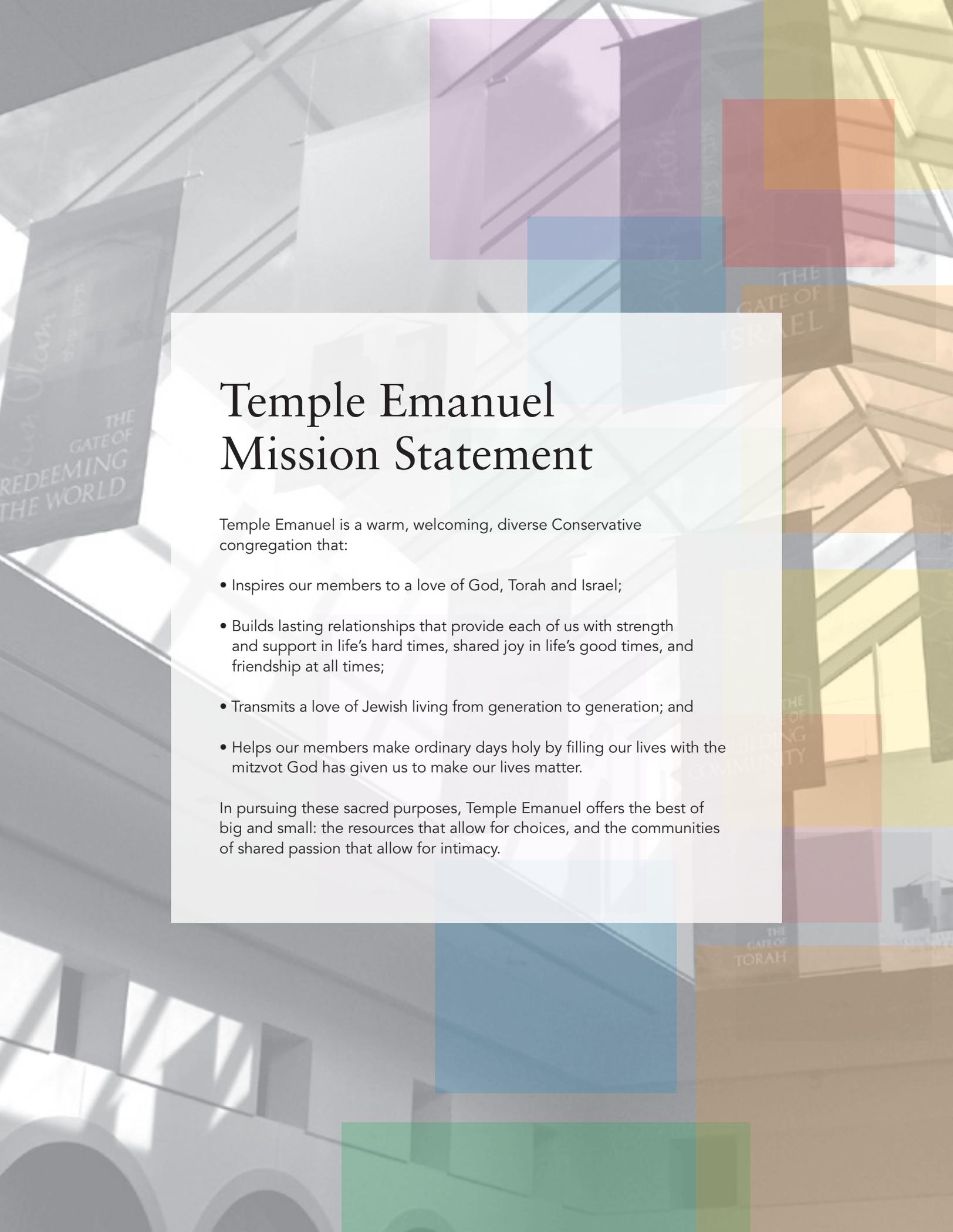
Thank you for giving us the resources to make Judaism and Jewish community live and thrive in this blessed land. May your generosity help us continue to do so for another year.

Shanah tovah u'metukah! A healthy and happy New Year!

Rabbi Wes Gardenswartz

Lisa Hills, President



The background features a photograph of a synagogue's interior, showing a high ceiling with a complex network of white beams and skylights. Several banners are visible, with text such as "The Gate of Israel", "The Gate of Torah", and "The Gate of the Community". The image is overlaid with a grid of semi-transparent, colorful squares in shades of purple, blue, green, orange, and yellow.

Temple Emanuel Mission Statement

Temple Emanuel is a warm, welcoming, diverse Conservative congregation that:

- Inspires our members to a love of God, Torah and Israel;
- Builds lasting relationships that provide each of us with strength and support in life's hard times, shared joy in life's good times, and friendship at all times;
- Transmits a love of Jewish living from generation to generation; and
- Helps our members make ordinary days holy by filling our lives with the mitzvot God has given us to make our lives matter.

In pursuing these sacred purposes, Temple Emanuel offers the best of big and small: the resources that allow for choices, and the communities of shared passion that allow for intimacy.



The Gate of Torah

What do you usually think about as you move through your day? Your next appointment to which you are running late? All the stuff at work that you haven't done that you need to do? The many things that clamor for your attention the minute you get home? Return calls. Do the laundry. Sort through the mail. Pay the bills. Get dinner ready. The homework routine.

Why study Torah? Because studying Torah allows us to have a different kind of conversation with ourselves and with others. What do we want to get out of life? What kind of person do we want to become? What is missing in our lives? What should I be doing that I haven't done yet? What kind of impact do I want to have and what do I need to do to have it? Learning Torah allows us to stop the carousel, to think more deeply, to act more intentionally.





The Gate of Prayer



TTT.

Do you have it?

TTT is time to think. So many of us do not have it. Screens we have. Emails to return we have. Phones ringing we have. Fires to put out we have. Prayer allows us to ask ourselves what is really important in life, are we doing it, and how might we bridge the gap between what is and what ought to be.



The Gate of Israel

When American rabbi Danny Gordis made aliyah with his family, he wrote his first book about moving to Israel with the evocative title If a Place Can Make You Cry. Why does Israel make us cry? Because Jewish history, especially in the twentieth century, reminds us how much we need a Jewish homeland. Because it is a living miracle and the answer to millennial prayers and prophecies that Israel even exists and not only exists but thrives. Because our desire for peace is great but the likelihood of peace in the near term is remote. Because of the welter of complex emotions that we feel when we deeply love Israel and yet live in Boston.





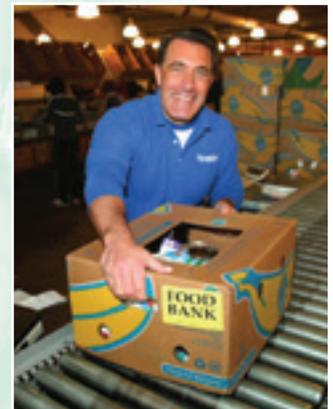
The Gate of Shabbat

To be. Not to do. That is the essence of Shabbat, the one day a week with no agenda.

The other six days of the week we respond to life's duties, the demands of our work, family, home and community. We do others' bidding.

But on Shabbat, if we can put our screens away, if we will ourselves not to work, if the chores and errands of life are saved for another day, then we can ask ourselves: what *do we want to do*? And with whom? The spouse that is so close but so far away, the children who are there but not there, the book on your nightstand that rests unread, the other six days of the week, are yours when you choose to bring Shabbat into your life.





The Gate of Redeeming Our World



There is a classic Hasidic tale in which a person, looking at the brokenness of the world, snaps at God. "Look at the world You have created. War. Suffering. Planes downed from the sky. Innocents who suffer. Poverty and hunger. Why don't You do something?" God responds: "I did do something. I sent you." That is the core prophetic message: God sent you. What shall you do about it?



The Gate of Community

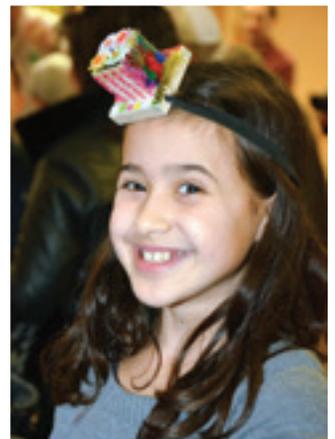
Shabbat morning at noon. The *b'nei mitzvah* make Kiddush and motzi, they and their families are glowing. The little children fill the bimah in search of candy, with parents and grandparents smiling as they grab a second (or third) piece. The bride and groom have been blessed, the sick have been prayed for, the long-time married couple has been celebrated, the 90-year old celebrating her birthday has heard the congregation sing her happy birthday. Those going to Israel have been wished a meaningful trip and a safe return. This happens not only on Shabbat morning, but also in all the places of authentic human experience: the *chuppah*, the *brit milah*, the hospital, the cemetery, the *shiva* house. In the best of times, in the hardest of times, in ordinary times, we need to share our life with people.





The Gate of Teaching Jewish Values to Our Children

There is always a moment before the *chuppah*, before the couple stands under its wedding canopy, that is an emotional highlight. The groom kisses the bride, lowers the veil over her, and is then surrounded by parents and grandparents as our hazzan sings his signature song *la'dor va'dor*, from generation to generation. The values of Jewish home and hearth, love and joy, peace and companionship, happiness and harmony, responsibility and repair, live from one generation to the next. We celebrate that at weddings. We celebrate that at *b'nei mitzvah*. We celebrate that in our school milestones. We celebrate that, with every prayer, every song, every mitzvah, every day.





Our Annual Appeal is Our Linchpin

Rabbi Harold Kushner once famously observed that a congregation's coming together on Shabbat morning is even more important than the words we say. *"I have come to believe that the congregating is more important than the words we speak. Something miraculous happens when people come together seeking the presence of God. The miracle is that we so often find it."* Who Needs God, p. 149.

The power of coming together.



When we come together, something magical happens. Some find friendship. Some find a reassuring structure and routine. Some find a time and place to think. Some find beautiful singing or thoughtful learning. Some find a great conversation at Kiddush. Some find God.

Because we are diverse, we need to find *multiple modes* of coming together—different kinds of services, different kinds of classes, different kinds of service opportunities, concerts, missions to Israel, multi-generational Sukkah decorating, Hanukkah lighting, Passover seder celebrating.



It takes a lot of resources to sustain all those modes. As this pie chart shows, our Annual Appeal is the linchpin that enables us to be able to pay for it all. It is core. Dues, seats and school tuitions cannot sustain all that we do, particularly because we offer abatements to members who cannot pay full dues and rely on our financial assistance. Our Annual Appeal determines our financial and spiritual health.

After membership dues, our Annual Appeal and Donations are our single greatest source of revenue—and the slice of the pie with the greatest capacity to grow.

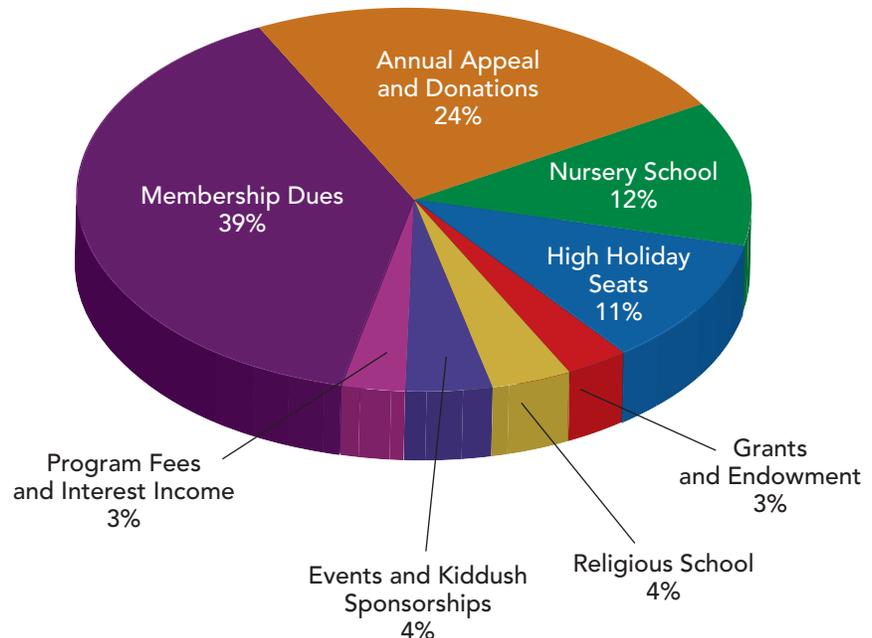
Whether we can continue to create multiple modes that enable our diverse members to come together in diverse ways depends on our Annual Appeal—which means that it depends on *you*.



Thank you for making the miraculous happen here every day.



Revenue Sources



Our Annual Appeal and Donations comprise 24% of all our revenue. Your gift directly translates into our ability to sustain our vibrant community.

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My Shabbat Prayer

תְּפִילַּתִּי לְשַׁבָּת

I Love life.

i Love home.

Mostly i

Love

G-D i

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**Special Thanks to
Our Temple Emanuel Photo Corps**

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TEMPLE EMANUEL
385 Ward Street
Newton, MA 02459

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