

Memories & Dreams

A Community Poem Celebrating TBT's 60th Anniversary, June 24, 2022

I remember when a small group of young Jewish Families started to plan for a Jewish life for our children and formed the Jewish Community Center, in the early 1960's

I remember the temple kitchen in the original 4-bedroom house on Mission Blvd had a huge table in the center and cooking was an elective in Sunday School. I still have copies of those recipes!

I picture a growing community, who continues to celebrate and learn together, helping each other become better

I remember being welcomed by so many kind people when we were new to the community

I remember finally being old enough to go to the classroom at the top of the parking lot when TBT was on Mission Blvd

I picture a synagogue that welcomes young families and creates a sense of community for parents to raise their kids with Jewish customs

I remember joining Temple Beth Torah and finding so much joy and activity. There were numerous young families with children of the same age as our daughters

I remember as a young child falling asleep to the soothing singing and prayers during Shabbat services

I picture a time when the religious school will once again flourish with students overflowing the hallways

I remember teaching my first kindergarten class in 1976 in the creaky old farmhouse synagogue building on Mission Boulevard

I remember listening to the sweet voices of our Religious School students who sang together in the TBT Junior Choir

I picture sitting in the sanctuary surrounded by joyous Shabbat music enhanced by tens of musicians - those from the community and those who joined our community specifically to jam out

I remember joining TBT in 1985 and finding my home

I remember as a child, and then a teenager, going to Sunday school and services in the "red barn" buildings on Mission Blvd in the 60's and 70's; cooking was my favorite elective, and I have fond memories of the fresh baked goods we would make and get to take home

I remember the joyous Purim Shpiels bringing together all generations and segments of our community

I picture my grandkids visiting TBT and seeing their relatives' names on the walls

I remember a warm loving time in Tot Shabbat at Temple Beth Torah with Debby Kaplan. It was the place to start my daughter on her lifelong Jewish learning, and a welcoming place for me as a mother of an active toddler

I remember the smell of the Etrog in the sukkah!

I remember, as a preschooler, my first memories of a friendly congregation whose humble beginnings began in a building that was an old house off Mission Blvd and the garage was converted to the Synagogue

I picture TBT continuing to be a beacon for learning, praying, and having open arms to all in the community!

I remember in 1989, a bit after the birth of my daughter, I was asked by Rabbi Steve Kaplan to fill in as the 'lay rabbi' for a Shabbat when he was out of town at

Camp Swig. I remember... the evening prayers and super short sermon went off without a hitch. I remember at the end of the service, a woman who came in late and didn't hear that Rabbi Kaplan was off-site, came up to me and thought I was Rabbi Kaplan! Oy vey, did I blush

I picture people rainbows - varying skin tones and ages - shoulder to shoulder in prayer

I remember my daughters' B'not Mitzvahs in 1990 and 1992 and being prouder than I have ever been

I remember the wisdom and knowledge Rabbi Steve Kaplan and Rabbi Avi Schulman shared with the congregation

I remember picking tomatoes before Hebrew school from behind the social hall when the building was on Mission Blvd

I remember Rosh Hashanah, wrapped in our mothers' tallitot, mine moonlit in mauves yours boldly jewel-toned, you welcomed this stranger as we turned and returned once more

I look forward to helping the new rabbi and watching our Temple grow

We remember January 10th, 1998: Family and friends gathered with anticipation of our son's Bar Mitzvah. We remember the Tallit being presented, and the Torah being passed from generation to generation until it reached our son. We remember the hard work and diligence that went into the preparation of leading the service and reading from the Torah. We remember hearing the collective "Oh!" when the curtain was opened revealing the beautifully catered Oneg that followed the service. We remember all the people that helped our son reach this day. Most of all, we remember with pride the day he became a man

I picture a place families come back to and see old friends

I remember tears of joy as the Torah was passed from grandparents to parents to our children on their B'nai Mitzvot. Sunday school (I'm not a fool after teaching

five days at public school) the delight of sharing the morning with TBT sixth graders

I remember our son, Steven, proudly and expertly reciting his Torah portion at his Bar Mitzvah in 2008

I remember the joy of my daughters becoming Bat Mitzvah, and the fulfillment of my reading from the Torah as I shared my adult Bat Mitzvah

I picture a synagogue that brings young families together to raise children with a sense of community

Life is a blessing. Life is a joy

I remember June 2011 planting trees in Israel with members of our Congregation and friends from St. Louis

I remember the pride, honor and pleasure I felt when called upon to light Shabbat candles for the first time on Friday, June 10th ...

I remember vividly our TBT tour of Israel. In particular, Rabbi Schulman had the bible on his phone, and I read from the Book of Jonah in the city of Jaffa

I picture a return Congregational trip to Israel

I remember on Simchat Torah, we held the unrolled Torah and Torah upheld us.

I picture being with my lovely friends, gathered in learning and song, at seders and celebrations, together in laughter and prayer

I remember our Wedding Day at Temple in this month in years past. I remember all the different people there of many different denominations and races. I remember us all getting along and having a wonderful time. Wouldn't that be nice for everyone in the world today to get along?

I remember the decades of prayers for healing and delicious meals provided by caring TBT friends and strangers as well as countless calls of support from Rabbi Schulman and others letting me know I am not alone

I picture an increase in our membership, and a return to the Sunday breakfast of bagels, cream cheese, scrambled eggs, etc.

I remember Simchat Torah 2015: “Wait till you see!” Michelle whispered as the scroll unfurled in this Beginning (for me, for all of us,) and we filled children’s sacks with chocolates that melted on their tongues like Torah’s milk and honey

I remember the day of our children’s Bar & Bat Mitzvah at TBT

I picture more concerts, Purim Shpiels and ShaBBQs for years to come

I remember I was officiating at a Friday night service. Someone’s dog had died recently. She asked me if I would add the dog’s name to the Yizkor list. I complied with this request. Later I told Rabbi Schulman about this, and he didn’t think it was such a good idea!

I remember making cardboard arcade machines for Purim

I picture friends who met at Temple Beth Torah sitting around the dinner table sharing how excited they are for the upcoming Purim celebrations

I remember the Shabbat after Thanksgiving, salty smell of the bay as I strolled with old and new Temple friends

I remember June 2016 the beginning of the Temple Beth Torah Community Garden

I remember a Shiva, the shimmering river of sorrow shared. We lit the flickering flame and drew together in friendship and memory to weave a gentle hug of comfort and love

I picture a new and improved Temple Beth Torah Garden blooming with flowers, vegetables, and fruit trees!

I remember participating in the High Holiday Choir and Purim Shpiels, enjoying our community

I remember a hot summer's day, celebrating the arrival of Rabbi Zoe with a local trivia quiz, ice cream, and social time

We picture a vibrant future for Temple Beth Torah

I remember Friday morning Tot Shabbat: Morah Cheryl reading stories, toddlers' high-pitched chatter while working on art projects, my newborn son asleep in his car seat, oblivious

I remember each summer gathering with temple friends and community at ShBBQs

I smell the bbq at the next milestone BBQ!

I remember the feeling of community with families during the Bat Mitzvah year events

I remember the family class Shabbat dinners before their yearly participation services

I picture a synagogue filled with young children every Friday night

I remember friendly TBT ladies reaching out and taking my hand during the family blessing the first time I attended a Shabbat service -- feeling that warm welcome and knowing I'd found a spiritual home

I remember the joy and camaraderie I felt at my adult B'nai Mitzvah

I envision the open area in front converted to a beautiful garden with fruit trees and flowers and a big, gazebo in the middle where we could have Torah Study and other activities

I picture a large joyous community together under the sukkah during sukkot

I remember being married at TBT on 6/25/2017 and I remember how it looked in the sanctuary

I remember the smell of hamantaschen baking in the kitchen

I picture an upcoming Bat Mitzvah, celebrating the diversity of our community while also continuing Jewish traditions

I remember the first time we sang one of the new songs for High Holidays and when the song concluded, someone in the congregation clapped. It brought tears to my eyes because all our hard work had made someone happy

I remember June 17, 2018 waking up thinking of what lay ahead of me that day. On that glorious day I became a member of the Tribe: Sonja Margalit!

I imagine hearing the sound of voices uplifted, chanting prayers on the High Holidays

I remember Shabbat morning, January 2020, standing on the bimah looking out as I recited my Bat Mitzvah Torah portion from 20 years before, coolness of the silver yad in my hand, quiver in my voice, faces smiling up at me, sensing the love in the room

I remember bringing my kids to toddler shabbat events on Saturday morning and meeting people that have become lifelong friends

I picture praying, singing, schmoozing and eating together carefree

I remember elaborate Purim Shpiels, with a true sense of community

I remember my kids' Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, their pride in accomplishment

I picture a multi-generational community singing in a Sukkah beneath sea-green paperchains, earthy gourds, and the full moon -- pregnant with promise in the infinite night sky

I remember being so excited to join a congregation with a female Rabbi

I remember watching my husband's face light up at a Friday Night Family Shabbat as he listened to Joel play music which was fun to sing along with

I remember rocking out at every Rick Recht and Sababa concert

I remember making the cardboard cars for Purim

I picture events that welcome people to come together as a community. A time where we are less worried about COVID and can focus on the joy of gathering in a multitude of venues to learn, pray, and feel a sense of community

I remember having fun in every Purim Spiel we put on

I remember eating latkes at every Chanukah Fair

I picture a Purim Shpiel filled with kids and adults, younger members, songs, laughter, and the smell of freshly-baked hamantaschen

I remember making a gift for someone

I picture singing and dancing to beautiful music

I wish for peace, safety and love in the world

I remember my Tuesday afternoon meetings with Avi - full of warmth, learning and inspirations for congregational, and personal, learning and growth

I remember watching the 7th grade religious school kids standing in front of their Torah portion when we unrolled the Torah on Simchat Torah

I picture Rabbi Zoe continuing to share her kindness, smiles, and insight with the TBT congregation

I remember Tuesday nights at TBT: Adult Midrasha, Teen Midrasha and, at times, BBYO. The energy was high and palpable

I remember zooming at 2022's Purim, dancing to the feeling of the prayers, popping bubble-wrap when they said *that* name, then creating my own play for my family

I picture a time when our synagogue will have standing room only to enjoy Rabbi Zoe's musical and inspirational Shabbat services...

I picture a post-Covid adult choir, lifting the ruach of High Holy Days in song

I remember first arriving to town, driving down Paseo Padre, catching a glimpse of the Temple Beth Torah sign surrounded by flowers, knowing I was home

I remember when I came to my first TBT service and listening to Rabbi's sermon and knowing this was the Temple for me. Everyone was very friendly and made me feel welcome

We picture a vibrant, thriving Synagogue where everyone is welcome and Jewish life continues to be the place we go to pray, socialize and thrive