

## People of Destiny: Vote “Yes” for the Future of Temple Beth-El

Rabbi A. Brian Stoller

April 17, 2026

This is a momentous time for our congregation—maybe the most consequential in decades.

On Wednesday night, April 22, at 7 p.m., the membership of TBE will be asked to vote on the sale and leaseback of our building.

The agreement before you is the product of three years of intentional visioning work by our lay leadership, numerous conversations and town meetings with our congregants, and skilled negotiations led by our dedicated team.

It’s a mutually beneficial arrangement that achieves both goals that you, our congregants, told us from the beginning are the most important: One, it will enable us to remain here in Great Neck, in our historic home at 5 Old Mill Road. And Two, it will secure our financial viability.

And let me state this clearly: The future of Temple Beth-El *depends* on your “yes” vote.

If you vote to approve the sale, as I hope you will, TBE will become one of the most financially stable synagogues on Long Island—if not *the* most. That’s an incredible achievement—and it’s a testament to the wisdom and foresight of our temple leadership.

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My favorite Jewish philosopher, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, taught that there are two types of people: people of fate and people of destiny.

People of fate sit back and let the world happen to them. When faced with challenges, they throw their hands up in the air and say, “Woe is me!” They make themselves *objects* in their own lives.

People of destiny are the opposite: They are the *subjects* of their own lives. When faced with challenges, they ask: “What does this moment demand of me?”—and they take initiative to create their own future.

I am honored, proud, and deeply grateful to be part of a congregation that is confronting its challenges head-on, courageously, and choosing to be people of destiny. I hope you feel the same.

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Great Neck has changed a lot over the last 50 years; and, yes, our membership is smaller than it was back in the day. We no longer need a 90,000-square-foot building—more than five times the size of most temples—to serve our community.

But make no mistake about it. There are a lot of Reform Jews in our area—and they deserve a congregation that invites them to be their authentic Jewish selves:

A congregation committed to pluralism, gender equality, transformational learning, modern worship, civic-mindedness and social action, inclusivity and belonging, and a strong connection to Israel.

We stand today on the shoulders of the giants who founded this synagogue—not based on square footage, but based on values and commitments we believe in, too.

We have the chance to make sure their proud legacy will live on and thrive for many years to come.

Please attend the meeting on Wednesday night. Or, if you can't be here in person, send in your proxy.

Either way, please vote “yes” for the future of our beloved congregation.