

# Temple Beth-El Member Update

וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכָם

*Ve'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham* *Vivi*

“Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell  
among them.” —*Exodus 25:8*



Dear Temple Beth-El Family,

Several weeks ago, our congregation took a major, historic step forward.

At our Special Meeting of the Congregation, Temple Beth-El members voted overwhelmingly to approve the proposed sale of our building and an agreement to lease back the space we need. The vote marked an important milestone in a process almost three years in the making—a thoughtful, careful, and often emotional effort grounded in our shared commitment to securing Temple Beth-El’s future.

For many of us, this building has been the setting for some of the most important moments of our lives and the life of our congregation. The congregational vote reflected confidence in our future and confidence in our ability to shape that future intentionally, responsibly, and faithfully.

The congregational vote did not emerge suddenly or in isolation. It was the culmination of years of study, conversation, strategic planning, financial analysis, professional consultation, legal review, and communal reflection. During that time, congregational leaders and members wrestled seriously with difficult questions about our mission, our finances, our physical space, and the long-term sustainability of Temple Beth-El. Throughout the process, our guiding question remained constant: How do we best position Temple Beth-El to thrive Jewishly, spiritually, financially, and communally for generations to come?

Now, with the vote behind us, we move forward together.

Temple Beth-El has chosen to approach these changes thoughtfully, proactively, and strategically—with the goal of not simply preserving our congregation but of strengthening it for the future. This process is rooted not in retreat but in renewal: aligning our physical space with who we are today and who we aspire to become in the years ahead.

Since the congregational vote, important progress has continued behind the scenes. The transaction documents have been executed, initial escrow funds have been received, and the formal appraisal and review processes required as part of the New York State Attorney General approval process has begun. While this stage will take time—approximately six months—the work is actively underway and moving forward steadily.

## Entering Phase Two

With the congregational vote now complete, we are entering what we are calling Vivid Vision—Phase Two: the next chapter in this important work.

Phase One focused on study, discernment, and decision-making. Phase Two will focus on planning, implementation, creativity, and community engagement as we begin shaping what Temple Beth-El's future will look and feel like in practice.

Over the coming months, we will continue working through the legal and logistical steps necessary to complete the transaction. At the same time, we will begin the important work of imagining how our congregation will live, gather, worship, learn, celebrate, and grow within our future space.

We want to remind you about the committees that are guiding our work in Phase Two:

- **New Space Design and Aesthetics**

Helping envision the look, feel, functionality, and atmosphere of our future space.

- **Ritualizing Change**

Creating opportunities for reflection, memory, celebration, and sacred transition as we prepare for the next chapter in the life of Temple Beth-El.

- **Membership Models and Financial Sustainability**

Strengthening and growing our congregation while ensuring long-term security.

- **High Holidays Planning**

Helping assure that High Holidays worship and related programming remain spiritually powerful and welcoming, including exploring possible locations for 2027.

- **Archive, Art, and Judaica**

Preserving and thoughtfully stewarding Temple Beth-El's archives, artwork, ritual objects, memorial items, and congregational history, retaining what makes sense to keep and finding appropriate homes for other items.

## Our Community, Our Future

Temple Beth-El today remains a vibrant and engaged congregation. Our worship is inspiring. Our learning and cultural programs continue to thrive. Our commitment to community, Jewish values, and meaningful Jewish living remains strong.

The sale and leaseback transaction is an important strategic step toward long-term sustainability, but it does not replace the ongoing support that preserves Temple Beth-El's worship, learning, caring community, and day-to-day operations. Our future depends not only on buildings and finances but also on the continued commitment, participation, and generosity of our members.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this process has been the dedication, thoughtfulness, and love for Temple Beth-El shown by so many members of our community. The future of Temple Beth-El will be shaped by all of us—together.

In many ways, the most important work is only just beginning.

Warmly,

Jordana Levine, President  
Rabbi A. Brian Stoller  
Stu Botwinick, Executive Director