

Shabbat Shalom

A year ago, I stood here in awe as I became your president and shared with you how grateful I was to have the opportunity to lead AEMT. A year has passed, but my feelings of excitement, passion and joy have grown each and every day. I stand here today with the same feeling of awe and even greater feeling of gratitude for allowing me to be your President. As I begin my next year as President our goals remain the same --the desire to see AEMT continue its pursuit of excellence, and to ensure that the resources are available to do just that. As a board we need to make sure that this happens, as a congregation you need to let us know if it's not.

Mazel Tov to all of you who have accepted the important duty of becoming leaders at Anshe Emeth. To you, our new Trustees, you have been elected because we know that you are capable, passionate and committed to AEMT. How do we know this? --we need only to turn to your own words which you so eloquently shared in the latest bulletin. *"I embrace the history of Anshe Emeth and strive to make it a lasting part of our children and grandchildren's lives". "The AEMT community has inspired me to be the best I can be in the Jewish community and in my personal and professional life".* You chose AEMT because it *"best prioritized Jewish values and Jewish education"*. You understand that AEMT is a place where we can *share "experiences together in an inclusive environment"*. Wow—you really get it and, you've provided wonderful quotes for a new ad campaign!! You are all a wonderful addition to a Board that works for the common good of Anshe Emeth. You have been entrusted with taking on an important, sacred task of leading this wonderful congregation. I look forward to working with you in forging a path to the future.

For our new Youth Group Board, your role is no less important. You are now mentors and role models for all of the youth in our congregation. It is your responsibility to ensure that the youth of our temple continues to thrive and that those on the fringes are brought in. It is no coincidence that many of these newly elected AETY Board members have parents and siblings who have been or are currently in leadership positions at AEMT. Thank you for being role models for these wonderful teens who are following in your footsteps. We are all looking at the future leaders of the Jewish people, and we should all be proud that when these youth look back, they will say that they learned to be leaders at Anshe Emeth.

I would like to also thank those Trustees whose terms on our board are completed. Thank you for all that you have done. Your impact on committees such as the Green Team, V'ad Atid and Gemilut Chasidim has made an indelible mark on AEMT. You should be proud of what you've accomplished, but put away any thoughts that your work here is done

To the outgoing AETY Board. I have had the pleasure of watching all of you grow as leaders and as true Jewish role models. You are leaving AETY stronger and more capable than ever to meet the needs of our youth. All of those installed today owe you thanks for allowing them to grow into leaders

Last year I described my term as President as a Marathon and not a sprint; who knew though that my knee would give out when I wasn't even half way through this marathon? This past year has challenging but with every challenge I have learned the resiliency of AEMT. I am thankful for the endless support that I received from so many of you. These challenges also taught me much about Temple leadership and what being a leader in a sacred community is really all about. It is very different then leading in the "business" world. So as I move onto my final year as President, I'd like to share with you what I've learned as a way of teaching and guiding those leaders who will come after me.

I've learned—that it's good to be the king—and I quickly learned that it only works here at the temple --at home—not so much. Leading this temple has given me spiritual and emotional fulfillment. Walking into this temple reinvigorates me. I continue to see my role as a great privilege. It has allowed me the honor to represent this temple at the Biennial. I was privileged to speak at Cantor Ott's Celebration. I am thrilled to welcome you to Shabbat Services each week. I'm always proud to say that I am from AEMT.

I continue to learn though that this is not about me; it's about all of you. I am just a representative of AEMT. All of us are AEMT

I've learned—every single possible interview question you could ask, and the expected answers. While I had many goals this past year, replacing 4 of our staff members certainly wasn't one of them. I know that we will miss Rabbi Epstein, Chase, Karen and Rachel. They will always be members of the AEMT family. We have learned much from all of them and they have each helped us to grow in so many ways. I am proud that each of them is going off to their new adventures having learned and thrived over their years here. I would hope that each of them will look back at their years here as a foundation for what I know will be a wonderful future for all of them.

I've learned that reviewing resumes, checking references and interviewing while seemingly "operational" type activities, when done in the context of the temple, are part of visioning and looking to the future. It is critical that we bring in those who share our vision and our values, while also having unique personalities and background to offer us an opportunity to develop in areas we haven't even thought of. I am confident that the individuals that we have hired and will hire will do just that.

I've learned that the President cannot possibly manage the day to day operations of this Temple. But I also learned that I don't have to since we have Heather and her team to do that. I could not even envision the amount of details that Heather deals with every day, and I only see a very small sample. But she manages with the help of her team, with skill, but more importantly with compassion, with dedication and with absolute love.

I've learned that I can't possibly keep up with Rabbi Miller. He still pushes all of us to do more and to think outside the box. I know that when he comes back from a conference or from vacation, he will have some new ideas to take us to the next level. Rabbi Miller's guidance, support, vision and unbelievable energy have allowed us to be successful. I look forward to his vision and guidance leading us for many more years to come.

I've learned that there is nobody better to learn from and partner with than Rabbi Miller. I have heard and read about so many institutions where presidents and boards work not in concert but in direct conflict with their clergy. I am proud to say that this is not the case here at Anshe Emeth. Rabbi Miller has ensured that there is a culture of the Rabbi and President being partners in this sacred work. I still have much to do in this next year. (I know that the Rabbi has a list) and I can't think of anybody I'd rather work with, dream with, pray with, and learn from than Rabbi Miller

I've learned that while there are certainly special Shabbat services, every Shabbat is special at AEMT. The dedication and passion of Cantor Ott ensures that every Shabbat Service is meaningful and wondrous. One of my absolute joys is sitting up here every Friday night. While I am usually tired after a long week, coming here to share Shabbat with all of you is the highlight of my week. It reinvigorates me. It reminds me of what is really important at AEMT and why what we do as leaders here is so important. It allows me for a few hours to not think about anything other than engaging in prayer, singing and learning. I hope that the Board has learned to enjoy being here for Shabbat and to connect what we do at committee meetings and board meetings to Shabbat. I have learned that there is no more divine greeting than "Shabbat Shalom"

I've learned that the best words in the English language are "yes", "sure", "it would be my pleasure", "I'm honored". These are the responses I generally get when I ask somebody to help. These responses just reinforce to me that our congregants are dedicated, committed and passionate when it comes to working for this community. While the board and I represent all of you, we know that the real work is done by the committees and the numerous volunteers who have committed themselves to Anshe Emeth.

I've learned that engaging our congregants in the work that we do will only make our congregation stronger and more vibrant.

I've learned that support for this temple will come as long as our congregants are engaged and feel that the meaning and importance of AEMT is worth their investment in time and money. Our congregants continue to support AEMT with their dollars and their dedication and for that we are very, very, grateful.

I've learned the importance of engaging our past leaders. I know that I can't do this alone. I need to draw on those who have been in this position before. I am just a link in a long chain of presidents and our temple will only remain strong if all the links are strong. I am proud that we have so many past presidents who remain committed to AEMT. I will continue to seek their guidance and support and I commit to providing guidance and support for our future presidents.

I've learned that a President is only as successful as the team that they lead. And what an unbelievable team that we have. I want to thank my officers and trustees for your support and encouragement throughout this past year. While debate, questioning and discussion are healthy, in the end we can only be successful if we speak with one voice and share one vision. I've set out certain goals for our board; to continue to provide meaningful programming, engage our congregants, ensure AEMT's Fiscal security, and support the youth. While we had many challenging issues this past year, I am proud of our board for allowing these shared goals and visions to guide their decisions. I am looking forward to the upcoming year as we continue to meet these goals and dream together.

I've learned what it means when I've been told, "It's a Temple not a Business". While conceptually I understood this it wasn't until this past year that I learned what it really meant. While a business usually runs with the philosophy of "the end justifies the means" I learned that the temple runs with the opposite philosophy—"the means justifies the end". Rather than simply focusing on the end result of a decision, this temple focuses on how we came to the decision. Did we consider how this would impact our congregation and community? Did we ensure that the decision was in line with our values and vision? Did we respect the individuals? Did we consider the "common good" over our own personal feelings? Can we say that this decision will help us to advance Torah, Avodah and Gemilut Chasadim? I know that the decisions of the past year have been with these questions as our guide. I believe that as long as we've considered these questions in our decisions, then the end is justified. We have all learned and will continue to learn, that you grow more by the journey itself then where the journey ends

Finally I've learned that you can't say thank you too many times. So for everybody who has helped and continues to help to make AEMT such a special place, Todah Rabah—thank you!!

So, while I didn't attend very many formal Torah study classes this past year, I feel like every day has been Torah study for me. Everything I learned about leadership this year is rooted in the teachings of Torah. I'd like to believe that these same lessons were brought to Board meetings as well. And just like learning and studying the Torah—I am excited to learn these lessons all over again, and continue to share my learning with all of you.

My hope this year, is that I pass on what I've have learned and will learn, to the next generation of leaders and to ensure that as we continue our great tradition of leadership, that our future leaders never lose sight of what it really means to lead here at Anshe Emeth:

To always let the teachings of the Torah be the blueprint for our decisions and priorities.

Together, let's continue to look to the past for guidance, to always treat others with respect and dignity. To prioritize the good of the community over our own personal agenda, to make decisions that drive our long term vision, to continue to invest in our youth and to work toward building a community that will weather any storm that may come our way.

So to our Officers and Trustees, as we embark on another year of leadership of this sacred and holy community, let's continue to do so with the teachings of the Torah always on our lips and our minds and to never forget that: *It is the Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it and all of its supporters are happy, its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace*