

January 2015

Visions and Visionaries

In this week's State of the Union address, President Obama said that leadership based on values is what "makes us exceptional" and "keeps us strong." This, he said, is why we must "keep striving to hold ourselves to the highest standards." Of course, the President was referring to our country. But I believe this also holds true for us at Temple Etz Rimon.

At our temple, the members of our Board of Directors lead based on values. They consult with our founders and past-presidents. They strive to honor the values on which we were founded while moving us into the future. They care, not only about the congregation as a community but also about each individual within that community. And they work tirelessly to ensure that our congregation will have a stable, secure, and successful future.

As you may know, a couple weeks ago our board participated in a 2-day workshop facilitated by a consultant from the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). Our membership in the URJ entitles us to this resource, and our board took full advantage of it! We began by sharing the things that make us proud to be part of this congregation. Participants mentioned our warm and welcoming community, our religious school, our shared facility and shared programming with the church, our clergy and staff, our festive holiday celebrations, and more. Together, we studied a text from Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Sages) about leadership to help us recognize our own leadership strengths and styles.

We then turned to the areas that deserve our immediate attention. By the end of the second day, the board had created realistic action plans to maintain and increase our membership, reach out to the public who may not know about us, and ensure our financial stability. The board members and I are excited about all the opportunities that await us, and we are looking forward to bringing all of you in on the conversation.

Our board members are to be commended for their hard work, their dedication, and their vision. We learn in the book of Proverbs: "Where there is no vision, the people shall perish." In our case, we are fortunate to have not only a new vision, but also visionaries—people who see what the future can hold and are willing to help take us there.

Here is where you come in. We need not only visionaries but also people who will help realize that vision. Our board needs your support. In the coming months, you will hear more about what we as a team think is needed in order to keep our congregation thriving. We hope you will be open to the possibilities that lie ahead.

Temple Etz Rimon is an exceptional place; we are strong, and we hold ourselves to high standards. Our values speak this message, our leaders strive toward it, and now it is up to all of us to uphold it.