

June 7, 1949

The annual meeting of the Temple Beth Israel congregation was held in the social hall of the Temple on Tuesday evening, June 7th, 1949 at 8:30. Letters had been sent and phone calls made to all members, so it was most gratifying to find approximately 125 present.

Mr. Epstein, president of the Board welcomed the group. He outlined the year's work, saying that its success had been a re-endorsement of the progressive movement. In particular, the board was pleased with the success of the Friday night services.

Mr. Epstein explained in detail the table of organization of the Board, listing the committees which carry out the program. Reporting for the committees were:

Dr. Ekker - Fund Raising. There has been very little this year, because the finances are in good shape. For the Rabbi Wise memorial fund, they received \$500 from the J.D.C. and raised a little over \$700 in personal contributions. Before undertaking the drive, the committee checked with various communities and found that it is the practice everywhere to have such drives for the universities from which the local Rabbi comes. He also reported on the choir party, which had cost the congregation \$65.00. The board members and all the guests paid for their own dinners. The dinner was in appreciation of and in tribute to the splendid and self-sacrificing efforts of the choir. Dr. Ekker also complimented the choir on the timely and entertaining program presented at the party.

Next a letter of appreciation to Rabbi Abramowitz was read. In it the Board of Directors told of their whole-hearted satisfaction with the Rabbi's work, and of the pleasure they had found in working with him. His handling of the schools, his conduct to our people on all occasions, whether joyous or sorrowful; his participation in communal and inter-faith projects; his handling of religious services - all presented a picture of thoroughness and intelligence.... a job well done. With the letter, Mr. Gerson presented a gift to the Rabbi as a symbol of appreciation. (portable radio)

For the committee on the cemetery, Mr. J.B. Goldberg reported that, due to unavoidable circumstances, Mr. Somerville had not been able to get our grounds in proper shape as yet; but this would be attended to next week. It was further announced that on Thursday June 9, two representatives from our Board would meet with two from Farrell and two from the allocations committee to work on the joint project for the cemetery.

Mr. A. Freyman, our faithful and beloved treasurer, gave an excellent report on our finances. Of our 160 members, 131 are paid up to July 1. 17 partly paid and 12 are delinquent. He reported a balance of... \$4069.55

In the absence of Mr. Rudberg, Mrs. Joseph Levine, co-chairman of the Bulletin, told of the satisfaction in working for it. This is a tangible evidence of the progressive; a wonderful form of expression for the community. She announced that Mrs. Irving Mermelstein would help on the committee for the coming year, and gave sincere thanks to the Rabbi and Miss Pauline Robinson for their faithful and invaluable work.

Mr. Routman for the building committee, said they had met and reviewed the old plans. They arranged for new plans with the architect, and these are now out for bids, which should be in within the next two weeks. At that time, they will meet with the architect to decide about the feasibility of proceeding at the present time. Several committees met to discuss raising additional funds, and the initial reactions were favorable. An additional \$100,000 will be the minimum requirement. If the bldg seems feasible, every one must be contacted to give. Mr. Routman stressed the need for the new building for a Temple is the heart and soul of every Jewish community.

Martin Shanks, for the Religious School, gave an intelligent and searching report on the status of our Hebrew School and of our Sunday School. The Hebrew School is available to children 4 days a week. Of the 25 pupils enrolled, 5 attend 3 days a week and 20 attend 2 days. The sessions last an hour and 15 minutes, so the children accomplish a great deal from the amount of time devoted. He stressed the importance of the parent's interest and co-operation if they truly want their children to have a Hebrew education.

82 children are enrolled in the Sunday School, and he has found them wonderfully faithful and co-operative. They are generous, too. Over \$125 was raised from the collections; and the children gave to UJA - the March of Dimes - the Stephen Wise Memorial - and Trees in Israel.

This is the largest number of children we have ever had enrolled in either the Hebrew or the Sunday School. He told of the special programs and services they had participated in: Yom Kippor, Chanukah - Festival of Weeks - Purim. They conducted a modern Sedar and participated in the Saturday morning services, where, he said, the attendance is only fair. This attendance, too, he pointed out, can be influenced by the parent's interest and co-operation.

In addition to the above, the children had a picnic at Buhl Farm on May 15 and at their final session on May 22, prizes were awarded for scholarship and attendance.

Mr. Shanks concluded by thanking his teachers and the Rabbi, who all worked so hard to make this a successful year. In particular he thanked Dr. Applebaum who would take no remuneration for his services.

His report concluded, Mr. Shanks asked for criticism and suggestions from the parents or other members of the congregation. All these teachers are working devotedly and unselfishly for what they consider to be the best program for the good of all. They will welcome and not resent criticism or suggestions honestly given.

Rabbi Abramowitz was then called for his report. He gave thanks to the people of the community in which he has enjoyed living this past year. He also thanked the Board, whom he found to be splendid representatives of that community - conscientious and unselfish; and he paid a special tribute to Mr. Epstein, president of the Board.

He spoke of his feeling when coming to Sharon, which is an exemplary community; a thriving Jewish group, the grass roots of American Jewish life. Knowing full well the difficulties we might have here, and weighing the fact that there are many pulpits open to Rabbis at the present time, he chose Sharon because of the progressive movement that had been started - the organ, the Union Prayer book were both influencing factors. The difficulties Sharon has had, not in just the past years, but for many years, are indications that we are in a transitional period... in that period of growth that must know some pain and unrest.

Coming here unbiased, trying to further the progressive movement, he feels that a great deal has been accomplished. He and the community have gotten to know each other. Many have crystallized in their minds the type of service they wish. He knows that some people are dissatisfied, which is natural in any group; but the position he has followed is the one he was told was that of the majority of the community. More than that, he feels the program is the best solution to the problem of American Jewry. He came with the intention to further the progressive movement and to iron out any inconsistencies. Although the Union Prayer Book was voted in last year, it was not used

for the High Holidays. But this prayer book stands for a PROGRAM - our children, too, must be instilled with the liberal. To be consistent with the program established, and which we are committed to, the Union Prayer Book will be introduced for the high Holidays.

The Rabbi said the modern services at 11 o'clock on Saturdays was not well attended, but beginnings are difficult always; and for many people who have attended them, who have heard the Torah read and then explained in English, who have heard the ceremony for the naming of a child - these ceremonies, for the first time, have meaning.

Fully realizing and sympathizing with the reasons some traditionalists can not accept the liberal program, provision was made, and will be followed, to conduct the traditional services in the accustomed manner.

The Rabbi spoke sincerely, sympathetically and courageously. Knowing that all things can not please all people, he realizes that some times people will be dissatisfied or displeased. He knows, too, that some things were said in criticism of the program he has been following; but never once was he personally approached with a problem or a complaint. He said he wants to be accessible at any time that any one has such a problem and that, working together, he hopes a solution may be found.

He repeated again how much he has enjoyed working with us, He is looking forward to the coming year as one of unity and growth.

Mr. Epstein, in commenting on the Rabbi's talk, said the program has the complete backing of the Board. He said we all feel that the traditionalists must and should continue to worship as they feel fit but the greater form of our worship should be geared to the majority modern group, and to our children. To attain the new building, which is so badly needed, we must have all our groups working together. He said the Rabbi has a willing ear and any suggestions on services or schools should be presented to him.

The meeting was thrown open for discussion and Mrs. O.B. Rosenblum mentioned the education group. This had not been reported on, since Mr. Green, the chairman, was absent. Fifteen classes were held and two books reviewed. The average attendance at the classes was ten, and all participants found them enjoyable and beneficial. They will be continued next year.

Before electing the new Board, Mr. Epstein asked for expressions from the floor; for any new business or discussions of any sort. Since nothing was raised at this time, the nominating committee presented the slate: Atty Routman, J.B. Goldberg, Wm. Polangin, Bertram Speizer and Sam Lansat.

Further nominations were asked from the floor and the names of Joseph Goodstein and Edward Greenberger were added.

Before proceeding to the election, Dr. Ekker spoke of the regret the old Board felt because Mr. Epstein was not a candidate for re-election, and the entire body rose in tribute to his splendid service and guidance.

Ben Wittman and David Adelman were in charge of the balloting and Myer Frank was appointed as judge of election. On written ballot, the following were elected: Atty Routman, J.B. Goldberg, Sam Lansat, Jos Goodstein and Edward Greenberger.

At the conclusion of the balloting, Mr. Epstein announced a meeting of the new Board to elect a president. This is to be held at the Center, on Tuesday, June 14th at 8:30 PM

On motion duly made, seconded and passed, the meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lillian Rosenblum,
Secretary Pro-Tem,