



# Temple Sinai and the State of Israel are Celebrating Their 70th Anniversary This Year

*We survived the Y2K scare and made it into the new millennium. A contested presidential election was ultimately decided by the Supreme Court. Then lives and life changed on September 11, 2001. That attack led to the Iraq and Afghanistan invasions which affect us to this day. Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast and exposed an already decaying infrastructure. Facebook was founded and launched a new age in social media. Through it all, Temple Sinai remained a stabilizing force in a drastically changing world.*

## 2000-2010

Following the horror of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, Rabbi White gave sermons and met with congregants to try to make sense of a world in turmoil. In October 2005, he galvanized the congregation in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina's devastation and destruction. Through the coordinated effort of the Temple's Social Action Committee, donated supplies filled a 50-foot, 18-wheel tractor-trailer, which was delivered to an operations center in Jackson, Mississippi for distribution to New Orleans evacuees.

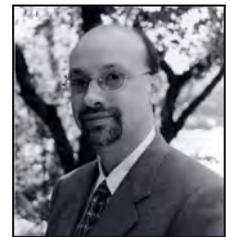
In May 2002, the Board of Trustees approved major additions and renovations to the Temple. The Susan and Leonard



Feinstein Learning Center, named in honor of its benefactors, included new classrooms and a subdividable multipurpose space. A beautiful catering facility accommodated up to 375 guests and allowed for sanctuary expansion on High Holidays. The site plan included additional parking and relocation of the nursery school playground. A magnificent entry canopy in the footprint of the Star of David leading to a spacious vestibule continues to serve as a warm welcome to our Sinai community. The Fortunoff Family Garden was landscaped to provide an exterior space for social gatherings, summer Shabbat services, and a Holocaust memorial and meditation garden. System

updates and an elevator were provided. Lech Lecha was created and members most generously funded a significant portion of the costs.

Ground-breaking ceremonies were held on June 2, 2006 to mark the start of construction, which continued until September 2007. During this time High Holy Day services were held at the Tilles Center Auditorium of the C.W. Post College. Completion of the project was marked by a re-dedication of the Temple and a "Big Party" to celebrate its 60th anniversary on December 7, 2007. Rabbi Michael White eloquently expressed that the renovation had prepared Temple Sinai as "a sacred haven; a place to gather for direction, guidance and communal strength" and to continue its mission, as "a place to study, worship and assemble."



Cantor Andrew Edison, who was installed in 1989, was the heart, soul and rhythm behind regular Sabbath services, High Holy Days services, the Junior, Young Adult and Senior Choirs. We can also thank him for numerous musical programs at



the temple including the annual Purim "spiel" and musical events sponsored by the Herbert Tarr North Shore Institute for Adult Jewish Education. During his tenure, he prepared over 2,000 congregational children for their b'nei mitzvot as well as several adults who participated in the Adult Bar and Bat Mitzvah Program. Cantor Edison's good humor and perpetual optimism aided him throughout an eight-month battle with a viral throat infection during which he lost his voice and could not participate in regular religious or High Holiday services. He nevertheless attended every service on the bima inspiring the congregation and providing moral support with his commanding

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presence to the visiting cantors who led the services in his stead. His recovery and the return of his voice to its former strength and beauty was celebrated by the entire congregation. Upon his retirement in July 2008, congregants and friends celebrated the 19 years that he was part of the Temple Sinai family. He was honored with a special Shabbat Service on May 16, 2008 and a gala dinner-dance. In tribute after tribute, current and former clergy, and congregants recounted their admiration for Cantor Andrew Edison who retired as Cantor Emeritus of Temple Sinai.

Cantor Gabriella Arad joined Temple Sinai in July 2008. Cantor Edison had been one of her teachers. She returned to HUC-JIR and, in 2006, was ordained as a Rabbi. Cantor Arad is one of a handful of cantors who is also an ordained rabbi. Cantor Arad had a friendly, spirited manner and remained at Sinai until June 2012.



Rabbi Benjamin David was appointed as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Sinai in July 2005. Rabbi David worked closely with youth and teens, supervised the Hebrew High School program, officiated at lifecycle events, furthered the congregational social action, community outreach and interfaith programs. He led weekly and monthly lectures and discussions on Talmudic studies and Jewish traditions, holidays and Torah. In March 2007 he participated in the five-day bike marathon *Ride 4 Reform*, where Reform Jewish leaders from around the world biked 250 miles across Israel. Rabbi David was a competitive long-distance runner, having completed 13 marathons and 20 half-marathons. He was a co-founder of the Running Rabbis, a social justice initiative that works with clergy worldwide to run and walk in the name of worthy causes.

Ethel Liebeskind joined the Temple Sinai staff as Executive Director in July 2001 having already been a Jewish communal professional for twenty years. She applied her administrative and management skills to Temple Sinai as well as her personal commitment to Jewish life, tradition and community. Ethel was present at all events to warmly welcome congregants and guests to our synagogue.



The list of distinguished speakers at Temple Sinai during this decade was particularly impressive. Included were: Henry Kissinger former Secretary of State and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Medal of Liberty; Dennis Ross, former Ambassador to Israel; Ehud Barak, former Israeli Prime Minister; William Safire, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist; Alan Dershowitz, Harvard Law professor, attorney and writer; Ruth Messinger, former Manhattan Borough President and Executive Director of the American Jewish World Service; Shimon Peres, former Israeli Prime Minister; David Horowitz, Editor-in-Chief of the Jerusalem Post and Abraham Foxman, National Director of the Anti-Defamation League.

*The first decade of the millennium was about growth, innovation and many things that now seem everyday and common place. The iPod, iPhone, Twitter, and YouTube all debuted. Lost, 24, Boston Legal, and Grey's Anatomy entertained us. The Sopranos finale left us wanting more, as did Michael Jackson's death. Barack Obama became the 44th President and Apple's iTunes sold its one billionth song. Temple Sinai paralleled with growth and changes of its own, some that now seem everyday and common place, but were envisioned, designed and built then. We are blessed with a clergy, lay leadership and congregants who look with optimism and hope to the future.*