



נר ה' נשמת אדם

The United Synagogue
of Conservative Judaism

Sacred Communities & Financial Sustainability

“Choosing the Sustaining Number Dues Model: Three Case Studies”

with

Barry Mael

Director, Kehilla Operations and Finance

June 23, 2014

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- Tifereth Israel, San Diego, CA
 - Jerry Hermes, President
 - Temple Emanu El, Providence, RI
 - Rebecca Kislak, VP Membership Outreach
 - Temple Beth Tzedek, Amherst, NY
 - Janet Gunner, Chairman of the Board / Immediate Past President
 - Rabbi Perry Netter
-



Rebecca Kislak Brown is the outgoing Vice President of Membership Outreach at **Temple Emanu El** in **Providence, RI**. When not welcoming new members, Rebecca advocates for health policy that helps community health centers and their patients. She lives in a Providence with her partner and their two children.

Rabbi Perry Netter came to **Temple Beth Tzedek (Buffalo, NY)** in August, 2009, from California, where he served three congregations in Greater Los Angeles between 1982 and 2008.

Rabbi Netter is also currently Adjunct Professor of Jewish Thought and Practice at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. Previously, Rabbi Netter was Adjunct Lecturer in Bible and Rabbinics at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Los Angeles, California. He spent many summers as Rabbi in Residence at Camp Ramah of Ojai, California. He has appeared on radio and television as an authority on Jewish life and history.

Rabbi Netter is the author of *Divorce is a Mitzvah*, an internationally acclaimed guide to divorce, written for Jewish families to help them understand, navigate, and heal from the traumas of terminating a marriage and has also published widely in national Jewish journals.



Jerry Hermes joined **Tifereth Israel (San Diego, CA)** in August 1980 having just moved to San Diego from Los Angeles. Six months later, out of curiosity, he went to a Men's Club meeting to meet some Jewish guys and left that meeting as President of the Men's Club— a position that had a seat on the synagogue's Board of Directors!

From 1981-1992 he served on the synagogue's Board as Men's Club President, Director, Secretary, Activities VP, and various other positions. Then, in 2009, he was pressed back into duty as an at-large Director. In 2010, he became Administrative (First) Vice President, a portfolio he held for four years. This past week, he assumed the synagogue's presidency.

Janet Gunner is currently chairman of the board following her recent completion of three years of service as president of **Temple Beth Tzedek, Amherst (Buffalo), NY**. She helped to create and chair programs to meet critical unmet needs that are within the mission of the synagogue and the Jewish community including the award-winning TBT Keshet program to dissipate isolation through inclusion and outreach, and the Task Force on Jewish Group Homes (now known as the Jewish Community Task Force on Individuals with Developmental Disabilities) which helped to form the first Jewish (kosher) group home in the Buffalo area for five lovely women.

She is a past chair of the Ritual Committee and the High Holidays subcommittee. Janet is currently involved in developing the Jewish Healing Center of TBT. She continues to pursue the central goal of helping to engage every member in the Synagogue Mission in areas that resonate.



Sacred Communities & Financial Sustainability

“Choosing the Sustaining Number Dues Model: Three Case Studies”

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Director, Kehilla Operations and Finance

June 23, 2014



Tifereth Israel Synagogue

San Diego, CA

FAQ on Proposed Sustaining Number Financing Model

- 1. What is the proposal about?** A new, progressive financial model, The Sustaining Number Model, that combines traditional dues with the High Holy Day Appeal into one donation. It allows you to decide what to contribute, with information from us regarding the cost of running the synagogue, and how much you contributed in the past.
 - 2. Why the change?** Multiple reasons, the foremost being the uncomfortable, intrusive, sensitive and time-intensive application process for reduced dues. Other reasons include changing demographics, a potential draw for new members, and greater appeal to our members.
 - 3. How is a Sustaining Number determined?** The number is identified by taking the annual budget (not including school fees and additional fundraisers) and dividing it by the number of adult members. This yields the cost per adult member to operate our synagogue.
 - 4. What is TIS's actual Sustaining Number for the coming year?** \$1,450 per adult or \$2,900 for a two-adult household.
 - 5. Will this number ever change?** Yes, because it is based on net expenses and the number of members we have. It can increase, decrease or stay the same. Traditional dues never decrease.
-

FAQ on Proposed Sustaining Number Financing Model

6. **Will I get a bill for that amount?** In the spring, when our next fiscal year budget is determined, members will be notified of the new Sustaining Number. Again, you'll be asked to choose the amount of your contribution. At the beginning of the new fiscal year (July 1) statements will be sent as always. Your statement will reflect the amount you have pledged.
 7. **What if I can't afford the sustaining number?** Then pay whatever you can. No questions asked, no paperwork, no application process and no guilt.
 8. **Will I be able to set up a payment plan?** As in the past, you will be able to pay in full or set up your own individual payment plan.
 9. **Will this replace other fundraisers like dinners, the Gala, etc.?** No, these congregational fundraisers will remain.
 10. **Can I still make a High Holy Day Donation?** Absolutely, and we would gratefully accept it. For many, this is a personal tradition they may choose to continue in addition to their Sustaining Number donation.
-

FAQ on Proposed Sustaining Number Financing Model

- 10. Will there be a High Holy Day Book?** Yes! We can never say thank you enough.
 - 11. Will members who are able to contribute above the Sustaining Number be recognized in some way?** Yes. Again, we can't thank our supporters enough.
 - 12. If this goes forward, is it permanent?** As long as the congregational response is positive and it is financially feasible.
-



May 22, 2014
22 Iyar 5774

FIELD(Family_Formal_Mailing_Label)

FIELD(Family_Address)

FIELD(Family_City_State_Zip_Code)

Dear FIELD(Family_Informal_Salutation):

We are very excited to formally introduce "**T'rumah**," Tifereth Israel Synagogue's new membership financial sustainability model. As previously announced, this model received overwhelmingly positive feedback from you, our members. With this in mind, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the adoption of this groundbreaking new financial program.

Much thought went into ensuring the name of the program would be meaningful to our community. We succeeded.

***T'rumah:** When it came time to build the Mishkan, the desert Tent of worship, every Israelite was expected to make a financial contribution. The Torah did not specify a set amount, rather, "The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts from every person whose heart so moves him." (Ex. 25:2-3) Every Israelite was expected to bring a freewill offering, of their own choosing, to build the sanctuary, but God did not say how much. God had faith in the Israelites. God knew that because of their love and faith that they would be as generous as possible.*

Please review the following information thoroughly before completing the enclosed form.

After further analysis of our anticipated operating costs for the next year, we are pleased to let you know that we were able to lower the original sustaining figure from \$1,450 per adult to \$1,400 per adult. The sustaining number for 2014-2015 reflects the amount that has been determined as our per-adult member cost for the upcoming year. This number may slightly alter on an annual basis.

Single Adult Household:	\$1,400
Two Adult Household:	\$2,800

The basis of this model focuses on creating relationships and experiences within our *kehillah* [community]. Your yearly membership commitment is voluntary. It invites you to contribute as your "heart so moves you" and should reflect your personal commitment to our congregation, while keeping in mind the sustaining number, and in a manner that is meaningful to you.

We are now asking you to renew your membership and make your commitment for this coming year. Your *T'rumah* represents your generous pledge to our congregation's future. Please keep in mind that the amount your commitment is *inclusive* of your High Holy Day pledge. The enclosed form illustrates your past two years of giving, to assist in your decision making process. For those who have been able to go above and beyond in previous years, we encourage you to continue to contribute at that level. Members who may not be able to reach the sustaining level are asked to be as generous as you can.

Although there is a baseline sustaining number, the following levels are designed to recognize those whose commitments fall into the categories below.

Sustainer	up to \$1,400 (per adult) or \$2,800 (per couple)
Builder	\$1,401 (per adult) to \$5,600 total per family
Pillar	\$5,601 to \$24,999
Cornerstone	\$25,000 +

As previously mentioned, we will gratefully accept your ongoing donations commemorating life cycle events, and fundraising efforts will continue. Remember, your commitment *does not* include High Holy Day reserved seats or parking spaces. ALL Tifereth Synagogue members will be recognized in our High Holiday Book.

Many of our members have shared with us the desire to continue to make an additional pledge during the High Holy Days. This is part of a number of our member families' personal traditions and will, of course, be gratefully accepted.

We strongly believe that this innovative program will enhance and ensure the continued vibrancy of Tifereth Israel. If you have any questions about the new financial system, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are confident that your love of Tifereth Israel and our Jewish heritage will inspire you to be as generous as were our ancestors in the Sinai desert.

May we continue to grow *mechayil el-chayil*, from strength to strength.

B'Shalom,

Seth Krosner, MD
President

Lisa Zelenetz
Executive Director

Financial Support Form

FIELD(Family_Formal_Mailing_Label)

FIELD(Family_Address)

FIELD(Family_City_State_Zip_Code)

Dear FIELD(Family_Informal_Salutation):

As we previously stated Tifereth Israel Synagogue's projected 'Sustaining Number' for 2014-2015 is \$1,450.00 for a single adult household and \$2,900.00 for a two adult household.

Again, here is an overview of your last 2 years of giving; you generously donated the following amounts to Tifereth Israel Synagogue:

	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>
Dues	\$FIELD(Net Dues 12-13)	\$FIELD(Net Dues 13-14)
High Holy Day Gift	\$FIELD(HHD pledge 12- 13)	\$FIELD(HHD pledge 13-14)
Total Gift	\$FIELD(Total Gift 12-13)	\$FIELD(Total Gift 13-14)

Please take a moment to review your generosity and share with us what you feel your 2014-2015 commitment may be. Remember this number is only being used to gauge the viability of the model.

\$ _____

Please return to the TIS office by March 21st.



2014-2015 T'rumah Membership Financial Support Form

FIELD(Family_Formal_Mailing_Label)
 FIELD(Family_Address)
 FIELD(Family_City_State_Zip_Code)

Dear FIELD(Family_Informal_Salutation):

As outlined in the enclosed letter, Tifereth Israel Synagogue's projected sustaining amount for 2014-2015 is ***\$1,400.00 for a single adult household and \$2,800.00 for a two adult household.***

Below you will find an overview of your last two years of giving (past yearly dues and High Holy Day gifts combined). Keep in mind that these totals *do not include* other forms of donations, such as recognizing life cycle events, fundraising, parking, etc.). This new financial model *only* takes into consideration your past yearly dues/High Holy Day gifts.

Please take a moment to review your past generosity and make your yearly 2014-2015 commitment.

	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014</u>
Dues	\$FIELD(Net Dues 12-13)	\$FIELD(Net Dues 13-14)
High Holy Day Gift	\$FIELD(HHD pledge 12-13)	\$FIELD(HHD pledge 13-14)
Total Gift	\$FIELD(Total Gift 12-13)	\$FIELD(Total Gift 13-14)

I/We commit the following T'rumah for 2014-2015: \$ _____

Payment Options

Please select one of the following payment options and send your contribution with this form:

- Pay in full by **check or cash** by June 20, 2014
- Pay in full by **credit or debit card** by June 20, 2014. Please take advantage of our online payment service at www.tiferethisrael.com. We accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover.
- Pay in up to 10 equal installments starting in July 2014 and ending no later than April 30, 2015.
 Number of installments: _____ (max 10) Installment amount: \$ _____
 To be charged on the _____ (enter day of the month)
- I would like to add 3% to my total to help offset credit/debit card processing charges

Name on card: _____

Card number: _____ **Exp date:** _____

Billing address: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **Date:** _____



Temple Emanu-El

Providence, RI

Temple Emanu El

Providence Rhode Island

Rebecca Kislak Brown
Outgoing Vice President
of Membership
Outreach



What did we do and why?

- National trend away from affiliating.
 - Aging demographics at synagogue.
 - Dues were increasing every year, but we were collecting about the same amount of money.
-

Process

- Synagogue President set this as a priority.
 - Lay and professional leadership visited nearby synagogue that had implemented similar changes.
-

Membership Committee

- Two year active process once we made decision to move forward with some change.
 - One year of study, one year of implementation.
-

What did we study?

- Temple Israel in Sharon, Massachusetts
 - Other synagogues: Philadelphia, San Francisco, Reform and Reconstructionist movements
 - Mormons, Protestants, Catholics
 - Amanda Palmer, TED Talk, “The art of asking”
 - Panera
 - http://www.teprov.org/temple_tales (first three blog entries, scroll all the way down for links)
-

Implementation

- This is what we did, but backing up the time line 2-4 months would have been even better!
 - December – April – One to one meetings and living room meetings
 - February – Sent out pledge forms (due April 20)
 - March-April – Town hall meetings
 - April – phone a thons
 - May – final board approval
-

Results

- Nearly 50 new member households joined!
 - Well over 50% of members returned pledge forms. The first 50% of returned forms accounted for pledges of about 75% of the contributions we need.
 - We are generating bills from pledges; We expect most people who did not return their forms will pay their bills as usual.
 - We think pledges will be easier to collect than bills.
-



Membership Town Hall

Have you heard about our new membership model?



The Membership Committee of Temple Emanu-El invites you to join our rabbis, cantor and Temple Officers for an informative and interactive Town Hall Meeting about our new "Gift of the Heart" membership model.



Come to one of these Town Hall Meetings in the Vestry at Temple Emanu-El:

Sunday, February 23 from 11:00 am- 12:30 pm

Sunday, March 2 from 7:00 pm- 8:30 pm

Monday, March 3 from 6:00 pm- 7:15 pm

If you have any questions, please contact Meital Cafri, our Advancement & Membership Coordinator, at mcafri@teprov.org or (401) 331-1616.

*Enter to WIN A THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE from *Harmony on Hope* by attending a Town Hall Meeting.

For more information about membership:

www.teprov.org

["Temple Tales"](#)

[Facebook](#)



"Gift of the Heart" Membership Commitment*

Names of Household Members: Example Form

Temple Emanu-El asks members to make a financial contribution that is comfortable and meaningful for you and your family. As you know, the Temple needs to raise these funds annually in order sustain and grow our community. As a guide, synagogues in other communities suggest contributions connected directly to income, usually between 1.5-2.5% of household income. If this is helpful, please feel free to use it.

It costs approximately \$2,300 per household to sustain our synagogue each year. Some households are able to contribute more, and others less. Regardless of your commitment level, your contribution:

- Replaces former Dues and Annual Fund solicitations
- Includes High Holy Day seats for you and all members of your household
- Does not include Religious School tuition and capital fundraising opportunities

Suggested levels of support to guide your commitment:

Protector	Supporter	Sustainer	Pillar	Benefactor	Guardian
Up to \$1,200	\$1,201 - \$2,299	\$2,300	\$2,301 - \$4,199	\$4,200 - \$5,499	\$5,500 and up

Your Commitment Level:

If your household is able to contribute more than the Sustainer level, your donation will help ensure that our synagogue thrives in these trying financial times.

For 2012-2013, your household contributed \$2020 in Dues and Annual Fund contributions. For 2014-2015, please consider an increased gift of \$2300.

Your 2014-2015 Membership Commitment:

My household is pleased to offer a voluntary commitment of \$ _____.

Your Response:

Please return this form by April 20, 2014. If we do not hear from you, your commitment will be billed at an additional 5% from last year's contributions. You will receive special recognition if you increase your previous commitment by 10% or more, or when your commitment is at or above the Sustainer level.

* Please continue to support programming funds, kiddush, chapel, and other individual funds, which are not included in this donation.

- Membership form:

http://www.teprov.org/sites/default/files/uploaded_documents/2014-2015_membership_application_june162014.pdf

Lessons Learned

- This was a great opportunity to start to do some great relationship building.
 - This is an annual fundraising campaign.
 - Thanking donors/members is so very important.
 - Need to think about office process and transformation in order to support this, and also how to institutionalize this on an annual basis with professional staff and lay volunteers.
-



Temple Beth Tzedek

Amherst (Buffalo), NY



TEMPLE BETH TZEDEK

621 GETZVILLE ROAD • AMHERST NY 14226
PH: 716.838.3232 • FAX: 716.838.6154
WWW.BETHTZEDOK.ORG

FAQ's about the Membership Pledge System

Q: Why are we changing from the traditional membership dues system?

A: Temple Beth Tzedek is not a membership organization like a country club or a Kiwanis. We are a synagogue, following ancient traditions in pursuit of a sacred mission. The goal of membership dues is to be able to pay our bills, so that we can do the holy work for which we came into being. Dues were never intended to define who is in and who is not. This new Pledge System is designed to give as many people as possible the opportunity to support our mission because they recognize the importance of what we do. The Board of Directors will no longer establish an amount you must pay in dues. No longer will anyone be asked to provide personal and private financial information to justify a dues level below the amount established by the Board. We are grateful for all you are able to do to maintain the synagogue.

Q: What is the Sustaining Pledge?

A: We need to raise about \$800,000 to meet our budget, which is about half the national average for a synagogue of our size. If each member paid the sustaining pledge - \$2000 per family membership and \$1500 per single membership - we will be able to pay our bills. And isn't that what everyone wants? We also recognize that some will not be able to pay the sustaining level, and that is OK. We also hope there will be people who step up to the honors categories. At the end of the day, we will fund the shul.

Q: If I pledge to pay 10% over last year's dues, and the amount I pay puts me into another Honors Category, will I be listed in the higher category, or in both?

A: You will be listed in both categories.

Q: Will there be reductions for dual membership?

A: Because the amount of your pledge is totally voluntary there is no longer a need for the dual membership category.

Q: What if I don't send back my pledge form by the posted date?

A: In that case, your pledge will be entered at 3% over last year's dues and you will be billed on a quarterly basis. But we expect that you will meet the deadline.

Q: What happens if this new system does not bring in sufficient dollars to meet our budget?

A: In the event that the Pledge System does not result in sufficient funds to run the synagogue, the Board of Directors will revert to the old dues system. That is the only responsible thing we can do. However, we have full confidence that this step will not be necessary.



TEMPLE BETH TZEDEK

621 Getzville Road
Amherst, NY 14226
Phone: 838-3232

membership@btzbuffalo.org

TEMPLE BETH TZEDEK MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Temple Beth Tzedek has a pledge system that removes financial barriers to synagogue membership; we do not have dues.

Members voluntarily select the amount they wish to commit to our congregation.

It is important to remember that each Member unit, Family or Single, sets their own rate of giving. There will be no pressure to give more.

As a guide, our synagogue will be able to meet its budget if every Family Member unit pledges \$2,060.00, and every Single Member unit pledges \$1,545.00. These levels are referred to as a "Sustaining Pledge."

We have also established honor categories of giving and they are listed on the pledge form.

We ask that you be as generous as possible. This is a self-determined pledge. Only you can decide how much to pledge within your financial comfort.

The Annual Commitment Pledge form and Membership Application are a part of this packet. Please return them to the synagogue office.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Temple Beth Tzedek family.

TEMPLE BETH TZEDEK

2014-2015 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PLEDGE FORM

FAMILY

Name: _____

As you contemplate your 2014-15 commitment pledge, please consider the following:

- 1) Each and every TBT household is asked to make a self-determined Membership Pledge to enable our synagogue to continue its important role in our lives and in our community.
- 2) Recognition will be given to all congregants who make their pledge at the Sustainer, Life, Strength, Pillars, or Lions levels.
- 3) **2014-15 PLEDGE CATEGORIES**

חברים (Haverim) FRIENDS	תומכים (Tomchim) SUSTAINERS	חי (Chai) LIFE	כח (Koach) STRENGTH	עמודים (Amudim) PILLARS	אריות (Arayot) LIONS
An amount you choose	\$2,060	\$360 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i> \$2,420	\$720 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i> \$2,780	\$1,440 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i> \$3,500	\$2,880 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i> \$4,940

- 4) In support of Temple Beth Tzedek, we commit to an annual pledge of:

\$ _____ *Enter your pledge on this line*

Please bill/invoice my pledge: Monthly Quarterly Annually

Please check the appropriate box

(See next page for more on payment options)

SIGNATURE: _____ EMAIL: _____

_____ Please initial if you do **not** want your name to be recognized in any listing of Giving Categories.

**Please submit this form with your application for membership
by mail to Temple Beth Tzedek, 621 Getzville Rd., Amherst, NY 14226
or by fax to 716-835-6154 or by email to office@btzbuffalo.org**

MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT OPTIONS

To make it easier to pay your membership pledge, we are pleased to provide the following options:

ANNUAL PAYMENT— A single payment in the amount of your entire pledge will be charged to your credit card or withdrawn from your checking account on or about June 15th.

QUARTERLY PAYMENT--- Your pledge will be divided into 4 equal payments charged to your credit card or withdrawn from your checking account on or about June 15th, September 15th, December 15th, and March 15th.

MONTHLY PAYMENT--- Your pledge will be divided into 12 equal payments charged to your credit card or withdrawn from your checking account on or about the 15th of each month, June through May.

Please select one of the following automated payment options. We strongly urge you to make your pledge payment(s) via **Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)**, the first option below. It is the most cost-effective way for the synagogue to process electronic payments. You can also make your payments by credit card.

EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) – Debit from your checking account. If you choose this option, please attach a blank voided check to this form.

OR

MasterCard Visa Discover

Name as it appears on credit card _____

Credit Card number _____

Expiration Date _____

Security Code* _____ (*Three digit code on back of card)

Please include credit card information even if you have previously placed a credit card on file with the office.

I authorize Temple Beth Tzedek to process electronic membership pledge payments and other charges as they arise in accordance with the information I've provided on this form.

I authorize Temple Beth Tzedek to process electronic membership pledge payments (only) in accordance with the information I've provided on this form.

Note: Choosing to permit use of your electronic payment information for all charges (the first choice) will permit you to put event fees, donations, etc. on your account. This is the default option if you fail to indicate a preference. Otherwise, you will have to pay for these charges in advance by cash or check.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

TEMPLE BETH TZEDEK

2014-2015 ANNUAL COMMITMENT PLEDGE FORM

SINGLE

Name: _____

As you contemplate your 2014-15 commitment pledge, please consider the following:

- 1) Each and every TBT household is asked to make a self-determined, financial commitment (pledge) to enable our synagogue to continue its important role in our lives and in our community.
- 2) Recognition will be given to all congregants who make their pledge at the Sustainer, Life, Strength, Pillars, or Lions levels.

3) 2014-15 PLEDGE CATEGORIES

חברים (<i>Haverim</i>) FRIENDS	תומכים (<i>Tomchim</i>) SUSTAINERS	חי (<i>Chai</i>) LIFE	כה (<i>Koach</i>) STRENGTH	עמודים (<i>Amudim</i>) PILLARS	אריות (<i>Arayot</i>) LIONS
An amount you choose	\$1,545	\$360 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i>	\$720 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i>	\$1,440 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i>	\$2,880 <i>above</i> <i>Tomchim</i>
		\$1,905	\$2,265	\$2,985	\$4,425

In support of Temple Beth Tzedek, I commit to an annual pledge of:

\$ _____ *Enter your pledge on this line*

Please bill/invoice my pledge: Monthly Quarterly Annually

Please check the appropriate box

(See next page for more on payment options)

SIGNATURE: _____ EMAIL: _____

_____ Please initial if you do **not** want your name to be recognized in any listing of Giving Categories.

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by mail to Temple Beth Tzedek, 621 Getzville Rd., Amherst, NY 14226
or by fax to 716-835-6154 or by email to office@btzbuffalo.org**

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EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) – Debit from your checking account. If you choose this option, please attach a blank voided check to this form.

OR

MasterCard Visa Discover

Name as it appears on credit card _____

Credit Card number _____

Expiration Date _____

Security Code* _____ (*Three digit code on back of card)

Please include credit card information even if you have previously placed a credit card on file with the office.

I authorize Temple Beth Tzedek to process electronic membership pledge payments and other charges as they arise in accordance with the information I've provided on this form.

I authorize Temple Beth Tzedek to process electronic membership pledge payments (only) in accordance with the information I've provided on this form.

Note: Choosing to permit use of your electronic payment information for all charges (the first choice) will permit you to put event fees, donations, etc. on your account. This is the default option if you fail to indicate a preference. Otherwise, you will have to pay for these charges in advance by cash or check.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

March 21, 2014

[Inside address]

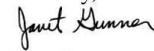
Dear [],

As we near the successful completion of the first fiscal year of our new **Membership Pledge System**, I would like to thank you again for your 2013-2014 membership pledge, underscoring your dedication to our sacred community. I am writing to ask for your generous membership pledge this year, too. As you know, our transformative pledge approach removes financial barriers to synagogue membership and promotes a positive, elevated feeling about financial giving. We seek to ensure the strength and vitality of our synagogue and Conservative Judaism in the Buffalo area. We are one of the first Conservative synagogues in the United States to implement this program. We know we can continue to count on you for its success. Here are some of the particulars of this system:

- Beginning June 1, 2013, Temple Beth Tzedek stopped using a structured dues system. Instead, we offer the Membership Pledge System. You select the amount of money you can afford to invest in Temple Beth Tzedek for the year. As a guide, our synagogue will be able to meet its annual budget obligations if every family-member unit pledges \$2060 and every single-member unit pledges \$1545. A pledge at one of these levels is referred to as a "Sustaining Pledge."
- We continue to have honor categories for elevated levels of giving. We need as many members as possible to pledge at one of these higher levels because there are many members who are not financially able to make a sustaining pledge. We are confident we all recognize that we should make a sustaining pledge or higher if we can afford it. Only through our constancy of support and spirit of generosity will we ensure that our sacred community will be here for this generation and future generations.
- Members who do not return the 2014-15 Membership Pledge form by April 4, 2014 will have their annual pledge entered at 3% over last year's pledge amount.
- This year we are introducing new electronic payment options to make it easier to pay your membership pledge. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of the EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) option to debit payments directly from your checking account. Credit card payments are available as well. Either of these options will improve synagogue cash flow and reduce administrative overhead.
- As a safeguard, the Board has reserved the right to revert to the old dues system in the event that pledges do not achieve a level that would allow our synagogue to meet its financial obligations.

Please return the Membership Pledge Form and Membership Payment Options form by April 4th. Please call the office if you have any questions. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,



Janet Gunner
President



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