

Dear Friends,

Today is Tu B'Shvat, a “New Year” for the trees and the first sign of spring, warmer weather and more opportunities to spend time outdoors. Here in New York it comes on the coldest day of the winter so far - a timely reminder that better days are G-d willing ahead.

Our Medical Advisory Team met last night to review our current practices in light of the best medical and scientific information currently available about vaccines, current infection and hospitalization rates in the Bronx as well as city and statewide and the potential impact of the more contagious variants of the Covid-19 virus in the near future.

The good news is that the vaccines are coming, even if the rollout is slower than we hoped. Looking ahead - in a few more weeks the coldest weather will be behind us, and we will be able to make better use of the Bayit’s outdoor spaces. The additional good news is that as a community we have been very compliant with our in-person tefillah guidelines, which makes continuation of in-person tefillah possible. Our task as we head into February is to make sure that we continue to operate as safely as possible.

In that spirit and following the recommendations of the Medical Advisory Team, we are making a few adjustments to our in-person tefillot for the upcoming short term, to be revisited as things hopefully continue to improve:

- Capacity at indoor tefillot will be reduced from 25 pods to 15 pods on each side of the mechitzah so that we can increase the physical distancing between each pod. We will ensure that there is a tefillah option for all who plan to attend.
- Improved facial coverings will be required.\* Options include:
  - N95 or KN95 masks
  - A mask plus a face shield
  - A double cloth mask with a filter (but no vent)
- The registration form has been updated to emphasize attendees’ responsibility to notify a clergy team member or Richard if they test positive within 7 days after attending a tefillah at the Bayit. Please be vigilant about this notification responsibility.
- We continue to welcome children to attend. They must remain seated in the pod with a parent for the duration of the service.

Our team will continue to meet regularly and adjust our practices as the situation evolves.

With best wishes for your health and wellbeing,

Rav Steven Exler  
Gillian Steinberg  
Richard Langer

\*The Bayit will be purchasing a supply of these items for those who attend tefillah. While we encourage you to wear these enhanced face coverings if you have them, we will not be enforcing this requirement until we can provide the appropriate masks.