



March 12th, 2020 / 16 Adar 5780

Dear Judea Reform Congregants,

In this rapidly shifting COVID-19 situation, we wanted to share with you important information about measures we are taking at Judea Reform. Starting today, **we are suspending all Judea Reform in-person gatherings** (e.g., worship, Torah study, Religious School, meetings, events, etc.) **over the next two weeks**. We will reevaluate this decision on a weekly basis based on the facts as they evolve.

We make this decision recognizing that the synagogue is called a *Beit Knesset*, “a house of gathering.” We are in the business of bringing people together, an act that our tradition regards as a mitzvah. Telling our community to maintain physical distance from each other is very difficult. However, there is no act in Judaism that exceeds the obligation to preserve life, and it is our ultimate obligation to do whatever we can to slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent our healthcare system from being overwhelmed.

As we limit our physical gatherings, we are fully committed to maintaining our spiritual wellness, individually and as a community. In this moment this will require activating the “Reform” in Reform Judaism and modifying how we gather, how we pray, how we learn, and how we affirm holiness.

What will this mean for all activities at Judea Reform through March 26rd?

SHABBAT SERVICES: Our worship will take place [online](#) . We will use the online tools we have to light Shabbat candles, pray, say Kaddish, and learn with Rabbi Soffer. Many thanks for the support of the Daniel Weiss Fund for making this livestreaming possible. We invite you to plug into our communal moments.

BUILDING CLOSURE: Judea Reform’s building will be closed to the public starting this evening. Our staff are using their time to deep clean our facilities, prepare to run the functions of the synagogues in this new environment, implement remote communication technology, and

determine further next steps for the safety and health of all within our community. Please demonstrate patience and appreciation for our professional team.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL: Religious School will be cancelled this Sunday, March 15th. We are preparing to move to online learning. More information is forthcoming from Rena Fraade.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & LEAD JRC: We will make available teleconferencing technology (Zoom) to gather virtually for those scheduled meetings (Finance, Nominating, Membership, etc.) and LEAD JRC.

For this week, the following will be cancelled:

Torah Study

Darchei Mitzvah

Meditation

Kabbalat Torah

Saturday Shabbat Services

Social Action Sunday

Books & Bagels

MahJong

PASSOVER SEDER SESSIONS - Rabbi Soffer is working to create a "virtual" version of these sessions. Details will be posted on our website and Facebook in the coming days.

LIFECYCLE EVENTS: At this time and for the near future, **all lifecycle events will continue**, including bar/bat mitzvahs, weddings, and funerals. We will work with each family to discuss their options.

We want you to know that as we continue making decisions regarding how we organize (and reorganize), we do so with constant appreciation for the resilience of our community and in communication with our campus and community partners. As a sacred community we encourage all of our members to cultivate compassion and patience with one another. There is much we do not know yet. The three of us are working to meet the needs of our community members in the safest ways possible. We will continue to communicate regularly via email and encourage you to check our website and Facebook page for updates from us.

Livracha ul'shalom - with prayers for wholeness,

Rabbi Matt Soffer

Ziva Raney, President

Emily Young, Executive Director (Interim)