



First Steps Toward the In-Person Gathering and Reopening of our Temple Or Rishon (TOR) Campus



A message from the Medical Advisory Team

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If you have ever taken on the responsibility of someone else's health and safety, you will fully understand and appreciate that medical decisions and facts cannot be swayed by social influences. In our recommendations we must be thorough in our fact finding, act with honesty, integrity and with the greatest concern for every last member of our community.

While we are thankful for all of the good news at the national and state level in recent days and weeks, we must stay alert to all of the information available to us. The finer points and details of local epidemiological data and vaccine efficacy are routinely part of our discussions. We are all dedicated to reviewing the latest information, which is often not always shared publicly in the general media.

Our medical team is working hand-in-hand with our leadership to see beyond the rhetoric and carefully analyze all medical facts available to our profession. Together, we have provided what we believe to be the safest path forward for our TOR family. Given how dynamic the information is, we review and revise our recommendations regularly.

We take our responsibility with the utmost seriousness and advise according to the same principles we are using for our own families and loved ones. We are you and you are us!

While what we recommend oftentimes does not necessarily coincide with what you hear or read, we have a duty by our teachings of Torah to preserve life and ensure each and every member of our community is included. As has been throughout this whole pandemic, our priority remains OUR TOR FAMILY'S HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our survey. The information received was incredibly helpful for us to create our re-gathering plan.

This action plan marks the beginning of the process of reintroducing in-person gathering at Temple Or Rishon (TOR). Most significant is the fact that this plan relies heavily on a high rate of vaccination in our community. **Your TOR leadership strongly encourages everyone to be vaccinated. Not only for ourselves, but out of a deep sense that we are also responsible for the health and safety of each other.**



Part One: This Moment

As the rate of vaccination increases, guidance from public health scientists and community leaders is trending towards reopenings, reduced social distancing, increased social gatherings, and fewer mask requirements. These changes in guidance are leading to opportunities for the TOR community to begin gathering in person again. Yet, as the potential for gathering increases, so do questions about what is safe, prudent, and inclusive.

Even as we consider recent guidance from public health scientists suggesting that masks are no longer required in many situations for those who are fully vaccinated, they also have much to say about the risks that are still present, especially for seniors, those with ongoing health concerns, and for children and others who have yet to be vaccinated.

With all this in mind, the leadership of TOR (Board of Trustees and professional staff), with input and guidance from many health professionals among our membership, understands that we must begin to find ways to gather as safely and inclusively as possible.



Part Two: Balancing Our Desire to Gather with Other Considerations

A - The past 15 months have been a journey. The TOR/Tahoe collaboration has allowed for engagement, prayer, community and learning in ways we never thought possible. What we have experienced in our online community has emerged as a model to others around the world. What started as a response to the pandemic will help us to transition forward and emerge into a “new reality” over the coming months. Whatever our path forward, the collaboration is sure to evolve in exciting and innovative ways.

As we begin to create opportunities for our TOR community to gather in person, the collaboration will remain, carrying us through with Shabbat services, expansive Elul programming and a portion of our High Holy Day experience. An updated plan will be shared in August for the High Holy Days.

B - This year has been enormously taxing on Rabbi Rabishaw, Mary Frank and Erev Cantor Ben. As we look to start gathering in person, we are mindful that our staff needs to take some time for rest and renewal before we begin creating and implementing much needed and much desired opportunities to gather.



Part Three: And Still, Now is the Time to Start Gathering

Our TOR health professionals are guiding us to begin with small group outdoor activities. With the understanding that the situation remains fluid (meaning you can expect us to follow up with updates as the situation evolves), for now the Board of Trustees and professional staff agree that we can start by implementing the following:

1. Effective June 15, small self-organized groups up to 15 people can meet under a tent in the newly created courtyard on the north side of the sanctuary, or at the picnic tables behind the sanctuary. These gatherings must be scheduled through the Temple office and must follow guidelines for safe gathering.

2. Beginning in August, and the start of Elul (the Hebrew month preceding Rosh Hashanah), TOR will offer a robust schedule of programming that will include outdoor in-person learning, Havdalah observances, and other TOR gathering opportunities. Additionally, there will continue to be abundant programming in the TOR/Tahoe virtual collaborative space.

3. Shabbat services will continue in the familiar virtual format at least through the High Holy Days, with new information regarding in-person attendance provided in August.

4. High Holy Day services will reflect a healthy blend of outdoor gatherings (e.g., Tashlich, 2nd Day Rosh Hashanah), services exclusively for our TOR community, as well as a selection of services in our TOR/Tahoe collaborative space. Specific information regarding the High Holy Days will be shared at the beginning of August.

Looking Towards Religious School in the Fall

As we look to the fall and the start of a new year of religious school, the TOR leadership and health professionals are working hard to make it possible for our children to gather in classrooms and other spaces during the next academic year. We have every expectation religious school will take place in person. Details will be provided to school families as the plan is finalized.

We are well aware of the opportunity that this singular moment offers our community and that complex questions still remain. We are committed to getting back to a “new sense of normalcy,” and will continue to be guided by Jewish values that require us to preserve life and strive toward inclusivity. **In August, we will be able to provide more concrete information regarding indoor possibilities for future Shabbat services, religious education, and the High Holy Days.** The pandemic has given us many new challenges that we have not only overcome but has allowed us to grow and come out of it as a more vibrant, inclusive, and a more dynamic part of the Jewish community. We thank you for remaining engaged in the TOR community and for your patience and understanding of the care we are taking to ensure the safety, health, and comfort of all our community members

We have not only
SURVIVED
as a community, we have
THRIVED