

Beth Shalom Re-Opening – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

As of 6/7/20

Q: What do we know about coronavirus and Covid-19?

A: This is a contagious disease – **COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person.** Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading easily and sustainably between people:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

The virus may be spread in other ways – It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by **touching a surface or object that has the virus on it** and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is NOT thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about how this virus spreads.

Even after reopening, we encourage people in high risk groups (e.g. 65 & older or pre-existing medical conditions) or those who live or work with high risk individuals, continue to shelter at home and not attend live events at the temple for now.

While outdoor activities also have risks, they appear substantially less than enclosed spaces, subject to appropriate precautions, including masks and social distancing.

These considerations guide us as we consider when and how to reopen.

Q: What is the best way to protect myself and others?

A: The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. You can take steps to slow the spread. Remember the 3 “W’s” (Wear, Wait and Wash):

- **Wear** a mask – Cover mouth and nose with a [cloth face covering](#) when around others.
- **Wait** 6 feet apart – [Maintain good social distance](#) (about 6 feet). This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- **Wash your hands** – often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- [Routinely clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces.

Please refer to the following links for more information and current updates:

- CDC Coronavirus site: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- NC DHHS Coronavirus site: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/>

Q: When will Beth Shalom re-open?

A: Our plan is to reopen gradually and in phases, based on expected levels of risk, abilities to mitigate that risk, and evolving conditions, both in the larger community and specifically within Beth Shalom. ***Note that any dates shown are best case scenarios, they may slip to later.***

Support for online streaming of Shabbat services, Tanakh Talks, and other programs will continue even after we reopen, for the foreseeable future.

Timeline for Reopening – Part I (timeline is subject to change based on guidance from CDC, NC Dept. of Health & Human Services, URJ and the Jewish Federation Medical Advisory Committee, amongst others):

- **June:** Start with outdoor activities with low-risk populations – Tot Shabbats in Amphitheatre, teen events, etc. Transmission risks are lower outdoors than indoors.
 - June 14: A Jr. BeShTY activity in the parking lot is scheduled
 - Date TBD: Rabbi is looking to schedule an outdoor Tot or Family shabbat soon
- **July:** IF and as the situation improves and once NC enters Phase 3 of state reopening restrictions, Friday Night Services may resume in July at temple with limited capacity. Online access will continue.
- **August:** Modified B'nei Mitzvah Services (subject to improvements and NC Phase 3)

Additional precautions during this phase:

- All of these activities will be subject to social distancing and face mask requirements
- Capacity will be limited.
- No Onegs or sharing of food.
- No sharing of Kippot, Tallit or Siddurs
- ***Strongly recommend that people in high risk categories, or people who are around high risk individuals continue to shelter at home and NOT come to in person activities***
- We will continue to offer video streaming for the indoor services so people can participate remotely.

Q: Will religious school reopen this fall?

A: Religious School Director Lynn Calnek and our School Committee are evaluating options; their decision-making process will be guided by WCPSS, CDC, NCDHHS, URJ and experience from other temples, as well as how the pandemic evolves in the coming months.

Due to the complexity of religious school and the number of students enrolled in religious school, we do not have a definitive answer for this question yet.

Q: Will High Holidays services be held in person at the temple?

A: The High Holidays Team, along with Rabbi Edery; Lynn Calnek; Judy Hodgins and the Ritual Committee; and Barnaby Court and the A/V Committee, are beginning discussions regarding different plans and options for our High Holidays services, including livestreaming.

Our High Holidays services are complex to coordinate in normal times, as they attract hundreds of people. Whether we can hold them in person safely this year will depend on several factors, and we do not have a definitive answer for this question yet. However, it is unlikely that they will remain the same as past years, anticipate some changes, the degree to which remains unknown at this time.

Our temple leadership and volunteers are working through contingency plans around both issues – we will announce updates as the situation evolves.

Q: What about other activities and events?

A: The following events and activities will NOT resume in-person until the Covid situation improves - updates will be announced as the situation evolves:

- Tanakh Talks & Book Club will continue to be held via Zoom (due to the high risk demographics of majority of participants)
- Onegs and food sharing at temple
- Meetings will continue to be remote or held offsite
- Rentals & Other Events

All of the above will be reviewed and adjusted as we receive more information.

Q: I am not comfortable returning to the temple for in-person activities. Will I still be able to participate online?

A: Yes. Friday night Shabbat services, Tanakh talks, and some other events will continue via Zoom. Committee meetings will also continue remotely or off-site.

Barnaby and the A/V committee have been working with the Rabbi and leadership team to continue to enhance the sound quality of our online services. This has required the acquisition of some additional equipment. If you would like to donate to the A/V fund, we encourage you to do so and appreciate your consideration.

Q: Who do I contact if I'm having issues accessing online services or events?

A: Please contact Shana Lieberman via Office@bethshalomnc.org

Q: Who and what are high risk groups and individuals?

A: High risk groups for complications and more severe reactions to the disease include:

- those 65 & older, and/or:
- people with pre-existing conditions, such as asthma/COPD, diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, immunosuppressive disorders/drugs, and those with elevated BMI's (e.g. overweight or obese).

If you are considered high risk, ***we recommend that you take extra care and continue to shelter at home.*** However, coronavirus is highly contagious and ***easily transmittable to everyone.*** So if you live with or work with people from high-risk groups, ***we also recommend that you take extra care and continue to shelter at home.***

Q: What new precautions will Beth Shalom implement for in-person events?

A: The health and safety of our congregants is our primary concern. With that in mind, the following precautions will be implemented for all in-person events:

- ***Requiring masks for congregants attending events at Beth Shalom - both indoor and outdoor***
 - Exceptions only for service leaders on the Bimah
 - If you cannot wear a mask for a medical reason, we encourage you to participate in the services online.
- Requiring social distancing at all in-person events

- Blocking off parts of the building not being used
- Restricting the use of water fountains
 - Due to this restriction, we will temporarily allow water bottles WITH LIDS into the sanctuary.
- Limiting the number of people in the bathrooms at one time.
- Providing hand sanitizing stations at entrances and other locations.
- Creating and implementing updated cleaning protocols
 - Regularly disinfecting and sanitizing high touch surfaces such as door handles, sink and toilet handles.
 - New medical grade surface sanitizer solutions will be used doing normal cleaning as well as intermittently during events onsite.
 - Implementing extra cleaning during back-to-back activities such as Friday night services and Saturday morning B'nei Mitzvah services.

Note: Specific operating and cleaning protocols for resumption of both Religious School and/or High Holiday Services will be determined as part of the evaluation of when and how those activities resume; details will be included in the updates for those activities.

Questions re: cleaning and protocols? Please contact Michael Marino via Facilities@bethshalomnc.org

Q: Will the temple be providing face masks?

A: We ask that everyone bring their own face mask to temple events. We will have a ***limited*** number of face masks for those who do not; however, there are no guarantees that we have enough when you arrive. Remember – you can't participate in person without a face mask.

Q: Will I have to provide my own Kippah or Tallit?

A: Yes. We are storing away the shared kippahs, tallit and siddurs in order to minimize touching/sharing of surfaces for the foreseeable future.

Q. Who is monitoring the situation and making these decisions?

A. Representatives from the Health & Wellness Team, Safety, Facilities, Admin, A/V, staff and the Board have been monitoring the situation with the pandemic and evaluating when and how to safely resume in-person Temple activities.

We will be cautious as we re-open. We will make decisions about how and when to reopen based on the most current information, guidance and updates from the CDC, NC DHHS, the local Jewish Federation's Medical Team and the Union for Reform Judaism, which has a variety of resources available and is helping congregations throughout the country to plan for High Holidays, reopening, and more.

Above all, we will do all we can to minimize the risk to our people by social distancing, requiring face masks be worn, enhanced cleaning of high-touch surfaces, hand sanitizing stations, and continued restrictions on some activities.

We understand that even when we reopen the building, not everyone will feel comfortable participating at in-person events, due to the highly contagious nature of this disease. We encourage people in high risk groups to continue to shelter at home and not attend live events at the temple. At the end of the day, each person must decide what they are comfortable with. Your health and safety are our top priority.

Additional questions? Contact the Health and Wellness Team via Health@bethshalomnc.org or Toby Kennedy via Safety@bethshalomnc.org