

Service Announcement, 3rd July 2020

How we miss singing together at Kent House, and enjoying conversations, delicious food, and the occasional glass of wine at our often extraordinary kiddush-im! How proud, also, are we of the way the community has stepped up, connected and supported each other during these past months! As well as dramatically increasing the number of calls being made between members, and the help being offered, we have also been enjoying services on Zoom, on both Fridays and Saturdays. There have sometimes been even more people Zooming in than have previously come in person, and there has been a strong level of participation, as members read passages and lead the service - and, no doubt, you have been belting it out in your living room while on mute.

Although the Government has broadly suggested that places of worship can re-open from July 4th we, at Westminster Synagogue, will not be gathering for services at Kent House yet. This is because the constraints that we would have to operate under would not allow us to return to the experience we love; it would be one of a few people gathering together and being told not to sing by a prayer leader, possibly masked up - and yes, no kiddush! Also, the details of Government Guidelines continue to be fleshed out, and we are continuing to discuss with our friends and colleagues at Reform and Liberal Judaism how and when it is best to return. Our lay and professional leadership has had thorough and sensitive discussions up to this point, and will continue to do so; in the coming weeks you will hear more about the plans for High Holy Days too. For now we will continue to enjoy and grow the warmth that we have been cultivating by connecting online, and through other community initiatives.

Should you not be able to access Zoom at home, we are exploring having a Live Stream of the Zoom service playing in Kent House on Friday nights and Saturday mornings (subject to demand). If you would be interested in this option, please do contact the office on admin@westminstersynagogue.org, or call us on 020 7584 3953. This would be for those who are unable to connect at home and feel safe to travel to Kent House. Alternatively, if you have internet at home, but are not currently confident enough to use Zoom - please contact the events team on events@westminstersynagogue.org and we will be happy to help you through this. Finally, if you are interested in coming to Kent House for private prayer then contact the office on admin@westminstersynagogue.org, and we will try our best to make this happen for you.

We know that many of us miss being together in person, while still being proud of how our community has stepped up and grown in lock-down. Please do not hesitate to be in touch; our Rabbis and leaders will always endeavour to be there for you. Please find details below of all that you can join us for this weekend.

Shabbat Shalom,

David Connick, Senior Warden, and Rabbi Benji Stanley

