Dear PTS Community,

As you are undoubtedly aware, after a brief time in the Orange tier for COVID-19, San Mateo County is now back in the Red tier due to a rise in cases. While we are hopeful that the situation will not get worse, it is possible that we move to the more restrictive Purple tier, as is the case with most Bay Area counties and the state.

With the holiday season approaching these new developments are profoundly discouraging. We are being told to stay away from our extended families, to celebrate at home. We are tired and stressed from 8 months of quarantine. We will grieve the loss of that time with our families, but we must do what needs to be done to stay safe. This year we will stay apart so that, next year, our whole community can be together.

At PTS, the clergy, staff, Board of Trustees, and COVID Task Force are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation, and continually discussing how it affects us as a community. While our government is making decisions which balance public safety with economic security, as a caring community, our decisions about how to respond balance our desire to connect with one another with the Jewish moral obligation to keep our community safe. Because of this, we will continue to host Shabbat services, B’nai Mitzvah, Youth Education, and other meetings and gatherings virtually. Now and again, when we can do so safely outside, we will also host in-person holiday worship, such as our upcoming Hanukkah Concert and Candle Lighting.

Even in the middle of this difficult time, we are looking to the future. For example, we are actively making plans to hold small gatherings at PTS once we are in the Orange tier, albeit with strict safety measures in place. We are also working together to imagine future worship and programming that allows for different decisions about personal risk, even when the pandemic is behind us.

In the meantime, creativity knows no bounds. The Board of Trustees and staff are committed to continuing to find ways for congregants to celebrate, learn, and socialize together, even during this time. If you have any interesting ideas, please contact any one of us.
We look forward to seeing you throughout Hanukkah virtually and in person at these events:

**On Zoom:**

- Nightly Hanukkah Candle Lighting, 6pm nightly (except Shabbat) [more info…](#)
- Hanukkah Kabbalat Shabbat, 6:30pm [more info…](#)
- Hanukkah Painting Party on Thursday, December 10, 7-8:30 [more info…](#)

**In Person:**

- Hanukkah Drive-In Concert and Menorah Lighting on Sunday, December 13, 5-5:30pm. Space is limited. [RSVP here.](#)

While this has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging times for us, and for the world, we have remained strong, learned about our community and ourselves, and come together to support one another and remain connected.

Wishing you a happy Thanksgiving and Season of Light.

L’shalom,

Jon Herstein, President
Rabbi Dan Feder
Karen Wisialowski, Chief Community Officer

Dated November 25, 2020