

Dear friends,

July 24, 2020

We hope that this letter finds you and your family doing well and staying healthy.

This pandemic changed our lives in countless ways and has brought with it many challenges for all of us. Individually, as families, in our work and in our congregation we have all struggled to adapt, trying to keep life as normal as possible, while being careful to stay aware of the level of the coronavirus threat and take all necessary precautions.

The precautions we are all observing have taken a mental and emotional toll on all of us. At the same time, we know that they have saved lives. Balancing these needs, the High Holiday task force grappled with the question of whether we could hold any kind of indoor service for the holidays. We are grateful to the 430+ members who shared their thoughts through the recent HHD survey. We have studied your responses carefully. We appreciate the thoughtful suggestions that you made and are incorporating many of them into our plans as we move forward. From the survey we learned that a number of you indicated your desire to attend services in the building. We respect how strongly those individuals feel and we took that into account in our deliberations.

We also took into account the medical advice of the CDC, the Ohio State Department of Health, and the Cuyahoga County Board of Health as well as local experts and the trend in number of cases. At one point, the number of new Covid-19 cases per day in our county was dropping. That gave us hope that by September we could be back in the building. Unfortunately, given the spike now occurring in Cuyahoga County and Ohio, and projections for fall, this virus will continue to pose a serious threat for months to come. It is only by maintaining our vigilance that we can successfully protect ourselves and each other. With this in mind, and with a very heavy heart, the task force, clergy, and leadership have determined that it is not yet safe to open up the building for the Holidays.

The good news is that we have learned a lot from our online experience this spring and summer. We are confident we can create an online High Holiday experience that will be beautiful, moving, and uplifting. To accomplish that goal, we are making many enhancements to the online experience. Also, we will arrange for times to pick up (and for delivery, as needed) of mahzorim, so everyone can follow the service more comfortably from home.

We are also adding several special in-person experiences before Rosh Hashanah and between the New Year and Yom Kippur that will be outdoors with limited attendance and precautions observed. Please see the attachment and look for additional details as the holidays get closer.

We are sad that we had to make this choice, but we are excited about the many ways we can connect, worship, and celebrate creatively over the holidays. We hope that as you look over the accompanying list of enhancements and programs, you will share our excitement. We promise you that we will do everything that is possible to ensure that we all can enjoy the holidays. Watch for a mailing around mid-August that will contain all the details.

Wishing you a sweet New Year. Shanah Tovah.



Stephen Weiss
Senior Rabbi



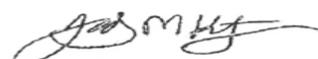
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