



HIGH HOLIDAYS TICKET LOTTERY SEAT ALLOCATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged every aspect of our lives, causing disruptions and inconveniences to our personal, family, and business pursuits. As a consequence, our ability to gather in person at the Merrick Jewish Centre for services and programs has been severely interrupted for several months. It is difficult to predict the conditions our country and community will face when the High Holidays, a time when our congregational family traditionally gathers at the synagogue in the greatest numbers, arrives in mid-September.

The health and safety of our congregation is paramount. Although we plan an enhanced-quality livestream of all services for our members during the High Holidays, we are also planning to conduct in-person services while observing physical distancing and other essential health guidelines as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and as required by the State of New York. Adhering to these guidelines has required us to significantly reduce seating in the Sanctuary to a small fraction of our usual capacity.

In addition to welcoming the congregation via livestream, it is our goal to be able to accommodate as many member families who wish to attend with the chance to participate in at least one in-person service during the High Holidays. To do this, we must implement policies and procedures that are necessary, but acknowledge they are as inconvenient as they are extraordinary. We must also maintain flexibility, as state and federal guidelines may change at any time.

We are also planning to bring additional aspects of these holy days to you in unique and engaging ways. Details on these events and activities will be forthcoming soon.

We are grateful for your patience and understanding during these trying times.

Next year, let us all be back together at the Merrick Jewish Centre.

IMPORTANT:

Based on current health and safety guidelines, we strongly discourage members from attending services in person if they are at increased risk for severe illness. The CDC has determined that older adults (age 65 and up) are at the highest risk, as are those with underlying medical conditions. We strongly

recommend these members join services via livestream only. We regret that we will also be unable to admit children under Bar/Bat Mitzvah age to the synagogue for these services.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR HIGH HOLY DAY SERVICES

We are planning to modify most of our traditional High Holiday services to accommodate shorter services on each day and additional services on Rosh Hashanah. However, limitations required for physical distancing in all areas of the Sanctuary, Simcha Room, and Ballroom will still seriously reduce the total number of seats available.

All services will be held in the Sanctuary, with additional seating in the Ballroom and Simcha Room. There will be no services in the Center for Jewish Life or in the classrooms.

All in attendance will be required to wear a facemask while on synagogue property, including on the sidewalks adjacent to the building and in the parking lot. All members will be required to bring with them a completed and signed a Health Screening Form that will be provided with the High Holiday tickets. Everyone will undergo a temperature screening before entering the synagogue.

As outlined in the section below, all seats will be assigned in advance, with services and seat locations determined by a random-draw lottery. We will be unable to accommodate requests for specific seating locations this year. It is also very possible that with even a greatly reduced demand for tickets, we will exceed the available supply of seats. We regret in advance if we cannot fulfill your request.

Seating will be pre-arranged in the sanctuary in pairs and singles, with a minimum radial distance of 6-feet between occupied seats. Member families participating in the lottery will be allocated a maximum of two tickets to a single service during Rosh Hashanah and/or Yom Kippur (it is our hope to make two tickets available for both holidays to as many members as we can). Individual members will be allocated a single ticket. Members may request one or two additional tickets to the service they will attend if there is availability after the initial lottery process has concluded.

Please do not come to the synagogue if you do not receive a confirmed reservation for a specific service. Unfortunately, we will not be able to accommodate you.

Under these highly unusual circumstances, there will be no payment required for tickets this year.

SEATING ALLOCATION PROCESS

It is our goal to provide members interested in attending services in-person with an equal chance of access. Our process is therefore based on a random lottery system.

1. **Please complete and submit the seat request form by August 10.** Forms cannot be processed after the lottery has been conducted. **Only one form will be accepted per member family.**
2. If you do not wish to attend services at the Merrick Jewish Centre, please be sure to let us know by checking the appropriate box and then submit the form so we do not have to contact you to confirm your intentions.

3. If you do wish to attend a service in person, please indicate your order of preference for the four Rosh Hashanah services (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th), and repeat the process again for the three Yom Kippur services (1st, 2nd, and 3rd).
4. If you leave a service blank (that is, if you do not indicate it is a first, second, third or fourth preference), it will indicate that you are not interested in attending that particular service under any circumstances. This may, however, reduce your overall chance to attend a service on the holidays.
5. A random lottery will be held to determine the order in which forms will be fulfilled. Requests for Yom Kippur services will be filled first in the order the forms were selected. Then, requests for Rosh Hashanah services will be filled in the reverse order. In this way, requests that cannot be fulfilled, or are fulfilled late in the lottery process for one holiday will be fulfilled early for the other.
6. First preferences will be filled first, from the front of the sanctuary to the back, then into the Ballroom and Simcha Room. When a particular service has been filled to capacity, second preferences will be filled next, then third, and so on. This process will continue until the lottery has been completed, or the supply of available seats has been exhausted. It is possible that the supply of seats will exceed the demand.
7. Unfortunately, we are unable to honor requests for specific seat locations (e.g., pew seats, Simcha Room, ballroom).
8. Members will be limited to receiving one ticket if they are a single member, or two tickets if they are a family member. Members may request one or two more seats for additional family members at the same service, but if additional seat requests can be fulfilled at all, it will be only after the lottery has concluded. The accommodation of additional seating requests will be fulfilled in the same order as the lottery draw. As all seating will be pre-arranged in physically-separated pairs and singles, additional seats will be in another area of the sanctuary from the initial allocation.
8. You will receive tickets confirming your service(s) and seating arrangement(s) approximately 2 weeks prior to the holidays. You will also receive health screening forms for each ticket to be used for each individual attending on Rosh Hashanah and one for Yom Kippur, which must be filled out and signed before arriving at the Merrick Jewish Centre. You must hand the completed form to the security guard at the synagogue entrance. You are encouraged to complete the health screening form before yontif.
9. Please come to the synagogue only for the services for which you have been confirmed, as only those with the correct tickets and completed health screening forms will be admitted to the synagogue.
10. Ushers will assist in directing members to finding their assigned seats.
11. If you later decide you cannot attend an assigned service, they are encouraged to notify the Ticket Committee at tickets@merrickjc.org no later than three days before so we can make their seats available to another member.

Please email questions regarding the High Holy Days seating allocation process to: tickets@merrickjc.org.

We greatly appreciate your kind understanding during these most challenging times.