

Dear Friends,

Over the past several months, we have been presented with many unique challenges at BTBJ. As I hope you can appreciate, the pandemic and accompanying uncertainty has necessitated extensive discussion and planning for Jewish communities around the world to face those challenges. However, along with those challenges were also opportunities for our BTBJ family to gather - albeit virtually - to attend minyan and services, celebrate simchas, study Torah, participate in cooking classes and to support each other during difficult times.

The “Back to BTBJ Task Force” has been meeting regularly to address a vast range of ritual, programming, educational, and building issues, as well as financial, fundraising, membership, and communication matters. The Task Force has worked extensively with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), as well as other Jewish leaders, medical professionals, lawyers, facilities and financial experts, to create a strategic and tactical plan to allow for the safe return to BTBJ. In addition, the Task Force has received expert guidance in synagogue best practices to fully understand and appreciate how we can protect the health, safety and welfare of our entire community, from children to staff, clergy and member families.

Significantly, we have also been guided by our Jewish values, which are critically important during these challenging times and include:

Pikuah Nefesh – “Safeguarding Life” – This is a bedrock principle of Jewish law and supersedes most other obligations or mitzvot. To that end, we are doing what we can to ensure that any steps towards restoring physical proximity place preserving life first and foremost.

Sakanat Nefeshot – “Endangering Life” – Congregants, staff, and clergy should not be placed in positions where they will be unduly endangering their own lives or the lives of their families due to pressure to restore activities as well as our own personal interest to see each other again.

Kol Yisrael Areivim Zeh Bazeh – “We Are Responsible for One Another” – It is our job to look out for the mental and physical health and safety of one another, while at the same time sustaining our community.

Over the upcoming weeks, we will share many communications about our plans for the upcoming year and our continued efforts to abide by government and expert guidelines as we strive to balance public health concerns with the needs of our sacred community and congregational family. We are enclosing, with this letter, an overview of our **Back to BTBJ Protocols**. Please be sure to read it carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to Valarie Hurwitz at vhurwitz@btbj.org.

Enclosed, you will also find an Acknowledgement, Waiver and Release Form. We are asking that all adult members of the household (18+ over) sign the document and that you

include the names of all minor children as well and return it to the synagogue office by August 21, 2020 (return envelope enclosed) or visit our website at www.btbj.org to fill out the form electronically and email them to office@btbj.org

We recognize that some congregants may take advantage of our all-virtual opportunities for services, events and classroom instruction while others may choose our hybrid versions. Regardless of the options you and your family select, we are respectfully asking all of our congregants to sign our acknowledgement, waiver and release form.

This is **She'at Hadehak**, an “extraordinary moment” in our lives. Jewish life has always adjusted in times of emergency and crisis. While we do not know how long these extraordinary moments will last, we do know that, as a community, we will continue to be mindful of our need to be flexible in our expectations, operations, and in Jewish practice informed by our traditions and commitment to all members of our community.

Sincerely,

Michael Drossner, President

Alana Dunoff & Richard Gersh, Back to BTBJ Task Force Co-chairs