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To the Congregants of Ohav Emeth:

It is my honor and pleasure to serve as your president; a privilege I am truly grateful and humbled by.

I wanted to take this opportunity to let everyone know that in approximately one month the tent in our parking lot will be taken down. I wanted to give those who are affected by this as much notice as possible as I know this will have a major impact on your davening for the foreseeable future. This is not a decision made lightly but rather was made in conjunction with and after consultation with numerous people in the shul and after weighing all the options and potential consequences. Primarily we are temporarily removing the tent for three reasons:

First: the tent was not designed to withstand strong winds, heavy rains, not to mention snow and sleet. There was a major financial commitment made when purchasing the tent and l'YH we hope to use the tent for many years to come for Simchos such as outdoor kiddushes, weddings and other social gatherings. Running the risk of damage to the tent which will force us to expend considerable financial resources is not something we are in a position to do and based on the funds we have already expended we should not have to raise and/or spend additional money to purchase a tent for a second time.

Second: strong winds and other inclement weather has at various times caused the light fixtures to shake and the mechitza to fall on more than one occasion, which adds to the risk that someone could get hurt which is simply not a risk that I can justify taking no matter how much we may want to continue having outdoor minyanim. There is also the concern that rather than our taking the tent down on our own terms we run the risk of it being forced down by factors well beyond our control.

Third: now that it gets dark earlier and as we head towards the winter season, undoubtedly less people will attend outdoor minyanim. Even some members of the shul who primarily daven in the tent have indicated that once the temperature gets significantly colder, they will opt not to continue davening in the tent.

I am very mindful of the fact and it troubles me deeply that there are people among us who will be unable to daven with us over the next few months. I understand that this will cause much pain and anguish and to be clear no matter how many minyanim we have, at the end of the day we are one Kehilla, so we all share in their pain. Having said that, the risks of keeping the tent up both in terms of physical damage to the tent and certainly to any people, not to mention the monetary costs involved, simply warrants that it be taken down at least until after the winter season.

In the interim, there is also nothing preventing a minyan from being held in the parking lot without a tent if the elements allow for that possibility. It is also my hope and expectation that the tent will be put back up sometime in the early spring, hopefully only to be used for Simchos but if G-d forbid we still need to use it on a daily basis as a result of COVID, all our members will have full access to it.

I hope that in the future when you hear from me it will only be to celebrate happy events and in the interim let me wish everyone continued health and safety as we look to get past this very challenging time.

Thank you

Steven Y. Steinhart
 President

