Dear Families of Or Atid,

We are here to update you on our plans for High Holidays 5781.

After much consideration, the Congregation Or Atid Board of Directors has decided that our High Holiday services will be led remotely this fall. In light of the current circumstances, we will take this unique opportunity to have meaningful, albeit different, experiences by providing a variety of ways for us to come together and celebrate the holidays.

While the specifics of our holiday observances are still being shaped, we are excited about the creative possibilities and energy this situation presents. We will likely use recorded and live-streamed elements including singing and reflection; resources for home practice and celebration; and, if deemed safe, a series of small outdoor gatherings for rituals like the blowing of the shofar and Tashlikh. We have assembled a design team to work on all of these elements, including offerings for children and families. This High Holiday Planning Committee, Co-Chaired by Mark Krasnow and Neal Yudkoff, is comprised of members who represent various ages, stages, and experiences within our congregation. This talented group has already begun working with the sole goal of orchestrating a safe and meaningful High Holiday experience for all members of Congregation Or Atid.

We did not arrive at this decision lightly. Thank you to our Re-Opening Task Force who considered the guidance and requirements from the CDC and the State of Massachusetts about what it might take to gather safely. There is no way to predict now what will be permitted or advisable in September. However, it is reasonable to assume that large, indoor gatherings with singing may be among the last things to return in the fall. We will continue to monitor local conditions as we plan, with the understanding that the situation may or may not continue to improve and become less restrictive.

We share your disappointment at the loss of the cherished in-person gathering for these central holidays. We will miss being together in the same room and the casual interactions which make this annual reunion of our community so special.

At the same time, we are excited by the opportunity to try something new and to engage more congregants actively in the month of Elul. Traditions begin somehow—perhaps we will discover something that will become a memorable feature of future holiday observances.

Throughout our long history as a people, our ability to adapt to adverse circumstances while holding on to what is most important, accounts for our enduring vitality and relevance. This situation will continue to test our community’s resilience, a test that we are confident that we can pass together.
We are attaching to this message a list of Questions and Answers which we hope will satisfy many of your curiosities. Please read through it and be in touch with any questions or further ideas about how, together, we will make this year’s High Holidays meaningful for everyone.

We look forward to joining together to make the coming year a *shanah yoteir tovah u-metukah* - an even better, sweet new year.

With wishes for peace and joy - *L'shalom u-l'simhah*,

Rabbi Louis Polisson  
Robin Wolk, President