

# **Congregation Shir Ami**

## **Staged Indoor Event Reopening Protocol**

### **Background**

These rules for access to the building and attendance at in-person indoor events are based on Austin-Travis County's COVID-19 risk-based guidelines and its associated Stages 1-5, as well as the latest CDC and Austin Public Health guidance. The risk-based guidelines are available at <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/covid-19-risk-based-guidelines>.

Austin-Travis County's COVID-19 Stages 1-5, used throughout this protocol, are based on key staging thresholds which are subject to change as additional information is received. While the primary indicator is new hospital admissions, additional indicators are also considered including the 7-day moving average of hospitalizations, number of patients in the ICU, ventilator usage, positivity rate, and the 7-day moving average of cases. All key indicators are aggregated in a dashboard webpage at

<https://austin.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/0ad7fa50ba504e73be9945ec2a7841cb>.

All hospitalization, ICU, and ventilator data, including the primary indicator of new hospital admissions are collected from the Austin-Round Rock, TX Metropolitan Statistical Area (Austin MSA), including Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties. Other key indicators are from data collected for the combined area of the City of Austin (any Austin address, no matter what county) and Travis County.

The Board of Trustees of Shir Ami will continue to monitor local conditions as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, and modify our protocols as necessary to ensure the safety of our staff and Congregation.

### **Metrics to Move Forward or Backward from Stage to Stage**

Data from the key indicator dashboard will be assessed each Sunday morning by a Reopening Protocol Committee (the Committee) appointed on an ad hoc basis by the Board President for the duration of the pandemic. If the Committee determines that a Stage change is warranted, a recommendation will be made to the President for approval. If the President approves such a Stage change, this information will be communicated immediately by email to the Board and Rabbi Reice, and will be communicated as soon as practical to the Congregation by the Communications/Marketing Committee through the Weekly Whisper or other electronic means. Movement to a new Stage, including in-person worship services to be held in the sanctuary, may necessitate a delay of up to 30 days in order to schedule security.

Moving **forward** to a less restrictive Stage will be based on Austin-Travis County moving to a lower numbered Stage.

Moving **backward** to a more restrictive Stage will be based on Austin-Travis County moving to a higher numbered Stage.

### **Rules for Attendance at Indoor In-person Activities Stages 3 and 2**

The following rules will be observed for all indoor in-person activities available during Stages 3 and 2, including worship services, religious school, meetings, and social events. Rules for Stage 1 are listed on a later page. All rules are subject to change based on then-current circumstances and evolving scientific understanding of the virus.

#### **Before you come:**

1. COVID-19 vaccination requirements are listed by age group below. Note that you are not fully vaccinated until two weeks after your final shot. If you are required to be vaccinated, and are not, please continue to attend our online events. As full FDA approval is granted by age groups not currently covered, this protocol will be updated to reflect new vaccine requirements.
  - a. Vaccination is required for all individuals 16 years of age and older. Individuals just turning 16 years of age are required to be vaccinated within 60 days after their birthday.
  - b. Now that the FDA has granted emergency use authorization (EUA), vaccination is strongly encouraged for individuals 5-15 years of age. Vaccination will be required for this age group within 60 days after the vaccine is fully approved by the FDA. After full approval by the FDA, individuals just turning 5 years of age are required to be vaccinated within 60 days after their birthday.
  - c. At this time, vaccination is not required for individuals under the age of 5.
2. Please stay home if you or a household member is not feeling well.
3. Pre-register for attendance at in-person worship services or events (except religious school) no later than 3 days prior to the service or event. The preregistration link will be available on the event calendar at the Shir Ami website.
4. Complete an Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability agreement at least 3 days prior to attendance at your first in-person worship service, religious school class, or event. This document is available on the SHIR AMI COVID-19 Information page on the Shir Ami website.

#### **Once you arrive:**

1. COVID-19 vaccination requirements are listed by age group above in the "Before you come" section.
2. Please return home if you or a household member is not feeling well.
3. Face masks are required for everyone age two and older, regardless of vaccination status, and must be worn properly over nose and mouth at all times for all indoor gatherings. Please see exceptions for the Rabbi and lay readers when on the bimah during worship services held during Stage 3, and exceptions for the Rabbi, lay readers, and the choir during Stage 2.
4. There will be green, yellow, and red wristbands that you can wear to indicate your comfort level in interacting with others in the community:
  - a. Green: "feel free to give me a hug or a handshake."
  - b. Yellow: "please ask first before initiating contact."

- c. Red: "please keep your distance and do not initiate any physical contact."
5. In general, please keep at least 3 feet apart from those around you.
  6. Bring your own tallit and/or kippah.
  7. Bring your own prayer book if you have one.
  8. Personal belongings shall not be left unattended at any time.
  9. There will be hand sanitizer available in the building, including entrance and exit points.
  10. Please sit where directed by signage or volunteers.

### **Austin-Travis County is in Stage 5 or Stage 4: No Indoor In-Person Activities**

1. All worship, programming and events will be via Zoom or another electronic platform as determined by the Board.
2. No staff, members or visitors will be allowed in the building, unless preapproved by the Board President.

### **Austin-Travis County is in Stage 3: Limited Access**

1. To the extent possible, all worship, programming and events held at the Shir Ami building will be made available via Zoom or another electronic platform as well as in-person as discussed below.
2. Rabbi Reice will lead in-person services from the Congregation Shir Ami sanctuary with limited attendance, capped at 45 people not including Rabbi Reice or volunteers.
3. Face masks are optional for Rabbi Reice and lay readers while speaking, chanting, or singing from the bimah during worship services.
4. Statement 3 above is the only exception to face mask requirements under this Stage.
5. The choir will be allowed to sing as a group during worship services, but will wear face masks and distance from one another and congregants to the greatest extent possible in limited space.
6. During worship services, the first row of seating nearest the bimah will be left vacant.
7. Religious school will be held in person at the Shir Ami building.
8. High-risk individuals are strongly encouraged to stay home.
9. No members or visitors will be allowed in the building without a prior reservation.
10. Staff may work onsite with approval of the Board President.
11. B'nai mitzvah candidates may have the option for a virtual or in-person service. In-person services will have an attendance cap of 15 people per family and 45 people total not including Rabbi Reice or volunteers.
12. Funerals, memorials, and weddings will be limited to 45 people in the sanctuary.
13. Events previously held in private homes such as Happy Bookers and Havdalah may be held in the Shir Ami building with capacity limits preapproved by the Board. There will be no food served at these events.
14. All meetings should be conducted virtually when possible. If an in-person meeting is necessary, it will be limited to 10 participants.

## **Austin-Travis County is in Stage 2: Increased Access**

1. To the extent possible, all worship, programming and events held at the Shir Ami building will be made available via Zoom or another electronic platform as well as in-person as discussed below.
2. Rabbi Reice will lead in-person services from the Congregation Shir Ami sanctuary with limited attendance, capped at 60 people not including Rabbi Reice or volunteers.
3. Face masks are optional for Rabbi Reice and lay readers while speaking, chanting, or singing from the bimah during worship services.
4. Face masks are optional for choir members while singing as a group during worship services, so long as the choir is distanced at least 10 feet from any non-choir participant.
5. Statements 3 and 4 above are the only exceptions to face mask requirements under this Stage.
6. During worship services, the first row of seating nearest the bimah will be left vacant.
7. Religious school will be held in person at the Shir Ami building.
8. High-risk individuals are strongly encouraged to stay home.
9. No members or visitors will be allowed in the building without a prior reservation.
10. Staff may work onsite with approval of the Board President.
11. B'nai mitzvah candidates may have the option for a virtual or in-person service. In-person services will have an attendance cap of 30 people per family and 60 people total not including Rabbi Reice or volunteers.
12. Funerals, memorials, and weddings will be limited to 60 people in the sanctuary.
13. Events previously held in private homes such as Happy Bookers and Havdalah may be held in the Shir Ami building or in private member homes with capacity limits based on location and preapproved by the Board. There will be no food served at these events.
14. Rabbi Reice may choose face-to-face pastoral and hospital visits following Austin-Travis County guidelines for safe visits.
15. All meetings should be conducted virtually when possible. If an in-person meeting is requested, the number of participants will be determined by the space provided.

## **Rules for Attendance at Indoor In-person Activities Stage 1**

The following rules will be observed for all indoor in-person activities available during Stage 1, including worship services, religious school, meetings, and social events. All rules are subject to change based on then-current circumstances and evolving scientific understanding of the virus.

### **Before you come:**

1. COVID-19 vaccination is strongly encouraged for all eligible individuals attending indoor in-person events.
2. Individuals 16 years of age and older who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated are encouraged to stay home and continue participating in online activities.
3. Please stay home if you or a household member is not feeling well.

### **Once you arrive:**

1. COVID-19 vaccination is strongly encouraged for all individuals attending indoor in-person events.
2. Please return home if you or a household member is not feeling well.
3. Face masks are optional for individuals who are fully vaccinated.
4. Face masks are required for individuals age two and older who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated, and must be worn properly over nose and mouth at all times for all indoor gatherings.
5. There will be green, yellow, and red wristbands that you can wear to indicate your comfort level in interacting with others in the community:
  - a. Green: "feel free to give me a hug or a handshake."
  - b. Yellow: "please ask first before initiating contact."
  - c. Red: "please keep your distance and do not initiate any physical contact."
6. In general, please keep at least 3 feet apart from those around you.
7. Personal belongings shall not be left unattended at any time.
8. There will be hand sanitizer available in the building, including entrance and exit points.
9. Please sit where directed by signage or volunteers.

## **Austin-Travis County is in Stage 1: In Person with Best Practices**

1. To the extent possible, all worship, programming and events held at the Shir Ami building will be made available via Zoom or another electronic platform as well as in-person as discussed below.
2. Rabbi Reice will lead in-person services from the Congregation Shir Ami sanctuary, with no capacity limitations other than those dictated by local ordinance.
3. Religious school will be held in person at the Shir Ami building.
4. Onegs and kiddush will be allowed with best practices in place for food handling as approved by the Board.
5. Lifecycle events may be held in the building, with no capacity limitations other than those dictated by local ordinance.
6. Receptions may be held in the building with best practices in place for food handling as approved by the Board.
7. Events previously held in private homes such as Happy Bookers and Havdalah may be held in the Shir Ami building or in private homes with capacity limits based on location and preapproved by the Board. Food service will be allowed with best practices in place for food handling as approved by the Board.