



TEMPLE
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July 1st, 2020
9 Tammuz 5780

Dear TBA Members and Community,

It has been a few weeks since my last letter, so I am writing to you today to fill you in on everything that has happened and what is being planned for the future, including Shabbat and the High Holidays. Before beginning, I want to thank Rabbi Malik and our recently formed task forces, the Scenario Task Force (STF) and the COVID Compliance & Operations Task Force (CCOTF). They have been working tirelessly to develop the programs and plans that are described in this letter.

Over the past few weeks, our virtual programs have been in full swing. Everyone is becoming a Zoom Master. It has been wonderful to see so many faces at daily minyan, Kabbalat Shabbat service, Havdalah, meetings, and adult education classes. For many people, these occasions also provide opportunities to socialize with congregants you haven't seen for awhile and to meet new people. Last week, the rabbi taught two classes to educate us about the Committee on Jewish Law & Standards' teshuvah on live streaming (video recording can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/4g-xFwz-fII>) and I have started a new ongoing series called "Cocktails and Conversations." Also featured on Zoom were the Sisterhood and Men's Club installations, the Board of Trustees installation, and Hebrew High School Graduation. So many events have taken place on Zoom that we sometimes had to arrange separate Zoom rooms to avoid overlap.

In case you are wondering: What is "Cocktails and Conversations"? It became obvious to me and to the rest of TBA's leadership team that many congregants are curious to hear about the latest news regarding TBA. These weekly sessions are my way of providing updates to the congregation, as well as to provide you with a forum to express your questions and concerns. Once a week, after evening minyan, the TBA Zoom room is open for your voices to be heard. So far, we have had three sessions and the feedback has been so valuable. Next week, our session will be offered on Tuesday, July 7th at 8:40 PM, immediately following 8:15 PM minyan. I invite everyone in our TBA community to join me!

Here are some updates about the TBA facility:

Updated Security System

Back in 2017, TBA received a security grant from Homeland Security. Over the past two years, the Security and Safety Committee has been working to implement the plan that is being funded by this grant. The first step of this process is almost complete. We have installed CCTV cameras inside and outside of the building, which will allow us to have better visibility of our grounds and building. The new security system also includes intercoms with built-in cameras at the office and school wing entrances. Over the next few months, we will be implementing additional measures to make the building even more secure.

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Plans for Resuming In-Person Services

In consideration of our return to in-person gatherings, we will be following the recommendations of the **STF and CCOTF**, which are developing an evolving plan for reopening based on:

1. **Health science.** We continue to learn more about transmission, protection, and safe gathering practices from public health specialists, including the CDC, who have offered both general and specific guidelines impacting religious and educational institutions
2. **Federal, NJ state, and local government regulations and guidelines.** We will adhere to all legal requirements pertaining to in-person gatherings. TBA will not adopt any practices less restrictive than the law allows, and even as the legality of gatherings become less restrictive, TBA will prioritize the health and wellness of our entire congregational family, with special concern for those who are most vulnerable.
3. **Jewish values, including Temple Beth Ahm's values and mission**
4. The TBA Preschool is being guided by the **federal and NJ state preschool licensing agencies.**

Plans for July and August

- ❖ All current virtual services will continue as-is, with at least one service offered every day of the week
- ❖ Shabbat morning, July 18th – *in-person service in the building
- ❖ Shabbat morning, August 1st – *in-person service in the buildings
- ❖ Shabbat morning August 15th – *in-person service **outdoors**
- ❖ On a Friday night in August (date TBD), we will offer live-streamed Kabbalat Shabbat services before candle-lighting
- ❖ The TBA Preschool has opened for a six-week summer program. Its first session was on Tuesday, June 30.

*A full description of health and safety precautions will be posted on the TBA website within the next few days. Shabbat morning services will be abbreviated and will be held from 10:00 AM-11:45 AM

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4-Pronged Plan for High Holidays 5781

- I. Virtual experiences BEFORE the holidays & during the 10 days of Teshuvah between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.** Details to follow in the coming weeks.
- II. In-person experiences BEFORE the holidays & during the 10 days of Teshuvah between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.** Details to follow in the coming weeks.
- III. In-person services ON the holidays with Rabbi Lisa Malik and Cantor Adi Wyner.** Services will be shortened (2½-3 hours instead of 4½ hours). Other details to follow.
- IV. Virtual services ON the holidays**

Depending on the state of the COVID crisis in New Jersey on August 15, a decision will be made as to which of the following courses of action will be pursued:

 - If COVID cases spike to 1/10,000 new COVID cases per day in the state of NJ, Rabbi Malik will consider this threshold to be “Sh’at Ha-D’chak” (extenuating circumstances of crisis proportions from a halachic perspective, thereby enabling the violation of Jewish law for a limited time period)
 - A) One service, led by Rabbi Malik and Cantor Wyner, will be held indoors (Sanctuary) and LIVE-STREAMED
 - B) Another service (consecutive), led by Rabbi Malik and Cantor Wyner, will be held outdoors (if permitted by NJ law).
 - Otherwise (if prevalence of new cases of COVID in NJ does not increase from 1/33,000 on June 23 to 1/10,000 on August 15)
 - A) One service, led by Rabbi Malik and Cantor Wyner, will be held outdoors or in the Social Hall, for maximum number of participants allowed by NJ law with social distancing. This will be a shortened service without streaming.
 - B) Another service (consecutive), led by Cantor Wyner, will be held indoors (Sanctuary) and LIVE-STREAMED. This service is targeted to congregants who, as individuals, face higher risks than the average population due to age or health conditions, and who believe that their lives would be endangered by attending an in-person service. Rabbi’s sermons will be pre-recorded.
 - C) If needed, Rabbi Malik will lead another service (alternative) outdoors or in Social Hall, without streaming. This will be an alternative service held at the same time as the Sanctuary service led by the cantor.

As you know, these have been challenging times; Rabbi Malik and I and the rest of the synagogue leadership have worked very diligently to connect with you in meaningful ways during this period of anxiety and uncertainty. As we make plans for the future, know that we have your best interests in mind. Your comments are welcome.

Nathan Goldwasser,
President