



We deepen relationships to Judaism and our community by engaging the soul, heart, and mind.

To our Beth Am community,

Rabbi Ruth is away on her Sabbatical, thinking about meaningful ways for us to connect to Judaism and each other through the coming years. While she is out, much is happening behind the scenes as we work to reopen, prepare for the High Holy Days, and bring people back together in person. Today, we will share some updates connected to our ongoing work.

Note to families with young children:

Families with unvaccinated kids continue to face stress and difficulty. We realize that many of the updates we are sharing in this email will impact you differently than other vaccinated adults. We commit to continuing to provide opportunities for your families to joyously and safely engage with the Temple and Judaism. You will see this beginning with outdoor gatherings during the High Holy Days. Coming first, mark your calendars for the afternoon of September 7, 2021, for an outdoor Rosh Hashana Afternoon Family Tashlich Service at Matthew's Beach Park. More details coming soon.

COVID restriction changes:

Despite the rise in COVID and the Delta variant cases, we are lucky to live in a conscientious community where we can care for the health and safety of the most vulnerable, while still working to meet the spiritual and relationship needs of our congregants. After consulting our Health Task Force and King County/CDC guidelines, we are updating our approach to COVID safety as it applies to worship and gathering.

Masks on the bima. We have heard from many of our online service attendees that it is difficult to hear Clergy and presenters while they are masked. After consulting with our Health Task Force, going forward vaccinated individuals may remove their masks while on the bima when speaking and or reading Torah. Our health experts have confirmed that because of the distance of the bima there is no significant increased risk when presenters remove their masks. Maskless performances will allow better audio for those at home and will enrich the experience of worship by allowing us to see the faces of our Clergy, Torah readers, service leaders, and *b'nai mitzvah* students.

Food and drink. Breaking bread with others is an important part of Judaism, Beth Am culture, and making connections with others. Opportunities to celebrate with limited food will start to be available in some forms in August of 2021. COVID is not a foodborne illness. However, we want to minimize the risks and impact of removing masks, even for those who are vaccinated or have tested negative. Accordingly, the way we serve food will look different from pre-COVID times. Initially, we will offer food outdoors only and will require masks except when eating or drinking. We may have additional restrictions depending on the circumstances and public health guidance, and we will offer more flexible food and drink options if King County COVID numbers decrease. We will be clear in the weekly Happenings email whether services or events include food or a lite kiddish lunch so people can plan accordingly based on their comfort level.

High Holy Days. Lastly, we thank you for your patience as we determine the maximum safe attendee numbers for in-person services for 5782. We are excited to announce that your High Holy Day service assignments will be shared with you on August 20, 2021. Please be sure to check your email for service assignments. We will continue to remind congregants of this date and be sure that all members have a chance to attend at least one in-person service.

COVID safety protocol reminder. Please remember that at this point that masks are required when on Temple grounds. Additionally, we require *vaccination or a negative test result within the previous 72 hours before attending services.*

Synagogue Welcome Forward Updates:

With the support from our entire Board of Directors, our professional staff has been working hard to welcome you back in person by reimagining our spaces to reflect the mission and values of our community. Our goals for updating our physical spaces are (1) to foster more moments of connection and (2) to increase accessibility for all members of our community.

Physical upgrades include: recarpeting the social hall and sanctuary; adding comfortable and flexible furniture to the lobby, library, and entry annex (which will no longer serve as office space), and adding high-speed internet throughout the building. Similarly, to enable more powerful online experiences, we are (1) replacing the current temporary sound booth in the sanctuary with a new sound booth that fits the aesthetics of our sacred space and (2) installing high-definition video cameras for enhanced online viewing. Finally, we are installing a retractable screen on the side of the sanctuary that can either be hidden or used to integrate congregants who are live streaming from home.

Lastly, we have heard from many community members that our website is outdated. Accordingly, we are excited to announce that we are launching a dynamic new website at the end of the summer, just before the High Holy Days. In addition to a refreshed look, our new website will provide a more effective means to engage with our community.

As always, we want to hear from you! It is your commitment to our community and valuable feedback that has helped us move many of these plans forward. Please feel free to reach out anytime to us at davida@templebetham.org or president@templebetham.org. Thank you again for helping us stay connected as we safely come together in-person once again as our sacred Beth Am community!

L'Shalom,

Davida Sims
Executive Director

Ben Glatstein
President, Board of Directors

