

June 30, 2020

Dear CBI Family Member,

We hope this letter finds you safe and well. While the past few months have been frustrating in many ways, our community remains vibrant and engaged as we have explored together new ways of celebrating simchas, interacting socially, and observing holidays and shabbat. We are proud to share that CBI members, friends and family have participated in more than 100,000 minutes of Facebook live virtual content. Whether through Facebook, Zoom or YouTube, we certainly have found new and interesting ways to stay connected.

As proud as we are of the ways we have stayed connected remotely, we are all looking forward to the day when we can gather together again. In early May, we convened a committee of health experts including physicians, a physician assistant and registered nurses within our congregation to begin a deliberate and systematic process to develop the framework for a building re-opening. The committee started by conducting a risk assessment of our physical environment, social and observance interaction practices, and current health and safety protocols, and recommended adjustments or enhancements that we felt were needed to safely open the building. Three fundamental principles have guided us in the development of our re-opening plan.

1. **Health science.** We continue to learn more about transmission, protection, and safe gathering practices from public health specialists, specifically from the CDC, who have offered both general and specific guidelines impacting religious and educational institutions.
2. **Federal, State, and Local regulations and guidelines.** We will adhere to all legal requirements around gathering. CBI will not adopt any practices less restrictive than the law allows, and even as the legality of gatherings become less restrictive, CBI will prioritize the health and wellness of our entire congregational family, with special concern for those who are most vulnerable, over legal allowances.
3. **Jewish values and specifically CBI's values and mission.** Jewish tradition prioritizes the sanctity of life above all other values, which has been our guiding principle in adapting our religious practices. We plan to continue prioritizing health and safety while maintaining our focus as a Bet T'filah (House of Prayer), Bet Midrash (House of Study), and Bet K'nesset (House of Assembly).

The committee has developed Phase I and Phase II of our re-opening plan. We will highlight the key points of each phase and encourage you to read this letter in its entirety and to review the detailed plan on the CBI website. Phase I began on June 12 and is expected to be completed by July 1.

Our goal for Phase I was to have the staff safely return to work in the building full time. To accomplish this, a new barrier door was built in the office, plexiglass screens were installed, and cleaning protocols were enhanced. During Phase I we began to transition from our Zoom-only Bar/Bat Mitzvah services to allowing the immediate family to be present in the sanctuary. Work also continued by outside vendors on installing our new sound, video and internet systems.

The goal of Phase II is to safely open the building to congregants on a limited basis. To accomplish this a number of changes are currently underway including:

- Installing new touchless hand sanitizer stations in 20 locations throughout the building including all classrooms, social hall, sanctuary, lobby and hallways
- Replacing two sinks, two soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers in each bathroom with a touch free system. A manual will remain for Shabbat / Holiday observance.
- Plexiglass barriers placed on podiums on bimah
- New social distancing signage and protocols throughout the building

We are pleased to announce that Phase II will start on July 6. The office will be open during posted business hours to handle all of your CBI-related business including scrip purchases and bill payments. We will also begin in-person Thursday and Sunday morning minyans on July 9. To protect everyone's safety, anyone who enters the building will be required to follow our strict social distancing guidelines.

While we are looking forward to returning to in-person services, virtual streaming of all religious services will continue, so you can always choose to participate comfortably at home. You should participate at home and not come to CBI if you have any of the following conditions:

- You feel even slightly unwell (fever, coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, gastrointestinal discomfort).
- You have been exposed to someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19, or who is a possible COVID-19 carrier, within the past 14 days.
- You have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- You are experiencing a loss of taste or smell.
- You have traveled outside the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Connecticut in the past 14 days and visited a location experiencing a spike in positive cases.
- You have underlying health issues that put you at greater risk.
- You are over age 65 – this group has shown the greatest susceptibility to the virus. Please consult your physician to make sure he/she feels that it is prudent for you to attend. Your health and safety is paramount.

During Phase II, all services will be held either in the sanctuary, social hall, or outside where social distancing can be maintained. Indoor gatherings will be limited to 25 people and outdoor gatherings to 100 people depending on the venue.

Advanced online registration is required for all in-person gatherings. This means you will need to register on the website for all Sunday morning minyans by 3pm on Friday and Thursday morning minyans by 4pm on Wednesday. Registration will be confirmed until capacity is met.

Our first in-person Kabbalat Shabbat service is scheduled for Friday, July 17 in the backyard of Rabbi and Naomi Tilman, weather permitting. Details will be sent out as we get closer.

For the time being, Saturday morning Shabbat services will remain online only.

The following requirements must be followed when entering the building for any reason or attending a CBI event:

1. Anyone entering the building or participating in an event must wear a mask and sanitize their hands. A limited number of disposable masks will be available at the entrance doors, so please remember to bring your own.
2. While in the building, you must continue to wear your mask and maintain 6 feet social distancing from anyone not in your immediate household. Seating is being arranged in the building to allow for social distancing.
3. Please bring your own head covering, tallit, tefillin to all services. A limited number of new kippot will be available, but if you take one, do not return it. Regular morning minyan goers will be offered a siddur to take home with them and bring to each service. Siddurs will be available for others to use, and a reprocessing protocol has been established to be followed before their next use.
4. Please do not congregate anywhere in the building before or after services.
5. Please follow all clergy, staff and safety personnel instructions while participating in services, especially as it pertains to ritual practices within the sanctuary (i.e., Torah aliyot, reading Torah, etc.).

We expect Phase II to take us through the beginning of August. We thank the committee for all of its efforts so far. The committee will continue its work, and we will communicate updates to these plans as circumstances warrant.

The safety of our community relies on all of us working together and adhering to the health and safety guidelines that we are implementing. We thank you for your continued cooperation, support, patience, and understanding as we navigate what we expect to be a successful re-opening of CBI.

B'Shalom,

Aaron J. Kessler. President
Rabbi Howard Tilman