

Requirements for Congregants: Attending In-Person Services at TI during COVID-19 Pandemic

Effective May 18, 2021

As part of an effort to keep all of us as safe as possible during the pandemic, the TI COVID Committee established the following requirements for those attending services in the sanctuary. Please note these requirements when making the decision to attend a sanctuary service. These guidelines will also apply if services are held in another part of the synagogue.

ELIGIBILITY

Fully vaccinated individuals may attend any Shabbat service in the sanctuary, following the guidelines enumerated below. Those who are not fully vaccinated may not attend regular Shabbat services, but may attend a *b'nai mitzvah* service at the invitation of the family, following the guidelines enumerated below.

PREREGISTRATION

For weeks when there is no *b'nai mitzvah*, all those wishing to attend a service in the sanctuary will be required to pre-register via the TI website. This will ensure that we do not exceed our maximum numbers and to assist in the process of contact tracing should that information be needed. When there is a *b'nai mitzvah*, the family will provide a list of their guests, with contact information.

SIZE OF GATHERINGS

The maximum number in the sanctuary is 20 households or 'pods' with a maximum of 50 total attendees. That number will be reassessed periodically by the COVID Committee.

GUIDELINES FOR BEING IN THE SANCTUARY

Given the risk to the community, we ask that you take the responsibility for following these COVID guidelines extremely seriously. Your healthy behaviors will not only make others feel safer and more comfortable, they will also show the importance of prevention activities.

- Everyone must remain in their seating area during services.
- If you need to leave the area to go to the bimah, use the restroom, etc., you must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Everyone is required to wear a mask at all times, except when leading services.
- If you are leading services, you must wear your mask until you are at your lectern or on the bimah and at least 6 feet from others. Replace your mask before you leave your station.
- While on the bimah, if you need to approach within 6 feet of someone (i.e., to help them find their place in the Torah), you must first put on your mask. Please try to move to a distance of 6 feet or more as soon as possible.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTENDANCE

Those who are fully vaccinated may attend services, following the guidelines above. “Fully vaccinated” means that you have received both shots (if receiving the Pfizer-BioNtech or Moderna vaccine) and at least 2 weeks has elapsed since your second shot or your single shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Generally, if you are not fully vaccinated, we recommend that you do not attend services in the sanctuary. This is for the protection of the unvaccinated, because even fully vaccinated people can become infected with the virus and infect others, while experiencing no symptoms. Exceptions are for those attending *b’nai mitzvah* as guests or services leaders. Unvaccinated attendees must follow the guidelines below.*

If you are unvaccinated and in a high-risk category, you are strongly discouraged from attending. High-risk categories identified by the CDC are:

- Adults age 65 and above
- People who live in nursing homes or long-term care facilities
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well-controlled
 - Chronic lung disease
 - Asthma
 - Immunocompromised conditions (e.g., cancer, organ transplant recipients, poorly controlled HIV/AIDS, prolonged use of corticosteroids, etc.)
 - Severe obesity (body mass index of 40 or higher)
 - Diabetes
 - Kidney disease needing dialysis
 - Liver disease
 - Serious heart conditions

***People who are not fully vaccinated are only eligible to go to a service in the sanctuary to attend a *b’nai mitzvah* service when invited by the family. Unvaccinated adults and children must comply with the following guidelines in order to attend a service in the sanctuary:**

- Avoid any travel outside of DC, Maryland and Virginia within two weeks of the date of the service.
- Get a COVID test no more than five days before the date of the service and far enough in advance to obtain results by Friday, the day before the service. PCR tests are preferable and generally take 3-5 days for results. Resources for testing in DC and Montgomery County can be found at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/testing.html> & <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/testing>.

CHILDREN

Because children are currently ineligible for vaccination, they only may attend services in the sanctuary when invited by a *b’nai mitzvah* family. We plan to offer outdoor services and programming geared at children and families. Children attending services in the sanctuary must remain with their family throughout the service.

IN CASE OF A POSITIVE TEST OR SYMPTOMS (EVEN MILD)

During the week before the service, if you or anyone in your household or pod (whether or not they were planning to come with you to services) tests positive or has even mild symptoms, neither that individual nor anyone one in your Family Unit may come into the synagogue.

On the day of the service, if you or anyone in your household or 'pod' (whether or not they were planning to come with you to services) receives a positive test result or has even mild symptoms, neither you nor anyone in your household/pod may come into the synagogue.

ONE IMPORTANT CAVEAT

Since the situation regarding COVID-19 can change, please be aware that TI's requirements may also change, even within days of the service. If there are changes, the COVID Committee will do their best to convey them to you in a timely manner. Please also check the DC government's website (<https://coronavirus.dc.gov>) to make sure you are aware of the most up-to-date local requirements.

It is truly a group effort to keep us all as healthy as we can. Now that vaccines are widely available, we strongly encourage everyone who can to get vaccinated. Thanks in advance to everyone for observing these guidelines. Please do not hesitate to contact Rabbi Werbow at mwerbow@tifereth-israel.org if you have any questions or concerns.