



# BETH EL HEBREW CONGREGATION

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August 2020

Dear Fellow Congregant:

This year we usher in the Jewish New Year 5781 on Friday evening, September 18, at 8:00 pm during a time of extreme change in our community and our world. Differing from years past, we all feel a greater need for personal reflection, repentance, and peace. It is even more important this year that we once again challenge ourselves with contemporary messages of Torah through our clergy's sermons and music. As we hear the words we have heard so many times before, let us all be comforted that we will come through these challenging times and emerge a stronger people and a stronger community for it. We are Beth El.

One of the extreme changes we are all wrestling with is the lack of physical togetherness, in the sanctuary and elsewhere. High Holiday services are traditionally a time for reconnecting with fellow congregants and catching up... and hugging. Lots of hugging. Sadly, this year we will not have that physical connection. Our services will be online, as they have been since mid-March. The complete schedule is at the end of this letter.

We recognize that doing Shabbat services without a *machzor*, or with a PDF, is an okay solution that simply won't work for High Holidays. High Holiday services are lengthier and more complex. Therefore, we have put together a program to check out *machzorim* from Beth El to you for the period of the holidays. Brotherhood has graciously consented to manage the book program and keep track of getting the books returned to Beth El. You can drive through the Beth El parking lot on these dates and times to get your books in as near a contactless way as possible.

- Thursday, September 3, 5:00 – 7:00 pm
- Wednesday, September 9, 10:00 am – noon
- Sunday, September 13, 10:00 am – noon
- Monday, September 14, 5:00 – 7:00 pm
- Tuesday, September 15, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Dates for returning the books will be provided later.

Because there is no in-person Yizkor service this year, there is no opportunity to distribute Books of Remembrance at Yom Kippur. However, we will make the Book of Remembrance available on the website as a PDF file. We would be delighted to email you the PDF on request. However, if you do want a hardcopy Book of Remembrance, you can pick it up at the same time as you get your prayer books. Please indicate on your Book of Remembrance form that you need a printed copy of the Book of Remembrance; as a cost-saving measure, we will only print the quantity we need.

Because we need to have the Book of Remembrance ready by late August instead of late September, we need to start putting it together now. This year we are using our website capabilities to collect all the information for the Book of Remembrance and High Holiday Bulletin greetings via online forms. Not using paper forms saves us time, money, and health risk. You can find the forms at the links on the website landing page; there is also a short user guide for the forms there, and instructions also are enclosed with this letter. The deadline

for the Book of Remembrance submissions is Friday, August 21. We apologize for the quick turn-around. These are trying times.

If you or someone you know does not have access to a computer or to the internet, you or they can call Dana Arnold at 703-328-2049 Tuesday-Friday, between 9:30 am and 2:30 pm.

As we prepare for the holiest season of the Jewish year, during a year unlike any other in our lifetimes, please know that your clergy and lay leadership are here for you. Call or email any of us individually or email [office@bethelhebrew.org](mailto:office@bethelhebrew.org) for support or assistance. We are ready to help. We want to help. We are Beth El. And So Are You.

Wishing you and your family a L'Shanah Tovah,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan J. Cohn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan J. Cohn  
President, Beth El Hebrew Congregation