



The information that follows describes Congregation Shalom's plans for operating during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Because this is a quickly evolving situation, recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and from local and state government agencies are changing rapidly. We will modify this document as our plans change and will continue to communicate changes to our policy, through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and phone calls. We encourage you to check back to this document regularly for the most up-to-date information.

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General Operations

General Program Interruption Announcement

Thanks to the recently released Covid vaccines, we are optimistic that we will see an end to the pandemic in 2021 and a return to familiar routines. We are not certain when we will be able to gather safely at Congregation Shalom, but the Task Force on Reopening is meeting regularly, monitoring the situation and continuing to make recommendations. At its meeting in December, the Board voted to postpone the date for reopening to at least March 31.

Though it is difficult for all of us, our congregational leadership, clergy and staff believe this is the safest decision for Congregation Shalom at this time and consistent with the Jewish value of *Pikuah Nefesh*, preserving life. The safety and well-being of all of our congregants has been and will continue to be at the forefront of our decisions.

We are very appreciative of your patience and understanding. Please know that the clergy are here for you and are conducting essential lifecycle events. The office is open daily. Our virtual offerings include religious and Hebrew school, daily minyan, Shabbat worship, Torah study and many more. On behalf of the Board, clergy and staff, may 2021 bring you and your loved ones good health, happiness and renewal.

Hours of Operation

Our offices are not open to the public. We have staff members working in the office each day, but each staff member is only working 2-3 days in office, with the other days working remotely (9am to 5 pm, Monday through Thursday and 9 am to 2 pm on Friday).

Communication

With the exception of emergencies, please only expect to receive a response during normal office hours. There may be a short delay receiving responses to non emergency emails or phone calls. Our staff will still be responding to their office voicemail and email.. If this is an emergency please call: Linda Holifield at (414) 719-0210 or Abby Habush Schroeder (414) 915-4357.

Status of employees and work from home plan

As far as we know, our staff members are currently healthy. Our staff is following the recommended guidelines.

Life Cycle Commemorations

Our hope is that Life Cycle events that are scheduled beyond March 31st will happen as planned. However, some Life Cycle events may need to be modified or rescheduled. We will be in communication with families on an individual basis to discuss this. Congregation Shalom will comply with the directives of the CDC, the local Health Department and will base its decision making on Jewish values as well as health considerations in consultation with our leadership and trusted medical professionals.

We continue to ask that if you are experiencing symptoms of illness or have reason to be under quarantine that you not attend public gatherings and that you follow CDC guidelines. We ask that you consider the effect of the quickly changing nature of the pandemic and plan accordingly. We also ask that everyone follow the social distancing guidelines and avoid physical contact (handshaking and social hugs/kissing should be avoided and if possible, leave 6 feet between individuals).

Brit Milah/Circumcision

Brit Milah is an essential Jewish Ritual that must be performed on the eighth day of a male child's life, with some notable exceptions as provided by *halakha* (Jewish law). Currently, Brit Milah should be performed with only the *moheh*/doctor and immediate family in attendance.

We would be honored to welcome all new lives with blessings virtually before the resumption of programming, please contact us to make arrangements.

We are monitoring closely the decisions made by the CDC and the health department. We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and phone calls.

Baby Namings

Baby Namings will be rescheduled if they fall before March 31. Despite scheduling this simcha after March 31st with the synagogue or the clergy, the CDC and the health department may change their policy pertaining to assemblies to preclude a group assembly beyond March 31st. If that is the case, we will reschedule this lifecycle ceremony.

We would be honored to welcome all new lives with blessings virtually before March 31st, please contact us to make arrangements. We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and telephone calls.

B'nai Mitzvah

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Services, is a coming of age ceremony that is the culmination of years of study. All in person B'nai Mitzvah Services that fall before March 31st must be rescheduled or arrangements made for a virtual Bnai Mitzvah on the original date. We will endeavor to be creative with the use of technology to hold a Bnai Mitzvah Service while maintaining social distancing.

For those B'nai Mitzvah services scheduled to take place after March 31st, please be aware that information and decision-making pertaining to public gatherings and travel is fluid and evolving. Despite scheduling this simcha with the synagogue or the clergy, the CDC and the health department may change their policy pertaining to assemblies to preclude a group assembly beyond March 31st. If that is the case, we will work with you to reschedule this lifecycle ceremony. If for any reason you feel the need to reschedule your simcha, we will work with you to find another date.

Because of the extraordinary nature of this emergency, **we will honor the work that our young B'nai Mitzvah have already put in to learning their portions and we will not change the Torah reading or the Haftorah reading they have learned on the rescheduled date unless that is desired by the B'nai Mitzvah and the family.**

We are monitoring closely the decisions made by the CDC and the health department and we will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and telephone calls.

Weddings

There are few rituals we delight in more than celebrating with brides and grooms. In these ceremonies we establish a new home and a future for our community. We will do our very best to provide virtual alternatives to physical presence through technology for those who wish to rejoice with the bride and groom.

Weddings may be scheduled after March 31st unless the CDC, the health department and the lay leadership of Congregation Shalom change their policy pertaining to assemblies to preclude a group assembly beyond March 31st. If that is the case, we will reschedule this lifecycle ceremony.

We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and telephone calls.

Funeral Services

Funerals are essential Jewish rituals that must be performed within a respectful period of time from a loved one's passing.

Funerals will be held graveside, with no more than 10 individuals present including officiants and taking all recommended safety precautions including social distancing and PPE. We will do our very best to provide virtual alternatives to physical presence through technology for those who wish to comfort the mourners or to be comforted as mourners.

Shiva Minyanim

Comforting the mourner is an important aspect of synagogue life and Jewish practice.

Gathering in the home of the mourner must be done virtually, by phone or by a web based communications tool. We will assist you in making the necessary arrangements. You can find a digital copy of Mishkan Tfillah for the house of mourning at the following link: [Click Here](#)

We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and telephone calls.

Unveiling/Stone Setting

It has become a minhag/custom to ceremonially unveil the tombstone of a loved one who has passed. There are differing customs on when this should take place, most commonly it takes place at the conclusion of the first year of mourning (either 11 or 12 months from passing) but there are many variants of practice.

Based on the best advice of the pertinent authorities, we may ask you to limit the number of attendees. Despite scheduling this event with the synagogue or the clergy, the CDC and the health department may change their policy pertaining to assemblies to preclude a group assembly of any number. If that is the case, we will reschedule this lifecycle ceremony.

We continue to ask that if you or any of your attendees are experiencing symptoms of illness or have reason to be under quarantine that they do not attend public gatherings and that they follow CDC guidelines. We also ask that everyone avoid physical contact (handshaking and social hugs/kissing should be avoided and if possible, leave 6 feet between individuals).

We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and telephone calls.

Educational Programs

Religious/Sunday School & Hebrew School

We have made the decision to offer virtual education to our learners of all ages, and will continue with virtual education until the circumstances are such that we feel it is physically safe, and also conducive to our goals to return to our building.

B'nai Mitzvah Tutorial

For students presently engaged in B'nai Mitzvah studies, the Cantor and tutors will continue weekly lessons via telephone.

The Cantor or synagogue staff will contact families weekly to schedule appointments.

For new students to the program, the Cantor will contact families to set a date to begin tutorials.

If you have questions, please email the Cantor at cantorperper@cong-shalom.org.

Adult Education

As of right now, we are postponing all adult education classes and programs in the building until March 31st. We will continue to offer meaningful virtual educational opportunities and programming. Please continue to check our calendar for opportunities.

Worship

Shabbat Evening Services

All Shabbat Evening Services are no longer open to the public until at least March 31st. Please note that our services will be streamed on our [Youtube site](#) or on our [facebook site](#).

A digital copy of the siddur can be found here: <https://www.ccarnet.org/publications/resources-repaginated/?fbclid=IwAR2zACNei2SxF7U6uICLDH5QxvvdztbZPgLaEMjKC3hS3ImQsNEq8cINw#>

During these services, all names on the shiva, shloshim and Yahrzeit lists will be read.

We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and telephone calls.

Shabbat Morning Services

All Shabbat Morning Services are no longer open to the public until at least March 31st. Please note that our services will be streamed on our [Youtube site](#) or on our [facebook site](#).

A digital copy of the siddur can be found here: <https://www.ccarnet.org/publications/resources-repaginated/?fbclid=IwAR2zACNei2SxF7U6uICLDH5QxvvdztbZPgLaEMjKC3hS3ImQsNEq8clNw#>

During these services, all names on the shiva, shloshim and Yahrzeit lists will be read.

We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through regular mail, email, Facebook, text messages and telephone calls.

Shabbat Morning Torah Study

Shabbat Morning Torah Study (held weekly on Saturday at 9am) will not take place in the building but will be available through Zoom. [Click here](#) to participate.

We will continue to communicate changes to our policy through email, Facebook, text messages and our calendar.

Daily Minyan

Daily Minyan will take place on Zoom and begin promptly at 5:45 pm Monday through Thursday. All names on the shiva list, shloshim list and Yahrzeit list will be read on shabbat.

Holiday Services

For services scheduled after March 31st there is currently no change. However, the CDC and the health department may change their policy pertaining to assemblies to preclude a group assembly of any number beyond the date of March 31st. If that is the case, we will continue to find innovative and prayerful ways to bring our community together.

Pastoral

Clergy Visits to Hospitals

There are significant changes to our Clergy's Pastoral Practice when called to visit a hospital. Each hospital has its own policy. The visiting policy of hospitals is fluid and changing daily. Clergy will check with the hospital to see if it is possible to visit a congregant.

Currently most hospitals are not allowing entry to clergy. If we are able to visit congregants in the hospital, our practice continues to be the following: If our clergy is sick, we will not make visits. We ask that if you are sick that you make us aware of your sickness. It may be that our clergy will be wearing protective clothing when they visit. This is for your protection.

We are monitoring closely the decisions made by the CDC, the health department and the hospitals.

We will continue to communicate changes through email, Facebook, text messages and by phone.

Clergy Visits to Residential Seniors' Facilities

There are significant changes to our Clergy's Pastoral Practice when called to visit a congregant in a residential seniors' facility. Each facility has its own policy. The visiting policy of the seniors' facilities are fluid and changing daily. Clergy will check with the seniors' facilities to determine if it is possible to visit.

Currently all Ovation Facilities are not allowing clergy visits under any circumstance. If you have a concern about a loved one in an Ovation Facility please contact us (414) 352-9288.

In the event that clergy are able to visit, our practice continues to be the following: if our clergy is sick, we will not make visits. We ask that if you are sick that you make us aware of your sickness. It may be that our clergy will be wearing protective clothing when they visit. This is for your protection.

We are monitoring closely the decisions made by the CDC, the health department and the hospitals and will continue to communicate changes through email, Facebook, text messages and by phone.

Clergy Home Visits

Clergy are restricted from making home visits with the exception of end of life care until March 31st when this policy will be re-evaluated. In the event that clergy is able to visit, our practice continues to be the following: if our clergy is sick, we will not make visits. We ask that if you are sick that you make us aware of your sickness. It may be that our clergy will be wearing protective clothing when they visit. This is for your protection.

We are monitoring closely the decisions made by the CDC and the health department and we will continue to communicate changes through email, Facebook, text messages and by phone.

Meetings

All meetings will either be cancelled, postponed or scheduled virtually through March 31st.

We will continue to communicate changes through email, Facebook, text messages and by our Calendar.

Conclusion

Even with all these changes to our programs and worship services, what remains constant is our concern for those in our Shalom family. We are here for you and encourage you to reach out to us. While not the same as face-to-face meetings, connecting still makes a difference either by phone or zoom meeting. We continue to check in with all members. Also please complete the survey found at this link: [click here](#) so we can have a better understanding of your needs.

When the Israelites marched upon the sea it was a frightening experience. Behind our ancestors was Pharaoh and his army and in front of our ancestors was the violent churning sea. But God told our ancestors not to stay frozen in their fear and to move forward step by step; to enter the sea and that's what they did. I often wonder what drove that courage in our ancestors. Some say it was the anguish of what was behind them. It certainly motivated them onwards. Others say it was the promise of what lay beyond the sea and that certainly filled their hearts with hope. However the fear was bearable because they were standing united as a community and they knew they would march into the future together. We are together. Even if it means we must reach out in ways that are less tangible and more ephemeral in nature, we know that we are standing side by side. And when this has passed, like our ancestors before us, we will sing with a new spirit and with a new song in our hearts as we continue on the journey to fulfill our promise.