

Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob

8825 East Prairie Road, Skokie, IL 60076



Shalom Skokie Valley,

As Elul approaches, we want to share an update with you on our High Holiday planning, and share a few ways that you can get involved and help our community have a safe, spiritual, and uplifting Yamim Noraim.

For weeks now, our shul leadership has been working hard on the unique challenges and opportunities this year presents for the High Holidays.

While many things will be different this year, we are excited to offer a range of services and programming in person and online.

It is our hope and plan to offer several staggered in-person High Holiday service options, both indoors and outdoors and with both mechitza and Traditional seating. Every in-person service will require signup in advance, masks for the entire time, social distancing between households, and strict adherence to the rest of our safety protocols. In-person services will be much smaller and shorter than we are used to. Our beloved communal singing will not take place and Rav Ari will not be sharing sermons at any of the in-person High Holiday services (they will be shared by video instead).

Unfortunately at this stage, children below bar and bat mitzvah age will not be able to attend most High Holiday tefillot, though we are exploring offering a family service and children's programming to help all of our members experience the High Holidays with their shul community.

Because our plans are still in development and the COVID-19 situation is dynamic, we are not opening sign-ups for the various tefillot we will be offering quite yet. You can expect to have that information by September 7th.

For those who choose to not attend in-person gatherings this year, we will have robust offerings on zoom and video including yizkor, kol nidrei, musical experiences, classes, sermons and more. We remain committed to making sure that every single member has a way to connect to the shul in this time. If you or someone you know wants to connect

digitally but needs either the equipment or help getting set up, please let Rav Ari know and we will find a way to get them online.

Now - here are some ways you can be involved this High Holiday Season!

Share your Rosh Hashanah Reflections

We are gathering material for a booklet to share with our members for Rosh HaShanah. Please respond in the form below if you are interested in submitting Rosh HaShanah greetings, memories (especially of Skokie Valley), or insights on the yom tov davening. We are looking for a diverse range of voices to participate - please sign up and submit [here](#) by September 4th.

Make sure your membership is up to date!

We will **not** be selling non-member or guest seats for any services this year. Unfortunately, for safety and due to the limits we will have on capacity, in-person services will be limited to our **full members** only. If you have not already done so, we encourage you to renew your membership here [Membership Renewal](#). **No one will be turned away for financial reasons.** If you would like to request need-based adjustment of dues, please [click here](#) or contact Rav Ari.

Help out with Ritual

Our Medical Committee is generating protocols for safely gathering people indoors, outdoors, shofar blowing, and more under the current Illinois restrictions. The ritual committee, following guidance from the medical committee, is working with the questionnaires that so many of you submitted to try and craft High Holiday services that best meets the needs of our diverse and large community. They are seeking out support from those who can help lead High Holiday tefillot, Torah reading, gabbai and more. If you can help, [please fill out this form](#). We are also committed to blowing shofar for everyone who needs to hear it, whether at shul or outside your homes. If you can volunteer to blow shofar for the homebound, [let us know here](#).

Set up our spaces!

The house committee is improving our indoor spaces and securing the permits and rentals necessary to make an outdoor space available. We will need your help in setting

up our various davening spaces - stay tuned for volunteer information as Rosh Hashanah draws closer.

Be a greeter

The security committee is coordinating with our security service to make sure we can safely hold our various services. We will need extra greeters to support the different tefillot we are offering. Please volunteer to be a greeter by contacting Josh Gutstein at gutstein2000@gmail.com.

Lend a Hand to Youth Programming

After a spring and summer of outdoor family programming, Tot Shabbat, and more, and online youth programming and connection, the Youth Committee is working to see what kind of programming is possible for the High Holidays. Due to safety and space concerns, unfortunately, we will likely be unable to provide on site groups or babysitting this year. We know this is not ideal and hope that the families will take advantage of the multiple and staggered tefillah options that are being offered, a family service, and the many programs happening before and after the holidays. If you would like to volunteer to help supervise potential outdoor, socially distant youth programming, email Paula p-landau@hotmail.com

This is not the High Holiday email we imagined sending a few months ago, and we imagine that many of our members are feeling a sense of loss and disappointment at what we cannot do together this year. We share those feelings, and we hope that, together, we can make the best of this difficult situation and usher in a new, healthy and better year!

Signed,

Skokie Valley Ritual Committee

Rav Ari

Debbie Eisenstein