



April 22, 2020
28 Nisan, 5780
13th Day of the Omer

Dear Friends,

During this time of global pandemic, we want to give you this update regarding ongoing congregational activities and to apprise you of further decisions the TBI leadership team has now made with respect to Temple matters.

During the months of March and April our congregation has been incredibly busy, albeit outside of our building and outside of our usual way of doing things:

- We have moved our Kabbalat Shabbat and Shabbat morning worship services to the Zoom platform and FaceBook Live formats and are happy to report that regularly more than 100 households are participating.
- We have continual online learning including Shabbat morning Torah study, Lori's Friday lunch and learn sessions, Wednesday morning Sisterhood study with Rabbi, Sisterhood book club, the B'nai Mitzvah Seminar, and various special events.
- Our Religious and Hebrew School teachers are in regular contact with their students providing virtual lessons and frequent communication.
- Sunday morning sing-a-long with Danny is a highlight for our school children.
- Our Zoom Congregational Second Seder welcomed more than 60 households.
- *Pesach* Morning and 7th Day *Pesach* Morning Services were also well attended and allowed many who would not normally be able to attend to say *yizkor*.
- The Zoom format has allowed us to add *Havdalah* to our service offerings.
- The Temple Board, Sisterhood and Brotherhood Boards and many other Temple committees are continuing to do the work of the congregation via Zoom.
- Teams of volunteers have been in phone and/or email contact with every member of the congregation and we continue to follow up and be of help and support wherever and whenever possible.
- Our office staff are continuing to work from home and attending to all of the regular business functions of the congregation.

Protecting the health of all our members, and especially of our most vulnerable members, and doing our part as citizens to help minimize further spread of COVID-19 are among our highest priorities during this time. **As of this writing it seems most likely that we will need to continue operating "virtually" throughout the month of May and so we are proceeding to plan that way.** Please watch for regular eblast notices which will update you

about both regular and special programming that we are offering to help keep us all connected to each other and to continue living vibrant Jewish lives as a congregational community. Also, please know that while this year is different than any other year of our long and proud history, we are also already hard at work making plans for the coming year of celebration and transition. More information will follow.

As always, Rabbi Weinberg is available via phone, text, email, or FaceTime for pastoral needs. In the event of a death or other emergency, or if you need financial assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Rabbi Weinberg by cell phone: 847-275-6759 or at home: 847-673-1987 or by email: rabbi@tbiskokie.org.

The coronavirus pandemic is also leading to significant economic turmoil that has already affected many institutions and many individuals. Clearly this turmoil affects each of us in a different way and it is too early to know what the long-term financial impact will be. But this we know: many of us are concerned for our own financial future and for the financial welfare of our loved ones, as well as the financial stability of the institutions and organizations we hold dear, like Temple Beth Israel. We are grateful to the many TBI members who are continuing their regular, faithful support of our congregation by sending in their membership commitment and other contributions in a timely manner. However, an important part of a congregation's *raison d'être* is to be a community that helps its members. So, if you are "caught in the crunch" and are having difficulty meeting your TBI financial commitment, please do not assume that you must resign your membership, and please do not assume that we don't care. Instead please contact one of our financial officers, Michelle Agrest or Adam Stewart, to discuss your situation. We want to be able to be supportive during difficult times, but we can only do so if we know about a difficult situation. Of course, all such conversations are strictly confidential. Our congregation is also ready to help you with emotional and spiritual support.

We urge all of you (and especially those most vulnerable to the virus) to do the following:

- Continue to practice "physical distancing" and good hygiene.
- Call your doctor and avoid in-person contacts with others if you are ill or believe you may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus.
- Watch for updates on COVID-19 from the [Centers for Disease Control](#), [the Village of Skokie](#), and other responsible authorities.

We continue to pray for the health and welfare of all our members and all their loved ones and our greater community. May God protect all of us during this difficult time.

Shalom,

Marc Raven, Chair of Safety and Security

Helene Levine, President

Rabbi Michael A. Weinberg

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