



TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
JOYFUL · PERSONAL · ACCESSIBLE

Remaining Joyful, Personal, and Accessible

Re-envisioning Jewish Life at Temple Beth Shalom for 2020-21 / 5780-81

The founders of Temple Beth Shalom (TBS) envisioned an egalitarian synagogue in which all individuals were valued as essential members of the community. Today, we are a thriving community that is truly Joyful, Personal, and Accessible. However, like all communities, we are facing unprecedented challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. To meet these challenges, we have drawn upon the wisdom of our Jewish teachings and current scientific/medical knowledge to provide a basis for developing guidelines that will allow us to move forward safely. Because the strength of TBS is its community, the Jewish value of *Pikuach Nefesh* (saving a life) is at the forefront of our decision making. Our sacred texts teach that we can forgo almost any commandment or prohibition to preserve life. Since its work began on June 17th, 2020, the COVID-19 Task Force of TBS has worked with integrity and a singular focus: to put forward recommendations that reflect *Pikuach Nefesh* and prevailing medical guidance. We are excited to share this overview of how we will ensure the safety and health of our community, while also preserving the Joyful, Personal, and Accessible personality of TBS. We have also prepared a larger, more detailed report which can be found on our [website](#).

Co-chaired by Dr. Roger Friedman and Amy Klaben, Esq., the Task Force was supported by five subcommittees:

1. Religious School
2. Shabbat/Lifecycle
3. High Holy Days
4. Temple Operations
5. Programming

TBS is blessed to have many wonderful doctors in its community. In organizing the Task Force, the leadership of TBS was very intentional in ensuring that, in addition to lay members, there were medical voices on each subcommittee to provide guidance on both physical and mental/emotional health issues. From start to finish, the Task Force and its process were guided by **medical knowledge, data, and CDC, state, and local guidelines and policies**. Between June 17 - August 5, 2020, the subcommittees met many times and provided research, recommendations, and insight to the Task Force. Within that time frame, our country has witnessed the trend of the pandemic take a turn for the worse. The uncertainty as we head into the Fall (coupled with flu season) necessitates a cautious approach to protect the health and welfare of TBS's congregation and staff. **Through at least November 1, 2020, TBS's offerings will remain virtual.** In late October, the Task Force will reevaluate its recommendations based on the status of the pandemic and medical guidance. Any potential changes to the Task Force's recommendations may be considered at that time. Below are the highlights from each subcommittee; please follow the links if you would like to read more about the recommendations from each group as detailed in the Task Force's Final Report.

- [Religious School:](#)

- TBS will offer a creative Religious School experience that is tailored to a virtual format.
- The Religious School will organize outdoor, socially distanced family activities throughout the Fall.

- [Shabbat/Lifecycle:](#)

- Communal worship experiences such as Shabbat will remain virtual or be offered in a manner that maintains social distancing (e.g. Drive-In Shabbat).
- Families will have the option to conduct in-person lifecycle events, such as B'nai Mitzvah, by adhering to a strict attendance limit of 20 people as well as other safety protocols, including mandatory masks. These protocols will help keep everyone as safe as possible while still enabling

families to mark their milestones.

- **High Holy Days:**

- High Holy Day services will be offered in primarily an online format.
- Drive-in options will be offered for the Shir Shirim Musical Services (Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur) and Yizkor (Yom Kippur).
- There will also be creative, socially distanced opportunities, including neighborhood shofar blows and a self-guided Tashlich Service.

- **Temple Operations:**

- Although the Temple is closed to in-person events, it was imperative that measures be implemented to protect the staff and Clergy from possible sources of infection. For example, masks are now mandatory for all visitors to TBS, and contactless faucets and soap dispensers have been installed in all bathrooms.
- Staff will continue to work virtually, or on a staggered schedule if individuals need to be in the office.

- **Programming:**

- Despite the Temple building being closed, it is still possible for TBS's many social groups and clubs to implement creative, socially distanced programming on the Temple's outdoor spaces. A guide has been developed to help TBS's clubs/groups better understand the requirements and characteristics of these kinds of programs.

Of course, there is nothing that we would love more than in-person services, Mah Jongg in the Social Hall, and personally greeting you and your children on Sundays during Religious School drop-off. Rest assured, the same staff and Clergy of TBS who have organized hundreds of virtual and socially distanced programs since March – including the first in Columbus Drive-In Shabbat – will continue to work to engage and connect with our TBS family. Our Religious School teachers, who already have experience with providing our curriculum in a virtual format, will once again seamlessly provide the quality educational experience that you have come to expect from TBS.

This Fall should be viewed as different as opposed to lost, and TBS remains focused on fostering our sense of Jewish community during these uncertain times. Engage with the Temple's leadership, clergy, and staff at the **virtual town hall meeting on August 17, 2020 at 7:00pm** to learn more about what life will look like at TBS in the ensuing months. There are still many opportunities to engage and connect with the Temple community. If you have a talent that you would like to lend to a TBS Connect program, please let us know! As mentioned above, we also want to work with TBS's many wonderful social groups and clubs to develop COVID-safe programs. Together, we will ensure that life at TBS is as vibrant as can be.

These are extraordinary – but temporary – times. Let us work collectively so we can look back on these days as a time when our community came together as one for the benefit of all.



Dr. Roger Friedman, Task Force Co-Chair



Amy Klaben, Esq., Task Force Co-Chair



Mindy Agin, Board Co-President



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Rabbi Benjy Bar-Lev, Senior Rabbi



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