

Shalom Chaverim,

At Congregation Beth El (CBE), we have been doing our best to balance multiple concerns created by the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- (1) our need to avoid infecting ourselves or others with the dangerous novel coronavirus,
- (2) our need for social connection with, and often physical proximity to, one another, and
- (3) our need to attend responsibly to the diverse needs of our fellow community members.

We approach this balance keeping in mind several guiding principles which include:

- (a) pikuach nefesh (saving lives),
- (b) tzorchei tzibur (community needs),
- (c) respecting varied individual needs, and
- (d) balancing the risks and benefits of physical gatherings.

We are committed, one to the other, to uphold the following obligations for the High Holiday services during this time when public health authorities, and our social responsibility, urge us to take precautions. That's why we are limiting in-person attendance to 25, abbreviating all services, limiting access to the bimah, and creating a safer zone, with physical barriers and distancing, in which our cantorial soloist can sing. The following assumptions will be communicated and in place during all in-person services at the synagogue:

1. We will wear face masks, properly covering our mouth and nose, keeping them on throughout the entire time that we are gathered, whether indoors or outdoors.
2. We understand that official CBE gatherings will not involve eating, drinking or singing together.
3. We will maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from people who are not part of our household or in a shared “bubble” with members of our household.
4. We will wash or sanitize our hands frequently and before arriving at any gathering. CBE will provide adequate anti-bacterial soap and sanitizer in the restrooms and throughout the building.
5. We will not attend any in-person gathering if we have symptoms - even if very mild - that might indicate an infection, which include but are not limited to fever, headache, sore throat, a new cough, congestion, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, unexplained fatigue.
6. We will not attend any in-person gathering if we or any member of our household has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the preceding 14 days, is awaiting COVID-19 test results, is considered a “person under investigation,” or has traveled to a COVID-19 “hot spots” or states on the PA Department of Health quarantine list in the preceding 14 days.
7. We will be certain to inform Rabbi Mandel if we or our household members are diagnosed with COVID-19 within 14 days following any gathering we attended. This information will only be shared by CBE as necessary to full contact tracing obligations.
8. CBE will keep a confidential and accurate list of the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of all individuals in attendance. This is so that we can assist public health authorities in contact tracing efforts when requested; we will follow their recommendations if contacted, and we will use this information only to support contact tracing.

9. Knowing that we can't guarantee a 100% risk-free environment, in order to mitigate risk, our sanctuary will be staged in accordance with CDC guidelines to provide adequate, socially-distanced, seating for all in attendance, including the rabbi and cantorial soloist.
10. We will respect and adhere to the guidelines and set-up in the building and help guide our children and other relatives when needed to uphold these obligations. We will remind those in attendance of these obligations if it appears that anyone is not upholding them, and we will welcome such reminders from others without reproach.
11. We will seriously think through our willingness to abide by the guidelines. If any feel too onerous, we will choose to stay home and participate via the remote options. We also understand that failure to respect any of the guidelines and precautions will result in being denied entry to the building, or being asked to leave the premises.
12. Each person in attendance will be asked to sign an agreement and liability waiver, should anyone in their family come into contact with the virus while at the synagogue.

We all look forward to the day when we can all gather in person in our building again. Together, we commit to learning and following recommended best practices to hasten that day's arrival.

Rabbi Nina