

August 14, 2020

Greetings Members of the Temple Bat Yam Congregational Family,

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. Like in past years, many individuals within Temple Bat Yam have been busy preparing for the High Holy Days. The survival of Judaism has been linked to our religion's ability to innovate and change as needed. The first such change took place in ancient times after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem which had been the center of all Jewish practice and ritual. The "new" system that was invented then allowed for the building of houses of worship outside of Jerusalem even though it was viewed by those of that time as not being as good as worshipping in the Temple in Jerusalem.

We currently face an epidemic of a serious and, for many, a life threatening illness which makes it unsafe for us to gather together in our building for worship. And similar to many other periods in Jewish history, we have innovated and invoked resourcefulness and flexibility reminiscent of our ancestors. Jews have never allowed hardship to interfere with our High Holy Days, from the hidden synagogues during the Spanish Inquisition, to the makeshift places of worship in the midst of the concentration camps, and the secret gatherings in Communist Russia. And this year services may look different, but we are working hard to create a meaningful, spiritual, and safe experience for our members, friends, and guests.

To help us achieve this goal, we have conducted a survey and offered focus groups. We have listened to what you deem most important and we are trying to respond with creativity. **We have made the decision to live stream services on Zoom for this year's Holy Days. We acknowledge that it is not the same as being all together in our beautiful Temple home, but it allows us to uphold the most important Jewish value: pikuach nefesh: the saving of lives.**

Our plan of action does take into consideration the parts of the Holy Days that many of you have shared are most important:

- 1) You shared that music is a highlight of the service. We have hired an accomplished soloist with a beautiful voice who will be sharing traditional and new melodies over Zoom. We also are taking advantage of being on Zoom to share the music of professional choirs and professional cantors. We will do our best to make sure music remains an integral and central piece of the service.
- 2) You shared that seeing one another is important. We will be offering several opportunities to see one another safely. To herald in the High Holy Day season, we

will celebrate the beginning of the month of Elul with a traditional shofar service as part of our drive-in Shabbat service on Friday night August 21st at 7:30 pm. Come in your cars and see and hear in-person, Paul Kahn blowing the shofar (see attached flyer).

In addition, we will be offering a slightly longer Tashlich service (the outdoor service where you throw bread) in three different locations on Rosh Hashana afternoon: Berlin, Salisbury, and southern Delaware (see attached flyer). Come worship with masks outdoors safely distanced from one another.

- 3) You indicated you wanted the familiar and ties to the past: Rabbi Emeritus, Susan Warshaw, will be speaking on Rosh Hashana morning. And our popular Yom Kippur afternoon “Congregant Hour” (see flyer) will continue on Zoom.
- 4) You felt it important to have the opportunity to be in our building and pray before our open ark. You will have the ability to sign up for a half hour time slot on Friday, September, 25 to come in alone or with your immediate family members and light a Yizkor candle and pray in front of the open ark.
- 5) You shared that you could not imagine sitting on Zoom for the normal length of the holy day services. We have shortened the services and for our morning services we have inserted a half hour break.

We are also continuing to brainstorm new ways to ensure you find this year’s Holy Days no less awe inspiring than previous years.

We hope that you will find all of the material contained in this email informative and helpful. The goal is to share with you the myriad of planned activities that comprise this year’s celebration of The Days of Awe. This information package includes dates and details concerning Services, associated Special Events, and ancillary activities built around the High Holy Days. Please read the attached “flyers” and note which events need reservations and by what date. **A Zoom link will be sent out to all members in good standing at a later date.**

Like in past years, we are also asking, at the behest of the Board of Directors, that you consider sending an additional “gift” to Temple Bat Yam. Your generosity will help to defray celebratory expenses, and it will give you the joy and satisfaction of knowing that you are a vital “part” of our High Holy Day Season.

We look forward to welcoming that New Year with you on-line. In the interim, stay safe and stay well and may circumstances permit all of us to be back together, under one roof and

in one place again, ובימינו במהרה” soon and in our own day.” Until then, with every blessing and good wish,

B’shalom,

Rabbi Estelle Mills, Candy Gusst, President, Bette Bohlman & Steve Winkler, HHD Chairs