

6/19/2020

Dear Temple Shalom Family:

We hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe, healthy and supported during this most unusual and trying of times. Of all the pieces of information we need to communicate, we want you to know that your Temple Shalom family is here for you to support you and your loved ones in this time of need. We also want to thank you, for your care for one another during this time has, and continues, to keep our community safe.

Since mid-March, when we entered the stay-at-home order, it became clearer than ever that Temple Shalom, which has always been a place for meaningful worship, learning and gathering, needed to be that and more in an online and virtual world more than we ever had been. We needed to be able to make sure that our community continued to be connected to each other, to our clergy and to the excellent array of programs we offer.

Our gathering in these months has moved to our living rooms, dining rooms and kitchen tables as we created a virtual sanctuary in our homes, through time, space and technology. Temple Shalom has never closed, nor even slowed down because Judaism does not close, it does not stop. Instead, we pivoted. Where we needed to, we adapted and adjusted, allowing ourselves to continue forward rather than stopping in place.

We have been working diligently to make sure everyone is counted, and everyone's well-being is represented at our Temple Shalom family table. To that end, we need your participation in two important "In This Time" surveys. One concerns the use of technology – which was shared with you earlier; and a second survey on re-entry issues, which will be sent to you this coming week. Our Caring Congregation, Adult Education Committee, and Task Force on Covid-19 have prepared these questions to help us to be responsive in this crisis, to listen and be informed by you.

We are working on guidance for building activities going forward, gathering information, and crafting criteria-based policies. All decisions associated with re-entering the building will continue to be based upon the guidance and consultation of staff, clergy, volunteers and experts in the field who are members of our Covid-19 Task Force, as well as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and health officials in Dallas County. The Task Force will continue to assist the clergy, staff, officers and board in determining

the most appropriate actions going forward, even after re-entry begins. This is a giant task, encompassing many details. We are grateful to Dr. Barry Lachman, Dr. Sander Gothard, Brotherhood President Roy Flegenheimer, Sisterhood representative Laney Arndt, Board of Trustees members Lisa Greenstein & Mark Stromberg, and Denise Blasband and Rik Heller for their many, dedicated hours of work. **Most importantly, we want you to know that we will make responsible policy-informed decisions throughout this time because we love and care for you.**

Another important message we want to share is the launch for summer activities, an array of dual or “hybrid” programming, outside at Temple Shalom! We are happy to announce these upcoming virtual and “Shalom in the Outdoors” events, so **save the date for these activities**.

We also have compiled answers to questions that might be on your mind in our Q&A page. We put this page together because you are partners in our community’s ability to keep adjusting to the necessities of this crisis.

Now, as always, your clergy and community are here for you. Just as we began our stay at home order with thoughts on upholding the values of welcoming, belonging and inclusion, our leadership team ends this message affirming that our every concern is for you, our beloved community. We will continue our gathering, work and worship around our virtual table, as we navigate this pandemic era, present in space and time, present before each other and God, together, and open for all who enter and belong with us and to us.

Please email any questions or concerns to [slewis@templeshalomdallas.org](mailto:slewis@templeshalomdallas.org) or to [president@templeshalomdallas.org](mailto:president@templeshalomdallas.org) and don’t forget to look out for the new survey. Check out our upcoming activities and read our Q&A page, and *wash your hands!*

L’ Shalom,  
Debra Levy-Fritts, President  
Rabbi Andrew Paley  
Cantor Devorah Avery  
Steve Lewis, Executive Director