

**Dear Temple Shalom Members and Friends,**

*Blessed are you who have come here in the name of the Lord, from the House of the Lord we bless you – Psalm 118*

It is with great excitement and anticipation that we welcome in this time of the year, a time of beginnings and a time, we pray, of continued health and vitality for our families, our communities and especially our beloved Temple Shalom. June 1st marked the start of our new fiscal year, the start of a new term for our board of trustees and most importantly, the entrance of our congregation to a time of renewed connection and engagement as we begin in-person worship and other activities. We know in our hearts that the world is different, and that we, too, are different. Yet, as we walk to the door of our Temple, where we meet, and step inside, we do so with joy and excitement and admittedly, with a little apprehension.

Throughout this difficult journey, the Temple Shalom COVID Taskforce has been diligently and carefully evaluating information in order, first and foremost, to keep our community safe, providing helpful and necessary logistical recommendations for continued operations. We thank them for their tireless efforts thus far and for their continued advice and guidance in the future.

Given the current public health information, the Temple Shalom Covid-19 Task Force recommends in-person gathering at Temple Shalom, beginning June 11th, and so, recognizing the sacredness of this time, please join us on June 11th at 6:30pm for a Shabbat service of re-entry, as we install our new board and share a welcome back service with members of our community. We are honored to welcome Texas House Representative Ana Maria Ramos to help us in our welcoming of one another, and in our return to in-person community building.

The Jewish value of “pikuach nefesh” - the value to preserve and care for every person’s well being - has been at the center of our efforts over these past 15 months to keep everyone as safe as possible and it continues to guide us as we gather in- person. We recognize that **each beloved temple member has different experiences, family and medical situations, and feelings** and comfort levels with the speed about being in-person as we navigate this process.

**We know that as a loving and caring community, we will do our best to live our values of care and respect in the weeks ahead as we begin to know each other person to person and become comfortable with being together, again. Take to heart the measures we require to keep one another as safe as possible.**

The COVID 19 Task Force recommends the following for in-person gathering at this time:

- Every Temple Shalom member will be vaccinated
- Worship will take place in the Sanctuary
  - Wearing masks throughout the service
  - Maintaining distance between worshippers
  - Beginning with 100 worshippers
  - Advance reservation(s) for worship
- Small group gatherings and meetings as capacity and conditions permit

This is a deliberate and careful plan of in-person re-engagement. This will allow us to continue to evaluate the situation to make sure we are safe. Please bear in mind that protocols and procedures can change as information becomes more available. We appreciate your patience.

It is with a surge of hope, love and excitement that we welcome you into gathering, into belonging. We can’t wait to see you, and hear about your life, families and stories of this pandemic year, and to build alongside you, our community’s strength and future.

With love and gratitude,

Senior Rabbi Andrew Paley  
Cantor Devorah Avery  
Executive Director Steve Lewis  
President Debra Levy-Fritts