



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

March 19, 2020

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To All Members—

I hope all of you are staying safe, following the recommendations of the Vermont Department of Health, and still able to enjoy your daily lives with minimal additional stress. First and foremost, we are a Community and if the stress or the moment becomes too much, please do not hesitate to reach out to Rabbi, myself, or your friends here at Temple Sinai.

I want to take a moment to keep you updated on all the goings-on at Temple Sinai including Shabbat services, observances and activities we are continuing with in a virtual way so long as COVID 19 continues to require social distancing. In times like these, it is more important than ever that you feel strengthened by our Community and our Community is strengthened by you.

- **Proactive Board:** The Board met via ZOOM at our regularly scheduled Board Meeting this past Monday (3/16/20) and made several determinations related to the coronavirus pandemic including allowing all employees to work from home, implementing the practice to notify other employees of times access to the buildings will be necessary so as to ensure social distancing is maintained, continuing to pay Religious School Teachers who continue to teach online, not allowing access to the building by outside groups and third parties, and being proactive to engage in online programming.
- **Isolated Members and Chavarim:** We are continuing our efforts to be engaged and helpful in our Temple Sinai community. We are concerned about and are trying to identify any member who is feeling isolated, does not have sufficient food or medicine, or is feeling stressed by this unprecedented situation. Some things we are working on right now include making regular and routine contact with isolated members and providing them with Passover Boxes. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us and we will continue to our best to reach out to you. There will be more updates on this so please watch for emails or announcements from Rabbi and Stacie, as well as the Chavarim Committee.
- **Shabbat Services via ZOOM:** Rabbi continues his unceasing efforts to bring Jewish life into our homes. Virtual Shabbat services will be held at the normal time (6:30) and you can participate by connecting to ZOOM through our website either by using your smartphone or computer. We are making this process as simple and intuitive as possible

but recommend you attempt to join the service at least 20 minutes in advance if you have not used ZOOM in the past.

- **Saturday Morning Services, Torah Study, Classes and Discussion Groups via ZOOM:** Our traditional Saturday Morning Shabbat Service and Torah Study can be joined via ZOOM also at their usual times. In addition to Shabbat services and Torah Study, Rabbi will conduct classes and hold discussion groups via ZOOM. Many of these will be repeated so if you are unable to make it at a certain time, please look for an additional time when you can join the class/discussion group via ZOOM. A complete schedule can be found on our website.
- **Communicate with Rabbi:** During this time, Rabbi will not be holding regular office hours and will primarily be working from home. He has assured me that he is available to speak with all of us via phone and internet (where both video and audio are available) so please do not hesitate to contact him. His phone and email contacts continue to be 862-5125 and rabbi@templesinaivt.org, respectively.
- **Virtual Passover Will Replace our Traditional Seder:** Rabbi, Mark and others are developing a Virtual Passover Seder for all of us to attend. This means, however, that our in-person, potluck Passover Seder is cancelled for this year.
- **Administration by Stacie:** Even though our facility is now closed, Stacie has been busy. For example, she continues to: communicate with Board Members, committees, and members, receive deliveries, and coordinate repairs/upgrades to the facility. Stacie has been proactive in garnering information and identifying actions we should and need to take to safeguard our facility from the spread of the coronavirus such as implementing new cleaning policies and discussing with all groups and third parties using the facility that access is no longer allowed. The latest group to be told this was AA whose last date of use was March 18th.
- **Business Hours:** Like Rabbi, Stacie is no longer keeping regular office hours. However, she can be reached through normal channels (i.e., Temple's telephone (862-5125) and email (administrator@templesinaivt.org)). Otherwise, the building is closed.
- **Religious School:** Judy has been hard at work with our Religious School Teachers and a plan is now in place to hold virtual classes via ZOOM for many of our classes. Please look for further announcements for which classes will meet virtually. Also, I want to report that Judy is also primarily working from home but continues to monitor the Religious School and is fully engaged in dialogue with other organizations about how to continue to provide quality religious school education.
- **Technology:** We are concerned about our members' facility with technology. Our primary way of communicating with members will be via ZOOM, email, and other interactive engagement through our website and social media. If you feel you need a tutorial or help in any way connecting via one or any of these sources, please let us know. Please forward to us any photographs you have pictures of your family engaged in

worship at home that can be on Facebook. In one respect, this “downtime” is resulting in a blossoming of Jewish content on line, and we want to ensure we participate in a meaningful way both in terms of developing our own content and providing access to our members.

- **Our Extended Community:** We are continuing our efforts to be engaged and helpful in our extended community. Our Social Action Committee is presently planning a food drive and is facilitating a blood drive via the Red Cross. There will be more on this so please watch for emails or announcements from Rabbi and Stacie, as well as the Social Action Committee; and please look to our website.
- **Contact Me:** Please do not hesitate to reach out to me via email (President@templesinaivt.org) or my office phone ((802) 495-5120) if there anything I can assist you with or if you have a suggestion, comment or constructive criticism. Please also continue to check our website (<https://templesinaivt.org/>) for updates.

I would be neglectful if I failed to mention both the professionalism and level of compassion every employee at Temple has exhibited during this time of crisis and this includes Rabbi, Stacie, Judy, Ibrahim and all of our Religious School Teachers. Thank you for your efforts and concern.

And thank you everyone for all of your help.

My thoughts and prayers are with each of you. I look forward to the time when we can all embrace each other once again.

Shalom,

Doug Marden