



## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

April 2, 2020

500 Swift Street | South Burlington, VT 05403  
802.862.5125 | [www.templestinaivt.org](http://www.templestinaivt.org)

---

### Message from Your President Regarding Temple Sinai's Response to COVID 19

Dear Members—

COVID 19 is having a chilling effect on all us. Rabbi and Stacie are working hard to bring worship and programming into our living rooms and, along with others, to reach out to each of us during these times. One of the certain consequences of the pandemic is and will continue to be the financial impact on our community both at the Temple level and on a deeply individual level as members' incomes are impacted. In this message, I want to primarily address how our leadership is addressing Temple's financial future, how each of you factor into this financial future, and—looking beyond finances—the role each of you can play to help all of us face the uncertain future emotionally and spiritually.

Speaking strictly for the consequences of COVID 19 on Temple's finances, there are several impacts we already feel. We know we have lost and will continue to lose significant rental income as we have stopped all third-party use of our facility and called off all lifecycle events. While dues payments have only fallen a little short for March 2020, we anticipate an increased shortfall over the next few months, at minimum, as members become harder hit. Community-wide fundraising events are on hold. Unfortunately, in regard to the expense side of our ledger, nearly all our expenses are fixed: employees continue to work; utilities continue to be used; and committees continue to function.

Our community has taken several initiatives to confront the isolation and stay-at-home requirements resulting from COVID 19. Some of them you are already aware of such as our active on-line presence and the tremendous efforts of Amy Collins, Deb Leopold and others through our Chavarim Committee to reach out to and engage members in need. In addition, we established an ad hoc, oversight committee—the COVID 19 Committee—to review our finances and to plan steps we can or must take to try to maintain an even keel financially so long as the effects of the pandemic are being felt. I have asked David Collins, Susan Leff, Bruce Hicken, Steve Greenfield, Rabbi, Stacie Gabert and Tim Cope to serve on this committee.

The COVID 19 Committee has met and come up with an action plan related to our finances. Fortunately, as is typical of this time of year, we have a strong cash position so our ability to pay staff and bills for the immediate future is not in jeopardy. Nonetheless, the committee primarily through Bruce, Steve and Stacie, is now in the process of applying for a grant pursuant to the Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) made available by recent federal legislation called the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act or the CARES Act. The PPP provides funding to cover expenses related to full time employees, rent and mortgage payments, and utility costs anticipated to be incurred through June 30, 2020. The committee is making cash flow

projections through the end of the year based on best, middle and worse case scenarios so that we are best positioned to strategize and protect our community as the pandemic evolves. The committee has started the conversation about the 2021 budget. As evidenced by who is on the committee, we are having open and honest conversations with staff about how to meet the needs of our community while looking more carefully than ever at staffing requirements. One thing is certain, however, while COVID 19 has changed the way we worship, program and educate—i.e., “provide services”—the need and effort of Temple to provide such services is more essential than ever. And it is our goal to continue to meet this need unabated.

### **What can you do?**

**First** and foremost, stay safe. We want everyone coming back healthy and as soon as possible to enjoy our Temple Sinai community, worship and activities as soon as we are able.

**Second**, call your friends and family members and please pay particular attention to reach out to members of our community.

**Third**, please attend services via ZOOM. Also available by ZOOM are classes, discussion groups, chat rooms, and other activities sponsored by Temple Sinai. While connecting electronically may not be the panacea for isolation, it always cheers me up to see and hear each other engaging in worship, learning and fun.

**Fourth**, if you or someone you know is having difficulty emotionally or financially, please reach out to us. If you have pledged to make a dues payment but right now is not the right time, please contact Stacie. And you know Rabbi will do anything in his power to make himself available to those in need of conversation or guidance.

**Fifth**, if you have the wherewithal, please donate to Temple Sinai. Our need for fundraising and long term financial planning is even greater today. There are at least two things this coronavirus pandemic reconfirms. One, we have an amazing community here at Temple Sinai and two, being on secure financial footing would allow us to do even more for our community. Here are a few gifting ideas for you to consider:

- Please consider making smaller donations in the amount of \$18, \$50 and \$100. These gifts add up and can be made multiple times. More to the point, small gifts will support efforts of the Chaverim Committee and may make a difference on whether we can keep or lay off employees. Please see our updated DONATION icon on our website or speak with Stacie. And don't forget to fill out the new gift form.
- Now is the time to consider making a pledge for a significant, multi-year contribution to Temple Sinai. Think about a multi-year pledge to endowment. You can speak with me, Susan Leff, Tim Cope or Rabbi, and we can schedule an in-person meeting once it is safe to do so. We will be reaching out to you as well.
- Please consider “planned giving” either in the form of a bequest or a distribution from your Trust. Adding Temple as a beneficiary is easy. Please contact me, Tim Cope or your lawyer if you have any questions on how to do this.

**Sixth**, we want to make sure that we are there for our members and our community. Consequently, your feedback and any new ideas about our response and outreach to members due to COVID 19 is appreciated. In terms of your feedback, let me just say that “we don’t know what we don’t know” meaning that, to a certain extent, we have to rely on contact with and information provided to us by our members. Please do not hesitate to email me at [president@templesinaivt.org](mailto:president@templesinaivt.org).

We will continue to keep you posted on the recommendations of the COVID 19 Committee and actions taken by the Board. Please contact me or Stacie or Rabbi with any questions. Please reach out if you have a need. Hope to see everyone at our service and Oneg this Friday starting at 6:30.

Until then, please stay safe.

Shalom,

Doug Marden