



Andrea C. London, Rabbi
Amy L. Memis-Foler, Rabbi
Kyle A. Cotler, Cantor Rabbi
Bekki Harris Kaplan, Executive Director
Marci Dickman, Director of Lifelong Learning
Marla Topp, Administrator
Kathy Kaberon, Director of Young Family Programs
Maia Volk, Director of Youth Programs
Peter S. Knobel, Ph.D., Rabbi Emeritus ז"ל
David Polish, Founding Rabbi ז"ל

June 2020 | Sivan 5720

Dear Friends,

I am writing to you with several important updates. As I shared at our Annual Meeting on April 20 (which can be found on our BE Connected web page), there is a lot going on at Beth Emet! While our building is closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, our congregation is as active as ever. In fact, in some ways, we are even more engaged and involved than ever before. Our amazing clergy and staff have worked tirelessly to create a virtual Beth Emet, and together with our lay leaders are busy working to connect and support the congregation in meaningful ways. Fortunately, we are starting from a position of great strength, and I am confident that we will weather these challenging times. I hope you would agree that we have had great success in adapting to the new circumstances and in creating a virtual congregation, including worship, Beit Sefer, adult education, lifecycle events, communications, and a wide range of other programs aimed at keeping us all connected. Check out our weekly "BE Connected" emails to learn more.

Importantly, I want you to know **how we are planning for the future**. Our Beth Emet community is strong, blessed with thoughtful leaders open to innovation and a vibrant community ready to apply their talents for creative solutions. We have assembled a task force to bring together all of our best thinking and to tackle the challenges that are ahead of us. I am chairing a **continuity planning team** which is composed of lay leaders and Klei Kodesh [clergy and senior staff] who are proactively looking at protocols for how we open the building under a variety of scenarios, how we can safely use our space to be together as a community, and, of course, how we will observe the High Holy Days.

We anticipate that we will open the building gradually and need to be prepared for additional intermittent closures or limitations. And, we know that different households will have differing needs and risk tolerance that may impact when they are ready to re-enter public spaces such as Beth Emet. We anticipate that we will continue to operate online, even once we re-open for some activities. Of course, we will follow federal, state, and local laws, and the safety and health of our staff and members is paramount. We are closely connected to the resources from the Union for Reform Judaism, and the affiliated rabbinic and cantorial organizations for additional direction.

As of this writing, there is uncertainty as to when we can begin to gather together physically, but we will be sure to communicate our plans as they become known. Attached to this letter we have responses to the most common questions that are being asked. We also want to give everyone in the community an opportunity to hear directly from leadership and to ask any questions you might have. To that end, we have scheduled an **online Beth Emet community town hall meeting on Monday June 15 at 8:00 p.m.** Please submit your questions in advance to info@bethemet.org

Sensitive to the uncertainty that we are all confronting, the Board of Trustees has determined that we will have **no increase in the membership commitment rates** for our fiscal year 2020-21. We anticipate that some of our members will experience significant financial challenges, while others may be able to support Beth Emet's financial stability during these times. If you are able, please consider a contribution to our Free Will fund in support of those who may find the cost of membership a bit more challenging this year.

The Board has been actively working to continually improve the safety and security of our building. In order to ensure we are properly addressing the changing situation, we have added a **\$75 annual security and safety fee** per household, which will be added to your billing statement. These funds will enable us to add additional lighting to our parking lot, implement a public address system throughout the building, install shatter-resistant film to first floor windows, and add supplemental personnel at larger or higher profile events, especially at times when we would need to have two entrances open.

Consistent with our mission to be eco-friendly, we are strongly encouraging households to enroll in **electronic billing and automatic payments**. Additionally, paper-based processes are much more complex during the coronavirus. Of course, if you are already receiving electronic statements and paying through automatic deductions or stock transfers, we thank you!

In the next week or so, you will receive by email a **personalized membership statement** from Bekki Harris Kaplan, which will confirm your membership commitment, and will include a link to contribute to the Free Will fund and enroll in automatic payments. (If you are unable to access email, please call Shlomit at 847-869-4230, and she will be happy to help.)

We will continue to communicate as plans unfold. If you have any questions or ideas, please reach out to me at karen.L.isaacson@gmail.com or join me online any Sunday at 10:00 a.m. for informal conversation [the link can be found in every Monday's "BE Connected" communication].

L'shalom,



Karen Isaacson
President, Beth Emet Board of Trustees