

Dear Friends,

Among the most important values taught in the Torah is a commandment in Deuteronomy 4:9, "You shall guard yourselves very well." Protecting our bodies and souls from harm is a primary Torah concern, and it is in fulfillment of that commandment that we write to you today.

As new cases of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) are reported in Ohio and throughout the United States, the health and safety of our community is our top priority. We are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of illness, while also continuing to remain lovingly connected to one another in this uncertain time.

At this time, we are not aware of any evidence that anyone in our community has contracted the Coronavirus, or had direct contact with anyone who has. That said, we know from experts that proactively limiting the gatherings of crowds is an important facet in reducing the spread of illness.

After serious consideration of information available to us from local and national authorities about the virus, as well as consultation with our congregant Dr. Jack Bernstein, whose professional expertise involves infectious disease control, we have decided to err on the side of extreme caution in order to protect the vulnerable in our community, our sacred obligation. **We will temporarily be suspending all building operations this weekend starting tomorrow, Friday March 13 at 3:00 pm through Sunday, March 15:**

- **All worship services – Shabbat and Sunday morning**
- **GOAL! religious school**
- **Sisterhood's Sunday Brunch Program: Intolerance and Hate: Let's Talk (To Be Rescheduled)**
- **Cantor Kopmar's Student Recital Sunday**

Due to health and operational considerations we have, with a heavy heart, also **cancelled:**

- **Ruth and Fred Scheuer Life Enrichment Series March 20-22 (To Be Rescheduled)**
- **Pesach Second Seder (Thursday April 9)**

We will make decisions regarding synagogue activities and services for the following weeks based on the best information available to us. As of today, we will continue to hold morning and evening daily minyan. The office remains open during normal hours.

As we work to keep all of us and our synagogue as safe and healthy as possible, we encourage everyone to follow good hygiene practices that have been communicated through the general media:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or a sleeve
- Stay home if you are feeling ill or have a fever
- Stop hand shaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting

**Remember, we are here for you! Don't hesitate to contact Rabbi Ginsberg or Cantor Raizen, or any of our staff. We must also be there for each other.** Our communal and spiritual connection to each other is among our greatest blessings here at Beth Abraham. So, even as we struggle to shape our response to outbreaks of the novel Coronavirus, we must make sure that we maintain our humanity. Rather than allowing restrictions to push us apart, we must find creative, compassionate ways to pull together.

With gratitude and care for each and every one of you,

Rabbi Ginsberg

Mike Freed