



Dear Congregants,

It has just come to our attention that one participant at Rosh HaShana services in the Main Sanctuary tested positive for Covid-19. This individual did not and does not have symptoms (though that is not dispositive) and was tested as a routine part of his job. He will be retested as soon as the rules and protocols where he is located permit. He was sitting in the North West pews of the men's section -- the section that is farthest away from the ark, seated toward the front of that section. We are contacting directly those whose seats were in close proximity to him.

We have discussed the issue with the medical and other professionals in our COVID-19 Reentry Working Group, which has been functioning and meeting regularly since the Spring, and will continue to seek guidance from them. They remind us that there is a meaningful chance that the test is falsely positive and that the congregant is not in fact infected with the virus. Given the many precautions we have taken including Merv-13 filters in our HVAC system, numerous air purifiers throughout the sanctuary, open windows, rigorous cleaning and sanitizing protocols before and after services, expansive social distancing in a large space, enforcement of valveless masks, avoidance of handshaking, etc., we are hopeful that, even were he to be infected, any spread of the virus will be limited to this one individual. In any case, CDC guidelines advise that you should isolate and get tested if you believe that you have not maintained safety precautions, including 6-foot distance from your fellow congregants in the affected area for durations of over 15 minutes. We cannot here quote or fairly summarize the CDC guidelines, which are important and can be found [here](#).

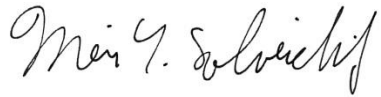
Nonetheless, as a precaution, because we believe that our cantor who led services in the Main Sanctuary on Rosh Hashana had prolonged interaction with this individual, we have instructed our cantor not to lead midweek, Shabbat, or holiday services until we are advised that he does not pose any added risk to our Congregation. The rapid COVID-19 test for our cantor today was negative, and he is experiencing no symptoms.

At this time, we expect to proceed with our Kippur services in the Main Sanctuary and at MDS as planned. We have other clergy and capable lay leaders to handle all aspects of the service. We understand that each of you needs to weigh your own risks, safety, and comfort levels. If

you decide that you are no longer comfortable attending our indoor services, please notify Barbara Reiss immediately at [breiss@shearithisrael.org](mailto:breiss@shearithisrael.org). Unfortunately, we do not have additional spots at our outdoor service at MDS.

We will notify you promptly if we have further guidance to share (and ask that you forward this email to anyone who was listed on your Rosh HaShana ticket).

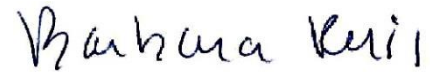
We pray for a prompt clean bill of health to our congregant and wish you all a *gmar hatima tova*, a meaningful Kippur, and a happy and healthy 5781.



Meir Soloveichik, Rabbi



Louis Solomon, Parnas



Barbara Reiss, Executive Director