

Dear Wise Temple Family,

Since March, when COVID-19 first changed our world, Wise Temple has held two primary goals for all that we do: 1) to be vigilant about upholding Judaism's highest priorities for life and health during a pandemic, and 2) to explore every new means of continuing our vibrant sense of community virtually to enrich your Jewish life with added meaning during a time of such uncertainty. You have enthusiastically embraced these new approaches with greater numbers of people than ever worshipping, learning, and studying, and exploring new avenues of community building with participation more than doubling in these last months as we sought to balance these primary objectives of safety as well as reaching you in new ways.

Our Wise Temple leadership continues to strive for that delicate balance. As you know, in July we initiated outdoor programs and Shabbat worship in addition to the full array of virtual worship, learning and programs. However, there are different considerations of safety and prudence involved in planning indoor gatherings of large numbers of people. Welcoming hundreds of people as we normally do each year for High Holy Day worship creates physical and logistical challenges that are difficult to meet while also observing the two primary goals of safety and meaning in Jewish life, even at the holiest days of our year.

As a result, our Board of Trustees has reached the very difficult decision to hold our High Holy Day services via Livestream only, with no in-person gathering for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. From the Plum Street Temple, our rabbis, High Holy Day Choir, and soloist Simon Barrad will bring all that is familiar and comforting to us for these Days of Awe virtually; it will be much of what you are used to, but simply being accessed at home. In addition, Family Services will be offered virtually as well. While there will be no in-person gathering for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we hope that we can draw upon the great sense of community that we have built over many years of assembly to add to the meaning of worshipping via livestream. As the High Holy Days approach, we will be sure to communicate specific instructions to make it easy to connect, and for those who are concerned about the ease of that connection, we will make individual phone and zoom tutorials available to increase your assurance that you will be able to join in without technology anxieties. Please also watch for information regarding the High Holy Days Mitzvah Bag dropoff and other creative ways of adding meaning to the virtual service that will come to you from Plum Street Temple.

In addition, you should know that while it was necessary to decide at this time about the High Holy Days, we have not yet made any decisions about smaller in-person indoor gatherings (including religious school, indoor Shabbat worship, adult learning, and programs). Your congregational leadership will continue to deliberate and keep you informed in the weeks and months to come, always returning to those two primary criteria of safety and deep Jewish engagement that Wise Temple uniquely brings to your lives. No matter what decisions are reached along the way, we will continue to enrich and expand our

virtual presence and your accessibility to it, so that we can be prepared for any change or new conditions that may arise.

As always, we welcome your thoughts, concerns, and feelings. You can connect with us through the Temple office 513-793-2556 which is open on weekdays, or via email (addresses below). In this new year of 5781, may we navigate these new and unsettling waters together, committed to our mutual well-being, safety, and desire to bring Jewish wisdom and comfort to our lives, now more than ever.

Warmly,

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