

Dear Religious School Parents:

Pikuash Nefesh. It is a phrase as old as our people, and its meaning has always been fundamental to our faith: The preservation of life and health overrides all else, including almost any religious rule.

For both the religious and lay leadership of Temple Beth David, the principle of *Pikuash Nefesh* guides and governs us in all that we do. For us, the life, health, safety and well-being of each member of our Temple Beth David family overrides all else. Just as all of you, we too have been following the advance of the Coronavirus, and share your concerns about it. It is with this as our foremost motivation, that the clergy and Executive Committee of our synagogue convened to formulate our response to the acceleration of the spread of the Coronavirus. Temple Beth David feels a unique responsibility in this regard to your children, for after all, your children are the children of our temple family as well. Our hope and our goal is to do all that we reasonably can to safeguard the health of your children and you, and to avoid any contribution to the continuing spread of exposure and illness in our own community and beyond.

Therefore, our officers, along with Rabbi Arberman and Cantor Bensimhon have therefore together taken the painful, difficult and yet important and necessary decision to suspend all Temple Beth David Religious School classes effective on Sunday, March 15 through to and including Sunday, April 19. Throughout this period, our leadership will continue to monitor and assess all relevant circumstances. If possible, we will resume classes at an earlier date; if necessary, the suspension of activities may extend further. It is our present intention to add any missed classes during this period to the end of the Religious School calendar.

Of course, if your children or you have recently returned from abroad, are ill, or are among the groups with special vulnerabilities, or suspect exposure to the virus, please do not send your children to pre-school.

Most office and administrative services at Temple Beth David will be unaffected and will continue, so should you have any questions or concerns, our office staff can and will respond to telephone and electronic communications and send and receive mail, although they will be unavailable to meet personally.

Also, our Rabbi and Cantor will exercise their best efforts, consistent with the preservation of their own health, to serve the congregation as they always have, and to meet the ritual, educational, pastoral and other needs of our temple family.

As we move through the uncertainties of the days ahead, we will strive to meet the changes in emerging circumstances, and to respond to the very best of our abilities. Most

importantly, we will keep you informed of all significant developments, and of our progress toward the restoration of our normal and customary operations.

We hope that you will understand that our decisions were not made lightly. We know that difficulties and inconveniences will occur. And we know and feel deeply how much Temple Beth David means to all of you, and how important a force it is in providing to your children the quality Jewish education you want for them.

But please know this - Temple Beth David has been here, is here now, and will continue to be here for you, as your spiritual home!

Our world and our community is faced with an unprecedented circumstance, and therefore some of what we will now attempt in response is unprecedented for our congregation. And so, we may get some things wrong, and we may stumble on the path ahead. But with your patience and understanding, and your strength and resolve, we can and will emerge stronger and with a greater sense of purpose than ever!

Pikuash Nefesh!

The Executive Committee of Temple Beth David

By: Len Schwartz, President