



CONGREGATION
BETH ISRAEL

Dear Beth Israel Friends,

We've all lost something these past few weeks. Let's not deny it. Due to physical-distancing, we've only come face-to-face with economic insecurity, fear of invisible contagion, and prolonged isolation, but not each other.

While we wait, alone, there are sources of support and many of them are real and tangible. Personal and financial support resources are generously listed on our website, and livestream Shabbat services and Torah study, midweek classes, and easy-to-reach clergy and Temple leaders are always available to you. They delay economic insecurity and contagion even if they can't completely eliminate our isolation from each other.

Faith is a valuable source, too. The old adage says, "There are no atheists in foxholes." Though some military personnel claim to be atheists, the adage grows out of the sentiment that, on the battlefield, faith provides an undeniable layer of protection. Who hasn't uttered the words, "Dear God," or "Oh, my God," in recent weeks, to express hope that something beyond us might provide an extra layer of protection on our battlefield against COVID-19? With hearts opened wide and arms raised high, we've all asked, what will become of our work, our children's education, bar/bat mitzvahs and weddings this year, and what of current troubles that still linger? Answers will come from reliable people and places, and the future will provide ways and means to do what is still possible.

Now, let's collect ourselves and take stock of what we still have, together. There are scientists working round-the-clock to find a way through this. And, there are silver linings that will emerge as positive consequences of a most horrible time; not the least of which is the usefulness of the internet and social media. The burst of creativity and connectedness will not disappear when we emerge from this pandemic. It will forever reveal what we can do when we take such a powerful tool and use it for good. And, there is faith. Online we have prayed, learned, shared openly, laughed deeply, and reached out over miles to family and friends. Just last week, on Zoom, my family, spread out over four cities, shared the Sabbath blessings together. What a gift.

So, let's work hard for an end to this experience and pray personally for a return to all the loves in our life, at home and work, at synagogue and school. Now, let me share a prayer that I wrote for you when we livestream on Shabbat.

Together, Again.

"For those who are alone, find comfort with us and in God's presence.

For those with a spouse or partner, gain strength from each other.

For those with children, know patience with them and love them more.

For those with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, keep them in your heart for their sake.

For everybody in our circle of families and friends, may we find our way, again, to share life's moments --- may they only be joyful --- and always, together."

To your health and well-being,

Rabbi David Lyon
Rabbi Adrienne Scott
Irving Stern, President

Cantor Star Trompeter
Rabbi Eleanor Steinman
David Scott, Executive Director