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Rabbi Azriel C. Fellner
Cheryl Gavin & David Stern, Co-Presidents

David & Dorothy Bernstein Hebrew School

March 17, 2020

Dear Congregants,

We are living in trying times. A virus called Covid-19, and also called the Coronavirus, has affected our nation, indeed the whole world. The virus is highly contagious and in older people very dangerous to their health.

Our Jewish tradition tells us that "Pikuah Nephesh," the protection of one's health, suspends almost all Jewish law. Jewish law also commands that we are responsible to one another. Consequently, since the governors of the tri-state area together with medical authorities have all determined that, because the Corona Virus is so contagious, group activities must cease, that we should all shelter in place until the danger passes.

Schools, bars, restaurants, public sports activities and places of worship where people gather have been asked to suspend their services to and for the public.

In response to this danger and our adherence to Jewish tradition in protecting ourselves, and in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by our civil authorities the following changes in our religious services have been decided:

- Friday night and Shabbat morning services are suspended.
- Hebrew School classes will be delivered online.
- The annual communal Seder has been cancelled.
- We will let you know when and if Passover services will take place
- Any meeting with 10 or more people should not take place.

Naturally, these decisions are painful. However, we want you to know that we are available through the phone, and that we will continually communicate with you via our Facebook page, email and our website (www.patchoguejewishcenter.com) Should you require special help or questions regarding Passover, do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Furthermore, we are examining the possibility of using ZOOM, a webbased internet protocol through which we can electronically connect with one another through our computers, iPhones, Android devices and tablets for modified Shabbat services. We will let you know when that will come on line.

Some of you may feel uncomfortable using electronic devices on Shabbat. There are Sabbath restrictions in the use of computers and other devices. But Jewish law permits certain flexibility when there is a "Sha-at HaD'Hak," which means "in times of emergency." This is such a time and as rabbi, I am permitting the use of such devices limited to this time.

Meanwhile, please stay safe and healthy and reach out to us when you feel the need. Please continue to check out our website, our Facebook page and your email for additional information.

May God protect us all.

Rabbi Azriel C. Fellner

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