

March 13th, 2020
17 Adar 5780

Dear Friends,

We're writing to let you know that our shuls have collectively made the decision to suspend all in person activities - including all minyanim, educational classes and youth groups - until further notice.

This decision is guided by the fact that halacha requires us to prioritize the preservation of life. Based on everything we have learned from medical experts, the best way to limit the spread of COVID-19 is through social distancing, even amongst otherwise healthy individuals who are not high risk. Indeed, last night we spoke with Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington, DC who told us that it is best to close.

While the state of Maryland has specified that only communal gatherings over 250 people should be limited, we nonetheless feel it is important to embrace the spirit of this guideline even if we might have been able to comply with it technically. This means suspending all large sized gatherings.

We join many other communities across the nation, including those in Bergen County (NJ), the Westchester Vaad, shuls in Manhattan, a group of shuls in LA, a group of shuls in Boston, and many other shuls across the country.

This is a decision we did not make lightly and we approach with a heavy heart. We encourage everyone to *daven* at home and to take every precaution you can to safeguard not only your own health but that of others.

Each of our shuls will be in touch with its members later today with more information about opportunities to connect virtually in the days ahead as well as shul-specific logistical information.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Nissan Antine
Rabbi Eitan Cooper

Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld
Maharat Ruth Friedman

Rabbi Uri Topolosky

