

March 12, 2020

Dear Shearith Israel Family,

Recognizing the supreme value that Jewish law places on the sanctity of human life, and in fellowship with many of our neighboring Manhattan congregations, we are very sadly cancelling regular services at Shearith Israel, effective immediately through Sunday evening, including this Shabbat. This is in addition to the suspension of all other classes and programs inside our building (although we are exploring the use of digital media to serve as a continuing source of Torah study, community learning, and intellectual engagement). This is being done under medical guidance that limiting large gatherings is particularly essential at this critical time in order to slow, and hopefully halt, the spread of the Coronavirus. We will re-evaluate the situation on Sunday and will maintain communication with you.

While not holding Shabbat services, we are looking into the possibility of providing very brief readings of Parashat Parah at some point this Shabbat. This will not be a service, but a brief reading that will last several minutes. If we do proceed with this possibility, it will be offered to very small groups of people who will be spaced far apart from one another, taking advantage of the unique size of our sanctuary. This would only be open to individuals who affirm that they are not in any way considered to be in high-risk groups, and only through confirmed pre-registration. If you are interested, please let us know by 8 PM tonight by registering [here](#). We will respond to registrants on Friday as early as possible with further details. Please understand, this reading is not guaranteed.

It is our hope and prayer that our physical distance from one another will ultimately bind us to each other in our hearts, and inspire us to better appreciate the spiritual bond that we share.

Wishing you a Shabbat of health and holiness.

Louis M. Solomon

Barbara Reiss

Meir Soloveichik, Rabbi Louis Solomon, Parnas
Barbara Reiss, Executive
Director