

All,

We likely cannot avoid remembering this time as a time of terror and tumult, for it surely is. But we can also work now on writing different narratives: of connection, of solidarity, of warmth, of acts of loving kindness, of praise for those who sustain themselves and who help others. As the author and activist [James Baldwin](#) taught: “For nothing is fixed, forever and forever, it is not fixed; the earth is always shifting, the light is always changing, the sea does not cease to grind down rock. Generations do not cease to be born. And we are responsible to them because we are the only witnesses they have. The sea rises, the light fails, lovers cling to each other, and children cling to us. **The moment we cease to hold each other, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.**”

My heart hurts for those who have nowhere to shelter, who have lost their jobs, who cannot get the medical care to which they are entitled, whose marginalization is magnified by this virus. Still, and maybe particularly, even with that heavily on the soul, as often as I can, I choose gratitude. Putting myself in a grateful mindset doesn't come easily but when I can get there, I can sometimes change what I feel inside by looking outside.

Here, I wish to lift up the Rabbis and the staff at Shir Tikvah for their simply extraordinary work in creating, refining, and making real the power of our Judaism to hold us against the sea and keep the light on. As president of the board, I have more insight than most about what they have been doing but I know only a fraction of what has been done and needs doing every day to transform the ways in which Shir Tikvah is reaching you. I am moved to tears by our Zoom Shabbat Friday services, tears which on the first Shabbat were [grief](#) but which by our third contained gratitude and joy in equal parts to the grief. I know that one reason Jews smash a glass at weddings is to remind ourselves that loss is ever present in our lives, to honor what is missing and missed. But there's still the joy of the wedding, of the [Shabbos bride](#)! (Link is to the Maccabeats' *Lecha Dodi*, a version which, as I taught you last month, slaps.)

Our most recent Zoom Shabbat service welcomed several hundred congregants from at least Minnesota, California, Oregon, Illinois, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C. When we return to the new normal times—and we will leave this narrow place, *mitzrayim*—we may be able to and choose to continue broadcasting from our own building. I am grateful today to the [Minneapolis Jewish Federation](#) whose COVID-19 emergency grant of more than \$7500 covered several months of our professional Zoom subscription for worship and for *b'nei mitzvah* tutoring, laptops for employees who didn't have them to work at home, and upgraded microphone and video equipment for the *shul*, among other things. You can [support Shir Tikvah](#) as we stretch to do this work (and a few of you have) and you could consider chipping into the Federation's COVID-19 program too. Just as they have aided us (and have long been our largest donor), they are also supporting other vital Jewish institutions in our community.

Board report

At its March 5, 2020 meeting, the Board authorized me, Rabbi Latz, and Executive Director Alison Olig to make decisions about programming and operations during this time of declared local, state, and national emergencies. We closed in-person school and the building for the first time about a week later and two weeks ago we extended those closures until May 15. Alison and Rabbi Latz continue to consult with the staff and Rabbis and all of us with the Board as we move forward.

A reminder from our March 24th email that the **annual meeting**, which is required to happen by June 15 each year, has been rescheduled to Sunday, June 14. We cannot say for sure that we will be able to meet in person on that date—and it might not be best health practices for some among us to attend such an event in any case. Our by-laws do not permit us to conduct an annual meeting remotely. The Board, however, fully supports my presidential authority to call for a special ballot from the congregation where we will propose to you an amendment to our by-laws to allow for the annual meeting to be conducted remotely and, just in case, to give ourselves a cushion until June 30 for this year's meeting. Please watch your email in the coming weeks for the ballot and related information.

The annual meeting, however it happens, will include a year-end summary, a presentation of next year's budget, and the proposed slate for this coming year's officers and trustees.

Kudos

Rabbi Lekach-Rosenberg has been selected as one of 15 [Rising Song fellows](#), a cohort of incredible spiritual Jewish musicians from around the world who will be studying with Joey Weisenberg for the next year. The fellowship is set to begin in August, so here's hoping that it will be possible to be in-person by then.

We asked in the e-news at the end of March for names of medical professionals to celebrate. Thank you to Jane Newman, Jim Pacala, Kara Pacala, Natalie Doll, Rebecca Stoller, Steve Stovitz, Phyllis Wiener, Faith Weiss, Masha Bowen, Alex Pokorny, Abbie Shain, Jim Nordin, Wayne Leebaw, Steve Miles, Diane Siegel, Geri Katz, Sharon Jaffe, Aaron Rutzick, Michael Rhodes, Dee Bass, Aimee Klapach, Lisa Wasserman and many many others. If you are in the medical field or a healthcare professional, a first responder, or otherwise involved in caring for people during the pandemic, please email Rabbi Latz.

As always, feel free to contact me.

In hope,

Bruce

