



Dear TBE Family,

We hope the first of many High Holiday communications finds you well.

We received 150 responses to our High Holiday Survey! A heartfelt thanks to all who contributed their feedback and thoughts. We are excited to share these results with you, as well as to share how they are informing our High Holiday programming this year. Many respondents expressed gratitude for the way TBE is considering our approach to services this year. And many also volunteered to assist in any way necessary! What an inspiration. You will find a summary of the survey [here](#).

A little background: The High Holiday Task Force is a robust and committed group of members from the Board of Directors, Ritual Committee, Family Engagement Committee, Adult Jewish Learning, and beyond. Between June 24 and August 13, we will have met 7 times. Subcommittees have formed and met a number of additional times as well.

Survey says:

1. **Ritual, Prayer, Community and Culture are all highly valued** as a part of the High Holidays.
2. **Indoor gatherings**, during these Covid times, **are not safe**. However, socially distanced masked outdoor gatherings can work for many congregants.
3. **Feeling connected** to the TBE Community and the Jewish world at large are important.
4. **Online services** (either Zoom or streaming, or pre-recorded) are acceptable, but not a fully satisfactory solution and should be limited to 2 hours per day. We hope to record those services so they can be accessed even when they are not "live."

Following are some of the most important elements of High Holidays and a sample of what TBE is planning to offer during Rosh Hashanah. (Yom Kippur is still in the works):

Shofar. This was at the top of most respondents' list.

1. **Courtyard Shofar services.** TBE will be facilitating outdoor Shofar services in the new Courtyard on the afternoon of Day 2. (Note that the first day of Rosh HaShanah is on Shabbat; therefore the Shofar will not be blown that day.)
2. **Other outdoor Shofar services** will be coordinated and synchronized around Portland and other towns of Southern Maine.
3. **Elul - Daily Shofar.** During the month of Elul, the Center for Small Town Jewish Life is offering recorded shofar blowing. TBE will be providing links to this daily shofar blowing.
4. **Shofar instruction.** During Elul, Karl Shatz will offer an online Shofar zoom session for interested and aspiring shofar blowers. (Want to purchase a shofar this year? In the Brookline (Boston area) you can purchase one at Kolbo (kolbo.com) or Israel Book Shop (israelbookshop.com) or search online.)

Torah. The Torah service and the honors associated with reading the Torah from the scroll all require a minyan. Because we have unanimously agreed that we would not have

services in the sanctuary, and because of transmission related to everybody reading from the scroll, we will not have aliyot, hagbah or gelilah honors. Limitations withstanding, we are committed to providing all Torah and Haftarah readings as well as divrei Torah and text study.

1. Torah and Haftarah readings will be video recordings of TBE readers.
2. These will be available to watch and listen at your convenience and choosing.
3. TBE will coordinate breakout and/or study groups to study the readings on the afternoon of Day 1.

Sermons. Rabbi Braun's sermons are a high point for many of us. This year, Rabbi's sermons will be pre-recorded. This will allow us to listen and watch, and re-listen, at whatever time works for you. TBE is looking at the possibility of organizing watch parties as well as break-out discussion rooms.

Prayer, Services and Reflection. Rabbi Braun and Rabbi Shoshana (our "Cantor" from last year) will be leading the Erev Rosh Hashanah service and approximately 2 hour morning services for both days. These services will be available live online, and possibly recorded via Zoom and livestream. In addition to services, TBE is focusing on enhanced, alternative observances, responding to the diverse desires of our community, including the various parts of the services that will not be part of the online experience. For example, since we all cannot join together in the Sanctuary, and because we will be davening from home, or in small groups, we want everyone to be able to find an appropriate space to pray.

1. **Creating Sacred Space at home.** We are working on some DIY materials for guidance on how to create a sacred space in your home. We are also going to provide some Zoom instruction to create Judaic art to enhance your home prayer space.

Recognizing that some would prefer to be outside, or just fill their house with the holiday spirit:

1. **Playlists and Podcasts.** We are curating a number of playlists and podcasts to access throughout the holidays. These might include cantorial highlights and favorites; meditations; sermons; stories; songs. We are partnering with other Maine Synagogues and the Center for Small Town Jewish Life to "bring in" musicians, artists and learning opportunities.

Tashlich. On Day 2 of Rosh Hashanah, TBE will organize small, socially distanced groups at various locations for tashlich, possibly connected with the Shofar sounding. TBE will also provide resources for individuals and families that choose to do tashlich on their own.

Families and Teens. Morah Abby and the Family Engagement Committee are developing hands-on and online resources and activities, discussion groups, as well as small in-person gatherings, "pray dates."

Volunteers. 41% of the respondents volunteered to help in many ways. Thank you!!! We will need people to help assemble and distribute materials, and people to reach out to those in need, shofar blowers, tashlich leaders, etc!

TBE is committed to keeping you informed of our plans as we create a meaningful, accessible holiday in a time that is like no other we have experienced. Please stay safe, enjoy the time we are given and pray for those who are in need of refuah shlemah - complete healing.

If you have any questions about the High Holiday plan, please contact Rabbi Braun (rabbi@tbemaine.org) or Joy Krinsky (joykrinsky@gmail.com).

With every good wish,

HHD Task Force:

Brian Allenby, Sarah Allenby, Ariel Bernstein, Rabbi Braun, Ilana Dew, Barbara Dichter, Barbara Epstein, Judy Gatchell, Abby Halpern, Margaret Hathaway, Sara Kahn-Troster, Joy Krinsky (Ritual Chair), Debbie Kanter, Sandrea Kornblum, Elaine Lewis, Eli Mellen, Karl Schatz, Zoe Levine Sporer, Matt Tzucker, Ben Weiss

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