



Dear Friends,

From the start of this crisis we have been doing our best to put in place steps that were prudent but measured. Unfortunately, recent developments over the past 24 hours require a more urgent response.

After meeting with both our Executive Committee and our Board of Trustees this afternoon we have come to the determination that the best option to keep everyone as safe as possible is to close the building effective immediately. This closure will be in place through March 29th at which time we will reassess to determine if we should extend the closure into April.

We hoped to avoid this step but the continued spread of COVID-19, and our concern for community members leave us no choice.

**Lifecycle:** The building will be open with a small staff on hand for a bat mitzvah this Shabbat. We will make a determination with regard to other lifecycle events scheduled for this month early next week. Thereafter, lifecycle events will be addressed on an individual basis.

**Services:** Services will take place as scheduled but will be available via our streaming system ONLY. Please do not come to the building for services but, instead, click here to view them: <https://www.tsti.org/watch-from-home>

**Religious School:** Religious School will be suspended through March 29th. Look for an email from Religious School Director, Mindy Schreff early next week. Any questions regarding Religious School should be directed to Mindy at [mschreff@tstinj.org](mailto:mschreff@tstinj.org)

**Preschool:** Preschool will be open tomorrow, Friday, March 13th and then suspended through March 29th. Preschool Director, Carol Paster will be communicating by email early next week. Please email Carol with any questions about the preschool at [cpaster@tstinj.org](mailto:cpaster@tstinj.org)

**Programs:** We are restructuring our programs and event schedule. Any programs and

classes that can be held virtually will still take place. Please watch your email for details later tomorrow.

**Contacting Temple:** While the building is closed, we are still here for you. During business hours please call the main number. If a staff person is not able to take the call, please follow the prompts for the emergency number. Your clergy and TSTI staff are here for you. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

In the meantime, please continue to follow all of the CDC instructions on Best Practices. As you know, this is a serious illness and it will take all of us working together in the days and weeks to come to address it. These measures include:

- If you feel unwell, are self-monitoring or are at a higher risk of infection, stay home. For the health and safety of every member of our community, including health workers and our most vulnerable populations, self-isolate if you feel at all unwell. If you have any questions, consult your medical doctor. The same direction has been issued to staff, volunteers and lay leaders.
- Avoid physical contact with others. Refrain from shaking hands, hugging or kissing other members of our community. Feel free to greet people using friendly waves or smiles, ideally from a distance of at least six feet.
- Remain vigilant about washing and disinfecting your hands and avoid touching your face.

**Selfcare:** We know this is a stressful time for us all as we continue to receive news of COVID-19's spread and now see the interruptions it is causing to our daily routines.

- If you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious about this situation, please contact any of our clergy: Rabbi Cohen- [rabbidmc@gmail.com](mailto:rabbidmc@gmail.com) , Rabbi Klein- [rabbiklein@tstinj.org](mailto:rabbiklein@tstinj.org) , Cantor Moses- [cantormoses@tstinj.org](mailto:cantormoses@tstinj.org)
- If you have questions or concerns about our efforts during this time please contact Beth Blackman, our Executive Director at [bblackman@tstinj.org](mailto:bblackman@tstinj.org)

Please know that we are taking these steps to not only protect our TSTI community but to help slow the progression of this virus. This will enable our healthcare system to continue to function effectively and, we hope, allow us to return to a normal routine sooner rather than later.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Daniel M. Cohen, Rabbi  
Max Weisenfeld, TSTI President  
Beth Blackman, Executive Director