



Dear Riverdale Temple Family,

This has been a hard year. We have all experienced loss this year, some a greater loss than others. All of us have lost a year of closeness, a year of community. Some have gotten great comfort from our zoom communities, our services, classes, book clubs, and special events. For others, virtual community just doesn't do it for them.

As more people in New York are vaccinated, and as the CDC cautiously advises that we relax some of our precautions, Riverdale Temple has decided to return to indoor, in person services for members who have been fully vaccinated and who feel healthy. Out of an abundance of caution, we will continue to ask people to register in advance, certifying that they feel healthy and have received their vaccine. We will also ask people to continue to wear masks and to keep space between themselves and others during services.

For those who have not yet been vaccinated, or who prefer to avoid indoor gatherings, we will continue to zoom our services as well. We recognize that some people will not be willing or able to attend the indoor services, but there are also people who can only attend the indoor services. We truly regret that we cannot accommodate everyone, but hope people understand that covid-19, not Riverdale Temple, is really to blame.

Rabbi Bill Tepper pointed out that we are not 'social distancing.' We are only 'physical distancing.' Things may change soon, hopefully for the better as more people are vaccinated, but possibly for the worse, as new variants continue to circle. We thank you all for being flexible.

Jews have not always been allowed to gather and pray together. We would never have expected that we would experience a year without in person prayers. Now that we can come back together, we feel the power of it even more than before. We hope to see you in person, in our beautiful sanctuary, very soon.

Rabbi Thomas A. Gardner