

All,

Happy new year! Shana Tovah!

I am sure there is a word in some language to describe an easy but very sad decision like the one that the Board unanimously made at the end of August, to step back our return to in-person worship for at least September. Midrash teaches “The people of Israel are similar to a ship. If there is a hole in the lower hold, one does not say, ‘Only the lower hold has a hole in it.’ Rather they must immediately recognize that the ship is liable to sink and that they must repair the hole down below.”

In the Spring, I felt particularly laid low by a second Passover spent away from a seder plate shared among extended family and guests. But widely available vaccines were on the horizon and there was a sense that we were coming out of the worst of it. It saddens me to spend another High Holy Days online, and I’ll own a certain amount of anger about how it is that we find ourselves where we do. In this story, the whole of humanity is in the same boat and I remind myself that in COVID, as in so many other areas, my frustration isn’t making the boat any more watertight. Sometimes I persuade myself; sometimes, I don’t.

Just as I am surely exhausted by all of this, we will surely gather in-person again. But not yet. If you are concerned about your or a loved one’s mental health, please consider reaching out to [Jewish Family and Children’s Services](#) (in Minneapolis), [Jewish Family Services](#) (in St. Paul), [NAMI-MN](#), or call the national suicide prevention hotline for immediate support at 1-800-273-TALK.

If you find yourself with the energy, with renewed energy, with more drive to work for a better world, one where we act as if we are all in the same boat, get involved with one of Shir Tikvah’s many social justice opportunities or get to know the [National Council for Jewish Women](#), [Jewish Community Action](#), [World Without Genocide](#), or a social justice or environmental organization that sings to you. And get online with Shir Tikvah and let us recharge each other in this New Year.

A thank you to our volunteers!

I’m glad to be the mouthpiece for a shout out to the awesome team of 19 delivery drivers who stepped up to help deliver nearly 300 bags to members throughout the Twin Cities. And that’s not to mention those bags that were mailed to apartment dwellers and out-of-towners. Thank you as well to the Caring Community committee, whose call for drivers produced help from Ursula Hargens & Michael Winikoff, David Raskas, Kate Sinakhone, Vicky Marvy, Brian Vertruba & Michael Getty, Amy & Willie Funk, Paula Forman, Robin Lavine, Rachel Orzoff, Deborah Dora, Aaron Lichtov & Molly Keenan, Lisa Brenner, Linda Tell, Ben Lahyani, Robin & Jim Miller, Shelley Miner, Lisa Villalta, Miriam Weinstein, and staffer Carmen Johnson.

Also, a special thanks to Zoe Johnson (Carmen’s daughter) who assembled *all* of the bags and boxes and to David Raskas and Ben Lahyani who managed the postage and mailing of the boxes. What a chorus we can make!

Meet some members!

Peeps! Let me share some words about you and yours! Submit [here](#).

Meet the Stovitz and Skoler family: Steve, Rebecca, Sam (22) and Noah (20). “We moved to Minneapolis for a one-year stay in 1999 with our four-month-old son, Sam, and immediately joined Shir Tikvah. Twenty-two years later, we are still here and with no regrets about our decision. We love Shir Tikvah's welcoming atmosphere and focus on social justice. We work in the medical field and in our spare time enjoy gardening, cycling, and hiking; our boys enjoy soccer, volleyball and ultimate frisbee. Some of our favorite holiday foods are latkes and charoset. Every year we ask the same question: Why don't we make these foods more often? And yet every year, we don't :)”



As always, feel free to [contact me](#).

Bruce

