



Shabbat 24 Adar, 5780/March 20-21, 2020

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE ST. LOUIS RABBINICAL AND CANTORIAL ASSOCIATION

As rabbis and cantors of the St. Louis Rabbinical and Cantorial Association, we are reaching out as one to the members of our community during this unprecedented time. Our hearts go out to those members of our community who are ill, and those who are afraid. We ache for those who have had to reschedule simchas, and for those who are mourning without the support of loved ones around them. We share the uncertainty and concerns about the financial impact of this pandemic on the economically vulnerable members of our community. We are profoundly grateful for those who are providing comfort, and those who are on the frontlines in hospitals, doctors' offices, patrolling our neighborhoods and serving the essential needs of our community.

We know that there are aspects of this sickness that are out of our hands. But we also know, both from history found even in the Torah and from examples around the world today, that there is a way to halt the spread of this virus. So we are taking it upon ourselves to ask that tonight, when Shabbat ends...then it doesn't end. That for each of us who is able, we keep this time of rest going. Stay home. Cancel the sleepovers and create virtual play-dates. Be with loved ones who live with you, and pick up the phone to call those who don't or send a text or email. Let everything else stop, and as much as possible, let's keep Shabbat going.

Our tradition teaches us that "pikuach nefesh", the saving of a life, is the most important mitzvah we have. And we all have the opportunity to do so, but it only works if we all do it. As your rabbis and cantors, who have sat with you during the most sacred moments of your lives, we implore you to join us in this so we can get through this together.

We're all in. We fervently hope you will be too.

MEMBERS OF THE ST. LOUIS RABBINICAL AND CANTORIAL ASSOCIATION

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Bais Abraham

Rabbi Garth Silberstein

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Rabbi Karen Bogard

Rabbi Randy Fleisher

Rabbi James Stone Goodman

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Jewish Community Center

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Jewish Federation of St. Louis

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Shir Hadash Reconstructionist
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Rabbi Elizabeth Hersh

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