



Reopening Plans - July 2020

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Introduction



The safety and well-being of our congregants, staff and visitors are our highest priorities. This reopening plan is based on what we have learned about the Coronavirus and the public health recommendations from the Fairfax County Health Department, the Virginia Department of Health, and the CDC. We are also committed to following all statutes and regulations (local, state, and federal).

As we begin reopening the synagogue building to welcome you and your families back to in-person services and activities, there are many questions as to what returning will look like. This guide is intended to help answer some of the most common questions. The synagogue building will be reopened in 5 phases.

Indoor Services will be offered both virtually and in person (assuming we have enough volunteers to perform screening and ushering duties for in person services). We are working on developing technical solutions in order to offer a virtual option for outdoor services as well.



COMMUNICATIONS

Website:	Get up to date information at www.bethemeth.org/covid-19
Email:	The congregation will send out emails to all members announcing changes in policies and procedures. The Covid-19 Task Force can be emailed directly at covid19@bethemeth.org
Announcements:	Congregation leadership will announce any significant changes to policies and procedures at each service.
Shofar:	Watch for important articles and information in the Shofar.
Ask the Task Force:	The CBE Covid Task Force will hold virtual open forums for congregants to share their thoughts and ask questions.
Contact Us:	You may contact the synagogue office at office@bethemeth.org

CBE Covid Task Force

Chairman - Scott Wollek (Medical and Public Health Preparedness)

Rabbi Mina Goldsmith*	Executive Director - Melissa Heifetz* Past
President - Fran Besalel	Admin/Operations - Ava Epstein*
President - Leslie Lesch	BEECC - Robin Cohen*
BEECC - Lauren Moses	Religious School - Ellie Klein *
Ritual - Denise Moldover	Medical - Alan Goldblatt, MD

*Denotes CBE staff

5 Phases of Reopening

PHASE	Summary	Est. Max. Occupancy Density	Est. Start Date
Phase 0	Building Closed, all activities virtual	0	March-July 2020
Phase 1	Employees work from home, optional return to building	5-7	July 15
Phase 2A	In Person Minyan - Wed. PM and Sunday AM Minyan only	20	July 20
Phase 2B	Shabbat Services Begin (Fri/Sat) Limited Bar/Bat Mitzvah	50	August 1
Phase 3	Small Group Activities/adult learning/ meetings	Based on physical space Appendix D	August 15
Phase 4A	BEECC	30	September TBD
Phase 4B	Religious School	Virtual Only	September 2
Phase 5	Full Operations/ no restrictions	100%	TBD

Although we hope to continue to move forward, we will return to a previous phase if necessary.

High Risk Members

Congregants and guests with **high risk conditions** or caring for those with high risk conditions should continue to ***stay at home*** as much as possible. We are putting measures in place to make participating remotely more accessible and recommend you participate in congregational activities through remote video connections and avoid in-person services and activities in the building at this time. Follow public health and CDC guidelines regarding your risks. The chart below lists common high-risk conditions.

65 years of age or older	Heart Disease
Hypertension (high blood pressure)	Immune Suppression
Diabetes	Cancer, Chemotherapy
Chronic Lung Disease	Obesity
Moderate to Severe Asthma	Liver Disease
Pregnancy	Kidney Disease
Medically complex children	Neurologic Conditions





5 Pillars of Reopening

The best way to minimize risk of exposure and transmission in the synagogue is to apply a strategy with the following five pillars:

- 1) Hygiene Measures
- 2) Physical Distancing
- 3) Wearing of Masks
- 4) Screening for symptoms
- 5) Changing our Culture

These five measures must be used together. Each one on its own has flaws. Skip one, and the risk goes up. But when taken together, and taken seriously, we have the best chance of shutting out the virus. We need to understand these elements – what their strengths and limitations are – and implement all five if we are going to make them work.

Hygiene



Hand Washing

- Cleaning hands is essential to stopping the transfer of infectious droplets from surfaces to your nose, mouth, and eyes. Each person must sanitize their hands (using at least 60% alcohol hand sanitizer) upon entering the building, **and** wash their hands with soap and water (rubbing for 20 seconds) or use hand sanitizer every time entering or exiting a group environment, and every 2 hours while in a group environment.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Children under the age of 6 will need supervision by an adult when using hand sanitizer.
- Please **Do Not** kiss or touch the mezuzahs



Disinfecting Surfaces



- General surfaces will be disinfected at least once a day.
- High contact areas (doorknobs, handles, light switches, faucets etc.) will be disinfected every 4 hours in areas where the building is in use.
- Personal use items should not be shared.
- Common use items (i.e. photocopy machine, keypads) should be disinfected between users.
- Sanctuary seating will be changed to hard surface seating and disinfected between uses.

Limitations: Inadequate technique for handwashing and lack of compliance (not doing it) will increase risk of infection. Many surfaces cannot be disinfected between every person. That is why hand hygiene is so critical.

Physical Distancing

Maintain 6 ft separation at all times

The Sars-CoV2 virus spreads primarily through respiratory droplets emitted by infected people when they cough, sneeze, talk, or simply exhale and possibly by some airborne transmission as well. Loud talking and singing has been shown to generate measurably more droplets than quiet talking. That is why physical distancing is so important (especially when indoors) and why singing or shouting is discouraged.

- Greet one another verbally, not physically. Do not shake hands, hug, high five, fist bump, or elbow bump.
- Enter/Exit - the front doors to the building will be marked for entrance or exit. Please stay alert and avoid two-way traffic through the doors. Also, please leave enough room by waiting patiently for others to enter or exit.
- Sanctuary - Entrance will be through the front doors and exit through the rear doors (in the flex space).
- Sanctuary seating will be pre-arranged to facilitate physical distancing and cannot be changed. Please do not move any chairs in the sanctuary.

Limitations: The 6ft rule is not some kind of infectious disease law. There is no stop sign at six feet that respiratory droplets obey. Public health guidelines initially were at 3 feet (based on TB studies from 1930's), but it has now become well recognized that under the right conditions – temperature, humidity, and air circulation – forceful coughing or sneezing can propel a cloudburst of respiratory droplets more than twenty feet. It was after the SARS outbreak in 2002 that the recommended distance was increased to 6 feet. The 6 ft rule was a compromise to consider what is most practical.

Masks **I protect you; you protect me!**



All persons entering the building must wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth. (Exceptions: children under age 2 should and persons unable to remove their own masks should not wear a mask).

- Many people may be infected without active symptoms and can possibly transmit the virus to others. We wear masks to protect those around us just in case we may be carrying the virus.
- When you wear a mask, it often helps prevent you from touching your face, but care must be used to not touch your mask and cross-contaminate your hands and mask. There is some evidence that the masks may help protect you (the wearer) by lowering the amount of virus you inhale.

*Limitations: Masks must be put on and taken off properly to prevent infections. Wash your hands prior to putting your mask on. Once done, do not touch the outside of the mask. When ready to remove it, wash or sanitize hands first, lift the ear loops and remove the mask away from your face and store in a clean area until washing. Cloth masks should be washed after each use (per CDC). **MASKS MUST COVER BOTH THE NOSE AND THE MOUTH TO BE EFFECTIVE! Please ensure you wear your mask properly.***

Screening (Symptoms, exposure and temperature)



Prior to entering the building, everyone will be screened for symptoms associated with Covid-19 infection. (Note: this refers to new onset of symptoms not otherwise explained by other underlying health conditions, i.e. allergies, GERD, Asthma, etc.)

Fever or Chills	Cough
Shortness of Breath	Nasal congestion/runny nose
Sore throat	Loss of taste/smell
Unexplained fatigue	GI (abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)
Headaches	Muscle or body aches

- Phase 2A - small minyan - please complete the screening list in Appendix A prior to coming to the building. If any YES, do not come to services in person. Please join us virtually.
- Phase 2B - Shabbat services - you will be screened prior to entering the building.

Temperature Screening

If your temperature is 100.4 or higher, please stay home and join us virtually. No one will be admitted to the building with a temperature of 100.4 or higher.

- Phase 2 A - small minyan - You will be asked to self-screen by taking your temperature at home prior to coming to the building.
- Phase 2B (Shabbat services) and forward -Temperature screening will take place when you enter the building.

Exposure Screening

You will not be permitted in the building if:

- You have been exposed to a known or suspected case of Covid-19 in the past 14 days
- You have traveled internationally, been on a cruise ship, river boat, or travelled from an area in the USA where widespread outbreaks are occurring in the past 14 days
- To identify high risk areas in the US check the following link:
<https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html#case>

*Limitations: Not all COVID-19 infected people have symptoms. Some will remain without symptoms (asymptomatic) and others will develop symptoms within 3 days (Pre-symptomatic). So, screening for symptoms will not pick up everyone who can potentially infect others. In addition, if people are **not** honest about their symptoms, then screening will fail.*

Although many COVID-19 patients will ultimately develop fever, less than 1/2 of them will have fever at the onset of the illness. Thus, temperature taking will only pickup some infections. Also, if people use fever reducing medication prior to being screened (not recommended), that will interfere with picking up those who are ill, and screening will fail.

Changing our culture as a community

Culture is arguably the most difficult pillar of our strategy. We need to educate ourselves and embrace the desire to keep others and ourselves safe. *We all have a responsibility to each other in our sacred community to help protect each one of us.*

Examples of desired culture are:

- "My throat is sore, but I don't feel sick. I'm still going to stay home."
- "I'm ok with being reminded to pull up my mask if it has slipped."
- "I understand the current science and public health recommendations have limitations and are rapidly changing with this new virus. I will be part of the solution, not part of the problem"

Changing Times

Although we hope to continue to move forward, we must all be aware of the possibility that we will have to change our operations or close the building again in the future.

- If a known case of Covid-19 has been in the building, appropriate temporary closure and deep cleaning will be implemented.
- If there is an "outbreak" tied to our activities in the building, guidance on operations will come from the Fairfax County Health Department.
- Other closures will be implemented to comply with local, state, and federal mandates.

I will lift up my eyes to the mountains

From where will my help come?

My help comes from the Eternal Who made heaven and earth.

(Psalm 121:1-2)

Living through a major pandemic that occurs only once every 100 years is not easy. Everyone has been impacted one way or another. It sometimes seems like things will never change. But history has shown that pandemics do end, and what we are living through, as disruptive as it is, will not be forever. In 6 short months, we have learned about the virus genetics, structure, and mechanisms of infection. We have developed some techniques that are helping keep people alive, and other strategies that are limiting infections. We as a human race are incredibly adaptable and there is hope that these restrictions that we are requiring will be eased over time and eventually removed.

They who hope in God shall renew their strength

They shall mount up with wings as eagles

They shall run and not grow weary,

They shall walk and not grow faint.

(Isaiah 40:31)

Phase 1 - Staff only

Staff will be allowed to re-enter the building for daily work with the following requirements:

- Flexible work schedules to minimize # of people in the office and work from home is still encouraged.
- Staff will self-screen daily with a questionnaire regarding symptoms, exposures, and travel.
- Staff will take their temperature no earlier than 1-2 hours prior to entering the building. If anyone has a temperature of 100.4 or greater, they will be required to stay at home and work from home if they feel ok.
- Staff will sanitize their hands upon entering the building.
- Staff are required to wear facemasks when inside the building in common areas (any space where other people are expected to pass through or work). If they are in private offices with no other people, they may remove their masks.
- Staff should wash (or sanitize) their hands after touching common surfaces **and** at least every 2 hours during the workday.
- Workstations must be at least 6 feet apart and sanitized daily.
- Shared equipment and supplies must be sanitized between users.
- Bathroom use is limited to one person at a time. Bathrooms will have sanitizing wipes to clean after each use.
- Personal food items must be in a closed container/bag and kept at a personal workstation. Use of the refrigerator at this time is discouraged. If access to the refrigerator is necessary, door handles must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes prior to opening and after closing the doors. Personal food items should be labelled with name if stored in the refrigerator.

Phase 2A- Wednesday/Sunday Minyan

Phase 2B - Shabbat Service

We will start with Wednesday evening minyan and Sunday morning minyan and add Shabbat service 1 week later. During the summer and fall when the weather is nice, outdoor services (when feasible) are encouraged. All indoor services will include both in-person and virtual remote options. We are working on setting up virtual options for outdoor services. Services will be abbreviated as much as possible to shorten exposure time in the building.

- In-person attendance inside the sanctuary will be limited to 50 people to comply with the 6 ft. distancing rule.
- Reservations for in-person service attendance must be made ahead of time via the synagogue website <https://bethemeth.org/service-reservations>. Reservations can only be made one week at a time. Please plan on attending if you make a reservation.
- Reservation deadlines for attending services that week will be 12:00 pm (Noon) on Wednesday each week.
- Sanctuary seating will be fixed. No one will be permitted to move the chairs. Seating will be in groups of two.
- Please register for all people in your party who will attend services in person.

Phase 2A- Wednesday/Sunday Minyan (continued)

Phase 2B - Shabbat Service

- For services with reservations for more than 20 people, arrival times will be staggered by alphabetical order of last name (to avoid overcrowding at the front door entrance).
 - Last name A-K arrive 20 minutes prior to service start
 - Last name L-S arrive 15 minutes prior to service start
 - Last name T-Z arrive 10 minutes prior to service start
 - *You will be notified by email if staggered arrival will be required.*
- Congregants and guests will be screened with the screening questionnaire and have their temperature checked. Persons with a temperature of 100.4 or greater will be asked to return home and join us virtually and will not be able to enter the building.
- You must wear a mask and comply with the 6 ft distancing when approaching and waiting in the screening line.
- All persons must wear a mask upon entering the building. Masks must be worn at all times (with exception of eating or drinking) while inside the building. (Exception - children under age 2 and persons unable to remove their own mask should not wear a mask.) If you do not have your own mask, please ask for one.
- All persons must use hand sanitizer prior to entering the building.
- Congregants and guests are encouraged to bring their own Kippah (at all times), Tefillin (Sunday morning), Tallit (Saturday & Sunday AM), Siddur (all services), and Chumash (Saturday AM) as well as their own bottle of water and hand sanitizer. (The water fountain will not be operational at this time and the school wing will be closed.)

Phase 2A- Wednesday/Sunday Minyan (continued)

Phase 2B - Shabbat Service

- Congregational supplies of Kippot, Tallitot, Siddurim and Chumashim, will still be available for you to use if you cannot bring your own. You will be given instructions where to pick them up and where to return them at the end of the service. Appendix B. Please follow directions and do not leave anything at your seat!
- All common use Ritual items (Kippot, Tallitot, Siddurim and Chumashim) will be "quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours prior to their reuse.
- Although music is an integral part of our services, singing is ***highly discouraged*** due to increased risk of spreading virus. Any singing during the service should be more of a personal soft humming and minimized. Please use caution as singing with masks on can cause difficulty breathing and dizziness for some people.
- Procedure for aliyot, Torah reading, Torah service, gabbaim...see Appendix B
- Procedure for Bar/Bat Mitzvah - Appendix C
- We encourage everyone to use the bathroom at home prior to coming to the synagogue. Restroom use is restricted to one person at a time (with exception of those who need assistance). Please follow instructions to use the vacant/occupied sign on the door upon entering and exiting the restroom. Please follow disinfectant procedures posted on the restroom walls. Wipes and gloves will be available.
- Young children - because of their very nature, might find it difficult to maintain physical distancing. Parents should consider

this when deciding whether to bring them to an in-person service during the early phases.

- There will be no communal food/kiddush at this time.
- At the end of services, congregants will remain in their seats and be dismissed by row to maintain physical distancing.
- Our building is cleaned and sanitized regularly. If you attend a service in-person and are diagnosed with COVID-19 within 14 days of being in the building, please let us know immediately so we can schedule additional disinfection and assist the Health Department with contact tracing.

Phase 3 - Small groups/programs/committees

All prior facility rules (see previous phases) apply to phase 3. In addition:

- All activities, programs, and committee meetings must be scheduled in advance with the synagogue office. This will allow for appropriate selection of dates, times, and room size.
- Number of participants will be determined by room size. See Appendix D.
- Outdoor activities are encouraged when possible.
- Registration should be arranged ahead of time.
 - All participants should be screened prior to entering the building.
 - Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or greater cannot enter the building.
 - All participants will wear a mask and comply with physical distancing of 6 ft.
 - Bathroom use will be restricted to one person at a time. (see Phase 1 and 2 for instructions)
 - All participants are encouraged to bring their own Kippah, water bottle, hand sanitizer and any other personal belongings needed for the program. Avoid sharing of supplies (writing instruments, books, papers, art/crafts/games, etc.). Any shared items must be sanitized between users.
 - Any food/snacks should be individually wrapped. No communal shared bulk food is allowed.
 - Singing and shouting are not allowed.

Phase 4 - Schools Open

Religious School

Religious school will be conducted virtually (no in person option) for the fall semester. The school will be communicating directly with students and families with more details.

BEECC

There will be a separate operational plan written for BEECC detailing infection control, attendance, arrival/drop off and pick up procedures, supplies, food, sick plans, etc.

Our current re-opening plan for BEECC for the 2020-21 school year will be based on multiple factors, including the public health recommendations from:

- The Fairfax County Health Department
- The Virginia Department of Health
- The CDC
- The local, state, and federal statutes and regulations
- Parent perspectives

Our goal is to decide about how we will proceed by mid-July.

Phase 5 - Unrestricted operations

This is unlikely to occur until sometime in 2021. However, we will continue to monitor the pandemic and public health recommendations and relax restrictions as soon as safely possible.

Appendix A- Screening Questionnaire

Have you had any of the following symptoms in the past 14 days?

	Yes	No
Cough	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sore throat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fever or chills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Muscle aches or fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shortness of breath	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chest pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GI symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Headache	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loss of smell/taste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you had contact with anyone in the previous 14 days with confirmed or suspected Covid-19, or someone with fever or respiratory illness?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you travelled internationally, been on a cruise ship or river boat, or been to an area of the USA where Covid-19 is widespread in the past 14 days?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If all of the above are NO, you may enter the building with a mask on.

If any of the above answers are YES, you are not allowed to enter the building at this time. Please return home, if sick symptoms seek medical attention and feel free to join us virtually.

Appendix B - Ritual procedures for Shabbat services

- Sanctuary chairs:
 - Upholstered chairs will be replaced with hard surface chairs which will be disinfected between services.
 - Chairs will be placed in pairs with 6 feet distance between groupings. Maximum of 50 chairs may be placed in sanctuary and flex space.
- Tallit, Tefillin, Kippah, Siddur, Chumash: Congregants are encouraged to bring their own Tallit, Tefillin, Kippah, Siddur and Chumash. If congregants or guests need to use the synagogue supplies, the following protocols will be followed:
 - Tallit - Routine Shabbat - Tallit may be removed one person at a time from the tallit rack. At the end of the service or when people depart, tallit will be put into the marked "used" bin at the rear of the sanctuary. Tallit - B'nai Mitzvah Shabbat - Tallit will be placed by a volunteer usher on a table in the foyer where people can pick up a Tallit. At the end of the service or when people depart, Tallit will be put in the marked "used" bin at the rear of the sanctuary.
 - Siddurim/Chumashim: Prayer books will be removed from a cart upon entering the sanctuary and placed in the "used" bin at the rear of the sanctuary when people leave the service.

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- Kippot - will be available on a table in the lobby. Kippah stand will not be in use. For congregational kippot, please deposit in the "used" bin in the rear of the sanctuary when leaving the service.
 - Service leaders will announce instructions for congregants and guests to not leave prayer books, tallit, or kippot on their seats when they leave and where to deposit them as above. All items in the "used" bins will remain untouched for a minimum of 72 hours prior to being reused.

Bimah Protocols

- Podium/Torah table will be wiped down between leaders.
- Leaders and readers will ascend and descend the bima using the steps by the Torah table. Stay at your seat until the person descending is safely away to avoid passing each other. If you were not wearing a mask on the bima, you must put your mask back on when you leave the Torah table and go back to your seat.
- Torah service
 - Eliminate the processional and recessional.
 - Leader will remain at the Torah table and face Ark when the Ark is opened.
 - Rabbi and Gabbai will remain 6 feet apart on the bima at the beginning and end of Torah service, but the Gabbai will supervise Torah reading from their seat on the floor.
 - Whomever takes the Torah out of the Ark is the one to hold it during the singing of Shema, Echad and Gadlu.
 - Rabbi will open and close the Ark.
 - Use One Gabbai only. This person will call up the aliyot from the Rabbi's podium as well as the page numbers. A tikkun will be placed next to the Torah for the reader to refer to if needed.

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- A plastic shield will be placed in front of the Torah stand (from the ground) to allow the reader or leader to do their part without wearing a mask, should they choose to do so.
 - If the Torah needs to be rolled during the service, the handles need to be wiped down afterward.
 - Torah readers will be required to wear gloves and masks.
 - Torah readers use either disposable chopsticks (and dispose of them in trash can provided) for a yad or bring their own.
 - Everyone up on the Bima will be required to wear a mask when not leading the service. If a mask is removed, the person must be standing behind the sneeze guard. 6 Ft distance between all persons on the bimah must be maintained. Mask must be put back on before leaving the Torah table.
 - When the Torah is not in use it will sit on a cushioned chair on the Bima.
 - When the service leader is not leading, they will sit in a chair off the bima.
 - Person or persons with an aliyah will say the blessings from the Torah table but MUST keep their mask on the whole time. They will then descend from the bima and stand to the side 6 feet from other people while the Torah is being chanted. Afterwards, the Torah reader and those with the aliyah will switch places.
 - Torah and Haftarah readers MUST keep their masks on the whole time.
 - No kissing the Torah for an aliyah. (i.e B'nai Mitzvah)
 - Eliminate the Hagbah and Gelilah roll. Gabbai will roll Torah closed and put the binder on it. It will then be placed on a cushioned chair and finished dressing it there.

Appendix C - Procedures for Bar/Bat Mitzvah

B'nai Mitzvah

- B'nai Mitzvah families will each be given 20 pairs of seats for their families. Families must register all attendees no later than the Monday prior the date of the B'nai Mitzvah.
- Tallitot will be placed on a table for anyone to take if needed. They will return to them to the “used” bin afterward.
- Parents may remain on the Bima for their aliyah ONLY if their child is chanting that reading. Parents may not touch the Torah.
- Parents may come to the Bima when their child has their aliyah and then give their blessing to their child. Parents and child may not touch the Torah.

At this time, we will not offer an outside option for B'nai Mitzvah families for August because it will be too warm to expect people to wear masks. This option can be explored later in the summer if needed.

Appendix D - Room Occupancy Limits

This is being determined base on each room size and will be finalized prior to Phase 3.