

Dear Community Members,

We have all heard that Governor Cuomo has granted permission for religious services of up to ten people. We are grateful to the Governor for his sensitivity to our religious needs.

In formulating and maintaining the policy promulgated by the OU/RCA, it is the unified consensus of our Poskim, Rav Hershel Schachter, Rav Mordechai Willig, Rav Asher Weiss and Rav Dovid Cohen, that we are still in a situation of ספק פיקוח נפש, a potentially life threatening situation, and that we should wait 14 days after the first wave of restrictions are lifted to assess if it is safe to gather in groups, including for Minyanim. We therefore hopefully anticipate a return to having Minyanim beginning with Maariv on Wednesday night, June 3rd.

It should be evident that this caution should not be restricted to Minyanim, and should be applied to all other social settings as well.

Throughout this crisis, the guiding principle of our Poskim has been that the potential loss of life is a far greater concern than davening with a Minyan. By continuing to refrain from davening in Minyanim we are not advocating leniency regarding Tefilla B'Tzibur, rather we are advocating the stringency of protecting life - וְנִשְׁמְרָתָם מְאֹד לְנַפְשֵׁיכֶם.

There will be those in our community who will follow the directives of other Poskim, and attend Minyanim. These groups are following their Rabbinic leadership, and while their approach is valid, we, following the decision of our Poskim, are advising greater caution.

We will use this two week period as an opportunity to set up locations and develop protocols for our Minyanim, which will enable us to ensure our Minyanim are properly organized in accordance with Halacha and Public Health.

We pray that we will see continued positive medical trends which will allow us to return to Minyanim in safety.

Rabbi Shalom Axelrod, Young Israel of Woodmere  
Rabbi Mordechai Benhaim, Sha'are Emunah  
Rabbi Hershel Billet, Young Israel of Woodmere  
Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Congregation Ohr Torah  
Rabbi Ira Ebbin, Congregation Ohav Sholom  
Rabbi Aaron Feigenbaum, Irving Place Minyan  
Rabbi Dovid Friedman, Congregation Darchei Noam  
Rabbi Dr. Aaron Glatt, Young Israel of Woodmere  
Rabbi Kenneth Hain, Congregation Beth Sholom  
Rabbi Simcha Hopkowitz, Young Israel of Hewlett  
Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz, Bais Knesseth North Woodmere  
Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz, Congregation Anshei Chesed

Rabbi Avi Miller, Congregation Beth Sholom  
Rabbi Jonathan Muskat, Young Israel of Oceanside  
Rabbi Ephraim Polakoff, Bais Tefilah of Woodmere  
Rabbi Mordechai Prus, Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach  
Rabbi Isaac Rice, Congregation Anshei Chesed  
Rabbi Shay Schachter, Young Israel of Woodmere  
Rabbi Steven Siegel, Congregation Bachurei Chemed  
Rabbi Yehuda Septimus, Young Israel of North Woodmere  
Rabbi Asher Stern, Congregation Bais Avrohom Zev  
Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum, Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst  
Rabbi Ya'akov Trump, Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst  
Rabbi Akiva Willig, Beis Medrash of Woodmere  
Rabbi Eliyahu Wolf, Young Israel of Woodmere