

President's Message September 2021

Déjà vu all over again

As I sit and ponder how the High Holidays will look this year, I have many mixed feelings about being totally on Zoom again this year. I was SO looking forward to seeing everyone at the holidays and being able to give every one of you a great big hug. I would say more than anything over the last 18 months, the lack of hugging has made me sad.

The leaders of this congregation — the Board of Trustees and I — decided at our last meeting that we in Warren County are not ready to fill the sanctuary and have people singing. COVID is still around and even folks who have been vaccinated have the potential to come down with the disease, although not as severely as unvaccinated people. We had an indoor service attended by about 15 people and the instructions were “no singing”; only the Rabbi was allowed to sing, and we were all wearing masks.

I had varied emotions at this service. I was overjoyed to be able to greet and talk with my fellow congregants in person and to share a meal with them. We were able to keep my granddaughter, Abigail, from hitting the crash cymbal with a cabinet leg, but that made her very unhappy. BUT, and the biggest issue for me was not to be able to sing. When I am in temple, the main way I pray is to sing along with the Rabbi and/or Cantor. Without being able to do that, I felt like I was not able to participate in the service and it left me with an empty feeling for this type of service.

When we get back to our normal services in late September, my current thoughts are we will be able to go back to the sanctuary, as our normal attendance is around 25-30 people a night, and we should be able to keep everyone safe with numbers even higher than that.

I am very excited to listen to our new student cantor from Hebrew Union College this year, who will be taking over for Rayn.

We are hopeful that this year's services will run smoothly, and that you will be happy with the Zoom service.

L'Shanah Tovah and with much love,
Howie