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Beit Emanuel will not yet return to on-site services

By Director (<http://www.beitemanuel.co.za/author/support/>) in News and Events (<http://www.beitemanuel.co.za/category/news-and-events/>)
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(From Dr Paul Davis, Chairman, Beit Emanuel Management Committee)

Our Management Committee met along with Rabbi Shaked earlier this week to discuss whether to return to physical services from this Shabbat. Our unanimous decision was that this would be premature, given the demographics of our congregation, and the risk that the pandemic might enter a second phase. We will also not be opening the administrative offices yet. The issue will be reconsidered in six weeks' time, i.e. mid-July.

Among the issues that were raised were:

1. The pandemic is likely to continue for some time, months or even years.
2. Our community includes many aged members, and people with medical conditions. Face-to-face communal engagement could be a real danger to them.
3. Our virtual services, educational programs, social and communal activities have been well supported and seem to be gaining in favour. Our use of the technology is becoming more sophisticated. We are so far managing quite adequately without use of the physical infrastructure.
4. It seems likely that hybrid activities (i.e. face to face, indoor and outdoor and virtual) will become a permanent feature of our future offerings. We should aim to be leaders of this new methodology in vision, content and technology.

The following broad actions have been agreed:

1. There will be no on-site services for at least six weeks, when the matter will be reconsidered.
2. We will use this time to prepare our Campus for our return. We will appoint a COVID-19 Compliance Officer to ensure that BE meets the requirements and is up to date with any new or changed circumstances. We will announce the appointment in the near future.
3. Prior to any return, the BE campus will be properly prepared (cleaned and sterilised) and have all the necessary PPE, disinfectants, COVID-19 spacing plans and cleaning procedures, training and facilities in place.
4. Administration offices will be opened on a needs-only basis. Before and after each session, facility and personal compliance with anti- COVID-19 measures are to be followed.

We hope that these arrangements, though not perfect, will suit most of us and keep us safe. This is a fluid and uncertain time, so our position will be reviewed frequently and if changes are required, we will of course notify you all.

I ask you all to take great care.

Kindest regards

Paul


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