



June 28, 2021

Dear Members of the Village Shul Community,

Spring is gone, summer is here, and COVID-19 is on its way out!

As we prepare for the upcoming High Holidays, we first want to thank those whose extraordinary efforts over the past year have held the community together under these difficult circumstances - the Rabbis, teachers, volunteers, donors, minyan attendees and so many others who have contributed in exceptional ways. Without their commitment, we could not have continued to thrive.

As we begin preparations for the upcoming High Holidays, we would like to thank Rabbi Sytner and our other Rabbis and teachers. In spite of the ongoing COVID restrictions and other pandemic-related challenges, we will strive to accommodate the needs of as many people as possible in as many venues as possible in a way that is inclusive, safe and secure. Moreover, we are striving to implement compliant yet more relaxed restrictions. We look forward to meaningful prayers, songs, and classes that will strengthen our connection to HaShem in our services.

Thanks to Rabbi Sytner's innovative strategy to deal with the current crisis, our Shul has grown exponentially during this time. We seamlessly transitioned from bricks-and-mortar to what is now known as The Virtual Village. This year, The Village Shul embarked on an incredible journey to reach farther than ever before. Using our successful father/son Bar Mitzvah Program model, we pivoted during COVID and created "The Worldwide Bar & Bat Mitzvah Program," a 10-week father/son and mother/daughter program for Bar & Bat Mitzvah families. We attracted, educated, and inspired over 115 parents and kids from Toronto to Vancouver, New York to California. Jews living in cities with very few Jewish resources joined our Program to connect deeply to their Jewish heritage and roots, and made their Bar & Bat Mitzvahs so much more meaningful.

The Inspiring Hope series by Rabbi Tzvi Sytner is an innovative way to connect with each one of us through a short weekly boost of Jewish Inspiration and messages of hope which had approximately 200,000 views from all across the globe. To our Rabbi and star speakers (Rabbi Yosef Posen, Rabbi Avi Diamond, Reb Zale Newman, Rabbi Asher Vale, Rebbetzin Devorah Vale, Rabbi Aryeh Pamensky, Reb Stuart Hytman, Adrienne Gold Davis, Ilana Kendal, Rabbi Elazar Robinson, Eve Levy, Stan Samole, Bob Zinner, and Ellie Bass) we thank you for sharing your wisdom and support.

Important life-cycle events (weddings, funerals, and bar/bat mitzvahs) have continued for our members. The Shul has ensured none of us have been left in isolation. We are reaching out to more people than ever with the assistance of the Chessed, Helping Hands, and VS Connects committees. We couldn't do this without you.

We are pleased to share that our Tots Together Pre-school re-opened on September 8, 2020. We've stayed open throughout the past year, and thankfully, did not have to shut down for even one day. It was great having the teachers, and children back in the building. We thank all the Tots' staff and our VS team for their outstanding contributions during these challenging times. We look forward to Tots summer camp in July, and a brand new Tots Together program beginning in September.

Last year, we were extremely blessed to be able to fundraise during the Pandemic. We held a virtual Sefer Torah Dedication Tribute for Rabbi Hoch, and in memory of Rebbetzin Faigy Hoch A”H. This was a very meaningful event for our Shul, community and the Hoch family. Thanks to the creativity of our Golf committee, we were able to have a Boutique Golf tournament with a limited number of golfers. Also, our 24-hour fundraising campaign, Inspiration Without Walls was an incredible success. Thanks to these fundraising efforts, and with the added assistance of Government subsidies, we were able to manage financially. However, we are nonetheless experiencing significant reductions in membership revenue, and need your help.

For many of our members, COVID-19 has brought financial challenges. Please be assured that we are making accommodations to meet everyone’s individual realities. We have set up an anonymous Family Sponsorship Fund. For those who are able, please consider increasing your regular dues to sponsor an existing member in need of assistance. Every dollar counts, as we expect subsidy requests to exceed normal levels.

To make membership payment arrangements for the upcoming year, login to your Village Shul online account, [The Village Shul \(shulcloud.com\)](http://TheVillageShul.com), or contact the office at 416-785-1107. *Please note that when registration opens for High Holiday services, only those who have made payment arrangements will be able to register.*

Life is about challenges. Our Village Shul community has come out in full force to face them. We miss seeing one another and gathering together, but, if nothing else, 2020-2021 will be remembered by how our community rallied during this challenging time. Our Shul is our Mishkan, and like our ancestors, it is our turn to stand up and be counted with our modern-day version of the half-shekel.

The Village Shul’s mission statement has always been about leadership, connection with our community, and service to Hashem. Our membership is our lifeline! Now more than ever, we need your continued support.

We are looking forward to the coming months when we are able to have larger services, more in-person gatherings, kiddushes, restarting our youth program, in-person classes, and of course our High Holidays celebrations. It will be good to see you all in person soon!

Barry Bank  
Chairman of the Board

Matthew Friedberg  
Vice Chairman / Treasurer

