

Holiday “Parking Lot” Minyan

Adapted from Outdoor Minyan protocol V2

September 14, 2020

Updated September 30, 2020 to Include Sukkot Day 2 Morning Parking Lot Modified Hoshanot and Simchat Torah Morning Modified Torah Reading and Hakafot

This document describes health-related procedures that will apply to outdoor Shabbat and Holiday minyanim in the parking lot at Ohr Kodesh Congregation.

Guiding principle: OKC’s guiding principle for implementation of programs during the pandemic is “compliance plus.” This means that OKC will be fully compliant with all regulations that pertain to its programs plus additional measures that should be implemented to further reduce the risk that programs will provide a platform for viral transmission. As with all other OKC-sponsored activities that are supported during the pandemic, the viability of the Parking Lot Minyan is predicated on attendees’ acknowledgement of communal responsibility for safety and the obligation to comply with the measures that are set forth in this document.

Contact Tracing Capability

The State of Maryland has established “covidLINK,” the state’s contact tracing initiative.ⁱ In a pandemic setting, contact tracing is an essential part of breaking the chain of infection. Contact tracing is relevant to Ohr Kodesh communal prayer to the extent that keeping track of persons who pray together at Ohr Kodesh may assist in the process of contact tracing should that information be needed.

Ohr Kodesh will maintain lists of persons who use the building or grounds for the purpose of communal prayer. These lists—including names and contact information—will be made available to appropriate authorities if this information is needed for the purpose of contract tracing.

Several features of the Parking Lot Minyan should be kept in mind.

- The Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur time slots during which the Parking Lot Minyan will be held will be planned for two hours fifteen minutes or less and will partially overlap timewise with the indoor Main Sanctuary minyan.
- The Sukkot Day 1, Sukkot Day 2, Sh’mini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah time slots during which the Parking Lot Minyan will be held will be planned for two hours or less and will partially overlap timewise with the indoor Main Sanctuary minyan.

- On Sukkot Day 2 morning and Simchat Torah morning, an additional 30 minute timeslot is planned for modified Hoshanot / Hakafot in the Parking Lot to include Parking Lot Minyan attendees as well as Main Sanctuary Minyan attendees. The two groups will be able to see each other but will be in separate parts of the parking lot.
- An objective of the Parking Lot Minyan is to offer a communal prayer option for families with young children as well as people who do not want to attend an indoor service.
- Access to bathrooms is a reasonable expectation for OKC-sponsored activities and is also necessary for hand hygiene.
- Access to (and cycling of) prayer books, kippot and tallitot should be available to the Parking Lot Minyan if attendees wish to use these resources.
- Security must be maintained.
- A process that permits contact tracing must be implemented as part of Parking Lot Minyan operations.
- A “Minyan Captain” must be identified and accountable for enforcement of the health measures described in this document.
- At this time, no tent or other covering structure is in place for any outdoor minyan. Services may therefore be cancelled due to inclement weather.

Location of the Ohr Kodesh Parking Lot Minyan

Services will be held at the Ohr Kodesh main parking lot.

Occupancy Limit: Ohr Kodesh Parking Lot Minyan

The Parking Lot Minyan will be limited to no more than **50 households** following Montgomery County’s guidance that requires at least 200 square feet per household for religious services.

All attendees must be pre-registered to maintain occupancy limits and to enable contact tracing.

Protocol Prior to Arriving for Communal Prayer: Parking Lot Minyan

- Attendees (adults and children) must take their temperature at home within one hour of arriving at Ohr Kodesh for the Parking Lot Minyan.
 - Oral temperature must be no higher than 100.3 degrees F.
 - Use of a mercury thermometer is preferred.
 - Questions concerning use of automated thermometers on Shabbat or Holidays should be directed to Rabbi Fishman.

Protocol Upon Arriving for Communal Prayer: Parking Lot Minyan

- Attendees arrive at the driveway entrances or the park pathway to be screened for entry between 15 and 20 minutes before services begin.

- There is no car parking available in the parking lot nor in the field behind Ohr Kodesh. All parking will be street parking. Please obey all posted signs.
- Attendees must be wearing masks **over their nose and mouth** as they approach the entrance to the Parking Lot Minyan.
 - Masks with one-way “valves” that facilitate exhalation are not permitted.
- OKC’s volunteer security team (CSS) may have a staff person on duty and that individual will have a list of Parking Lot Minyan attendees.
 - Attendees may be asked to briefly lower their masks as part of the CSS security protocol.
 - Individuals may be asked by CSS to show the contents of any bags they may be carrying.
 - Adult supervision for children is required at all times.
 - Young children who cannot remain in their seats may present a risk to other congregants.
- On all fall Jewish holidays, there may be Montgomery County Police present at Ohr Kodesh for security and safety purposes.
- Only people who have signed up for the **Parking Lot Minyan, the Main Sanctuary minyan, or Hoshanot/Hakafot only, will be permitted to enter the Parking Lot area for modified Hoshanot / Hakafot.**
- Families/attendees must position themselves at least six+ feet from one another at all times, including while they are waiting to be screened for entry into the Parking Lot Minyan area.
- The Parking Lot Minyan Captain will use an infrared thermometer provided by OKC to take temperatures of all persons entering the Parking Lot Minyan area.
 - People with temperatures exceeding 100.3° F will not be permitted to enter the parking lot area.
 - **Temperatures should be taken as close to the forehead as possible for best reading results. Clear device between each reading by clicking “trigger”.**
- After temperatures have been taken, Parking Lot Minyan attendees will be directed to use hand sanitizer that will be provided at the entrance area.
- Following hand sanitizing, attendees proceed directly to their seats.

Logistics During Prayer: Parking Lot Minyan

Seating in the Parking Lot

- Members of the same household who attend services together will be seated together in “clusters.”
 - **These clusters will be indicated by the locations of the pre-arranged chairs and/or markings on the ground in the parking lot area.**
 - Chairs can be moved as needed within each boxed seating cluster.
 - Additional chairs will be available in the area if needed.

- The Parking Lot Minyan Captain or a designee will be responsible for ensuring that once families/attendees arrive at the parking lot, seating is arranged such that individuals or family units are ≥6 feet from one another.
- Shluchei Tzibur will lead from the front of the seating area.
- People who chant the Leining and Haftorah will lead from the front of the seating area.
- Sanitizing wipes will be available at the front area where services are being led.
- Specific for the Sukkot Day 2 Morning Parking Lot Minyan and for the Simchat Torah Morning Parking Lot Minyan, service attendee seating will be arranged for the north half of the parking lot only (the side closest to the residences and public playground) leaving the half closest to the OKC building open for when those attending the Main Sanctuary Minyan come to the Parking Lot at the conclusion of services in order to participate in joint modified Hoshanot (Sukkot Day 2 morning) and joint modified Hakafot (Simchat Torah morning). Seats in the parking lot half closest to the building will be set up but reserved exclusively for those coming to modified Hoshanot / Hakafot from the Main Sanctuary.
- Those attending the Main Sanctuary Minyan who will then be coming to the Parking Lot for modified Hoshanot / Hakafot will use only the front doors of the building for entering and exiting the Ohr Kodesh building. All attendees must continue to maintain 6+ distance from each other when moving from the Main Sanctuary to the Parking Lot area.
 - Those that sign up for Hoshanot/Hakafot only will join the Parking Lot Minyan when they arrive on the north half of the parking lot.

Prayer Books (Siddurim), Machzorim (High Holiday Prayer Books), Chumashim (Torah / Haftarah Reading Books), Tallitot (Prayer Shawls), Kippot (Head Coverings)

- Parking Lot Minyan attendees are encouraged to bring their own prayer books (Siddurim / Machzorim), Chumashim (Torah/Haftarah readings), kippot, and tallitot.
 - OKC will provide these items for Parking Lot Minyan attendees as needed, and they will be placed on a designated table.
- At the conclusion of services, attendees who used OKC books (Siddurim / Machzorim / Chumashim), kippot or tallitot must return them to the box that has been designated for this purpose.

Singing

- Singing is permitted at the Parking Lot Minyan.
- Masks are required at all times by all attendees and service leaders.

Duration of Services

- High Holiday Parking Lot Minyan services will last approximately 2 hours **15 minutes or less.** On Sukkot Day 2 morning and Simchat Torah morning, an additional 30 minute timeslot is planned for modified Hoshanot / Hakafot in the Parking Lot to include Parking Lot Minyan attendees as well as Main Sanctuary Minyan attendees (the two groups will be able to see each other but will be in separate parts of the parking lot).

Handling of Ritual Items During Services

- **Torah:** At this time, the Parking Lot Minyan will not use a **Torah with the exception of Simchat Torah as described below.**
- On Simchat Torah morning, the following will occur:
 - Up to three Torah scrolls will be removed from the Ohr Kodesh ark several days prior to Simchat Torah and placed in a location identified by Cantor Labovitz to the service leaders for the Parking Lot Minyan.
 - Three individuals attending the Simchat Torah morning Parking Lot Minyan will be identified in advance who will be the only individuals who will be permitted to touch the Torah scrolls. Each of the three individuals will be assigned to a specific Torah. Each of the three individuals will carry their specific Torah scroll, unwrap the Torah covering, recite Aliyah blessings, read from the Torah, re-cover the Torah, be the only ones to hold the Torah during modified Hakafot, and return to the Torah to its designated location indoors after the service.
 - A table specifically designated for Torah reading will be set up at the front of the parking lot area.
 - Only Cantor Labovitz or her designee may roll the Torah scrolls.
 - Before and after each of the three Torah scrolls are read, the table surface will be wiped down with disinfecting wipes.
 - Modified Hakafot will not involve communal circle dancing. The scrolls will remain in one place and attendees will remain in their places.
 - Singing is permitted at normal prayer level (not high intensity).
 - The handles of the three Torah scrolls will be wiped with sanitizing wipes before and after being used, as will all handles of arks that are touched when removing and replacing the Torah scrolls.
- Attendees who are reading the Torah will do so from the Machzor (on High Holidays) or Chumash (on all other days except Simchat Torah morning per the above).
 - Readers must either bring their own yad or a similar instrument for reading, or not use one.
- **Mezuzot:** Attendees may not touch mezuzot on any door frame in the Ohr Kodesh building.

Restroom Usage During Communal Prayer: Parking Lot Minyan

- Parking Lot Minyan attendees may only use the restrooms located on the lower floor of the ECC in the school wing of Ohr Kodesh.
- Restroom access will be through the side parking lot door. Attendees must obey signage indicating which bathrooms are to be used.
- **Main Sanctuary Minyan attendees who come to the modified Hoshanot / Hakafot in the Parking Lot after the Main Sanctuary Minyan services should continue to use only the restrooms specifically designated for the service they have attended. and should only use the main doors at the front of the building to access the bathrooms.**
- Attendees must ensure that only one person or family unit uses the rest room at a time.
- Hands must be washed with soap before leaving the restroom.

Minyan Captain: Parking Lot Minyan

A Minyan Captain for the Parking Lot Minyan will be identified for each service. The Minyan Captain will have several responsibilities, some of which can be delegated to a second individual if needed:

- Arrive at least 25 minutes prior to the start of services and position him/herself outside the designated entrance(s) to welcome attendees and take temperatures.
- Remain at the entrance(s) until all attendees arrive.
- Confirm that attendees who arrive have been assigned to that minyan.
- Direct attendees to use hand sanitizer after temperatures have been taken and direct them to an appropriate seating area.
- Direct attendees to the parking lot exits immediately upon completion of services.
- **Be familiar with all elements of this protocol and be willing to ensure compliance throughout the services.**
- **For Sukkot Day 2 morning and Simchat Torah morning services where Main Sanctuary Minyan attendees may come to the Parking Lot immediately after services for modified Hoshanot / Hakafot, the Main Sanctuary Minyan Captain will continue to ensure that health protocols are followed.**

Restrictions During Communal Prayer: Parking Lot Minyan

- **Social Distance** – Attendees/family units must remain at least six+ feet away from other people at all times. No handshaking or other direct-contact greetings are permitted.
- **Restrooms** – Parking Lot Minyan attendees may only use restrooms on the lower level of the building in the ECC wing.

- **Access to other parts of the building** – After screening, Parking Lot Minyan attendees may only enter the building to use the designated restrooms. Attendees are not permitted in other parts of the building.
- **Physical Contact with Ritual Items** - Kissing of the Torah, prayer books, or mezuzot is not permitted.
- **Water fountains** may not be used anywhere in the building. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own water.
- **After Services** – Parking Lot Minyan attendees should exit the parking lot immediately following services **(or after the modified Hoshanot / Hakafot)** while maintaining at least six+ feet from other attendees/families.

High-Risk Groups that are Strongly Discouraged from Attending Communal Prayer at the Current Time

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified groups that are at high risk of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 if they become infected. These groups include:

- Adults age 65 and above
- People who live in nursing homes or long-term care facilities
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well-controlled
 - Chronic lung disease
 - Asthma
 - Immunocompromised conditions (e.g. cancer, organ transplant recipients, poorly controlled HIV/AIDS, prolonged use of corticosteroids, etc.)
 - Severe obesity (body mass index of 40 or higher)
 - Diabetes
 - Kidney disease who need dialysis
 - Liver disease
 - Serious heart conditions

People with one or more of these risk-enhancing characteristics are strongly discouraged from attending in-person communal prayers at this time. People with one or more of these risk factors who desire to attend the Parking Lot Minyan may do so; however, it is understood that these individuals will consult with their health care provider before attending the Parking Lot Minyan.

Groups that are Prohibited from Attending Communal Prayer at the Current Time

People with the following characteristics are prohibited from participation in the Parking Lot Minyan:

- Any respiratory symptoms
 - Cough

- Sneezing
- Wheeze
- Shortness of breath
- Sudden loss of taste and/or smell
- Temperature equal to or greater than 100.4 degrees
- Household member attending shul with person with fever of equal to or greater than 100.4°F
- **Sharing household with someone who:**
 - Has active, confirmed COVID-19 infection
 - Has any respiratory symptoms
 - Has fever
 - Is recovering from COVID-19 infection (is less than 2 weeks from active illness)
- History of COVID-19 infection; less than 2 weeks post-recovery
- People who believe they have been in recent contact with someone who has COVID-19 with the exception of medical personnel who maintain PPE and otherwise follow CDC guidelines for medical professionals.

Attendance of Children: Parking Lot Minyan

The Parking Lot Minyan increases access to prayer for more congregants in an outdoor setting, including families with younger children. However, it may be difficult for some young children to understand the importance of maintaining social distance during the service. To ensure viability of the Parking Lot Minyan, it is essential that parents have their children:

- Proceed to their seats immediately following hand sanitizing.
- Do not enter the building during the service for any reason other than to use the designated restrooms.
- Do not go to any parts of the building during the service other than the designated restrooms.
- Remain in their designated seats for the entire service. (*Children running around together amongst congregants increases risk to others in our community.*)
- Direct children to the public playground area outside the gate (instead of the OKC playground area) if children need a break during services – children should be supervised by an adult at all times.

If parents are uncertain if a child can comply with these infection control measures, we ask that you do not bring the child to the service.

Families will be expected to immediately remove a child to outside the parking lot area if the child is unable to remain in his/her seat during the service. Families should be prepared to remove their children before the Minyan Captain is obligated to act. If the Minyan Captain or another family/attendee observes that a child is not in compliance with the social distancing or

other requirements for safe implementation of the Parking Lot Minyan, it is their responsibility to ask parents to remove children from the service.

High-Traffic Surfaces

Several shared surfaces will have *relatively* high traffic during communal prayer:

- Microphones
- Leader tables/shtenders
- Interior/exterior door handles at building entrance
- Interior/exterior restroom stall doors
- Bathroom stall doors
- Bathroom faucets
- Paper towel dispensers

People who attend the Parking Lot Minyan strongly encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or to use hand sanitizer after touching any of these surfaces.

Hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes are to be placed near the doors to the building, near the parking lot entrances, and at the leader tables.

Cleaning Protocols for Communal Prayer: Parking Lot Minyan

- All door handles (see list above) must be wiped down with an EPA-approved disinfectant immediately before and after the Parking Lot Minyan.
- A large volume, pump-style hand sanitizer that is suitable for use on Shabbat/Holidays should be placed outside the gate and near the side door to shul (for entrance to designated bathrooms) for use by Parking Lot Minyan attendees.
- Bathroom doors, stall doors, faucets, and paper towel dispensers in the designated restrooms will be wiped down immediately before and after services.
- All chairs used must be cleaned/disinfected before and after each parking lot service.

¹ State of Maryland. CovidLINK. Respond. Connect. Recover. Available at: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/contact-tracing>. Accessed June 8, 2020.