

During this pandemic, while most people are sheltering in place, they have shared with me that they wish that they could do more to care for others who are in need. Beth Emet has had a long history of being engaged in Social Justice, and one of the ways we can do more for those in need is through the vehicle of advocacy. Please read the following message from our member Judy Caplan, who has been a leader in our congregation in the area of advocating for Social Justice. She has sent this message to those who have signed up to receive such actions, and at a time like now, there may be a wider interest in participating to help others who are in need. -- Rabbi Amy L. Memis-Foler

First and foremost let me say that I hope this email finds you and those you care about staying healthy and coping with these challenging times.

A friend of mine reminded me that " It's hard to be sad when you are being useful". In that spirit, I share with you the following assessment from our partners at ICIRR (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights).

"The COVID 19 pandemic put the systemic failures of our health care, labor, economic and public safety infrastructure on full display. These systems were one virus away from total catastrophe. These systems . . . were designed by and for a privileged set of individuals, while leaving behind masses of the most vulnerable amongst us. This is not new. Our communities have been uninsured, underpaid, and over-policed long before this crisis struck. As the faults of these systems are laid bare, we have an opportunity and responsibility to fight for a vision of a world where the most vulnerable are not left out but also given the opportunity to live lives of dignity and respect. As we address the gaps that have revealed themselves and ultimately put each and everyone one of us at risk, we must take very seriously the dangers of a shortsighted and meek approach. We have a duty to transform the broken systems for the benefit of everyone. For this reason, ICIRR's membership is calling for a response to this crisis focusing first on immediate relief, then moving towards recovery and ultimately transformation. We must address the needs of today while we also develop solutions for tomorrow from a lens of love and racial, economic, and health equity."

Here are two actions you can take -- as you are in your homes - that can put our Jewish values into action and address the needs of two -- the immigrant community and people in jail awaiting trial --

1) [Ensure All People Have Access to Care](#)

2) [Call In to Protect Public Health Through Decarceration](#)

These are not easy times, but I am confident we will get through them. At times when I worry about what the future holds, I quickly remember how much I have and how many others are dealing with so much more.

Please continue to be smart -- stay home, ask for help when you need it , and take care you yourselves. Keep your spirits up and find a way to help others in need. I end as I started, " It is hard to be sad when you are being useful."