



September 2020

Dear Kerem Shalom Friends,

While there will be numerous changes to our High Holy Days celebration, Kerem Shalom's tradition of asking for a Freewill Offering in connection with the High Holy Days continues. The time-honored Jewish act of tzedakah, or charity, is especially important in these challenging times of pandemic uncertainty. Members of our congregation have already contributed over \$15,000 in the past few months to support Kerem Shalom's Food Insecurity Fund, which benefits Open Table and Jewish Family & Children's Service Family Table. To help meet the needs of those who do not have enough to eat (and in acknowledgement that September is Hunger Awareness Month), we will direct 36% (2 X Chai) of all High Holiday Appeal donations to the Food Insecurity Fund (with the remaining 64% being allocated to Kerem Shalom's operating needs, as is our custom).

This has been an eventful year at Kerem Shalom, highlighted by many meaningful spiritual and celebratory occasions: we read from a recently donated Torah for the first time at Kol Nidre, celebrated in our re-designed Sukkah, joyously contributed to our community on Mitzvah Day, and witnessed many cherished life cycle events. Our 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration was held in February, with a Shabbat service and gala honoring our spiritual home. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic required all of us to pivot quickly, and we are both proud and grateful for the quick and creative transition Kerem Shalom has made in response. Within weeks, we moved Shabbat services online (with an increase in average attendance), and our Hebrew School students (and teachers) migrated to online classes. We began celebrating B'nai Mitzvah online in June. Our interactions have become "virtual" but our connections have remained real as we have become stronger together!

In a typical year, Kerem Shalom's dues do not cover our carefully managed operating costs, and we rely on our High Holy Day Appeal to make budget. This year is no exception, and in fact your generosity is needed more than ever. Our building may be temporarily closed, but our operating expenses remain largely the same, and we have had to invest additional resources in technology, to maintain KS as an online community, and in steps necessary to protect the health and safety of our professional staff. And we are all aware that many of our fellow congregants have been negatively impacted economically by the consequences of the pandemic, which will further challenge our budget. Accordingly, we are counting more than ever on the generosity of our members to provide voluntary donations to fill the gap in our annual operating budget.

If you are financially able to do so, we hope you'll consider giving in two ways. First, for your immediate family's reservations, please consider making a voluntary donation to support the 5781 High Holy Days Appeal. (The suggested amount is \$486/family. And any amount is welcome.) Second, as in the past, we recommend that you make a donation of \$180 for each adult (post Bar/Bat Mitzvah) member of your extended family or adult child not living at home, and \$360 for each adult non-family guest who will be joining you at this year's online High Holy Days services. You can [make your donation online](#) or by sending a check to Kerem Shalom, P.O. Box 1646, Concord, MA 01742. If giving to KS at the High Holy Days is your established tradition—thank you very much! If you are able to make this the first year of a new giving tradition, an extra thank you very much!.

Kind regards,

*Mark Stein*  
VP, Co-Chair Development Committee

*Matt Daniel*  
VP, Co-Chair Development Committee