

Introduction and Remarks for Leadership Call on 8.18.21

Jackie Land and Rabbi Maurice Harris

Welcome to our Leadership meeting. We scheduled this meeting to give our communities a chance to network and share updates, thoughts and feelings about next steps in your communities, and to learn from each other.

We understand that this past year and specifically the last several weeks have been very stressful as COVID related news keeps changing. When this summer began, most of our communities were excited to be planning for multi-access services and the opportunities for in-person gathering that we all missed last year. The news of the past few weeks has led many of our communities to change course, in some cases reducing or eliminating some of their in-person holy days plans, and in other cases moving ahead with multi-access plans that have been long in the making. Each congregation is in a different place and there is no one right or wrong answer for how you move forward. Your choices need to be based on what is best for those in your community.

One thing that we are observing in our many conversations with congregations is that, compared to this time last year, broadly speaking people are in a different place emotionally and in terms of human energy. Last year we surprised ourselves with our ability to rise to a huge challenge. We delighted in the new faces joining us online and in the many ways our clergy, staff, teachers and lay people went to great lengths to strengthen and support one another. This year we are, in the aggregate, much more fatigued. Those wellsprings of human energy have been drained for many of us. There's also disappointment that this fall is not what we had hoped. There's Zoom fatigue and uncertainty, and when people are tired and more ragged they are also more prone to get sharp with one another and judge each other's decisions negatively. It helps to be aware of what we are carrying collectively as we try to support each other in this year's challenge.

We will not be having a meeting in September. We hope that holidays and programming in your communities is meaningful and full. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, October 20th at 1:00 p.m. ET. I also want to remind you that Convention 2022, B'Yachad: Reconstructing Judaism together will be a multi-

access convention from March 23-27th in Tysons' Corner Virginia and available virtually. Registration for Convention will be opening on September 26th. Please make sure to publicize Convention to your communities.

I would like to take this time to wish all of you a Shana Tova Umetukah, a Happy Healthy, Sweet and meaningful New Year.