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VAAD HARABANIM
THE RABBINICAL COUNCIL
of GREATER WASHINGTON

Rabbi Moshe Walter
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Executive Director

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Dearest Members of the Washington Jewish Community:

We eagerly anticipate the day when our lives will once again enjoy a semblance of normalcy. The simple pleasures of being with beloved family members and friends, and perhaps even commuting to work will likely never again be taken for granted. Of course, we also yearn for the opportunity to serve our Creator with tefillah b'tzibbur. To that end, to facilitate a safe and enduring transition to public prayer, we are providing the following guidance to our congregations:

1. We have adopted the national guidelines of the OU and Agudath Israel for our local Vaad shuls, and strongly encourage everyone to carefully review them. Links to these documents are provided below.
 - a. Orthodox Union:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bzImm2f_GleR--L5o9LfeeGzhauCY-HM/view?usp=sharing
 - b. Agudath Israel of America:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/149gEbb_h5KUpSyOb0uhzS7MBDAKNFfqh/view?usp=sharing
2. In keeping with these guidelines, the Vaad has determined that the following policies be implemented by its member congregations:
 - a. No shul shall be reopened until at least two weeks after state and local governments (e.g. Montgomery County, Washington DC) have permitted the transition to Phase 1 of the reopening process. At that point, each shul will decide its own reopening protocols. This will occur most likely after Shavuot.
 - b. It is the strongly held opinion of the Vaad that the social distancing standards and precautions applied to mitzvah type gatherings, for example, weddings, bris, and shivas should be more stringent than those recommended by local governments.
3. There shall be **no** private home or backyard minyanim during this period of time. Even after shuls are reopened, everyone must please follow the guidelines of their respective shuls and attend only those minyanim that their shul has organized. Again, please do not form private minyanim.
4. Social distancing standards must continue to be observed by all members of our community. In particular, parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children strictly adhere to these standards.

Please know that the aforementioned policies are informed by expert halachic and medical advice. They are also motivated by our commitment to Torah law, which places a primacy on the preservation of human life, and by our love, respect, and concern for our beloved congregations.

Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington

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