

Gathering Us All

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It has been quite some time since we were last here, physically in this space. And while it may feel as if nothing has changed, as we smile at familiar faces and join together in prayer, we know that isn't the case. Much has changed since we were last together. We recognize the vacancies, the beloved members of our community whose presence will not return this year. And we welcome the new faces, those who are joining us for the very first time. This space may feel familiar, and yet it is also new. For we as a people have transformed.

Throughout the last 18 months, each of us has had to grapple with what we need to thrive. We leaned on our communities, nurtured relationships across physical space, and even found new ways of connecting with Judaism. For some, this period removed barriers that had been present for so many in our Jewish community. Virtual gatherings and Zoom services increased accessibility for those with physical disabilities, limited harmful questions about race, and helped increase understanding around gender-identity.

As we begin to gather in person once again, let us strive to remove the remaining barriers within our spaces. We must hold on to the blessings that come with being a part of a diverse Jewish community, and do our part to support everyone - especially Jews of Color, people with disabilities, and trans and gender expansive folks. May we be welcoming in our hearts and mindful with our words, remembering those we have lost and embracing new friends we have had the privilege to meet. Let us revel in our transformation and accept new beginnings. As we enter a new year, let us express gratitude and include everyone on our journey.

טוב כל שגמלנו טובות לחיבים הגומל העולם מלך אלהינו 'ה אתה ברוך

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, creator of the world, who rewards the undeserving with goodness, and who has rewarded us with goodness