

One of the central values of Jewish community was articulated about 2000 years ago by Rabbi Hillel in Pirkei Avot, 2:4. אַל תִּפְרוֹשׁ מִן הַצִּבּוּר – “*Al Tifrosh min hatzibur*”, literally means, “Do not separate from the community.” In other words, “Show up!”

The essence of a Jewish community is that we show up for each other, especially in difficult times. What a quandary this has been, these past few months that have demanded that we literally, physically separate ourselves. How strange that to be in solidarity with each other, in order to support the whole community, we must *refrain* from showing up.

But Judaism has always been an evolving tradition, and I am amazed by how our capacity to show up has evolved. I am amazed by the staff who continue to put their hearts into serving this whole community, even without face-to-face interactions. I am amazed at the volunteers who offer teachings and services online, and who offer tech support for those events. I am amazed at all of you who continue to support this community. I am amazed by the legions who have volunteered to make phone calls on my behalf checking up on fellow members. (If you haven’t received those calls, please let me know!)

We continue to be creative in creating community. Our Democracy Sunday events will encourage us to “show up” in the wider civic sphere. Our YouTube chat during Friday evening services is lively and new people are joining even now. Our staff is still here, ready to connect you with resources and hear your needs and your feedback. We will be welcoming Rabbi Alyson Solomon as our new Director of Community Education at the end of this month, and she will provide news ways to learn and connect. And I am here for you. If you want to connect, please reach out! I am delighted to meet you on a bike-by, a socially distant walk, an online meeting or even an old-fashioned phone call. So – *al tifrosh min hatzibur!*

—Rabbi Ruhi Sophia Motzkin Rubenstein

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