

## **Rabbi Gordon's Sabbatical Leave Frequently Asked Questions**

### **June 1, 2024 – August 31, 2024**

#### **What is a sabbatical?**

The term "sabbatical" is related to the word Shabbat (a time of rest). In the Torah, every seventh year is a sabbatical year where the land lies fallow. Sabbaticals are typically taken by rabbis in their seventh year of work for a congregation. During this period Rabbi Gordon will not be working and will have the opportunity to rest, study, travel and gain new perspectives. Rabbi Gordon's contract states that he will take three months of sabbatical from June 1, 2024 – August 31, 2024.

#### **Who will serve the congregation during Rabbi Gordon's sabbatical?**

We have a talented group of local rabbis, cantors, and song leaders as well as lay leaders who will be leading services while Rabbi Gordon is gone. Regularly scheduled summer events like the Annual Meeting, Shavuot Yizkor Service, Pride Shabbat, Pride Parade, Summer BBQ, and Board meetings will all be led and overseen by our wonderful lay leaders. All of Rabbi Gordon's regular responsibilities will be covered by congregants or local clergy. This will be a chance for everyone to learn from some wonderful rabbis and members of our community. Additionally, we have a talented team serving as our sabbatical committee to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

#### **Who do I call if I have an emergency?**

Sarah Jacobs, Executive Director, is serving as the contact person in case of a death or serious illness. Several local rabbis and cantors have volunteered to be available to officiate at funerals and support families through the grieving process. We also have a dedicated group of volunteers under the leadership of Joy Mandel and Marc Wernick who can lead shiva minyanim and help those who are ill with visits or meals.

#### **Will Rabbi Gordon be in contact with us during his sabbatical? Will he be checking email or answering his phone?**

Rabbi Gordon will be fully away during his sabbatical and will not be checking in on the synagogue during his absence. One goal of the sabbatical is for Rabbi Gordon to have the ability to step back from the day-to-day work of the synagogue to gain distance and clarity. This will help him return refreshed and renewed.

#### **Email:**

Rabbi Gordon will not be checking his email during his sabbatical. Please refrain from sending him emails. If you forget and email him, you will receive a detailed "away" message directing you who to contact in his absence. All of Rabbi Gordon's emails will be deleted from his inbox. If you'd like to reach out by email, please resend the email after September 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Phone Calls and Texts:**

Rabbi Gordon will also not be answering calls or texts to his cell phone. Synagogue President Ethel Zelenske and Sarah Jacobs, Executive Director, will be in touch with Rabbi Gordon if an emergency arises which the board feels needs his attention.

#### **Social Media:**

Rabbi Gordon will not be checking social media during his sabbatical and will not be able to see your posts or Facebook messages.

No doubt many of you will see Rabbi Gordon around town during his time “away.” We ask that you not discuss synagogue business with him when you see him around town. You should feel free to ask him if he has read any good books or made any delicious meals!

**What will Rabbi Gordon be doing on his sabbatical?**

Rabbi Gordon has three goals for his sabbatical: rest, a change of perspective, and learning. Rabbi Gordon will be away from Baltimore for much of the summer. He’s excited to spend a few weeks in New York City studying at the Hadar Institute. He’ll also be teaching and learning at a Conference on Jewish Life in Maine. Rabbi Gordon will be studying texts with rabbinic colleagues, reading lots of books, and writing some modern liturgy and poetry. Rabbi Gordon will spend some time traveling to Canada and to Virginia to visit with family and friends. He plans to visit other synagogues for Shabbat worship and to learn some new liturgy. He’s excited to spend time with his family, read by the beach, be outside, write, and listen to lots of new music.

**Who do I contact with questions about the sabbatical?**

You may speak with Synagogue President Ethel Zelenske or with Rabbi Gordon (before May 31st).

**Who will be in charge of what during the sabbatical?**

Sabbatical Committee—Ethel Zelenske ([president@boltonstreet.org](mailto:president@boltonstreet.org)), David Speer ([david.k.speer@gmail.com](mailto:david.k.speer@gmail.com)), Marc Wernick ([mhwernick@aol.com](mailto:mhwernick@aol.com)), and Sarah Jacobs ([sjacobs@boltonstreet.org](mailto:sjacobs@boltonstreet.org)) will serve as the sabbatical committee and ensure that everything runs smoothly while Rabbi Gordon is away.

Death and Serious Illness—Sarah Jacobs ([sjacobs@boltonstreet.org](mailto:sjacobs@boltonstreet.org)) is the contact person and will put you in touch with a local rabbi.

Pastoral Care and Requests from the Discretionary Fund—Ethel Zelenske ([president@boltonstreet.org](mailto:president@boltonstreet.org))

Services and High Holy Days—Marc Wernick ([mhwernick@aol.com](mailto:mhwernick@aol.com))

Religious School—Cory Hermann ([chermann@boltonstreet.org](mailto:chermann@boltonstreet.org))

Caring Committee – Joy Mandel ([jmandel951@gmail.com](mailto:jmandel951@gmail.com))

General Synagogue Questions – Sarah Jacobs ([sjacobs@boltonstreet.org](mailto:sjacobs@boltonstreet.org))