**FAQ (Updates from Zoom Calls to be added to existing FAQ on OT webpage)**

**Will there be a Yom Kippur Appeal?**

Yes. While you are asked to include your Yom Kippur Appeal donation in your Gift of the Heart annual commitment pledge, for those congregants who are unable or prefer not to, you will have an opportunity to make a standalone Yom Kippur Appeal pledge. Additionally, if you include your Yom Kippur appeal donation with your Gift of the Heart pledge, and want to make an additional Yom Kippur Appeal pledge, you can most definitely do that.

**How long does my Gift of the Heart commitment pledge last?**

Your pledge is an annual commitment, so please base it on what you can comfortably contribute for the upcoming year.

**Can I change the amount of my pledge?**

Yes. If your circumstances change and you want to adjust your commitment pledge, please contact our bookkeeper, Pam Carson, so she may assist you. You may increase or decrease your pledge; our hope is that you will be mindful that our congregation depends on our pledges to sustain itself.

**Are we measuring the success of the Gift of the Heart model? How will we know if it is working out?**

Yes. The board will monitor and review the success of the Gift of the Heart model at regular intervals. As one of our goals is greater transparency, updates will be shared with the congregation periodically, so that you know whether we are maintaining our financial sustainability. If the board observes that the model requires adjustments or modifications, we can do so.

Many congregations that have made this transition have seen growth in both membership and revenue, though many reported the most growth in years 2 and 3 of the new model. We’re optimistic that we may see a positive impact sooner, yet we are being conservative in our expectations based on the experience of other congregations.

**Why did the board decide to make this change? Why now?**

There are multiple reasons for the board’s decision. We want to promote financial sustainability, transparency, and flexibility. We feel it is time to evolve from our prior dues-based membership model to one centered on relationships and values. We want to free our congregation from the need to maintain an abatement committee for congregants whose financial circumstances prevent them from meeting the proscribed dues level. We believe this progressive change makes us a more welcoming home for congregants, current and future, and we think that this will lead to growth for Or Tzion. From a competitive perspective, the Gift of the Heart model differentiates us from other congregations with which we may compete for congregants. The timing makes sense now given the need for flexibility we anticipate on the part of many congregants due to the current economic challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic. A survey of our congregation in the spring of 2020 reaffirmed our view that many congregants feel a sense of financial uncertainty.

**Do we have a backup in case annual Gift of the Heart commitments are less than anticipated; for instance, because of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic?**

Yes, we had a highly successful year of fundraising in 2019-2020 (last fiscal year) and the board authorized setting aside some of our surplus into operating reserves to assist with this transition. Also, several congregants have stepped forward to indicate they would consider making supplementary commitments if needed.