

5-1-08 –A motion passed unanimously to accept the [following] Brit Avodah beginning with the June 2008 board of directors, as proposed, with the addition of and upholding the decisions and policies approved by, the board under Communications and Confidentiality, third bullet. (Handout in minutes, “Brit Avodah: Covenant of Service”.)

BRIT AVODAH: Covenant of Service For Congregation Beth Israel Board Members

Do what is right and good in the sight of the Eternal. Deuteronomy 6:18

It is the responsibility of Board Members of Congregation Beth Israel, an affiliated synagogue with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) to ensure that the synagogue is an ethical stronghold in all its pursuits and dealings. Board Members should be guided by *kedushah* (holiness) in promoting the synagogue’s mission of sustaining Judaism. Our role is that of “managing the sacred,” by bringing vision, wisdom and dedication to our duties. In doing so, we will adhere to the following principles:

Congregational Expectations

Board Members are expected to:

- Set the synagogue’s mission and purpose, goals and strategic direction and implement these through congregational programs and services, working closely with clergy and staff.
- Be actively involved in the organizational and communal life of the synagogue by frequently attending worship services, congregational events and committee meetings.
- Attend at least 75% of scheduled Board Meetings
- Be familiar with the congregation’s by-laws, policies and traditions, as well as its financial affairs.
- Ensure sound financial and organizational structure and procedures and exercise fiduciary oversight.
- Be responsive to the congregation’s members, providing support and listening to their needs.
- Strengthen the congregation’s role in the local community, relationship to the URJ and to Israel.

Personal Expectations

Board Members should expect to:

- Gain spiritual and personal growth through prayer and Jewish study.

- Set an example through personal commitment and actions, serving as role models.
- Use our skills to participate fully and thoughtfully in synagogue governance.
- Work collaboratively with the clergy, staff and members of the congregation.
- Act as advocates and positive spokespersons for the synagogue, our personnel, programs, and policies.
- Embrace *tzedakah* (righteous action) by financially supporting the synagogue to the best of our ability.
- Be part of the creative process of sustaining Jews and Judaism *l'dor v'dor* (from generation to generation).
- Board Members can expect to be appropriately recognized for their efforts.

Accountability

Board Members are accountable for:

- Decision-making based upon Jewish values such as fairness, *derech eretz*, mutual respect, sensitivity, and openness.
- Acting with personal honesty and integrity, including avoiding personal gain and conflict of interest.
- Providing oversight and fiscal responsibility so that resources are used effectively.
- Engaging in regular evaluation of policies, programs, procedures and personnel.
- Preserving the dignity of the synagogue, each of its members and those who serve it.
- Supporting both positively and Jewishly the daily work of the clergy and professional staff.
- Creating a safe and welcoming environment, built on trust, for all congregants and employees.

Communication and Confidentiality

Board Members are responsible for:

- Ensuring that matters requiring confidentiality are unequivocally respected.
- Upholding to the highest standards the laws of *la-shon harah* (idle gossip or slanderous talk).
- Respecting the privacy of deliberations and discussions that take place within meetings and upholding the decisions and policies approved by the Board.
- Communicating openly and truthfully with fellow lay leaders, clergy, professional staff and congregants.

- Ensuring that criticism of policy, positions, programs, or individuals is expressed constructively and addressed to the appropriate party.
- Ensuring that disagreement relates only to principles and priorities, not personalities.

Respect for Others

Board Members are responsible for:

- Ensuring that everyone involved in synagogue life is treated with *kavod* (respect).
- Enabling those who are connected with synagogue life to reach their highest potential.
- Teaching that all are created *b'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God) and that being a Jew is an honor and a privilege.
- Remembering and reminding others that the goal is unity, not uniformity.
- Ensuring that respect for boundaries, prerogatives and expertise is the norm and that the position/office/calling of the clergy, professional staff and lay leaders is worthy of respect.

It was not with our fathers that Adonai made this covenant, but with us, the living, every one of us who is here today.

(Deuteronomy 5: 3)

The privileges and benefits bestowed upon Board members are a blessing, creating the opportunity for personal growth through service to the Jewish community. By living a committed Jewish life, each of us can improve while contributing to *tikkun olam* (repair of the world).

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President _____ Date _____

Rabbi _____ Date _____

Adopted May 12, 2008 by Congregation Beth Israel Board of Directors

**Adapted from: *Brit Avodah: A Covenant of Service* from the Joint Commission on Synagogue Development 2005, Union for Reform Judaism.

