

Beth Israel Congregation of Lexington Park, MD
Constitution
Passed by the Congregation, 1978
Amended, 1983, 1988, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2012, 2022 and 2024

Preamble

The objective of the Beth Israel Congregation is to be the community center of Conservative Jewish worship, Jewish study, thought, education, fellowship, charity, and community relationships. It shall be the responsibility of the members and officers who compose the Congregation to provide for these needs of the Jewish community at large. This constitution provides the governing rules and regulations to accomplish these objectives, and shall be amended when needed to best achieve the spirit of these objectives.

Article I, Membership

Section 1. Membership shall be open to any person of the Jewish faith.

Section 2. There shall be two types of full membership.

A. **Household Membership.** All membership privileges shall be extended to married couples and couples in the same household. At least one member of the couple must be of the Jewish faith. Each couple shall be entitled to two votes in Congregation meetings. If one member is not present at a Congregation meeting, the attending member may cast two votes.

B. **Individual Membership.** Such membership shall be extended to individuals and shall entitle the member to one vote in Congregation meetings.

Section 3. **Associate Membership.** For members who do not reside in Southern Maryland (approx. 75 miles from the synagogue). Associate members may not vote in Congregation meetings nor hold office in the Congregation.

Section 4. **Complimentary Membership.** Complimentary memberships shall be extended to the following:

- A. Jewish full-time college students.
- B. Jewish citizens of foreign countries resident for less than one year.
- C. Jews currently serving in the U.S. armed forces in a pay grade of E5 or lower.
- D. New Jewish residents during the first three months of their residence in the community.

47 Section 5. **Honorary Membership.** The Executive Committee shall confer such
48 membership on deserving persons who have left the community and shall entitle the honorary
49 member to all complimentary membership privileges. (passed 6/5/88)
50

51 Section 6. **Privileges of Membership.**
52

53 A. Full members (Household and Individual members) in good standing shall
54 enjoy the following privileges:

55 (1) To attend all meetings of the Congregation.
56

57 (2) To have a voice and a vote at all Congregation meetings.
58

59 (3) To hold office in the Congregation.
60

61 (4) To participate in all religious services in the synagogue.
62

63 (5) To participate in all educational, social, and cultural activities of the
64 Congregation.
65

66 (6) To enroll their children in the Religious School of the Congregation.
67

68 (7) Reduced fees for out-of-town guests for the High Holidays
69

70 B. Complimentary membership shall entitle the complimentary member to all of
71 the privileges of membership except that the complimentary member may not vote in
72 Congregation meetings nor hold office in the Congregation.
73
74

75 Section 7. Household, Individual, and Associate Membership become effective with the
76 payment of the member's first quarterly dues. The privileges of membership may be suspended
77 by the Executive Committee of the Congregation.
78

79 **Article II, Officers**
80

81 Section 1. The officers of the Congregation shall be:
82

83 A. President,
84

85 B. Vice President,
86

87 C. Recording Secretary,
88

89 D. Corresponding Secretary, and
90

91 E. Treasurer.
92

93 Section 2. Only members in good standing shall be eligible to serve as Officers of the
94 Congregation. The members who serve as President and Vice President must be Jewish.

95
96 Section 3. **Officer Duties.** The officers of the Congregation shall perform the duties
97 prescribed by this constitution.

98
99 A. **The President** shall lead the Congregation, preside over Executive
100 Committee and the Board of Directors (further referred to as the “Board”), appoint chairs to all
101 standing committees, and shall represent the Congregation to the community-at-large.

102
103 B. **The Vice President** shall assume the duties in the absence of the President.
104 The Vice President shall coordinate the activities of all committees and is an *ex-officio* member
105 of all standing committees, except the Executive Committee where the Vice President is a
106 member.

107
108 C. **The Recording Secretary** shall call the roll and record the minutes of
109 Congregation, Board, and Executive Committee meetings. The Recording Secretary is a member
110 of the Executive Committee.

111
112 D. **The Corresponding Secretary** shall communicate all minutes and official
113 notices to the members of the Congregation and, when necessary, to the Jewish community at
114 large, and shall be responsible for the official correspondence of the Congregation.

115
116 E. **The Treasurer** shall collect all Congregation dues, fees, assessments, and
117 donations, and pay all Congregation expenses from these monies as authorized by the
118 Congregation, Board, or the Executive Committee.

119
120 Section 4. **The Nominating Committee**, comprised of the Past President as chairperson
121 and one other member appointed by the Executive Committee, shall select a slate of candidates
122 for their respective offices. The Congregation shall be notified of the slate in writing or by
123 electronic means at least ten days before the election meeting. (passed 9/30/2005) (passed
124 6/10/2012)

125
126 Section 5. A Congregation meeting shall be held before the June Board meeting to elect
127 officers. A slate of candidates for its officers shall be put before the Congregation by the Board.
128 Before the election of each officer, additional nominations from the floor shall be permitted.

129
130 Section 6. Officers shall be elected for a two-year term that shall begin at the June Board
131 Meeting.

132
133 A. Officers may serve multiple terms at the discretion of the Congregation or the
134 Board.

135
136 B. In the event of an officer vacancy prior to completion of the term, the
137 Executive Committee shall appoint a replacement to complete that term.

C. The President and the Recording and Corresponding Secretaries are elected in the same year and serve concurrent terms and not concurrent with the Vice President and Treasurer.

D. The Vice President and Treasurer are elected in the same year and serve concurrent terms and not concurrent with the President and Reporting and Corresponding Secretaries.

Article III, Standing Committees

Section 1. The chairs of all standing committees shall be appointed by the President.

Section 2. Only Jewish members may serve as chair of Religious, Talmud, and Membership committees.

Section 3. The standing committees of the Congregation and their duties shall be as follows:

A. **Executive Committee.** This is a leadership committee made up of the following officers; President serving as its chairman, Vice President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary. This committee meets as directed by the President to address confidential issues and support timely action where convening the entire board is not practical or necessary.

B. **Parliamentarian.** The Parliamentarian shall advise the President and the Board on "*Robert's Rules of Order*" and act as the Historian for the Congregation.

C. **Religious Services Committee.** This committee shall be in charge of all religious services of the Congregation, subject to the approval of the Board, and will ensure that religious services are held on Jewish holidays and on occasions of special observance, and will advise the Board and Executive Committee on matters of religious ritual.

D. **Talmud Torah Committee.** This committee shall supervise the Religious School of the Congregation and shall determine policy and formulate rules for the Religious School subject to the approval of the Board.

(1) The Talmud Torah Committee will ensure that the Religious School provides for the teaching of Jewish history, philosophy, culture, and thought to the school-aged Jewish children of the community.

(2) The Chair of the committee shall recruit, vet, recommend to the Board, and supervise Hebrew School Teachers.

(3) In addition, the school shall provide for the teaching of the Hebrew language and the requirements of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, excluding specific Haftorah study.

184 E. **Ways and Means Committee.** This committee shall plan and execute special
185 fund-raising events and projects for the Congregation, subject to the approval of the Board.
186

187 F. **Membership Committee.** This committee shall identify and recruit new
188 members from the community and advise the Board of membership applications and new Jewish
189 members in the community.
190

191 G. **House Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for maintaining the
192 synagogue and for supervising the use of the synagogue or other Congregational property,
193 subject to the approval of the Board.
194

195 H. **Building, Planning and Funding Committee.** This committee shall be
196 responsible for the long-range planning of building improvements and expansions for the
197 synagogue, and for the acquisition of funds for the purpose of implementing those plans, subject
198 to the approval of the Board.
199

200 I. **Publicity Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for publicizing all
201 functions and activities of the synagogue to the community through the use of media, subject to
202 the approval of the Board. (passed 6/19/83)
203

204 J. **Newsletter Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for publicizing
205 all functions and activities of the Congregation to its members and those who might consider
206 joining the Congregation by publishing a newsletter. The content of the newsletter is subject to
207 the approval of the Board. (passed 8/25/02)
208

209 K. **Security Committee.** This committee shall evaluate and recommend physical
210 security needs and protocols to the Board to ensure the safety and security of the synagogue
211 building and those using it. The Committee shall ensure, assess, and periodically evaluate
212 existing procedures and processes for access control, emergency response planning, and security
213 training of the congregation. The committee shall coordinate with the Technology Committee
214 and with county law enforcement as appropriate. (passed 6/16/2022)
215

216 L. **Technology Committee.** This committee shall evaluate, maintain, and keep
217 current existing technology used by the synagogue for security and other purposes, ensure full
218 compliance with manufacturers' warranties and operational guidance, and coordinate with
219 technology vendors, as required. As directed by the Board, the committee shall recommend and
220 procure technology acquisitions and/or upgrades for the synagogue. (passed 6/16/2022)
221

222 **Article IV, Board of Directors** 223

224 Section 1. The Board of Directors of the Congregation shall be composed of the elected
225 officers of the Congregation, the Chairs of the standing committees, a representative of the
226 Sisterhood of the Congregation, the Immediate Past President of the Congregation, and the
227 Congregation Rabbi, *ex officio*, as a non-voting member. Chairs of standing committees may
228 serve multiple one-year terms at the discretion of the Congregation or the Board respectively.
229

230 Section 2. The Board shall have regular monthly meetings. The dates and times of the
231 meetings shall be set by the President. A quorum for a Board meeting shall consist of a simple
232 majority of its members. All members of the Board shall have one vote. A majority of the Board
233 may also call Board meetings.

234
235 Section 3. The proceedings of the Board meetings are, to the greatest extent possible,
236 conducted under the *“Robert’s Rules of Order”*.

237 238 Section 4. **Duties of the Board**

239
240 A. The Board shall plan and coordinate the overall program of the Congregation.
241 No Congregation function may be scheduled or held without the approval of the Board.
242 Religious functions will take precedence over all other functions.

243
244 B. The Board or its representative shall interview all potential employees of the
245 Congregation. Employees may be hired by the President upon the candidate’s approval by the
246 Board.

247
248 C. The Board shall be the authority for the interpretation of the Constitution.

249 250 **Article V, Congregation Meetings**

251
252 Section 1. Congregation shall, at a minimum, meet to elect officers, review the budget,
253 and approve constitutional amendments.

254
255 Section 2. All meetings of the Congregation may be held in-person, virtually, or in
256 combination. Meetings of the Congregation may be held as necessary.

257
258 Section 3. A quorum is needed to hold a Congregation meeting. For all matters other
259 than Constitution amendments, a quorum consists of one-fourth of the membership, excluding
260 honorary members, associate members, and complimentary members, and including at least one
261 officer. Quorum threshold for Constitution amendments is found in Article IX Section 2B.
262 Members of a quorum include those attending in-person and virtually and through the use of a
263 quorum proxy—a proxy for the sole purpose of obtaining a quorum and nothing else. A sample
264 quorum proxy is found in Appendix A of this Constitution.

265
266 Section 4. Additional meetings of the Congregation may be called under any one of the
267 following circumstances:

268
269 A. When the President deems it necessary.

270
271 B. By a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

272
273 C. Within two weeks after receiving a petition signed by at least one-fourth of
274 the membership, excluding honorary and complimentary members.

276 Section 5. **Voting.** Voting shall be conducted at a congregation meeting (in-person,
277 virtual, or both), or by electronic or mail-in balloting, or in combination as determined by the
278 Board. If mail-in or electronic ballots are sent to all members of the congregation, then the
279 threshold to pass an amendment(s) is a simple majority of its entire membership.

280
281 A. Congregation voting rights are defined in Article 1 Section 2.

282
283 B. An enclosed return ballot or instructions for how to vote electronically may be
284 included with the proposed officer slate, constitutional amendment(s), or other proposal brought
285 to the congregation, allowing at least two weeks for ballots to be returned and considered valid.

286
287 C. Mail-in or electronic ballots shall be returned to the Recording Secretary.

288
289 D. The Recording Secretary will count the returned ballots and the in-
290 person/video votes with at least two other members of the Executive Committee as witnesses to
291 verify and validate the count

292
293 E. If the number of votes received is less than a simple majority of the quorum or
294 membership as required, the voting period may be extended by the President.

295
296 F. A simple majority of the verified and validated ballots (in-person, virtual,
297 mail-in, and electronic) will determine the outcome of the amendment.

298 299 300 **Article VI, Budget and Dues**

301
302 Section 1. The fiscal year of the Congregation shall run from July 1 through June 30.

303
304 Section 2. The Board must approve a balanced budget prior to the start of the fiscal year.

305
306 Section 3. It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to present a proposed budget for the
307 upcoming fiscal year to the Board, at its regular June meeting, for approval.

308
309 A. The budget, as approved by the Board, shall be presented to the Congregation
310 for review at its regular summer meeting for transparency and comment.

311
312 B. A written or electronic copy of the approved budget shall be sent to all
313 Congregation members at least ten days prior to the Congregation budget meeting.

314
315 C. An annual meeting for the purpose of presenting to the congregation the
316 Board-approved budget shall be held between July 1 and August 31. The congregation may
317 suggest amendments to the approved budget.

318
319 Section 4. Special expenditures may be approved by the Board with a super majority
320 (two-thirds vote). The Board must notify the Congregation in writing or by electronic means of

the approved special expenditures and rationale. A special expenditure is defined as an expense greater than one-third of the total Congregation budget.

Section 5. The yearly dues of the Congregation shall be presented as part of the yearly budget.

A. The primary source of revenue is membership dues and the Board is encouraged to set the dues to cover the anticipated operating expenses of the synagogue.

B. No dues are assessed for honorary and complimentary membership.

Section 6. Fees for attending the Congregation Religious School shall be proposed as part of the yearly budget, specifying both member and non-member tuitions.

A. A child with at least one Jewish parent may attend Religious School, regardless of membership in the Congregation.

Section 7. The President and Treasurer shall have the right to waive any dues, fees, or assessments against any Congregation member or persons seeking full membership, for reasons of financial hardship. These proceedings shall be held in strict confidence.

Section 8. Fees for participation of non-members in synagogue affairs may be set by the Board.

Article VII, Religious Participation. All members have the right and responsibility to participate in all aspects of religious worship.

Article VIII, Parliamentary Practice. “*Robert’s Rules of Order*” shall be standard for parliamentary procedures at all Congregation and Board meetings when they do no conflict with the Constitution of Beth Israel Congregation.

Article IX, Amendments to the Constitution

Section 1. This constitution may be amended.

Section 2. To ensure adequate time for review, Congregation must be notified in writing or by electronic means of any proposed amendments at least two weeks prior to the Congregation acting on such amendments.

A. Only amendments closely related to the subject and meaning of the proposed change or addition may be adopted. (passed 6/10/2012)

B. A quorum is required to act upon a constitutional amendment and consists of at least a simple majority of the entire membership and including at least one officer, and excludes honorary members, associate members, and complimentary members. Members of a quorum include those attending in-person and virtually and through the use of a quorum proxy—

a proxy for the sole purpose of obtaining a quorum and nothing else. A sample quorum proxy is found in Appendix A of this Constitution.

C. Voting procedures are found in Article V Section 5 and require a simple majority of the congregation to support the amendment(s).

Article X, Dissolution of the Congregation.

Section 1. **Decision.** If the congregation of Beth Israel Congregation decides to end operations and its existence as a synagogue, a majority of remaining members of the congregation in good standing shall meet to determine the best course forward with either complete dissolution or a merger with another synagogue.

A. To ensure adequate time for review, the Congregation must be notified in writing or by electronic means of any and all details of any dissolution or merger proposals at least two weeks prior to the Congregation acting

B. A quorum is required to act on any proposal and consists of at least a simple majority of the membership, and excludes honorary members, associate members and complimentary members. Members of a quorum include those attending in-person and virtually and through the use of a quorum proxy—a proxy for the sole purpose of obtaining a quorum and nothing else. A sample quorum proxy is found in Appendix A of this Constitution.

Section 2. **Merger.** Should members negotiate and approve a merger with another synagogue:

A. Assets shall be liquidated after termination of operations,

B. Payment of all outstanding debts shall be made, and

C. Remaining assets will be transferred to the new synagogue per the negotiated agreement.

D. An attorney may be hired to conclude any outstanding business, such as closure of accounts, and removal of tax-exempt status and grant reporting requirements.

Section 3. **Dissolution Without Merger.** Should members decide to end operations:

A. Assets shall be distributed for one or more tax-exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. The asset transfer recipient shall be determined by a vote by the membership under the process found in Section 1 of this Article.

B. The distribution may include, but not be limited to, *Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger*, the Jewish National Fund, the Federal government, the State of Maryland, or St. Mary's County for a public purpose.

413 **APPENDIX A**
414 **SAMPLE PROXY AND BALLOT**

415
416
417 Beth Israel Congregation of Lexington Park, MD
418

419 **PROXY**

420
421 Congregation Meeting on (fill in date)
422

423 I (Single member), We (Household member), (fill in name), being a member of
424 Beth Israel Congregation in good standing, and being entitled to vote at the Congregation
425 Meeting, do hereby constitute and appoint board member (fill in name), and/or his
426 assign, or (fill in name) as my proxy to attend the
427 Congregation Meeting on my behalf to be held on (fill in date), and/or any continuation or
428 adjournment thereof. Any previous proxy or proxies heretofore given by me to any person or
429 persons whatsoever are hereby revoked.
430

431 Signature(s): _____
432

433 Print Name: _____
434

435 Date: _____
436

437
438 **PLEASE RETURN THIS PROXY SO IT ARRIVES NO LATER THAN (fill in date).**

439 If you decide to attend in person you may retrieve your proxy and vote in person

440 **HOWEVER, WE NEED YOUR PROXY RETURNED IMMEDIATELY**
441 **TO ENSURE A QUORUM.**

442 You may either return your proxy in the enclosed stamped envelope or email to:

443 Recording Secretary *(email address)*
444 _____
445

446 **(Optional)**
447 **SAMPLE BALLOT**
448

449 I instruct that my vote or votes be cast for the following:

450
451 Motion #1. (Slate of Officers, Amendment #1, etc.)
452 _____

453 **Please check one of the following:**
454

455 ☐ In Favor

455 ☐ Against

456
457
458 Signature(s): _____ Date: _____