



### Temple Beth Am Ethics *B'rit* (Covenant)

Temple Beth Am values community, worship, social action, learning, and a place of holiness, fiscal responsibility, involvement, and ethical behavior. This Ethics *B'rit* helps us cultivate *k'dushah* (holiness) in our community. These standards are guided by Torah and our values; they act as a shared set of ethical expectations for interactions among us. This Ethics *B'rit* includes members of TBA and visitors, employees, and others who work with us, pray with us, or share our space. This Ethics *B'rit* is grounded in TBA's Values:

- **Inclusion:** We welcome everyone into our community. We embrace diversity so that people feel seen and heard, and everyone is invited to participate. We honor all levels of Jewish knowledge.
- **Inspiration:** We nourish the soul, mind, and body. We affirm Judaism's belief that life is a gift from the Divine. We nurture our capacity for gratitude and blessing.
- **Purpose:** We believe that every individual's life has meaning and what we do matters in the world. Our actions are rooted in Jewish values, texts, and traditions.
- **Engagement:** We get involved in issues that matter to us to make the world a better place. We contribute to one another's lives by cultivating kindness, joyously celebrating, and offering solace to heal pain.
- **Curiosity:** We are inquisitive, eager to learn from our successes and our mistakes. We strive to continually improve our communication and enhance our organizational health.
- **Responsibility:** We participate in a web of relationships within and beyond our congregation, and fulfill our obligations to others locally, nationally, and globally. We recognize our special commitment to Am Yisrael, the Jewish people here, in the State of Israel, and throughout the world.

In order to support and sustain these shared Values, the Board of Temple Beth Am, in consultation with the clergy and professional team, adopted this Ethics *B'rit* on March 2025. This Ethics *B'rit* will be made available to all congregants, staff, and clergy. It will be published on the TBA website and will be available in the synagogue office.

We expect that this *Ethics B'rit* will be updated over time based on feedback and experience.

**OUR *B'RIT*:** As Rabbi Ruth preached on Rosh Hashanah 5785, we at Temple Beth Am embrace the ancient and evergreen belief that the world holds steady for us

when *together* we engage in *Torah* (learning and living our sacred texts), *Avodah* (prayer and other acts of divine service), and *Gemilut Hasidim* (acts of lovingkindness to people we know and to strangers.) We seek for our congregation to continue to be a *progressive religious community* that believes the world stands on these foundation stones learning, prayer, and acts of loving-kindness. As such it means that we engage in a *brit*, a sacred covenant with one another. Therefore, we treat others with respect, dignity, fairness, and compassion.

1. Everyone is welcome at TBA, without regard to religious background, age, ability, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, or socioeconomic status.
2. We refrain from hateful or demeaning speech, negative talk, gossip, and slander, whether in person, or in email, texts, or other electronic or social media.
3. We do not bully, including any unwanted behavior that degrades, humiliates, or oppresses another.
4. We do not tolerate sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, physical, written, or visual conduct of a sexual nature.
5. We do not tolerate acts or behaviors that exploit the vulnerability of another, take advantage of a power imbalance, compromise one's moral integrity, or create an intimidating, offensive, abusive, or hostile environment.
6. We protect confidential information, either about an individual or the synagogue, and do not disclose or misuse it without permission. For example, this includes personal address and contact information in the TBA Member Directory, and (for those professional staff, clergy, and lay leadership with access to it) personnel information such as employment status, compensation, and performance review, as well as personal information about an individual's health, financial status, or family matters.
7. We make decisions regarding synagogue-related matters with transparency, openness and accountability, unless confidentiality dictates otherwise. For example, it is especially important that we protect inadvertent and premature release of names of candidates for employment. This includes adhering to placement guidelines of the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis), ACC (American Conference of Cantors), and ARJE (Association of Reform Jewish Educators) when hiring clergy.
8. We refrain from using one's synagogue position for personal advantage or benefit. For example, we refrain from hiring or firing, rewarding or punishing staff or volunteers, and awarding or denying contracts based solely on personal considerations such as favoritism, nepotism, or bribery.

9. We conduct financial matters related to synagogue involvement with complete honesty. For example, we refrain from financial impropriety in decisions regarding restricted, committed, and discretionary funds.
10. We conduct employment practices and related decision-making in an ethical and legal manner. We establish and enforce the appropriate policies and procedures to protect the employees of the congregation, such as fair employment policies, grievance reporting, and conflict resolution procedures.

### **Reporting and Responding to Concerns**

The following section outlines the process for raising, evaluating, and remediating concerns related to this *B'rit*. Our primary goal when addressing complaints and violations is resolution (which may involve escalation beyond the TBA community when appropriate). As a sacred community, we also strive for healing and reconciliation.

As a first response, we encourage all community members to address interpersonal conflicts directly and compassionately between the affected parties.

If escalation is needed, any community member may approach any member of the Board of Directors, clergy or professional staff in order to raise a concern about a possible breach of this *B'rit*.

#### **Responding to concerns: priorities**

- All reports to a member of the Board of Directors, clergy, or professional staff will be taken seriously and will be investigated in good faith.
- Respondents will address reports diligently, promptly, and in good faith and (to the extent consistent with applicable law), using their best efforts to ensure confidentiality both during and after each investigation and response.
- When a report includes allegations against a specific person, any investigation should include hearing from both sides of the allegation.
- Where an allegation raises the possibility of imminent or substantial harm to a person, legal obligations will take precedence and supersede any procedures otherwise provided in this *B'rit*.

## **Responding to concerns: process**

- When an allegation of unethical behavior is made, the person to whom the complaint was made will alert the Senior Rabbi, Temple President, and Executive Director (ED).
  - If any of the Senior Rabbi, Temple President, or ED cannot participate or must recuse themselves, the Board of Directors will choose their replacement and transition the investigation as necessary (e.g., to the CCAR).
- The Senior Rabbi, Temple President, and ED will convene to learn the details of the report and decide on a course of action that includes information gathering, deliberation, and resolution based on the particularities of the allegation.
  - This may include consulting independent legal counsel representing the Temple.
  - This may include appointing a small, discrete Incident Review Team to further investigate and make recommendations based on their findings, our values, TBA's bylaws, and applicable law.
  - The choice of the Incident Review Team members shall be based on the following qualities: integrity, leadership, independence, and ability to handle challenging situations.
  - No individual may serve on an Incident Review Team if an allegation pertains to them in any way or involves a direct report or family member.
  - When possible and appropriate, resolution will involve reparative justice (T'shuvah).
- As appropriate or contractually required, concerns will be escalated to other organizations, such as the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), American College of Cantors (ACC), Association of Reform Jewish Educators (ARJE), National Association for Temple Administration (NATA), the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), or law enforcement.