

BY-LAWS
OF
ONEONTA JEWISH COMMUNITY, INC.

TEMPLE BETH EL
ONEONTA, NEW YORK

(Revised & Adopted July 1, 2001)
(Revised & Adopted July 6, 2016)

ARTICLE 1

NAME

This Congregation of Jewish people shall be called ONEONTA JEWISH COMMUNITY, INC., also known as TEMPLE BETH EL.

ARTICLE II

THE CONGREGATION'S MISSION

This Congregation has been established to build and maintain a synagogue - the Jewish people's *Beit HaKnesset*, *Beit HaMidrash* and *Beit HaTefillah* – as a house of assembly, study and prayer. The objective of the Congregation is to provide opportunities through religious services, educational formats, cultural, social and recreational activities for the Jews of the community.

The congregation is committed to the principles and values of Conservative Judaism. The synagogue is dedicated to the study of *Torah* which leads to the observance of the *mitzvot* (g-d's commandments); to the principle of *K'lal Yisrael* (the whole Jewish community of the world) which focuses the Congregation to reach out to all Jews irrespective of affiliation; to the land of Israel, *Eretz Yisrael*, which is seen as the historic homeland of the Jewish people, a spiritual resource for Torah learning.

This Congregation is committed to participate in activities of social responsibility and justice according to principal of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world).

The Congregation seeks to:

- * **transform** the lives of Jews through the observance and the teaching of *mitzvot*;
- * **refine** the moral and ethical behavior of all people by Jewish *mentschlichkeit* (a concept: the highest ideals of Jewish human conduct) demonstrated by Torah role models and Talmudic descriptions.
- * **create** a *kehillah*, a Jewish community.

ARTICLE III

AFFILIATION

The Congregation shall be affiliated with The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The auxiliaries and organizations of the Congregation shall also be associated with the parallel affiliates of the Conservative Movement. The Congregation shall follow the Standards for Congregational Practice and A Guide to Congregational Practices of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, published annually by The United Synagogue in the Directory and Resource Guide.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Jewish persons from the age of 22 years or older may be eligible for membership. (A person born of a Jewish mother or who has been converted to Judaism according to *halakhic* (Jewish tradition) requirements is a Jew.)

Section 2. There shall be four types of membership:

- a. **Household Membership.** Such membership may be extended to two Jewish adults in the same household and includes Jewish children younger than 22 years of age. Each adult shall have the right to one vote as a member.
- b. **Individual Membership with Children.** Such membership may be extended to a Jewish adult with Jewish children younger than 22 years of age.
- c. **Individual Membership.** Such membership may be extended to a single Jewish adult.
- d. **Honorary Membership.** Such membership may be conferred upon the Rabbi of the Congregation, spouse and children; the Cantor, spouse and children. No vote shall be given to an honorary member.

Section 3. A majority vote of the Board members present at a meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be required to elect an Applicant to membership.

Section 4. Resignation from membership should be submitted in writing to the Board for acceptance.

Section 5. Membership may be suspended or terminated by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the Board of Trustees at any regular or special meeting for conduct which it deems to bring discredit upon Jews, the Synagogue or the Jewish Community. Notice of such meeting shall be given by the Secretary or President of the congregation, by mail, to all trustees, and to the member involved, not less than seven days prior to such meeting before a vote may take place. The written notice shall state, "A vote will be taken to suspend or terminate a congregant's membership." (This Notice Provision does not apply to termination provisions under Section 7).

Section 6. A simple majority vote of quorum can terminate or suspend a member for failure to fulfill Congregational obligations, including payment of dues assessed, school tuition, building fund, or any other pledge. Notice of such meeting shall be given by the Secretary or President of the congregation, by mail, to all trustees, and the member involved, not less than seven days prior to such meeting before a vote may take place. The written notice shall state, "A vote will be taken to suspend or terminate a congregant's membership." (This Notice Provision does not apply to termination provisions under Section 7).

Section 7. Membership shall be terminated upon failure to pay dues for two consecutive years. (Board Resolution of 8/15/96).

ARTICLE V

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

All members shall pay such dues, assessments and obligations as shall be determined by the Board of Trustees and/or the Congregation. Special financial arrangements may be made upon request when there is need for such consideration. Arrangements to be made through the Treasurer and held in strict confidence by the Treasurer and President.

ARTICLE VI

PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Members in good standing shall enjoy the privileges enumerated, subject to rules and regulations which may be established by the Board of Trustees, or its designated committee.

- a. To participate in *Tefillot* (religious services) and *Talmud Torah* (study) conducted or sponsored by the synagogue.
- b. To enroll children in the religious school and the youth activities of the Congregation.
- c. To celebrate the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of a child.

- d. To secure seating for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- e. To participate in the educational, cultural and social programs of the Congregation.
- f. To attend meetings of the Congregation and to have a voice and a vote at such meetings.
- g. To call on the *Klei Kodesh* (Rabbi and cantor) and professional staff for Jewish needs and Jewish life cycle events.
- h. To secure a location in the synagogue's *Beit Olam* (cemetery).
- i. To hold an office in the Congregation, when eligible.
- j. To use the Temple facilities with Board approval.

ARTICLE VII

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1. An annual meeting of the Congregation shall be held each year on such day as the President and Board of Trustees may designate. Notice of the annual meeting shall be given in writing to all members of the Congregation, and sent not less than 10 days prior to such meeting. Publication in the Temple Newsletter satisfies this notice requirement.

Section 2. Special meetings of the Congregation may be called by the President whenever it is deemed necessary. It must be called at the written request of 5 members in good standing of the Congregation. Said request shall state the reason for and the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the President fails to issue a call for the special meeting within 5 days after being requested to do so, any other officer may issue such call, and such meeting shall be held within 30 days of said request.

Section 3. No business shall be transacted at a special meeting, except for the purposes stated in the call for such meeting. Notice of such special meeting shall be given by the Secretary of the Congregation, by mail, to all members of the Congregation, not less than seven days prior to such meeting.

Section 4. At all meetings of the Congregation, regular and special, a quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of 10% of the members of the Congregation and no less than 15 members of the Congregation. A lesser number may adjourn the meeting to some future time, not less than 14 nor more than 28 days from the date thereof. The Secretary shall thereupon give at least 5 days notice, by mail, of such adjourned meeting, to all members.

Section 5. A member in good standing may vote on issues presented by the Board of Trustees.

Section 6. Meetings shall be conducted in conformance with Robert's Rules of Order and with *Derech Eretz* (decorum and showing respect to others).

ARTICLE VIII

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Section 1. The management and administration of the Congregation shall be vested in a Board of Trustees of 10 members, consisting of four officers and six trustees, plus the immediate past year's president. Each Trustee shall be elected by the Congregation for a term of 3 years. Terms shall overlap in such a manner that each year the terms of office of 2 trustees shall expire. The election shall be held annually after the Nominating Committee presents its recommendations.

- a. A Trustee must be a member in good standing of the Congregation.
- b. No member of Temple Beth El is eligible to be a trustee if he/she is a member of any other organized Non-Jewish religious institution.

Section 2. The Rabbi and Cantor of the Congregation shall be ex-officio members of the Board without voting rights.

Section 3. The Board of Trustees shall be charged with and assume control of all of the property of the Congregation; shall designate the bank or banks wherein the funds of the Congregation shall be deposited; shall be responsible for all expenditures and disposal of Congregational funds and property. It shall not invest any of the funds of the Congregation in instruments which are not legal. All funds shall require the signature of the President or Treasurer for withdrawals made or checks written. The Board of Trustees shall select a CPA to conduct annual reports and audits of the Congregation's financial books and records.

Section 4. The Board of Trustees shall make such rules and regulations, consistent with these by-laws, for the proper conduct of their meetings and the furtherance of the purposes of the Congregation.

Section 5. The Board of Trustees shall meet once each month. Seven members shall be considered a quorum. Each matter voted upon by the Board shall be by a majority vote of the members present.

Section 6. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the President, and must be called at the written request of 2 members of the Board. Said request shall state the reason for and the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the President fails to issue a call for a special meeting within 7 days after being requested to do so, any other officer may issue such call. No other business may be transacted at such a meeting.

Section 7. In the event of the death or resignation of a member of the Board, a successor shall be elected by the Board of Trustees to fill the office for the unexpired term.

Section 8. Any trustee may request a closed Board session for the purpose of discussing confidential matters.

ARTICLE IX

CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Congregation shall be:

- a. President
- b. Vice President
- c. Secretary
- d. Treasurer

Section 2. It shall be the function of the **President** to preside at all meetings of the Congregation and to call all meetings of the Congregation and of the Board of Trustees; to sign all agreements, contracts, deeds and other documents for the Congregation, pursuant to appropriate resolutions by the Congregation or the Board of Trustees; to be among the signatories of all checks, vouchers and notes, together with the Treasurer and such officers as may be directed by the Board of Trustees; and to appoint all committees. The President shall have the authority to provide financial assistance to a person in need for such things as short term accommodations, meals and clothing. The Board shall provide in its annual budget for this purpose. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees, without the right to vote.

Section 3. The **Vice-President** shall assist the President in the discharge of all duties and, in case of absence, resignation, death or disability, shall discharge all of the duties of that office.

Section 4. The **Recording Secretary** shall keep an accurate record of all the proceedings of the Congregation and of the Board of Trustees; issue all notices for meetings; carry on all correspondence of the organization and the Board of Trustees, and sign such instruments or documents as may be necessary to effectuate the proper directions of the organization or the Board of Trustees. The Secretary shall furnish the Treasurer with the names of all persons who have become members of the organization. The Recording Secretary may request that the Board appoint a **Corresponding Secretary**.

Section 5. The **Treasurer** shall keep an accurate and correct record of the receipts and expenditures of the Congregation and of the accounts between the Congregation, its members and others. These records shall be open for inspection by the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee. The Treasurer shall notify all members of the Congregation of their obligations and pledges; receive all monies which shall be payable to the Congregation, and cause the same to be deposited or invested in the Congregation's name, as directed by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer shall make withdrawals by check only, signed by a Board designated officer. The Treasurer shall be authorized to make withdrawals if the Board fails to designate an officer. A written report shall be rendered of the finances of the Congregation at meeting of the Board of Trustees when requested, at the annual meeting of the Congregation, and at such other meetings or occasions as the Treasurer may be directed to do so by the

Congregation or by the Board of Trustees. This report shall be affixed to the minutes of that meeting. The Treasurer shall maintain a list of active members of the Congregation.

Section 6. An officer shall be elected for a term of one year and may be re-elected.

Section 7. In the event of the death, resignation or incapacity of any officer, a successor shall be elected by the Board of Trustees to fill the vacancy until the next election of the Congregation.

ARTICLE X

THE RABBI

Section 1. The pulpit shall be occupied by an ordained Rabbi.

Section 2. The hiring of and firing of the Rabbi and issues of the Rabbi's contract may be conducted at the annual meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose, and shall be voted on by the Congregation upon the recommendation of the Board of Trustees.

Section 3. The Rabbi is the spiritual leader of the Congregation, and as such, is the authority on matters of Jewish law and practice. The Rabbi serves the religious, educational, spiritual and pastoral needs of the congregation, as well as the spiritual leadership in the community at large. He shall enjoy the freedom of the Pulpit. The Rabbi shall have the overall responsibility of implementing the aims and objectives of the Congregation. At the same time, the Rabbi shall seek the advice and guidance of the Board of Trustees, the Ritual Committee, or of any special committee or committees which may be set up for this purpose, to determine the views of the congregation and the most effective way of discharging his duties.

ARTICLE XI

THE CANTOR

Section 1. The Cantor shall be selected by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2. The Cantor shall be responsible with the Rabbi for the religious services and the musical program and activities of the Congregation. The Cantor shall be responsible in the performance of all duties to the Rabbi and Ritual Committee.

Section 3. The Cantor leads the Congregation in prayer and is authorized to officiate, together with the Rabbi, in all religious services and rites of the congregational family. The Cantor, in consultation with the Rabbi, also serves as the religious, pastoral, cultural and educational needs of the Congregation.

Section 4. The renewal or termination of the contract with the Cantor shall be voted upon by the Board at a meeting called for this purpose after consultation with the Rabbi.

ARTICLE XII

EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR

Section 1. The Educational Director (Principal) of the synagogue school shall be selected by the Board of Trustees, upon consultation with the Rabbi.

Section 2. The Educational Director shall be responsible for the Jewish education of the children of the congregation. The development of the curriculum, the supervision and selection of the faculty and the overall administration of the school shall be the responsibility of the Educational Director, in consultation with the Religious School Committee.

Section 3. The Educational Director shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees and the Rabbi of the congregation. The Educational Director shall report on the progress of the school at least annually to the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XIII

STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. At or after the election of a president, the appointment of all standing committee chair people other than the Nominating Committee of the Congregation, shall take place as well as any other committee(s) requested by the Board or deemed necessary by the President.

Section 2. Standing committee chair people shall be appointed for a term of 1 year by the President.

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

- a. **Ritual Committee.** Subject to the Rabbi's direction, this committee shall be in charge of all religious services of the congregation and shall formulate rules and regulations for all such services for the Board's consideration. Any significant changes in synagogue ritual shall be presented to the Board for approval. This committee shall offer to the Rabbi such advice and guidance regarding the character and mode of the various services. It shall also be in charge of

arrangements at the High Holy Days and at other times during the year, and shall have the responsibility of appointment ushers for the various services.

- b. Religious School Committee.** The Committee shall supervise the school of the Congregation and shall determine policy and formulate rules and regulations for the administration of such school, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- c. Membership Committee.** The Committee shall be charged with the responsibility of communicating with Jewish families in the community which are not yet formally affiliated with any congregation, particularly families which recently moved to the area, with the view of inviting them to become members of the Congregation. The Committee shall receive applications for membership, review such applications and applicants and present them for appropriate action to the Board of Trustees. The Committee may also initiate action for the suspension or termination of members. The Committee shall develop programs to encourage maintaining membership with the Congregation, and shall call on appropriate committees to assist in membership retention.
- d. Finance and Budget Committee.** The Committee shall review the financial operations of the Congregation and shall report at the annual meeting of the Congregation and on a regular basis to meetings of the Board of Trustees. It shall present at the annual meeting of the Congregation a proposed budget approved by the Board of Trustees for the upcoming fiscal year for the approval of the Congregation. The Treasurer of Board of Trustees shall be a member of this Committee.
- e. Cemetery Committee.** The Committee shall maintain the cemetery and determine policy and formulate rules and regulations for the administration of such subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- f. Nominating Committee.** The Committee shall be responsible for developing a slate of officers and trustees annually. The nominated slate shall be presented 30 days prior to the election meeting. The individuals nominated shall be circulated in a congregational mailing at least 15 days prior to the meeting.
- g. House Committee.** The Committee shall have authority to hire housekeeping services with approval by the Board. It shall have the responsibility to keep the Temple clean and obtain general cleaning supplies and provisions.
- h. Building and Grounds Committee.** The Committee shall oversee the maintenance of the building and its systems, including heating, plumbing, and electrical systems of the Temple. This Committee shall also oversee the maintenance of the grounds.

- i. **Social Action and Welfare Committee.** The Committee shall bring to the Board's attention issues of social justice and concern in the community and may make recommendations for Board action. The Committee shall have the authority to provide financial assistance to a person in need for such things as short term accommodations, meals and clothing. The Board shall provide a line item in its annual budget for this purpose.

ARTICLE XIV

SELECTION OF A NOMINATING COMMITTEE

1. There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of 3 members, including the President.
2. The Committee shall be selected by the President.
3. The Nominating Committee shall present its slate at the regular Board Meeting immediately prior to the annual congregational meeting.
4. The Nominating Committee is responsible for selecting the new leadership of the Congregation. The Committee shall solicit interest from the entire membership and from current Board members.
5. The Committee shall develop a procedure allowing for nominations from the congregation and from the floor.

ARTICLE XV

PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE: CODE OF BEHAVIOR

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard for parliamentary procedure in the Congregation, in the absence of any other rule or laws governing the procedure in a particular situation. As Conservative Jews, ethical and moral behavior is imperative, and values of mutual respect and honor take precedence in guiding our discussions and deliberations.

ARTICLE XVI

AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The By-Laws, and the Certificate of Incorporation may be amended by the membership at any regular meeting. A special meeting may be called for that purpose.

Section 2. Any proposal to amend or suspend one or more By-Laws, or to adopt a new By-Law, may be initiated by a duly constituted By-Law Committee, or a majority of the Board of Trustees or upon an initiative of fifteen percent (15%) of the general membership. By-Laws may be amended or suspended or adopted at either the annual meeting with prior written notice, or at a special meeting called for that purpose with 30 days written notice.

Section 3. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present is necessary for the passage of a new By-Law or amendment or a suspension of an old By-Law.

ARTICLE XVII

ADOPTION

These By-Laws were adopted by a vote of at least 2/3 of the members of the Congregation present at a meeting held on July 6, 2016.