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Shalom,

On behalf of Congregation Beth Torah, we are so excited to learn of your interest in joining our synagogue family and becoming part of our community. It is our mission to inspire each of our members on their “Jewish Journey,” whatever and wherever the journey may be. Congregation Beth Torah is a unique synagogue. Members arrive here from various places geographically, religiously, and personally. Whatever your background, you will find a home at CBT.

There are opportunities for everyone whether you are looking for spiritual, religious, social, or educational. We’re always open to new programs and ideas you bring with you!

- Our Congregational Learning Center includes a vibrant Hebrew school for Pre–K through 12th grade, dynamic Adult Ed programs, Adult B’nai Mitzvah program, Junior Congregation and Tot Shabbat services.
- Social action programs focus on our annual Karen Leynor Mitzvah Day, partnership with the Network of Community Ministries, Faith in Texas, Jewish Family Service, local food banks, and providing help and support throughout the entire community.
- Social groups abound for virtually every demographic in our shul: Youth Programming (grades K–12), Ruach (Young Adults), Young Families (families with toddlers and preschoolers), The Schmoozers “40 Somethings Plus”), Chai Lights (55+), Chosen by Choice, Men’s Club, and Sisterhood. Many congregants enjoy belonging to more than one of our active social groups. Congregational dinners, meals in our unique Sukkah, creative and fun Purim celebrations, challah baking, hosting the Dallas Kosher BBQ Competition, participating in the Dallas Kosher Chili Cook–Off, Hanukkah parties, and Congregational Passover Seder are highlights you won’t want to miss!
- Shabbat embraces our congregation’s participatory nature. Singing and praying together, enjoying Joyful Noise Friday night events, celebrating various simchas during Torah service, and “schmoozing” during Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush lunches all provide opportunity together.
- Morning minyanim on Sunday and Monday, as well as Friday evening and Shabbat morning services, allow us to spend time praying and supporting each other.

We’re more than a synagogue... we’re a community!

L’shalom

President, Lynda Markowitz

Shalom Y'all!

We are delighted to share our love of Congregation Beth Torah with you and warmly welcome you as part of our family.

Enclosed in this booklet you will find:

- ◆ Information about many (but not all) of our programs and groups—we often create new groups or classes depending upon our congregation's needs or ideas! Please feel free to attend any of our programs to gain insight into who we are.
- ◆ Welcome letters from Rabbi Zelony and our President.
- ◆ A contact information sheet with phone numbers and e-mail addresses that we encourage you to use as needs arise.
- ◆ Membership application forms which include a dues sheet with financial information—Beth Torah welcomes everyone regardless of financial situation. Should you wish to discuss alternative arrangements, our Treasurer will be happy to work with you.

Belonging to Beth Torah is like being a part of an extended family, where countless lifelong friendships and treasured memories are continually being created. We invite you to celebrate *Shabbat* with us! Friday evening services begin at 7:30^{PM}. We celebrate those with birthdays and anniversaries each month on the first Friday evening with our Festive First Friday service—don't forget to stay for cake! Saturday morning services begin at 9:30^{AM}. Please stay and enjoy *Kiddush* lunch and schmoozing with us on Saturdays. These are warm and friendly opportunities to meet us and to experience our warmth and *ruach* (spirit) firsthand.

Our synagogue welcomes those who wish to partake in the richness of Jewish life. Interfaith couples and families are part of the make-up of our congregation, reflecting the diversity of an ever-widening variety of people committed to, or interested in, Jewish life.

At Beth Torah, we seek to provide a level of comfort in—and accessibility to—Jewish study, Jewish worship, and Jewish life for those who are born Jewish, for those who have chosen Judaism, and for those who are part of a Jewish family. As part of our congregation, you will be invited to participate, encouraged to ask questions, and supported in your personal and/or familial journey.

We look forward to connecting with you on a personal level. Please don't hesitate to contact myself (or one of us listed on the last page) to learn more about our special community.

L'Shalom,



Membership Vice President, Fern Gerstein
membership-vp@congregationbethtorah.org



Welcome from Rabbi Elana Zelony

Shalom! We are delighted about your interest in joining Beth Torah. I'd like to illustrate for you a few of the reasons why our community is special by sharing with you some of the things I love best about our community.

Kol Yisrael arevim zeh b'zeh—All of Israel is responsible for one another.

People care about one another. Whenever I visit a member who is recovering from illness and I sign the visitors' log I notice several names of congregants who have also made visits. Our CBT Cares Team helps people through difficult times. To me, this experience is an example of the culture at Beth Torah. People care deeply for one another and look out for the welfare of the community members.

Emor m'at v'aseh harbeh—Say little and do much.

Things get done around here. Beth Torah is a place where the lay leadership is empowered. Our committees are not just monthly meetings with a lot of talk and no results. For example, one volunteer wanted to have a community seder. He expressed his desire, organized a team and a few months later 160 people enjoyed a spiritual and joyful seder. Whatever your interests are, there is a committee or group that will welcome your participation in realizing your vision.

Kol haneshama t'hallel ya—Every soul (whether it sings off key or not) shall praise God.

Beth Torah sings. On my first Friday night service, I expected the usual slightly embarrassed humming that accompanies the leader of the service. To my delight, many people sang whole-heartedly. I'll admit that while many people sang beautifully and serve as service leaders, not everyone was in tune. But no one shushes them. To me, this enthusiasm demonstrates that you don't have to be a master of Jewish liturgy to participate in Beth Torah's services and feel moved spiritually.

I hope my stories have given you a sense of who we are. Whether you're looking to connect through Torah study, prayer, social action, Israel advocacy or making friendships, Beth Torah has something to offer you. We're large enough to serve you and small enough to know you. Our professional staff, lay leaders, members and I are ready to welcome you. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to answer your questions.

L'shalom,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elana Zelony".

Rabbi Zelony

About the Rabbi

Rabbi Elana Zelony fell in love with Conservative Judaism because of the relationship it weaves between tradition and change. She feels rooted in rituals and Jewish law even as they constantly evolve to reflect the modern world. Her rabbinate is dedicated to creating a community that is inclusive, spiritual and empowered.

Rabbi Zelony began her path to the rabbinate at the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem, where she first engaged in serious Jewish text study. She received ordination from the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in 2009. She also holds a Master's Degree from American Jewish University's Graduate Center for Jewish Education. She served as the Assistant Rabbi at Congregation Shearith Israel in Atlanta and as the Director of Congregational Learning at Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco.

Rabbi Zelony was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. She makes her home with her husband Adiv and their two children Nesya and Magen. She is an avid reader of poetry, loves to cook and enjoys keeping healthy by running, practicing yoga and Tae Kwan Do.



An Overview...

Congregation Beth Torah is a vibrant, multi-generational Conservative synagogue located in Richardson, Texas. Families come to Beth Torah from North Dallas, Plano, Frisco, Richardson, Allen, McKinney, and surrounding areas.

Founded by a group of families in 1974, Beth Torah built a permanent facility in 1982. In 1995, after dynamic growth, we added a two-story Education wing to better serve our Learning Center program. We also added a multipurpose room—complete with *bimah* and ark—to hold weekly junior congregation services, celebrations, lectures, youth activities, and more. Renovation of the sanctuary, *Oneg* room, and offices were completed in 2001. We added permanent seating in the sanctuary, crafted and installed by members of *Kibbutz Lavi*, in the fall of 2005.

Beth Torah offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere for learning, spiritual observance, fellowship, and life cycle events with a sanctuary that evokes peace and tranquility.

PRAYER and RITUAL OBSERVANCE

Ritual practices at Congregation Beth Torah underscore the Conservative character of our congregation. We are a fully inclusive congregation where both men and women lead services, read Torah, serve as officers, and participate in all aspects of synagogue life. We encourage new people to step forward to learn, and help lead services or read *Torah* and *Haftarah* throughout the year.

Religious Services

Religious services at Beth Torah are central to our community and spiritual practice. Congregants lead and participate in services with Rabbi Zelony. Former *B'nai Mitzvah* frequently participate in leading services or reading *Torah* and *Haftarah* as do numerous other volunteers.

We use the traditional version of *Siddur Sim Shalom*, and the *Etz Hayim Humash* for study during Torah service. While prayers are in Hebrew, much of our services are in English. A full transliteration of our Friday evening and *Shabbat* morning services is available to encourage maximum participation.

The first Friday of each month is our Festive First Friday Kabbalat Shabbat Service where we celebrate all of the birthdays and anniversaries for the coming month. All of our uplifting, song-filled Friday night services begin at 7:30^{PM}. *Shabbat* morning services, an enriching, community-building celebration, begin at 9:30^{AM} with Junior Congregation services starting at 10:30^{AM}, as well as Tot Shabbat at 11:00^{AM} on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays. A traditional sit-down *Kiddush* lunch follows *Shabbat* morning services. Our *Shabbat* celebration is punctuated by a rousing *Birkat Ha'Mazon* and singing traditional *Shabbat zemirot*. Free babysitting is available each *Shabbat* morning, 9:30^{AM} to 1:30^{PM}.

Weekday Minyan

Morning *minyanim* take place on Sunday at 9^{AM} and Monday mornings at 6:45^{AM}, followed by a light breakfast and coffee on Mondays.

Tot Shabbat



We have a special service for the youngest members and their parents, grandparents, or special friends on the second and fourth *Saturdays of the month, 10:30–11:45 AM that introduces them to the joy of *Shabbat* through storytelling and music. This family friendly celebration is designed for children from infancy through 5 years, and the big people who love them. We use puppets, costumes, musical instruments, and creative movement to get the whole family in the spirit of *Shabbat*.

Junior Congregation

Junior Congregation is a fun and meaningful opportunity for children to explore leading and participating in services in a safe and sacred space. Students practice and gain additional understanding of the prayers they study at Learning Center.

This interactive and engaging Shabbat service is ideally for grades 3 – 7. Junior Congregation is led by Jessica Winter weekly on Saturdays 10:30–11:45 AM in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Holidays

Our Holiday Team plans the congregational celebrations for the Jewish holidays throughout the year. We work closely with our Ritual Team to support the traditions associated with the holidays. Holiday activities at Beth Torah include our congregational *Sukkot* Dinner, *Tu B'Shvat* celebration, *Simchat Torah* festivities, *Hanukkah* Extravaganza, Congregational Second Seder, and our renowned *Purim* bash.

Rituals

Our Ritual Team serves as a sounding board for the religious and ritual needs of the Congregation. The team is deeply interested in the content and style of religious services at our synagogue. We combine the desire to embrace new ideas with the value of preserving traditions. The Ritual Team works with our Rabbi to form ritual policy that reflects the *minhag* (custom) of our congregation and the standards of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Life Cycle

From the moment an infant is welcomed into our community, either through *brit milah* or a *simchat bat* (baby naming) ceremony, the congregation looks forward with anticipation to sharing major life cycle events with the child and family.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is carefully planned with each family, the Rabbi, and members of various synagogue committees, including the Learning Center, Sisterhood, and Ritual Team. We work together to prepare students to celebrate this milestone in their religious education and emergence as active, participating members of our synagogue community.

Couples plan weddings at Beth Torah with the help of the Rabbi. Those who are interested in Rabbi Zelony officiating at their weddings should contact her assistant to schedule an appointment. The Rabbi meets several times with the wedding couple prior to the day of their marriage. A complimentary one year membership is the synagogue's gift to any couple married by our Rabbi.

Our Beth Torah family is also present during times of sorrow. The Rabbi—along with the Ritual Team, Cemetery Team and *Chevrah Kadisha*—are available to help and advise congregants with funeral arrangements at our Jewish cemetery grounds when needed. Shiva observances and other mourning rituals are facilitated by the Rabbi and members of the synagogue community. Each year, members are sent reminders of a loved one's upcoming *yahrzeit*.

Congregation Beth Torah's website has many helpful tools for our members. Go to www.congregationbethtorah.org for any of the following...

Aliyah Requests	Volunteering Opportunities	Add/Change Yahrzeit Info	Requests for calendar additions and event publicity
CBT Calendar	Read the Family Record (including archived issues)	Update Your Contact Info	Rabbi's Sermons
Holiday Info & Calendar		Share Your News	

EDUCATION

At Beth Torah's Congregational Learning Center, we understand that Judaism is not just meant to be studied; it is meant to be lived. Our multi-generational education program is built on experiential learning—a pedagogy that emphasizes students partaking in and creating their own learning opportunities. We don't just discuss Judaism; we do Judaism.

We are deeply committed to providing a quality Jewish education for all members and believe that learning is a cornerstone of our congregation's commitment to the future. We offer classes for all ages and stages of learning.

For any questions about our Congregational Learning Center, our library, or any additional educational question, please contact our Director of Congregational Learning, Beri Kaplan Schwitzer at beri@congregationbethtorah.org.

Congregational Learning Center

Imagine a school where your child will be excited to learn Hebrew skills, gain a deep understanding of Conservative Judaism, and develop a connection to prayer, spirituality, and the Jewish people. A school that allows each child to reach their potential and caters to their individual learning styles and skill sets. Beth Torah's Congregational Learning Center is proud to be that school.

We teach our students how Judaism is meaningful & relevant every day. Our unique Hebrew program was created with one goal in mind—to offer all Jewish children an education & memories that will inspire them for a lifetime. During our midweek program, participants (grades 3–6) focus on prayer...they take a **Walk through the Siddur** by following the order of service throughout the year and delving into the meaning of the liturgy through art, music, and games. During each session, students have 20 minutes of one-on-one tutoring to practice and develop their Hebrew reading and decoding skills. Over the course of a year (an average of 33 sessions), each student receives approximately 11 hours of private tutoring in Hebrew. Our Sunday program is thriving due to our partnership with the Goldring Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL).

Adult Education

Congregation Beth Torah is excited to provide a wide array of Adult Education classes and invites you to experience Judaism in a new way. Over the course of the year, you can take a multi-session course or single classes or join us for one of our lecture series or our annual Scholar in Residence programming. Our rabbi, teachers, and guest speakers are dedicated to helping you develop and strengthen your relationship to Judaism.

There are classes at all levels of learning. Please check out our website for information on one of the many courses like: Nosh and Knowledge (a deep dive into Jewish history and culture), Positive Judaism (a look at thousands of years of Jewish tradition and how Positive Psychology go hand-in-hand), Rabbi's Spirituality Class (a look at Jewish spirituality through text study), Talmud Study (with Rabbi Zelony following Monday morning minyan), Introduction to Judaism, Adult B'nai Mitzvah...and so much more!

GET INVOLVED AND CONNECTED...

Chai Lights

This exciting constituency is for active 50+ adults interested in fun, social activities. Events have included guest speakers, retreats, concerts, plays, *Shabbat* dinners, and outings around town.

CBT Cares Team

The CBT Cares Team provides hospitality, help, and hope to our Beth Torah "family" members in need. Whether it's delivering a meal, providing comfort and encouragement, or offering a friendly hand, our team strives to help ease the burden for those who are ill, welcoming a new baby, grieving a loved one, or new to the DFW area.

Men's Club

The Men's Club creates activities that benefit the synagogue, are of service to the community, and provide enjoyment for our members and the entire congregation. We sponsor monthly breakfast meetings featuring a lox-and-bagel buffet and speakers. We are proud of our annual 24-hour "Remembering the Names" Holocaust Memorial vigil. We also sponsor a variety of sports, recreation, and Mitzvah programs; we build the congregational *sukkah*, provide ushers for High Holiday services, distribute *Yom Hashoah* memorial candles, and organize the annual parent-child minyan for the World-Wide Wrap. There are no dues during your first membership year with Congregation Beth Torah.

Sisterhood

From catering simchas to helping families in need, our Sisterhood provides a wide range of opportunities for involvement. We welcome volunteers both for ongoing projects and one-time events. Sisterhood operates the Beth Torah Judaica shop, *L'Dor Va Dor*, hosts guest speakers and book reviews, organizes blood drives, sends High Holiday greetings, sponsors the annual *Yom Kippur* break-the-fast, *Mishloach Manot*, as well as our annual Miriam's Seder. Sisterhood also sponsors social events, such as the Paid-Up Membership Brunch, recipe exchanges, and field trips. There are no Sisterhood dues during your first membership year with Congregation Beth Torah.

The Schmoozers

No longer in your 20s & 30s and ready for the next fun thing? Interested in making new Jewish friends, socializing with your peers, or just getting better acquainted with your awesome CBT community? Join The Schmoozers for events geared toward those of us "in between" Young Adults/ Young Families and Chai Lights.

Young Adults / Ruach

Young Adults, otherwise known as Ruach, is dedicated to fostering friendships between young adults and young couples both at Beth Torah and in the unaffiliated Jewish Community. Anyone is welcome to attend Ruach events which may include religious, cultural, social, and social action programs. Ruach also seeks to incorporate new and existing young adult members into active synagogue life at Congregation Beth Torah. Ruach is open to anyone who self-identifies as a young adult or young couple, though the approximate age range is 21-35.

Young Families

Friday night dinners, holiday programs, and PJ Havdallah are just a few of the events that our Young Families Team heads up for our families with children ages 0-8. Our thriving community has a variety of events planned throughout the year that encompass holiday celebrations and everyday get-togethers. We are constantly growing and adding new programming to meet the needs of our young families.

Youth Groups

Jewish fun for all! Our youth programming offers a wide variety of social, cultural, and recreational programs and activities for Jewish youth in grades 2-12. Lifelong friendships and memories are created through participation in these terrific programs. Keep an eye out for individual evites, emails, Facebook updates and additional information!

Grade's K -2nd

Join friends on Sundays for games, food, friends, and fun! This group meets four times a year with special age-appropriate programs.

Bonim (Grade's 3rd – 5th)

The goal of Bonim is to help "build" (as the word means in Hebrew) friendships and comfort level within our synagogue community. This energetic group meets once a month either in the synagogue or offsite.

Yala! (Grade's 6th-8th)

Yala! in Hebrew means "to go forward" and this is exactly what this group plans to do. Yala! is designed for Jewish pre-teens who are in the process of starting their B'nai Mitzvah or who have recently completed it and wish to remain connected to their synagogue and their Judaism.

Gesher (Grade's 9th-12th)

When our teens get together, they learn about and connect to Jewish life by actively experiencing it, creating a "bridge" between their Jewish heritage and their Jewish future. Our teen program combines experimental education and social experiences that foster Jewish identity, community-building, leadership skills and deep connection to Jewish life.

For more information, contact youth@congregationbethtorah.org.

STAY CONNECTED!

Our members must subscribe to our EMAILS in order to receive electronic communications. You can either text 'CBTCONNECT' to 22828 or contact our office administrator. Within a few minutes of subscribing, you will receive a confirmation email. It is critical to click on the link provided. Failure to do so will result in the system not sending you our communications. If you do not receive the confirmation email, or have additional questions including help with signing up, contact Carren in the office at 972.234.1542 x221.

Also, we post important news and/or messages to TWITTER (https://twitter.com/CBT_Richardson) and FACEBOOK. You do not have to sign up to view these pages; however, followers do receive instant updates in their newsfeeds.



Beth Torah Directory

Rabbi Elana Zelony

RabbiZelony@congregationbethtorah.org

Assistant to Rabbi Zelony & Membership Coordinator, Kenyett Nealy

Monday–Friday

972.234.1524 x 227

Rabsec@congregationbethtorah.org

Director of Congregational Learning, Beri Kaplan Schwitzer

972.234.1524 x 232

Beri@congregationbethtorah.org

Assistant to Director of Cong Learning, Joanie Block

972.234.1524 x 234

LC-Office@congregationbethtorah.org

Office Administrator, Carren Carpenter

Sunday–Thursday

972.234.1524 x 221

Carren@congregationbethtorah.org

Bookkeeper, Cathryn Etheridge

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

972.234.1524 x 262

bookkeeper@congregationbethtorah.org

Maintenance, Tom Moon

972.234.1524 x 267

Tom@congregationbethtorah.org

Synagogue President

President@congregationbethtorah.org

Adult Education

Adult-Ed@congregationbethtorah.org

CBT Cares Team

CBTCares@congregationbethtorah.org

Chai Lights

ChaiLights@congregationbethtorah.org

Chosen by Choice

Chosen@congregationbethtorah.org

Gift Shop

IdorVador@congregationbethtorah.org

Inclusion Initiative

Inclusion@congregationbethtorah.org

Legacy

Legacy@congregationbethtorah.org

Membership

Membership-VP@congregationbethtorah.org

Men's Club

Mens_Club@congregationbethtorah.org

Ruach (Young Adults)

Ruach@congregationbethtorah.org

Sisterhood

Sisterhood@congregationbethtorah.org

Texas Hold'em Poker

Poker@congregationbethtorah.org

The Schmoozers

schmoozers@congregationbethtorah.org

Tot Shabbat

Tot-Shabbat@congregationbethtorah.org

Young Families

Young_Families@congregationbethtorah.org

Youth Programs

Youth@congregationbethtorah.org

Thank you for your interest in Congregation Beth Torah.

We sincerely hope you have found valuable information in these pages and that you will visit us very soon.

Once you have enjoyed our warm and caring hospitality we feel certain you will want to stay and become a valued member of our Beth Torah family.

Sincerely—*Your friends at Beth Torah*



Congregation

Beth Torah

720 W. Lookout Drive

Richardson, TX 75080