

CONGREGATION HAKAFA

BYLAWS

Adopted September 7, 1984
Amended February 27, 1987
Amended January 8, 1988
Amended June 11, 2004
Amended April 9, 2017
Amended March 15, 2019
Amended May 19, 2019

Article I. Name, purpose and goals

1.1 The name of the congregation is Congregation Hakafa.

1.2 The word Hakafa means encirclement. It is the name given to the ceremonial acts of encircling the Synagogue during the festival of Succot. Congregation Hakafa, a Reform Jewish community, will seek to create an encirclement of friendship, of concern and of love for all its members. In addition, it will seek to fashion ever wider circles of understanding and service in the Jewish community and in the world of which we are a part.

Hakafa emphasizes the act of encircling the Torah. The study of Torah and the search for new insights in its ancient words will be a vital part of our endeavor. As a Congregation, therefore, we will study, we will worship and we will seek justice. “With our young and our old ...we will hear and we will do.” But our encirclement of the Torah will not be a static one. Our Torah will move and we will move with it as we seek to find new truths in its ancient words.

An important part of our task will be to discover fresh meaning in the act of Avodah. The word Avodah has a twofold meaning – worship and work – and we commit ourselves as a Congregation to the fulfillment of both. We will try to translate our worship into deeds, and to make our work holy. Our constant goal will be to build a community and a world filled with wisdom, with compassion and with peace.

Article II. Membership

2.1 Each person or family who has been enrolled for membership and whose annual dues are not in arrears shall be considered a Congregation member. The members of a family who shall be considered voting members include all adults and all children aged 16 and older residing in the same household. Children away from home but maintaining legal residence at their parents’/guardians’ home shall be considered as residing in their parents’/guardians’ home.

2.2 The rights and privileges of membership shall not be abridged in the event a family unit is severed by divorce or changed by remarriage or death, for the year following the divorce, remarriage, or death.

Article III. Governance

3.1 Except as otherwise provided by these bylaws, the business, policies, affairs and property of the Congregation shall be directed and controlled by its members. The membership shall exercise all authority and duties not specifically delegated to the Congregation's officers, standing and ad hoc committees, and/or the Rabbi.

3.2 The members of the Congregation shall elect a President, Vice President, Operations Treasurer, Dues Treasurer and Secretary. No other officers are authorized. Officers shall be elected for a term of one year and shall be elected for no more than two consecutive terms in the same office, with the exception that three consecutive one-year terms shall be allowed if an officer, first elected in an odd-numbered year, is willing to serve a third term in order to align the completion of that officer's term with that of the other officers' terms that began in an even-numbered year. A period of three years must elapse following the completion of a term of office before an officer may be re-elected to the same office.

3.3 The President shall preside at all Congregational and annual meetings and is responsible for their agenda and progress. The President with the consent of the majority of the other officers shall appoint all committee chairpersons, subject to Section 4.3. The President shall be sensitive to the desires of the members and shall act in a responsible fashion to ensure full and fair discussion on all matters coming before the Congregation.

3.4 The Vice President shall perform such duties as may be designated by the President. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall perform the duties and exercise the authority of the President.

3.5 The Operations Treasurer and the Dues Treasurer shall have the following responsibilities:

a. The Operations Treasurer shall be the chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee. The Operations Treasurer shall have custody of the funds, securities and financial records of the Congregation, except dues records to be maintained by the Dues Treasurer. The Operations Treasurer, Congregation Administrator, or bookkeeper shall deposit funds in such accounts and securities as the Congregation may approve and shall maintain accurate and current records of all receipts and disbursements. The Operations Treasurer shall prepare an annual report as of the end of the fiscal year of assets, liabilities, receipts and disbursements of the Congregation. The Operations Treasurer and the Dues Treasurer, with the assistance of the Budget and Finance Committee, shall prepare an annual budget for submission to the Congregation prior to the commencement of the fiscal year.

b. The Dues Treasurer shall be responsible for all matters relating to the collection of dues other than their custody, which is the responsibility of the Operations Treasurer. The Dues Treasurer shall issue pledge notices to each member of the Congregation and collect the pledges made, including necessary follow-up and notification as prescribed in Article 10.6. Where appropriate, the Dues Treasurer may also arrange for a lesser dues commitment in light of individual or family financial capabilities. The Dues Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the membership roll of the Congregation.

3.6 The Secretary will be responsible for assuring that minutes of each Congregational meeting are prepared, and will conduct or supervise preparation of election ballots and other official documents of the Congregation. The Secretary shall be responsible for the filing and safekeeping of all Congregation permanent records, excluding those maintained by the Operations Treasurer and the Dues Treasurer.

3.7 The officers shall share responsibility, at the direction of the President, for coordinating the work of all standing and ad hoc committees.

3.8 The officers share the responsibility and authority for making decisions necessary for the day-to-day operations of the Congregation.

3.9 The officers will constitute the Congregation's Board of Directors as required by law. Meetings of the Board of Directors will be held in conjunction with and as part of Congregational meetings. The decision of the Congregation shall be considered the decision of the Board of Directors.

3.10 Officers are elected to serve the membership. All authority delegated to the officers is temporary and expires at the end of each elected term.

Article IV. Committees

4.1 Standing committees of the Congregation shall be designated as:

- Worship Committee
- Religious Education
- Adult Education
- Social Action (can be represented by ad hoc committees addressing timely issues)
- Chesed
- Membership
- Budget and Finance
- Nominating

4.2 The President may establish other standing or ad hoc committees as the need arises.

4.3 The chairpersons of standing and ad hoc committees shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the majority of the other officers. The President, with the approval of the majority of the other officers, may replace a committee chairperson at any time. All members of the Congregation may and are encouraged to serve on one or more committees. No member shall serve simultaneously as chairperson of more than one standing committee. Except for the Budget and Finance Committee, officers shall be ineligible to serve as committee chairpersons. Chairpersons shall normally serve no more than two consecutive years as the chair of a particular committee, although the President, with the approval of the majority of the officers, may approve an extended term.

4.4 When appropriate, committee chairpersons may appoint a secretary for each committee meeting, who shall prepare accurate minutes of committee proceedings. A copy of each set of committee minutes will be delivered to the secretary of the Congregation.

4.5 Committee chairpersons or their designees may, at their discretion or as required by the President, report on committee activities at a Congregational meeting and submit the actions of their committees for Congregational approval. Committee chairpersons shall communicate directly with the Operations Treasurer on all matters of budget, income or expenditure before decision or implementation.

Article V. Standing Appointments

5.1 The President, upon advice and counsel of the membership, shall appoint members to act in various ad hoc positions, such as Oneg Coordinator and High Holiday Coordinator. Such appointments shall be subject to annual renewal, with no limit as to the number of terms a member may serve. Officers may serve in these ad hoc positions, although it is intended that these appointments be filled by other members to achieve the broadest possible involvement of the membership in Congregational affairs.

Article VI. Congregational and Annual Meetings

6.1 The ultimate responsibility for the operation of the Congregation rests with the membership.

6.2 At least five regular Congregational meetings shall be held each year. The President, in consultation with other officers and the Rabbi, shall prepare the agenda of all regular Congregational meetings. Any member may place an item on the agenda by making a request to the President prior to the meeting date. Members may, at the discretion of the President, address the Congregation with reference to any unscheduled agenda item at any regular Congregational meeting.

6.3 A special Congregational meeting may be called by the President for a specified purpose, and shall be called upon presentation to the President of a signed petition of no fewer than thirty members or ten percent of the membership, whichever is greater. Any such petition shall state the matters to be presented at the special Congregational meeting. The notice of any special Congregational meeting shall set forth the purpose of the meeting as specified by the President or stated in a petition, and no other matters may be considered at the meeting.

6.4 In addition to the regular Congregational meetings, an annual meeting will be held during the month of May of each year, as determined by the President. The purpose of the annual meeting will be to review the year's activities and programs as measured against stated goals, to set future goals, to approve the budget for the next fiscal year, and to elect officers for the ensuing year.

6.5 Notice of the date, time and place of Congregational meetings shall be given to all member households at least five days before the meeting in the case of a regular meeting, at least fourteen days before the meeting in the case of a special meeting, and at least twenty days before the meeting in the case of an annual meeting, except as otherwise required by law or these Bylaws. Notice of regular and annual meetings may be delivered in any of the following ways: in person; by deposit in the United States mail, with first class postage prepaid, addressed to the member's residence as it appears in the Congregation's records; by inclusion of the notice in the Congregational bulletin; or by email to the email address(es) of the member household as listed in the Congregation's records; or by other acceptable means. Notice of a special meeting shall be considered given if delivered in any of these ways except by inclusion in the Congregational bulletin.

6.6 At all Congregational meetings, including the annual meeting, a quorum shall consist of those members attending that meeting, including the officers.

Article VII. Elections

7.1 The membership will elect a chairperson of the Nominating Committee at the annual meeting in May of each year, to serve during the ensuing year. Any member of the Congregation may serve on this committee by advising the Chairperson in writing, prior to the Nominating Committee meeting, of a desire to do so.

7.2 The Nominating Committee shall select a slate of officers for the ensuing year by majority vote of committee members in person or by mail. A committee member will be ineligible to vote on his/her own nomination to office.

7.3 Notice of the Nominating Committee's slated officers will be made at a Congregational meeting at least thirty days before the annual meeting and in the Congregational bulletin last preceding the annual meeting.

7.4 Thirty members may, by signed petition, nominate a candidate for Congregational office. Such petition must be delivered to the President: (1) at least fifteen days before the annual meeting, and (2) in sufficient time to allow inclusion of the petitioned nomination in the Congregational bulletin last preceding the annual meeting.

7.5 The Congregation will declare the Nominating Committee's slate of officers as elected by acclamation if no candidate for office is nominated through the petition process.

7.6 For each office for which a nomination by petition is properly received, the Secretary shall prepare a ballot listing alphabetically, without differentiation, the names of the candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee and by petition for each office. A ballot for each person of voting age shall be sent to each member household in good standing postmarked not later than ten days before the annual meeting. Each ballot shall be accompanied by a return envelope addressed to the Tellers of Election at the Congregation's mailing address, an envelope marked "For Ballot Only," and a signature slip.

7.7 Each member will mark the ballot by placing an “X” opposite the name of each candidate chosen and will enclose the ballot in the envelope marked “For Ballot Only,” seal the envelope, sign the signature slip and return them in the envelope addressed to the “Tellers of Election.” The several ballots of the voting members within a family may be enclosed in a single envelope marked “For Ballots Only.” Ballots other than those prepared by the Secretary and ballots received at the Congregation’s office later than the beginning of the annual meeting will not be counted. Votes for write-in candidates will not be counted.

7.8 When one or more candidates are nominated by petition, the President shall appoint three Tellers of Election. When the Tellers of Election are satisfied, either by report of the Secretary or by personal inspection, that each signature slip is valid, each envelope marked “For Ballot Only” accompanying the signature slip shall be marked on its face with the number of eligible voting family members and placed in a locked ballot box. The ballot box will be opened by the Tellers of Election at the beginning of the annual meeting to tally the vote. The Tellers of Election will report the tally to the Congregation at the annual meeting. A majority of the votes cast will elect each office contested by two candidates, and a plurality of votes cast will elect each office contested by three or more candidates.

7.9 All members sixteen years of age and older shall be eligible to vote for the election of officers and all other Congregational matters.

Article VIII. Vacancy and Removal from Office

8.1 The President will declare that a vacancy exists when an officer resigns or fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Congregation without good cause.

8.2 The Congregation shall fill the vacated remaining term of an officer at the next scheduled meeting of the Congregation based on nominations from the floor. A partial term as officer to fill a vacated remaining term shall not constitute a term for purposes of determining the number of consecutive terms a member may serve in that office.

Article IX. Rabbinic Leadership

9.1 The direction and general supervision of the religious programs of the Congregation shall be vested in a duly qualified Rabbi who shall enjoy freedom of the pulpit.

9.2 The selection of a new Rabbi shall commence with selection of a Chairperson of the Search Committee. The Chairperson shall be nominated by the President and approved by the Congregation at any Congregational meeting.

9.3 The Search Committee Chairperson shall provide notice to the Congregation of all meetings of that Committee, and all congregants can be members of that Committee by attending meetings.

9.4 By a majority vote of the Committee’s members who are present at a meeting at which a vote is taken, the Search Committee may vote to recommend rabbinic candidates to the Congregation.

9.5 Any rabbinic candidates recommended by the Search Committee shall be presented at a Congregational meeting, and the members present at such meeting shall determine whether the candidate will be presented to the Congregation by ballot.

9.6 If submission of a rabbinic candidate to the Congregation is approved at a Congregational meeting, written ballots shall be mailed to each member family. The ballots shall provide each member an opportunity to approve or disapprove the proposed rabbinic candidate, and shall indicate the date by which a ballot must be returned in order to be counted. The deadline for return of ballots shall be not less than thirty days from the date that the ballots are mailed. A Rabbi may be hired by the Congregation if approved by a majority vote of the Congregation members who vote by ballot.

9.7 The provisions of Article IX shall not apply to an assistant rabbi, who can be hired by a majority vote at any Congregational meeting.

Article X. Financial Policy

10.1 It is understood that the financial needs of the Congregation must be met to ensure economic survival and fulfillment of stated goals. All members are expected to pay dues in relation to their individual or family financial capabilities. However, no one will be denied membership because of financial inability.

10.2 The Congregation will establish dues guidelines applicable to each year's operation, based on the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee, taking into consideration expected member commitments so that budgeted expenditures correspond with anticipated resources. These guidelines will state the Standard Pledge dues that all financially able members are expected to pay. The Standard Pledge dues will be voted on by the Congregation as part of the approval of the annual budget at the Annual Meeting. Dues pledges that are paid in amounts that exceed the Standard Pledge shall be referred to as Enhanced Pledges; those pledges that are paid in amounts that are less than the Standard Pledge shall be referred to as Adjusted Pledges.

10.3 Dues pledge forms shall be sent out as soon as possible after the approval of the budget at the Annual Meeting. Members' dues commitments are expected to be made promptly upon request by the Dues Treasurer, but in no event later than Rosh Hashanah. Payments shall also be made promptly, but in no event later than Rosh Hashanah unless the member has specified a payment plan on the dues commitment form.

10.4 Information as to individual member's dues will be known only to the Dues Treasurer and the Congregation's Administrator, except that the Dues Treasurer may seek advice and assistance from the other officers and/or the Rabbi in evaluating and collecting dues commitments.

10.5 The Operations Treasurer's annual financial report will be independently audited if prescribed by the President with the consent of the membership.

10.6 A member shall be "in arrears" who fails to comply within thirty (30) days with an invoice sent to the member for his or her overdue Article X dues commitment. A written notice shall be sent at the direction of the Dues Treasurer to resolve the matter.

Article XI. Fiscal Year

11.1 All references to "year" or "fiscal year" within these bylaws shall refer to a twelve month period commencing June 1 and ending May 31.

Article XII. Amendment

12.1 These bylaws may be amended at any Congregational meeting upon at least thirty days prior notice to the membership. Such notice will include the original bylaw wording, proposed changes, reasons for the change, and the date when the matter will be voted upon.

12.2 Amendments may be proposed by a majority of the officers or by written petition of at least thirty members.

12.3 A vote of two-thirds of eligible members present and voting will be required for passage of a bylaw amendment.

12.4 Where more than one bylaw amendment is presented, each amendment shall be considered separately unless there is unanimous agreement to the contrary by those voting.

Article XIII. Indemnification

13. Hakafa shall indemnify any person who becomes a party to a lawsuit by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, or trustee of the Congregation, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding, if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed, to the best interests of the Congregation.

Article XIV. URJ DUES

14. Congregation Hakafa will be a member of the Union For Reform Judaism (URJ) and will abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of the URJ and will pay dues to the URJ as specified in the URJ's By-Laws.