



We deepen relationships to Judaism and our community  
by engaging the soul, heart, and mind.

## TEMPLE BETH AM TZEDEK COUNCIL

Tzedek, tzedek tirdof – צדק צדק תרדוף

“Justice, justice shall you pursue.” – Deut. 16:20

### Tzedek Council Mission

Foster a supportive and fertile environment for social justice work at Temple Beth Am that is aligned with Temple Beth Am’s mission, priorities and values.

#### TEMPLE BETH AM STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**Soul:** Together we will create powerful Jewish experiences that touch the soul.

**Heart:** Together we will make strengthening community the “heart” of Temple Beth Am.

**Mind:** Together we will transmit Jewish values and traditions through relevant, challenging, and diverse learning experiences for people of all ages.

**Sustainability:** Together we will ensure the organizational sustainability of Temple Beth Am.

**Transparency:** Together we will increase transparency and effective communications to provide information, solicit feedback, and deepen engagement with congregants.

**Adaptability:** Together we will create an organizational structure that is nimble, responsive, collaborative, and values-driven.

#### TEMPLE BETH AM VALUES

**Inclusion:** We honor the image of the divine in all people, and we are mindful of the Biblical injunction to welcome the stranger in our midst.

**Inspiration:** We take inspiration from the millennia of Jewish texts and teachings. We pursue justice not only because it is inherently right, but because it enables us to embody and express our Jewish values.

**Purpose:** The reason we do this work is *l’taken ha’olam* – to heal the world. We will periodically evaluate our social justice work to ensure that we are achieving our intended outcomes.

**Engagement:** We believe in the value of *machloket l’shem shamayim* – disagreements for the sake of heaven – and we invite a variety of opinions to be respectfully expressed, heard, and considered so that we can understand and learn from each other.

**Curiosity:** As Jews, we are God-wrestlers. We wrestle also with the status quo, constantly questioning and challenging injustice and seeking out its root causes.

**Responsibility:** We accept the principle of *bal tashchit* (“do not destroy”), which teaches us that as Jews we are stewards of this world, not its masters.

## GOALS

- Offer more opportunities for meaningful engagement in *tzedek*/social justice work.
- Increase the number of Temple Beth Am members involved in *tzedek*/social justice work.
- Expand the impact of Temple Beth Am's *tzedek*/social justice work.

## ROLES

- **Connecting:** The Council connects Temple Beth Am members with *tzedek*/social justice work that interests them, and with each other. To do this, Council members must be well-informed about *tzedek*/social justice opportunities at Temple Beth Am and in the wider community, including the work of the Religious Action Center and of regional Jewish and/or interfaith coalitions. In this role, the Council acts as a resource to the Director of Community Engagement.
- **Communicating:** The Council keeps the congregation informed of ongoing *tzedek*/social justice work at Temple Beth Am, as well as new opportunities that may arise within the wider community (locally or nationally). The Council also facilitates discussions, through periodic forums and by other means of communication, about pressing issues.
- **Collaborating:** The Council convenes an annual gathering of clergy, professionals, and members from all the action, project, and learning teams to share information about ongoing *tzedek*/social justice work and about plans for the coming year. Throughout the year, the Council identifies opportunities for action teams, project groups, clergy, and professionals to work collaboratively toward a stated goal or event. The Council helps action teams and project groups avoid duplication of effort and maximizes synergies among the work of the various groups.
- **Cultivating:** The Council creates opportunities for social justice leadership development and for training on best principles regarding advocacy and outreach. The Council is responsible for creating a framework that each project group and action team can use to evaluate the effectiveness of its work and identify areas for improvement.

## **STRUCTURE**

The *Tzedek* Council is defined as a “Community Committee” under the Temple Beth Am (proposed) bylaws. Community Committees are not created by the Board and do not have authority to take any action that would legally bind Temple Beth Am. The charter of the Council must be reviewed by the Board of Directors and approved by the Senior Rabbi or the Senior Rabbi’s designee.

The Senior Rabbi convenes the Council and serves as an ex-officio member, and ensures that the Council’s activities are grounded in Jewish values. The Council is staffed by the Executive Director, who also serves as an ex-officio member.

There are up to ten lay leaders on the Council: three to six members from the action teams, at least one member from the congregation-wide initiative, and the Learning Resource team, a youth member, and at least one at-large member. Except for the Chair, the term of service for Council members is one year, with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Members of the *Tzedek* Council are there to support the broader social justice work of Temple Beth Am, and not to advocate for the work of a specific action team.

The Senior Rabbi and the Executive Director, in conversation with the *Tzedek* Council, will appoint the first *Tzedek* Council Chair, who is responsible for running the meetings. The Council will choose subsequent chairs from among its members. The term for the Chair is two years, and the Chair may serve up to two consecutive terms. With input from the members, the Chair sets the meeting schedule for the year each June, and will create the agenda for each meeting in consultation with other members of the Council.

## **COUNCIL DUTIES**

- Develop and ensure the implementation of efficient processes for accomplishing all social justice work.
- Develop Congregation-Wide Initiative proposal guidelines and templates and provide project A oversight.
- Collaborate with learning team to organize issue forums on project proposals.
- Establish the guidelines for action teams and Learning Resource Team. Review all social justice-related proposals (for action teams, congregation-wide initiative proposals, special projects and learning opportunities) initiated from within the congregation and provide assistance to help improve the proposal to meet guidelines, if necessary and/or desired.

## CLERGY AND PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

### **Clergy**

Under the proposed bylaws, the Senior Rabbi is responsible for convening the *Tzedek* Council. The Senior Rabbi is an *ex officio* member of the Council. The Senior Rabbi also ensures that the work of the Council is grounded in Jewish values, supports the Jewish learning that undergirds Temple Beth Am's *tzedek* work, and where appropriate, offers rabbinic counsel.

### **Executive Director**

The Executive director supports the Council, attends monthly meetings, serves as a liaison to the professionals and board, provides leadership development, and helps ensure that the coordinating Council activities and decisions are aligned with the Strategic Plan.

### **Director of Community Engagement**

The Director of Community Engagement ensures congregants are aware of volunteer opportunities associated with social justice, provides materials to new members, and integrate social justice work with other engagement opportunities at Temple Beth Am.

### **Facilities Director**

The Facilities Director works with Council, Action Teams, and learning resource team to schedule rooms and handle other logistics for events.