

Congregation Agudath Israel Cemetery Association

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I buy cemetery plots from Congregation Agudath Israel?

Strictly speaking, the synagogue does not sell cemetery plots. The Congregation Agudath Israel Cemetery Association is a separate organization whose purpose is to sell cemetery plots to the members of the synagogue. The Cemetery Association has existed almost as many years as the synagogue itself.

Buying cemetery plots is easy. Just send an email to info@agudathcemetery.org to get the process started, or call Steve Eisen (973-602-9091) or Mel Berkowitz (973-226-8623).

Where are plots available?

The Cemetery Association does not have its own cemetery but owns blocks of plots in three local Jewish cemeteries: Menorah Cemetery, which is the Jewish section of East Ridgelawn Cemetery in Clifton; King Solomon Memorial Park in Clifton; and New Mount Zion Cemetery, which is the Jewish section of Hillside Cemetery in Lyndhurst.

What are the differences between the three cemeteries?

When the Cemetery Association was first established, it bought plots at Menorah Cemetery. Most of the synagogue's burials have been at Menorah Cemetery. Those original blocks, which we call Blocks A, B, C, and D, are almost fully subscribed, except for a few single plots scattered throughout. There are plots available, however, in Blocks F and G. Block F is restricted to footstones only, and Block G can accommodate headstones and/or footstones.

Plots are also available at King Solomon Memorial Park, which are restricted to footstones with bronze plaques.

Currently, the Cemetery Association has no available plots at New Mount Zion Cemetery. We are in discussions to purchase additional plots, and we have a waiting list for when additional plots become available.

When is the best time to buy cemetery plots?

The best time to buy plots is before you need them. We will work with you and your family, of course, to arrange for a cemetery plot when a death occurs or is imminent. But bear in mind it is always much easier and helpful to our loved ones if arrangements have been made in advance.

Who can buy a cemetery plot?

The Cemetery Association can sell plots to members of Congregation Agudath Israel in good standing, their immediate families, and the immediate families of their immediate families. By "immediate families" we mean parents, current and former spouses, siblings, and children.

Who may be buried in plots that are purchased from the Cemetery Association?

The plots may be used for the burial of Jews, as defined by the rabbi of Congregation Agudath Israel.

How do I pay for the cemetery plots that I purchase?

Once you select the plots that you want, we will send you an invoice, which you can pay by check or credit card. The Cemetery Association accepts Visa and MasterCard.

Within a couple of months of paying for your plots in full, the Cemetery Association will issue a deed that states that you own the plots.

What if my plans change?

If you decide that you no longer want cemetery plots that you have purchased from us, we will buy them back from you at any time for the price you paid.

Can I transfer the ownership of my plots to someone else?

You can transfer the ownership of your plots to another member of your family by contacting the Cemetery Association. If you wish to transfer your plots to anyone other than a family member, even if they are members of Congregation Agudath Israel, the plots must be repurchased by the Cemetery Association and then resold to the new owners.

What exactly am I buying when I buy a cemetery plot?

You are simply buying the right to use the plot for a burial. The cemetery's fee for opening the grave at the time of the burial is not included. The cost of services provided by a funeral director and the cost of erecting a monument on the grave are also separate.

Can you recommend a funeral director?

The Cemetery Association recommends Jewish Memorial Chapel in Clifton. Jewish Memorial Chapel is nonprofit, and its board consists of delegates from local synagogues, including Congregation Agudath Israel. Congregation Agudath Israel has two delegates and two alternates on the Jewish Memorial Chapel board. Prices at Jewish Memorial Chapel tend to be lower than those at other funeral chapels, sometimes significantly so.

To reduce the burden on your family, the Cemetery Association strongly urges you to make prearrangements with Jewish Memorial Chapel or whichever funeral chapel you choose. For more information about this program, please contact the funeral chapel directly.

How do I arrange for a monument?

The Cemetery Association requires that a monument be erected within two years after a burial occurs.

We do not recommend any specific monument makers, but we can provide a list of local providers that our members have used. Monument makers should be able to quote a price that includes the cemetery's charge to pour a foundation for the monument and can discuss with you any restrictions on the sizes and styles of the monuments permitted at the cemetery.

The monument maker will need to obtain a permit from the Cemetery Association. The Cemetery Association does not charge a fee to issue the permit.

Is there a separate fee for care of cemetery plots after a burial takes place?

King Solomon Memorial Park does not charge a separate fee for care. At Menorah Cemetery and New Mount Zion Cemetery, care can be paid either annually or as a one-time “endowment.” Please contact the cemeteries for their fee schedules and to find out what services are included.

Does the Cemetery Association provide plots for interfaith burials?

We have arranged with Oheb Shalom Cemetery in Hillside to sell plots to families of our members who would like to arrange for interfaith burials. Please see www.ohebshalomcemetery.org for more information.

Where can I get more information about the Congregation Agudath Israel Cemetery Association?

Additional information, including price lists and the names of the current board members of the Cemetery Association may be found at www.agudathcemetery.org, or you may email your questions to info@agudathcemetery.org.