



Temple Beth Abraham
4 Raymond Street, Nashua, New Hampshire 03064-8184 (603) 884-8184
CEMETERY COMMITTEE

RELIGIOUS POLICIES – TEMPLE BETH ABRAHAM CEMETERY **As Revised and Approved at Congregational Meeting 20200126**

In the event of any questions, the rabbi of Temple Beth Abraham is the final authority for applying these guidelines or making exceptions in extraordinary situations.

When someone dies who wishes to be buried at the Beth Abraham Cemetery, call the rabbi of Temple Beth Abraham as soon as you can, even on Shabbat or a holy day. The rabbi is available through the synagogue (603-883-8184 ext. 102). If the rabbi is not there a current cellphone number is given on his voicemail. This call will set everything you need in motion.

Who May Be Buried

- Our cemetery is a Jewish cemetery. Burial is available for people who are Jewish according to *halacha* (Jewish law), which means either born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism with the traditional rituals of immersion for women and men, and circumcision or *hatafat dam brit* (symbolic circumcision) for men. Burial is also available to a non-Jewish spouse, partner or dependent child of a Jewish member of Temple Beth Abraham, who is not practicing another religion. (Not practicing another religion is defined as follows: Not being a member of a congregation of another religion; not attending religious services and/or performing the rituals of another religion regularly or as an adherent, rather than as a family member or guest. Someone who has a symbol, such as a Christmas tree in the home, who attends the holy day celebrations of another religion with family or friends, or who occasionally attends religious services with family or friends who are not Jewish is not considered to be practicing another religion).
- A person who is or has been Jewish but who converts to another religion or practices another religion, including Messianic Judaism, may not be buried in our cemetery. Similarly, interfaith couples can be buried together in an area cemetery and the Rabbi is available to officiate at the funeral service of the Jewish spouse/partner. (For the purpose of these policies, we use the term 'interfaith' to refer to a family in which a person who is Jewish is married or is a partner of a person who is not Jewish.)
- A Jewish person whose death was a suicide may be buried in our cemetery.
- A person with tattoos or whose body had been pierced may be buried in our cemetery, so long as anything in the pierced areas is removed.

Traditional Preparation for Burial

- Bodies buried in our cemetery must undergo *tohora*, the traditional cleansing and purification carried out by the *Chevra Kadisha* (Jewish burial society). *Tohora* takes place locally at the Davis Funeral Home in Nashua.
- In some cases, *tohora* cannot be carried out, because of the condition of the body or a concern for the safety of the *Chevra Kadisha*. The rabbi and the *Chevra Kadisha* will confer and decide in those cases whether *tohora* should not take place.
- A person is buried only in a plain shroud, with soil from *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel) and, if requested, the person's *tallit*. Nothing else may go with the body.
- For non-Jewish burials in the Beth Abraham cemetery, the body shall be prepared in an Act of Final Kindness by the funeral director under the supervision of a trained member or members of the Jewish community. A *kavvanah* (spiritual intention) will be recited, the body will be dressed in a plain shroud and be placed in an *aron* (casket) as described below. In accordance with Jewish tradition, other clothing and objects will not be placed in the casket.
- Embalming is against Jewish law. This applies to non-Jews buried in the Beth Abraham Cemetery. In some cases, because of a body being transported a long distance, embalming may be required. The rabbi and the funeral home will confer and decide what is proper in those cases.
- Cremated remains may not be buried in our cemetery, except in extraordinary cases such as when the condition of the body presents a danger to public health. The rabbi must be consulted first in such cases before any cremation might take place.

Aron – Casket

- The *aron* must be made of wood or another organic material that disintegrates into the earth. No part of the *aron* may be metal.
- It is strongly recommended that the family choose the least expensive and least ornate *aron* available.

Religious Service

- A traditional Jewish funeral takes place in one of two ways: (1) at a synagogue or funeral parlor with prayers and eulogies, followed by a burial service at the cemetery; (2) entirely at the graveside at the cemetery.
- At our cemetery, the service must be led by the rabbi of Temple Beth Abraham or by another officiant approved by the rabbi, or the synagogue president if the rabbi is not available.
- These guidelines apply to all Beth Abraham funerals/burials. For non-Jewish spouses/partners, the only rituals and ceremonies used shall be ones traditionally used at Jewish funerals/burials. If it is desired that clergy from another religion should perform the funeral with non-Jewish rituals or ceremonies, burial in the Beth Abraham cemetery would not be appropriate.
- The traditional Jewish rituals include certain psalms, words of eulogy by the officiant and/or family and friends, shoveling of dirt by any people present, the *El Maleh* memorial prayer, and the *Kaddish Yatom* (Mourners' Kaddish).
- Other rituals may be included only with the approval of the rabbi. Readings and/or music

may be included with the approval of the rabbi. American military honors such as the presentation of a flag to survivors and the playing of “Taps” are appropriate.

- There will be no open-casket and flowers are not part of Jewish tradition.

When Burial May Take Place

- Burials take place during the daytime from Sunday through Friday, except for major Jewish holy days. The holy days when burials may not take place are: the two days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, the first two and last two days of Pesach, and the two days of Shavuot. There are no burials on Shabbat.
- Timing of funeral/burial shall be in accordance with Jewish practice.

Monument

- There are different customs we honor for when a stone marker should be placed and dedicated. Most commonly in Ashkenazi Jewish families the unveiling of a monument takes place around the first anniversary of a death. Some families and Jewish groups dedicate the monument at the end of *shloshim*, the first 30-day period of mourning.
- The text for a marker must be approved by the rabbi.
- In general, the marker should include the Hebrew name of the deceased, including the names of father and mother in Hebrew if known, and the date of death according to the Jewish calendar.
- Gate City Monument in Nashua is our recommended provider. Other engravers may be used so long as they coordinate with the rabbi.