

Our Values, and How We Live Them

This statement is a reminder of what makes Congregation Beth Emeth a sacred Jewish congregation and reinforces the values that unite us. It declares that the entire congregation aspires to act according to the highest ethical standards of our tradition.

B'tzelem Elohim (Created in God's Image)

We understand that because we are all created in the image of God each person has infinite worth. We demonstrate our amazement at our special place in Creation. We recognize the personal potential for holiness that we each demonstrate through acts of mercy, love, and justice. If each of us is created in the image of God, then all of us together are always in the act of forming the world as God imagined.

Kavod Hab'riyot (Respect)

We recognize the divine in every person and treat one another with the dignity that deserves. We also recognize that every person is unique, each with their own feelings and needs. We strive to act respectfully to each other by valuing others' feelings, experiences, and perspectives. We refrain from derogatory speech, negative talk, gossip, and slander. Even if we disagree, we do so *l'sheim shamayim*, for the sake of heaven, seeking peace and understanding with our words and actions while listening to and appreciating each other.

Kehillah (Our Community)

We join together as individuals who share a common faith based on traditions of Torah and Judaism as understood through Reform Jewish teaching and principles. Within this Jewish context, the congregation acknowledges individuality and supports diversity in belief and practice. We foster a sense of community by striving to ensure that members feel that they belong and that they matter to one another. Caring for the needs of our community and its members is a mitzvah (sacred obligation), and those needs will be met through our commitment to be together.

Hachnasat Orchim (Being Welcoming and Accepting)

We welcome anyone who wants to be a part of our Jewish congregation and affirms our community values and practices. We strive to make all who wish to participate in our community feel that their ideas and concerns are respected and can be discussed. We honor the boundaries that each individual sets in their work and personal lives. We understand that we are diminished as a community and we compromise our Jewish values when we exclude anyone from our community based on race, age, sex, disability, marital or veteran status, nationality, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Yichud (Inclusion)

We affirm that our congregation is strongest when all its members are equally able to participate. Jewish tradition teaches we must not separate ourselves from the community. Accordingly, we must actively include in our community anyone who, through no fault of their own, feels excluded from any observances or activities. We seek to promote an inclusive environment by respecting one another's abilities, facilitating everyone's participation in Congregation activities, and actively seeking to ameliorate limitations to participation that members might face.

Bitachon (A Safe and Secure Space)

We strive to maintain a community that prioritizes safety and accountability, and recognize the safety of everyone in our congregation as our sacred responsibility. We are committed to ensuring that our environments are safe, equitable, and inclusive for members and guests. Our Jewish values do not permit us to tolerate, in any form or at any time, discrimination, harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, threats, intimidation, menacing, or any other offensive behavior or acts against anyone in our community or participating in our events.

Shalom Bayit (Peace in the Home)

We recognize the need for wholeness and fulfillment in our communal spaces as well as in our personal spaces. It is a Jewish ideal that households be peaceful, nurturing, respectful, and have compassion to further their relationship and make the relationship complete. We also hold these ideals for our community and strive to make our congregation one of peace, nurturing, respect, compassion, and learning from one another. When we interact with each other, we do so from a place of respect and kindness.

L'sheim Shamayim (Dialogue)

We acknowledge that diversity of opinion is an essential component to making our congregation whole. When well-meaning people disagree, we are reminded to treat each other with respect, dignity, fairness, and compassion. Our congregation encourages forthright and respectful conversation, seeking to truly hear our fellow community members. We strive to give each voice a turn to speak, be heard and share ideas without fear of repercussion. We work to resolve disagreements with kindness for the greater purpose of holiness.

G'milut Chasadim (Active Kindness)

We demonstrate caring and benevolence toward others, and understand that there are a myriad of ways, large and small, to do so. The Prophets teach that kindness is one of G-d's central demands of human beings. It is a *mitzvah* without anticipation of something in return. Through our actions and behaviors, we extend loving-kindness, benevolence, and patience toward one another and, as a congregation, to the outside community as well. We seek opportunities to do kind acts for others without waiting to be asked.

Tzedek (Justice)

We engage in the pursuit of justice. The Prophets understand that pursuit means we must seek ways to ensure justice prevails. We believe that we should treat people equitably and fairly and protect those who are vulnerable. As such, we choose to model these behaviors in our community and speak out when we see injustices that affect people in our Jewish or secular community. We actively search for equitable and just solutions to problems that we find and do our best to implement these solutions to better ourselves and our community.

Yosher (Integrity)

We trust that all our members of our congregation will do what is right and be open and honest in our dealings. When representing or acting for the congregation we act solely in the best interests of the community. We decide congregation business with transparency, openness, and accountability. We conduct financial matters related to the congregation with honesty, and give what is justly due to support the congregation.

Tochecha (Correcting Behavior with Love)

We strive to react restoratively and with love if members of our congregation, or the institution itself, might fall short of our ethical or behavioral expectations. This process includes learning and repentance from those who have hurt others, forgiveness from those who have been hurt, and an effort to restore the bonds that have been broken.