

**FITERMAN
B' MITZVAH
PROGRAM**



**Beth El
SYNAGOGUE**

2025-2026

Handbook

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Dear Families,

Welcome to the Ben and Bernice Fiterman B' Mitzvah Program at Beth El Synagogue! This is a unique and memorable time in the life of your family, and we are delighted to be on this journey with you.

Our program goes beyond the customary skills of chanting Torah/Haftarah and leading prayers. Through family education, Shabbat experiences, adult-only learning, and mitzvah projects, our program offers your family a chance to feel the rhythm and depth of Jewish life. We hope that by taking advantage of the full B' Mitzvah Program, your child's B' Mitzvah will be a steppingstone to a more meaningful connection to Judaism in your home and within our community.

Simply stated, the goals of the B' Mitzvah Program are to:

- Give students a "Jewish toolbox" full of skills that will assist them in living rich Jewish lives, as well as other areas of their lives.
- Bring families together and create a stronger community.
- Build community among our students.
- Model that Jewish learning is a life-long process.
- Demonstrate the beauty of Shabbat and communal prayer.
- Involve families in mitzvah projects within our community.
- Reinforce Jewish literacy.

This Handbook is designed as a tool to help you organize and understand the many elements of the B'Mitzvah Program. In addition, you will receive appropriate forms and information throughout your years in the program. Please carefully watch your email and always feel free to reach out if you feel you may have missed something.

You may also access this information as well as a wealth of other tools to help you through the B' Mitzvah Program on the synagogue website and Mitzvah Tools.

As your clergy team, we look forward to getting to know you over the next years and beyond. The entire B' Mitzvah Program team is committed to making your family simcha meaningful and enjoyable. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us – we are here for you!

B'Shalom,



Rabbi Alexander Davis



Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald



Rabbi Matt Goldberg

Values of Beth El Synagogue

During our strategic planning process, the Beth El staff and Board committee chairs met independently to identify and define the core values that should inform our decisions and daily actions at Beth El. In furtherance of our Mission and Membership Statements, we reached a consensus on the five values listed below: Ruchaniut, Kehilla, Chiddush, Tikkun Hanefesh, and Tikkun Olam.

Ruchaniut (Spirituality through God, Torah, Israel)

- We strive to “walk in God’s ways,” upholding the covenant, living our values intentionally, and cherishing the mitzvot both in the synagogue as a collective as well as in our individual lives “at home and away, night and day.”
- We believe that Judaism is an all-encompassing way of life, that a full Jewish life shapes our beliefs, behaviors and sense of belonging, that each person’s relationship to Judaism is unique and personal, and that we are called upon to grow in faith and faithfulness.
- We are a beit knesset, a home of gathering for sacred-social occasions; a beit midrash, a home committed to life-long learning; and a beit tefillah, a home grounded in Jewish spiritual practices.
- We are inheritors of a masorah (tradition) that we lovingly and actively bequeath to the next generation.
- We are Ohavei Yisrael (lovers of Israel) who feel a special relationship with and obligation to the Jewish people and the Land and State of Israel.

Kehilla (Community)

- We consider Beth El to be our home, where young and old are invited to gather and are welcomed as mishpacha (family).
- We are a tapestry of different backgrounds, perspectives and beliefs.
- We are committed to supporting each other and the institution of Beth El.
- We offer opportunities for participation and engagement that are open to all.
- We are focused on providing an environment that is safe for all and a building and premises that are physically secure.
- We rely on community members for participation, leadership, volunteer support, and financial contributions.

Chiddush (Innovation)

- We are dedicated to learning from the past to shape the future.
- We are committed to continuous improvement.
- We recognize the ever-changing nature of our lives and of our world and respond with the timeless, ever-growing wisdom of Judaism and the agility and adaptability of Jewish community.
- We are at the forefront of making Conservative/Masorti Judaism relevant in modern times.

Tikkun Hanefesh (Self-Improvement)

- We show gratitude through words and deeds, through our generosity and selfless acts.
- We practice humility: appreciating what we know and being curious about what we do not know, learning when to speak and when to listen, and understanding when to stand up and when to lean in.
- We recognize the possibility of tshuva (repentance) for ourselves and others.
- We face challenges and opportunities with patience, perseverance and positivity.
- We live life with simcha (joy) and look with optimism to the future.
- We are committed to truth, to fostering trust, and to creating a communal culture of transparency and integrity.

Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World)

- We treat others with compassion and respect, recognizing each person is created b'tzelem Elohim (in God's image).
- We uphold our responsibility to comfort the bereaved, lift the down fallen, and support people through life's challenges.
- We work to bring communities together and serve as a catalyst to respond through our Jewish values to the critical needs and contemporary issues facing our planet and its inhabitants.
- We act courageously to apply Jewish values to better our world by pursuing tzedek (righteousness), performing acts of chesed (loving kindness), and striving for peace between people and between peoples.



The Ben and Bernice Fiterman B' Mitzvah Program

MAZAL TOV! You are becoming a B' Mitzvah! What does this mean? You will soon be considered an adult member of our community and the Jewish people.

This is a great honor. This honor comes with responsibility. By becoming a child of the mitzvot, your community will look to you to perform mitzvot (sacred responsibilities). There are many people in our community and likely in your own family that you can look to as role models of people committed to living a life of mitzvot. We thought you would like to know a little more about two of these role models in our community – the individuals for whom this mitzvah training program is named, Ben and Bernice Fiterman.

Ben and Bernice both came from very humble backgrounds growing up on the North Side of the Minneapolis community. They were born to immigrant parents and together with their families, faced many hardships and challenges in their early years. During those times of the Great Depression and pre-and post-World War II, many Jewish children on the North Side benefited from the generosity of philanthropic individuals who started facilities known as settlement houses to help those in need in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. These houses, similar to our Jewish Community Center, offered free meals, medical assistance, and critical services to people of all faiths.

Ben and Bernice met in high school, and later married and had a family of their own; they were some of the early congregants of Beth El Synagogue. Ben served his country as a soldier and patriot during World War II. The family lived on the North Side for many years where the Jewish community continued to thrive and flourish. Ben and Bernice worked shoulder to shoulder in the family business known as Liberty Carton Company. Through the hard work and dedication of hundreds of employees, Liberty grew and has become an international success.

Throughout their 67 years of marriage and raising their family, Ben and Bernice always considered themselves very blessed. Still, they never forgot their humble beginnings when others were there to help them. They were involved in many charitable causes and programs that gave back to both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. In that spirit, their family established a fund to support your mitzvah program. This fund is dedicated to ensuring that you learn, value, and live Jewish tradition. When you do, you will be following in the footsteps of Ben and Bernice. Like them, you will know that being an adult member of the Jewish community means making mitzvot a part of your life, being a mensch caring about others, and giving back through tzedakah and volunteering your time.

General Program Policies

Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Beth El Synagogue is a large and diverse community. We welcome Jews of all colors, backgrounds, and walks of life. We welcome spouses and life partners of other faith backgrounds to be active members in the life and culture of our Jewish community. We welcome learners of all types and abilities. We welcome families of all constructs.

We welcome children of all abilities to our Ben and Bernice Fiterman B' Mitzvah Program. We are committed to the idea that each person learns differently. Therefore, our staff works with families on an individual basis to ensure that each student reaches their best success as they go through the program.

Prerequisite Studies

Beth El's B' Mitzvah Program is designed to give students the skills necessary to participate in leading the service, studying Jewish text, and chanting Torah and Haftarah—at their B' Mitzvah service and beyond. However, we are not a Hebrew School where skills of language are taught. Therefore, to become a B' Mitzvah at Beth El, your child must be enrolled in Talmud Torah of Minneapolis, Smith Jewish Academy, or a Jewish Program authorized by the B' Mitzvah Program Director through the end of the school year in which the B' Mitzvah takes place. Students who attend Talmud Torah should begin their classes in second grade to ensure they have the Hebrew skills necessary to succeed in our program.

B' Mitzvah Dates

According to Jewish tradition, b'nai mitzvah are celebrated on or immediately after the thirteenth Hebrew birthday. Dates, therefore, are assigned as close to your child's Hebrew birthday as possible. You will find out date and Parasha at the end of fourth grade.

If circumstances make this date unworkable, we will work with you to find an alternate date. Changing an assigned date after training has begun is complicated and may impose additional work for your child. If this is something you wish to pursue, please reach out to the B' Mitzvah Team Members and we will work with you to the best of our ability.

Financial Requirements

Program Fees:

Upon accepting your B' Mitzvah date, a \$500 non-refundable deposit is due. The total Program Fee is \$3750 and may be paid monthly, quarterly, or in full. A payment arrangement needs to be in place by the start of the program. Monthly and quarterly automatic payments will begin in the fall.

All fees must be paid in full by the end of your child's 6th-grade year. Financial Aid is available upon request. A link is included in the confirmation email sent after the submission of the Registration Form.

Kiddush Lunch

Community lunches have been a treasured part of Beth El's Shabbat celebration for decades. Over the past year, it became clear that our current Shabbat kiddush lunch model was presenting challenges to many B'Mitzvah families. Our growing community, rising costs, inconsistent experiences, and the desire to create more equitable celebrations for all families prompted us to take a comprehensive look at our approach to this central aspect of our Shabbat experience.

The base cost of a lunch for every Shabbat will be \$18 per person for 2025-2026. This standardized \$18 per person cost maintains high-quality kiddush lunches every Shabbat for all 360+ weekly attendees.

Families celebrating a B' Mitzvah during the 2025-26 fiscal year (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026) will contribute \$5,000 (structured as a tax-deductible donation) toward lunch for the entire congregation plus up to 50 invited guests. Families can choose from a set of standard menu options. While the total cost is greater than \$5,000, Beth El will pay the remaining amount of this standard lunch. Families are welcome to contribute more than \$5,000, to offset Beth El's share of the cost.

Should families wish to add any menu items (beyond the standard menu) or guests (beyond 50), they will be responsible for the additional cost. The cost for these additions will be clearly communicated to families as early as possible before the B' Mitzvah so they can plan appropriately.

The family contribution amount for B' Mitzvah in each subsequent fiscal year will likely increase due to anticipated rising food and service costs. Any increases will be communicated to families prior to their child(ren) beginning the B' Mitzvah program in fifth grade.

Who's Who @ Beth El

Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald, B' Mitzvah Program and Ritual Director
Phone 952.873.7316 | Email jschwarzwald@bethelsynagogue.org

Rabbi Alexander Davis, Senior Rabbi
Phone 952.873.7310 | Email adavis@bethelsynagogue.org

Rabbi Matt Goldberg, Assistant Rabbi
Phone 952.873.7311 | Email mgoldberg@bethelsynagogue.org

Amy Godsey, B' Mitzvah Program Administrator
Phone 952.873.7313 | Email agodsey@bethelsynagogue.org

Jill Blustein, Rabbinic Assistant
Phone 952.873.7315 | Email jblustein@bethelsynagogue.org

Pam Friedman, Welcome Services and Events Coordinator
Phone 952.873.7300 | Email pfriedman@bethelsynagogue.org

Liz Rappaport, Associate Director
Phone 952.873.7314 | Email lrappaport@bethelsynagogue.org

Director of Youth Engagement-TBD
Phone 952.873.7306 | Email

Corinne Calderon, Charitable Giving/Finance Associate
Phone 952.873.7307 | Email ccalderon@bethelsynagogue.org

B' Mitzvah Program Timeline for Students

5th Grade Family Intake Meetings

In the months before 5th grade, each family will have individual intake meetings with our clergy, including the Director of the Fiterman B' Mitzvah Program. These meetings are both an opportunity to get to know each other and “kick off” your journey towards B' Mitzvah, as well as for us to know about each student as an individual learner so that we may prepare for their best success.

Start of TaRBuT

The core of the program is TaRBuT where students learn t'filot (prayers), bayit (home) skills and Torah reading trope, and form lifelong connections to the community. TaRBuT takes place on most Shabbat mornings throughout the school year. During 5th grade, parents are asked to attend Family Learning sessions with their child on select Shabbat mornings. See page 12 for more information.

Mitzvah Curriculum

Mitzvah is the key word in “B' Mitzvah”. We teach students that just as they receive the right to participate in the community as Jewish adults, they now must take responsibility for mitzvot. As part of TaRBuT, students will learn about different mitzvot – ways in which we can fulfill Torah precepts by giving of our time and our resources – and how they as individuals and as a group can have a positive impact on the world around them.

During 6th grade, families will participate in mitzvah opportunities as a group.

Shabbaton

5th and 6th grade learners join each year for a weekend retreat (Friday thru Sunday) at a local overnight camp, accompanied by staff and clergy, for an immersive and fun experience. We engage in prayer, study, community- and team-building activities, and of course, games and treats, all while experiencing an authentic Shabbat in a beautiful setting. This is a highlight of our program!

6th Grade and 7th Grade

Haftarah: 2 Paths

Chanting Haftarah

Chanting the Haftarah has been a tradition for B' Mitzvah in American synagogues for several generations. Students who wish to chant Haftarah will begin Trope (cantillation) classes during TaRBuT and continue learning with their private tutor.

Nevi'im (Study of the Prophets)

This track engages students in the study of the Prophets in a small group setting, led by one of our Rabbis. They will also study the prophet associated with the haftarah for their B' Mitzvah date and write a D'var Haftarah (short teaching to introduce the haftarah) which they will share from the pulpit. Nevi'im classes take place on Sunday mornings in the semester before the B' Mitzvah.

Chanting Torah

Chanting Torah is a lifelong skill. Beth El is proud to be a congregation with generations of Torah readers raised in our halls. Students will receive an introduction to Torah Trope (cantillation) as part of their TaRBuT studies and will receive weekly private instruction in chanting their Torah portion with a tutor assigned by Beth El.

Assessments

You can expect us to check in with students at various points in their learning both to establish deep relationships with families and to ensure students reach their full potential. At a minimum, you may expect the following touchpoints:

- One year before your B' Mitzvah
- Six months before your B' Mitzvah
- A minimum of three meetings in the four months leading up to your B' Mitzvah

In addition, parents may feel free to reach out for additional check-ins with Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald.

Beit Midrash: Preparing for the D'var Torah

Beit Midrash roughly translates to “a hall dedicated to biblical study.” Students and parents are assigned to one of several sessions offered throughout the year, led by one of our Rabbis. In these sessions, families study the learner’s Torah portion and are guided to then craft a D’var Torah (speech, speaking about the Torah portion) which students will deliver from the pulpit.

T³ (One year before becoming B’ Mitzvah)

T³ stands for Tallit, Tefillin, Tefillah. This 6-week program takes place with parents and learner together on Sunday mornings the year prior to B’ Mitzvah. In this class, students will learn the whats, whys, and hows of putting on tefillin, tallit, and tefillah and participating in communal prayer. We will engage in iyun tefillah (deeper study of the prayers) and explore connection to prayer.

Information for Beth El Kesher

During the week of your child(ren)’s B’ Mitzvah, they will be highlighted in the publication of the bi-weekly Kesher and Shabbat Hakol. Please watch for an email requesting a photo of your child(ren) and confirmation of Kiddush sponsor.

Beth El Facilities

Submit the Mitzvah Simcha Reservation for your Shabbat dinner (if applicable) and make arrangements for Kiddush lunch sponsorship at least 6 months in advance of your simcha. Contact the Events Coordinator, Pam Friedman, or the B’ Mitzvah Program Administrator, Amy Godsey, for more information.

Week of B' Mitzvah

Minyan Participation

Becoming B' Mitzvah is as much about joining the community as it is about personal accomplishment and joy for a family. At Beth El, students come to daily services in the week leading up to their B' Mitzvah. At these services, they will read Torah and lead some of the prayers.

- Shabbat Minchah (Saturday afternoon services) the week prior, 4:30 pm in winter/5:45 pm in summer
- Monday and Thursday morning minyan, 7:00 am

Kabbalat Shabbat (Friday night services)

Perhaps the most joyous and song-filled service of the week, students and families attend Friday night services at 5:45 pm. Students will lead prayers, and parents/guardians have the opportunity to present students with their Tallit (prayer shawl).

The Big Day!

Shabbat morning services begin at 9:00 am. We ask families to arrive at Beth El 10-15 minutes prior to the start of services to allow them to begin on time with you in the sanctuary. For purposes of informing your guests, students will begin leading Shacharit at approximately 9:20 am and the Torah is taken out just before 9:45 am. Services typically end at or just before noon and are followed by a community-wide congregational Kiddush lunch.

Learners celebrating at minchah services will be notified of their service start time in advance, and we ask that you arrive 10-15 minutes early, as well.

Programs & Kippot

Programs and kippot should be brought to the synagogue before Shabbat on the week of your simcha.

Note: If you are planning to print a program booklet for guests attending your service, it must be submitted to the Program Director for review one month in advance of your simcha. Remember, as well, to order customized kippot (optional) at least two months in advance.

The Fiterman B' Mitzvah Program

TaRBuT

The Shabbat morning component of the Fiterman B' Mitzvah Program.

TaRBuT, is an acronym for T'fillot (prayers), Ru'ach (spirit), B'rakhot (blessings), and Torah. It is directed by the B' Mitzvah Program and Ritual Director, adult Master Teachers, and teen volunteer teachers who graduated from our 8th grade leadership program, Rimonim.

Learners are divided into five groups based on what they have learned. All students begin in group Kachol and have the opportunity to progress through Tekhelet over the course of their time in TaRBuT. While students progress at their own rate through the material, we guide which Tefillot (prayers) should ideally be accomplished each semester to ensure that students remain on track.

The extent of your child's participation in leading services on their B' Mitzvah will be determined by their mastery of the requisite material in this program. Progress will be assessed on an individual basis throughout the training process.

Students begin by learning Bayit (home ritual) skills, for example, Kiddush; then, they progress to learn Shacharit (the morning service). Students who complete this material may advance to learn Kabbalat Shabbat or Ma'ariv (Friday night service), the Torah Service, Musaf, Hallel, or other advanced skills.

Torah Trope Training

As part of TaRBuT, students will take a multi-week course introducing them to the concept of Trope (cantillation for Torah, Haftarah, and Megillot). They will learn some of the basic Trope groups using the melody for chanting Torah, and apply what they learn as they begin to study Torah and Haftarah.

Beit Midrash

Beit Midrash roughly translates to a “hall dedicated to biblical study.” This is a two-part session that begins with a class devoted to answering questions like, “What is Torah?” and “How do I find my parasha (Torah portion)?”, as well as teaching learners the basics of how to study the Torah. In the second part, students will get to join with their adults as learning partners to study and deepen their understanding of the text.

In the weeks following this session, families have private follow-up meetings with one of the rabbis to study the student’s parasha in greater depth to help your child begin to shape their D’var Torah (brief sermon) that they will deliver on the day of their simcha.

5th & 6th Grade Shabbaton

We have found informal education opportunities add a level of joy to learning. The Shabbaton is an annual retreat (Friday afternoon through Sunday morning) at a sleepaway camp, where students will join with TaRBuT staff and clergy in experiencing a fun and relaxing Shabbat. Students will participate in services, enjoy traditional Shabbat meals, and share in both structured learning opportunities and unstructured social time. A highlight of the weekend is the Talent Show! Information about the Shabbaton will be sent out each fall.

Assessments, Check-ins, and Rehearsals

“OY” (One Year) Assessment

Students will have individual assessments outside of TaRBuT to review all t’fillot (prayers) they will have learned in TaRBuT. This allows the opportunity to track initial progress and determine the best path forward based on each family’s goals. The first is scheduled one year before B’ Mitzvah. At this time, learners will be asked to choose which Haftarah path they will pursue.

6-Month Assessment

Six months from your child’s B’ Mitzvah, they will have an assessment to gauge their progress since the OY assessment, and to help guide their learning through the final months before the B’ Mitzvah.

4-Month Check In

Starting four months from your child’s B’ Mitzvah, they will have three review sessions with one of Beth El’s staff to review their Tefillot and Torah reading and to identify areas of study requiring continued work.

2-Month Check In

By the two-month check-in, we will finalize what prayers and Torah reading each B’ Mitzvah student will do at their simcha.

1-Month Check In

Students will review prayers and everything that has been learned, especially materials that they have reviewed recently or regularly.

Dress and D’var Torah Rehearsal

The Dress and D’var Torah rehearsal is an opportunity to give a final spot check of the prayers your child will lead, practice reading from the Torah scroll, review choreography, and make sure everyone is aligned about the week’s schedule of services and your child’s participation in each service. This rehearsal is scheduled with the assumption that your child’s D’var Torah will be finalized before the date of this rehearsal.

Final Family Meeting with Rabbi

In the weeks prior to your simcha, you will be invited to a private family meeting with Rabbi Davis or Rabbi Goldberg. This is an opportunity to discuss the deeper meaning of becoming B’ Mitzvah and deepen your relationship with the clergy team.

What to Expect at Shul?

Shabbat Etiquette & Observance

To make Shabbat holy and to help our community “unplug” from the week, we ask those coming to shul to:

- Dress for Shabbat (see below).
- Wear a kippah (men are asked, women are invited).
- Wear a tallit if you are over 13 (extras are available in the closet to the left of the sanctuary).
- Make sure alarms and cell phones are turned off or on silent mode and are not used in the building.
- Refrain from using cameras, recording devices, or writing.
- Bring gifts or checks to a family celebration, not to the synagogue on Shabbat.

Appropriate Dress

Different places call for different attire: shorts at the beach, jeans at the mall, etc. The synagogue is no exception. We request that families come dressed in clothes appropriate for Shabbat, for shul, and for learning.

Livestreaming

We are aware that for a variety of reasons some of your guests may not be comfortable or otherwise able to attend services at Beth El in person. We are fortunate to have the Al and Audrey Kaufman CyberShul, a live stream of our services, accessible daily via Zoom and with additional HD streaming on our website for Shabbat and Holy Day services in our Spiegel Sanctuary. We will provide you with a link you may send your guests, and archived recordings are often available upon request. Contact Liz Rappaport for more information about livestreaming.

Young Children in the Synagogue

Beth El always welcomes families with young children. We understand many of our B'Mitzvah families have multiple children, some of whom may still be too young to sit through services or need accommodation. Every Shabbat morning during the school year, the synagogue provides childcare for children ages 2-5, beginning at 9:00 am. We also offer BESTY (Beth El Synagogue Torah for Youth) for grades K-4 starting at 9:15 am. These programs take place in the Aleph Preschool classrooms. No reservation is required and programs are free of charge. Children return to their parents in the Spiegel Sanctuary after the service.

For those who need, baby changing stations are available in restrooms throughout the shul. "Grandma Faye Shul Bags" are available on the rack in the lobby. They are filled with picture books, soft toys and games for young children. Please feel free to use them in the main sanctuary but be sure to return them to the rack after services.

Best Practices for Families

The most effective way for you to teach your child about the importance of study in Jewish tradition is for you to become a learner & lead by example! During the years of your child's preparation for their B' Mitzvah, we encourage you to do the following:

- Attend 5th and 6th grade Family and Adult Learning Sessions on Shabbat morning.
- Attend services regularly to demonstrate to your child your commitment to Judaism, the importance of prayer, and the beauty of Shabbat and Festivals.
- Reinforce the Bayit Skills by having your child light Shabbat candles, recite Kiddush, perform ritual hand washing and recitation of HaMotzi, and lead Birkat HaMazon at family Shabbat dinners. Contact the Program Director or any of the clergy for materials to guide you.
- Schedule special lessons, athletics, or outside activities for times other than Shabbat or Sunday mornings. While we understand things come up, missing TaRBuT sessions takes away from your child's opportunity to learn and make progress.
- While you do not need to know the material yourself, it is important to help your child set aside a regular time for B' Mitzvah study: 15 minutes/4 days a week. There is no substitute for practice at home, just as with dance or with a musical instrument! Resources are available on Mitzvah Tools.
- See that your child arrives on time for the Shabbat and Sunday morning programs.
- See that your child brings all the necessary study materials to class each week and to their assessments and rehearsals.
- Work together with your child to study the Torah portion and Haftarah and then help write the D'var Torah to be delivered at the service. Reach out to our Rabbis if you desire assistance.
- In general, monitor your child's progress. Be aware of any problems. Do not hesitate to ask for help from our Clergy team.

Shabbat, Kashrut, and Use of Beth El Facilities

Please review all the attached carefully and submit the online simcha Reservation Form that you will find at <https://besyn.shulcloud.com/form/MitzvahSimchaReservation> as soon as possible (at least 6 months out for a Shabbat dinner).

Beth El Synagogue Kashrut & Catering Guidelines

Beth El views kashrut as a central Jewish mitzvah (commandment), expressing our commitment to Jewish values. As such, we observe the laws of kashrut, and all who use the synagogue kitchen are expected to be respectful of the below guidelines.

Kashrut Standards & Supervision

- All foods served in the synagogue must be kosher certified (with an approved hechsher/Kosher symbol).
- Please note that a simple “K” is not an acceptable hechsher.
- Kashrut standards are maintained under the supervision of Rabbi Davis (or his designated representatives) and use of the synagogue kitchen is granted contingent upon adherence to these standards.
- Beth El’s Kitchen supervisor or a mashgiach (kashrut supervisor) certified by the Rabbi must be present whenever baking, cooking, serving, or cleaning occurs in the main Beth El kitchen. The mashgiach will ensure that utensils, ingredients, and preparation follow Beth El’s kashrut standards; that safety standards are adhered to; and that equipment is used properly.
- When an outside caterer is present, a fee will be charged for supervision and dishwashing. To make arrangements, please contact Pam Friedman. The caterer must be approved by the Rabbis. Please contact Rabbi Davis with any questions.

Beth El Synagogue Shabbat Morning Kiddush Information

Beth El Synagogue observes each simcha as a community. It is customary for families to sponsor the Shabbat Lunch and Kiddush as part of their lifecycle celebration (see below for specific information).

Please contact Pam Friedman, Welcome Services and Events Coordinator, to review all details and options available. As part of the lunch sponsorship, families are also asked to provide 70 dozen assorted sweets and baked goods.

Tax Benefit Information

A portion of your generous sponsorship can be treated as a tax-deductible donation to Beth El. To receive a tax receipt, please contact Beth El's Finance Department at Beth El at 952-873-7304 or finance@bethelsynagogue.org once the invoice has been fulfilled.

The tax-deductible portion for sponsoring a Congregational Shabbat Lunch and Kiddush is:

- The entire cost of the Kiddush
- The cost of congregational guest count for the luncheon.

Baked goods and assorted sweets must be from approved kosher bakeries and/or from private homes in accordance with the Beth El home baking guidelines and appropriate for dairy meals ONLY. All deliveries must be made by 12:00 pm on Friday and/or on the day preceding Jewish or legal holidays.

Home-Baked and Store-Bought Goods

Home-Baked Goods, General Policy

- It is preferable to serve baked goods from an established kosher caterer/bakery. In addition, Beth El's Snyder Family (dairy) kitchen is available to be used by affiliates and congregants to prepare baked goods.
- It is permissible to serve home-baked goods to celebrate or mark a family lifecycle event such as a baby naming, B' Mitzvah, wedding, etc. provided the below standards are upheld: and following the guidelines on the next page.
 - Home-baked goods may only be served with a dairy or pareve meal.
 - Home-baked goods may be brought into the social halls and plated in the bar area but not brought into the kitchens.
 - Desserts that include nuts must be clearly marked on the outside of the container.
- It is understood that individuals, families, and organizations sponsoring events and/or serving food at Beth El will respect policies and procedures and will communicate them to family and friends so that they can be respectful of this highly regarded tradition.
- Desserts brought from an establishment without approval will not be served; they will be set aside for the family to take home.

Home Baking Guidelines

Beth El permits the bringing of dairy baked goods from homes for dairy meals only subject to the following requirements:

- All mixes and additives must have an approved hechsher (kosher symbol). If there is a question regarding the acceptance of a given symbol, please consult Rabbi Davis.
- Only vegetable shortening with an appropriate hechsher may be used.
- Items baked at home must be baked in new, disposable baking pans.
- All mixing bowls and utensils used in preparation must be either new or used only for non-meat purposes. Mixing bowls or utensils used at any time in meat preparation may not be used for baked goods being brought into the synagogue.
- Baked goods may be brought to the synagogue only in previously unused, disposable containers.
- Suggested alternatives to home-baked goods are: scheduling a baking day in the synagogue's kitchen or purchasing baked goods from a certified kosher bakery.
- Baked goods from home may be served only on disposable dishes or trays or on doilies; they may not come into direct contact with Beth El dishes or utensils.
- Challah is allowed only from a certified bakery or may be baked in the Beth El Kitchen.
- Label desserts as "gluten-free, nuts, or other".

Food Service Policy

All items served at Beth El must be:

- Prepared in our kitchens under supervision, or
- Brought in from a kosher establishment (see the approved list of caterers and bakeries), or
- Commercially prepared items that have an acceptable hechsher, or
- Commercially baked items that some may consider "ingredient-kosher" (Bruegger's bagels, etc.) may not be brought into Beth El at all.

If you have any questions regarding our kashrut policies, please contact Rabbi Davis.

List of Approved Kosher Dessert Establishments

Basil (Dairy) 5101 Minnetonka Boulevard, St Louis Park, MN 55416

Bogart's Doughnut Company (Pareve) 904 West 36th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55408 (Pareve)

Nothing Bundt Cakes (Dairy) – Multiple Locations

Breadsmith (Pareve) – Multiple Locations

Sebastian Joe's Ice Cream Café (Dairy) – Multiple Locations

Most ice cream flavors are kosher; baked goods are not kosher.

Dunkin' Donuts (Dairy) 7280 42nd Avenue North, New Hope, MN 55427

Only beverages, donuts, muffins, bagels and croissants produced onsite are kosher.

Sandwiches produced onsite are not kosher, except bagel and cream cheese.

The Kosher Spot (Pareve and Dairy) 4217 Minnetonka Blvd, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Please note that only the specific locations listed above are approved Kosher. Check mspkosher.org for additional options.

In addition, hechsher desserts may be found in St. Louis Park at Costco, 5801 W 16th St; at Cub Foods, 3620 Texas Ave S (Knollwood) and 5370 W 16th St (West End); at Trader Joe's, 4500 Excelsior Blvd (St. Louis Park) and 11220 W Wayzata Blvd (Minnetonka); and at some Target stores. Be sure to check for kosher symbols.

Wuollet Bakery is no longer kosher and is not an approved bakery.

All deliveries must be made by 12:00 pm on Friday and/or on the day preceding the legal or Jewish holiday.

Guidelines for Use of Beth El Facilities

In order to preserve the spirit of Shabbat we ask you to adhere to the following policies:

- Cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used anywhere in the building on Shabbat.
- Deliveries (including, but not limited to, food, flowers, or other items) are not permitted during Shabbat or on legal and Jewish holidays. All deliveries must be made by 12:00 pm on Friday or the eve of Yom Tov and/or on the day preceding the legal or Jewish holiday, unless a specific exemption to this deadline has been approved by the Rabbi. Any baked goods brought on Shabbat or Yom Tov will not be served.
- Foods left over from a weekend event must be picked up by noon on Monday following the event, except when the Monday is a legal or Jewish holiday when the synagogue is closed. If that is the case, the food must be picked up by noon on the first permissible day.
- Photography and recording are not permitted during Shabbat. To schedule a weekday or Sunday photography and/or video session, please contact Pam Friedman to schedule that time. However, live streaming is available, and a recording of the stream is usually available after the service. Links can be sent to you the following week upon request. Contact Liz Rappaport for more information.
- Writing is not permitted during Shabbat. Sign-in boards and guest books should not be displayed until Shabbat has ended.
- Gifts, gift-checks, and cards should not be brought to Beth El during Shabbat.

Please confirm Shabbat beginning and ending times with the Beth El office.

Beth El Synagogue Facilities Information

To help ensure you and your guests have a successful and safe experience at Beth El during your simcha celebrations, please note the following:

- All room set-ups and equipment requests must be submitted to Pam Friedman at least two months prior to the event. If you have submitted and not received confirmation of receipt, please contact the synagogue office.
- Beth El Synagogue is not liable for any action resulting from drinking alcoholic beverages by your guests.
- Beth El Synagogue is a smoke-free building. In addition, no smoking is permitted on the grounds during Shabbat.
- Please notify Pam Friedman, Beth El's Events Coordinator, if you will be using helium balloons.
- Beth El Synagogue is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Please always protect your valuables.
- Children must be always supervised by an adult or responsible teenager. Children are not permitted to loiter in the hallways or restrooms at any time.
 - We offer childcare and youth services on Shabbat and holiday mornings. Check the synagogue website or contact the Director of Youth Engagement for information about current youth programming.

Torah Reading Assignments

Reading Torah is a beautiful and meaningful way to include friends and members of your family in your simcha. Please review this page for important information related to extending this special opportunity to those in your circle. Please know that it is not an expectation that families will find readers for the entire parasha. Beth El is blessed to have a wonderful and talented corps of volunteer Torah readers who chant weekly. If you have any questions, please contact the B' Mitzvah Program Director, Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald, and we will be happy to help you!

In order to ensure kavod la-Torah (respect and honor for the Torah), we ask that the following guidelines be kept in mind as you think about who might chant:

- Chanting Torah is a complex skill. It requires comfort with reading Hebrew, awareness of the Trope, and the ability to put these skills together. It is more than simply memorizing. With this in mind, we ask that you check in with those who you wish to honor, asking their comfort and experience, and how many p'sukim (verses) they are comfortable learning.
- Readers should ideally be able to read a minimum of ten (10) verses (p'sukim). Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for parents and grandparents.
- Recordings may be made available as aids for readers, but not as a primary way of preparing for a Torah reading.
- All emerging and non-regular Beth El readers will need to be checked by one of our Clergy or assigned lay leaders ten (10) days prior to your simcha.
 - Readers who are not heard by Beth El in advance will not be able to ultimately read on Shabbat.
 - Similarly, readers who are not prepared will not be able to read on Shabbat.

You will receive a link to the Torah Readers/Honors form at the time of scheduling your 6 month assessment with Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald, and reminders about it in the months following. **This form is due four months in advance of your simcha.**

As you prepare in advance for your simcha, you might consider acquiring the skill of Torah reading. If you wish to inquire about one of our skill classes or private study, please contact Rabbi Julie Schwarzwald for more information about our current offerings.

B' Mitzvah Checklist

Twelve – Eighteen Months Before

- Decide how you want to celebrate the B' Mitzvah weekend.
 - A Friday night Shabbat dinner
 - A congregational luncheon
 - An extended Kiddush
 - A private luncheon
 - A Saturday evening celebration
 - A Sunday celebration
 - Other
- Fill out the Mitzvah Simcha Reservation form:
<https://besyn.shulcloud.com/form/MitzvahSimchaReservation>
- Contact out-of-town family and friends you would like to invite to allow adequate time for travel arrangements.
- One-Year (OY) Assessment-Decide whether to choose Haftarah or Nevi'im
- Begin working on D'var Torah with B' Mitzvah Program staff.
- Schedule a 6-month assessment.

Six Months Before

- Confirm that ALL the spaces you need at Beth El are reserved for the appropriate times with Pam Friedman, the Events Coordinator.
- If you choose to do formal photography, contact Pam Friedman to schedule any sessions that will be held at Beth El.
- Reserve your catering company.
- 6-month assessment.
- Contact the gift shop manager to order kippot and tallit.
- Submit a photo to the B' Mitzvah Program Administrator
- Schedule a 4-month check-in.
- Wrap up working on your D'var Torah.
- Begin working on the Torah Readers/Honors Form (online).

Four Months Before

- Schedule your child's Dress and D'var Torah rehearsals.
- 4-month check-in.
- Finalize menus for Kiddush Luncheon with caterer.
- Finalize and submit the Torah Readers/Honors form.

Two Months Before

- Finalize room set up and all other facilities details, including AV needs, table set up for Shabbat dinner/luncheon, etc. (if applicable), with Pam Friedman, Events Coordinator.
- Order customized kippot, programs, etc. if desired.
- Divide up friends' responsibility, request bakers for Kiddush desserts.
- Arrange for care for small siblings in the synagogue.
- Schedule a one-month check-in and Dress Rehearsal.

Four Weeks Before

- Ensure that your child's clothing (including shoes) for the B' Mitzvah is appropriate, well-fitting, and comfortable.
- Attend the final family meeting with either Rabbi Davis or Rabbi Goldberg.
- Submit your program booklet to Rabbi Schwarzwald for review if you plan to have one printed for your guests.
- Order challah and purchase whiskey.
- Contact the synagogue's Events Coordinator to schedule family pictures.
- Contact the caterer with the final number of invited guests.

Two Weeks Before

- Dress Rehearsal and D'var Torah Rehearsal- Last lesson with clergy on the bimah
- Deliver hospitality baskets to the hotel

The Week of Your Simcha

- Make sure that all deliveries (food, decorations, handouts, etc.) to Beth El arrive before 12:00 pm on Friday.
- Print programs and deliver them to the synagogue
- Deliver kippot to the synagogue
- Pictures with family and clergy

B' Mitzvah Schedule

- *Be sure to bring your SIDDUR, TALLIT, TEFILLIN, YAD, and KIPPAH for each service
- Saturday Shabbat Minchah- (the week before B' Mitzvah) service times vary with the season
- Monday Minyan service 7:00 am
- Thursday Minyan service 7:00 am
- Friday Kabbalat Shabbat 5:45 pm- Lead Kiddush, Shema, etc.
- Saturday morning Shacharit 9:00 am- (Bring your SPEECH as well as your other service materials)

NOTES