

# LIBRARY MINYAN GOVERNING CHARTER

(Established 2012; Revised 2024)

## PREAMBLE

The Library Minyan (referred to herein as “the Minyan”) is a participatory, lay-led, family-friendly community that blends traditional observance with a modern and egalitarian approach to Jewish living, operating within the Temple Beth Am community.

The Minyan is led by a Steering Committee (SC) and coordinators, and committees that organize participation in three main areas: (1) aspects of prayer services, such as serving as gabbai, reading Torah and Haftarah, and leading the congregation in prayer; (2) teaching, such as *divrei* Torah or learning sessions; and (3) community building functions, such as kiddush, shiva meals, and outings.

The Minyan strives to create a sense of community through members joining together to share in each other’s celebrations and support one another through sorrows. The Minyan’s motto “Come, Serve, and Belong” encapsulates the foundations of Minyan life—attending the Minyan regularly, taking an active role in Minyan activities, and paying membership dues. Decisions on Library Minyan practice are made through a democratic process, within the guidelines of Jewish law and Temple Beth Am policy.

## I. GOVERNANCE

The Library Minyan is governed by a Steering Committee (SC), chaired by the *Rosh Minyan* and having seven other members. In addition, there are a number of coordinators for specific activities, whose number, purpose, and scope may change over time, as determined by the SC and/or the Minyan as a whole. SC members and coordinators are encouraged to serve for an initial two-year term and may serve for additional terms. The *Rosh Minyan*’s term begins on *Tu BiShvat* (or as close to then as is practical) in odd-numbered years. The terms for all other SC members begin on *Tu BiShvat* in even-numbered years. The Steering Committee holds an annual kick-off meeting shortly after Tu B’Shvat to introduce its new members to one another, to review the Minyan procedures and roles of each coordinator, and to brainstorm plans for the coming year.

SC members each have a designated area of responsibility. They may handle their area individually, or may form committees to share work, broaden participation, and assist in succession. The SC consists of the following eight positions: Rosh Minyan, Head Gabbai, Membership, Communication, Ritual, Social, Education, and Finance. The Rosh is selected each 2 years by the members of the SC from among current and past

members of the SC. The Rosh serves for a two-year term, and may serve for additional, but not consecutive, terms.

Members of the SC are selected by the Rosh in consultation with the SC and others. An SC member who serves two consecutive terms must wait two years before serving again in the same position. Coordinators are selected from time to time as needed by the Rosh in consultation with the previous coordinator and the SC.

The Steering Committee is convened and led by the Rosh, at least three times per year. The Rosh provides liaison with Temple Beth Am, while also serving as the point of contact for members and visitors who have questions concerning Library Minyan policy or practice.

After receiving an inquiry on a substantial matter, the Rosh circulates the inquiry to the members of the SC. The SC decides whether it should resolve the issue, delegate it to an action committee, or bring it to the Minyan as a whole for a vote, either at a general meeting, on-line polling, or by mail ballot. Vote winners are decided by a majority count when there are two choices, or by a plurality if more than two choices. All decisions by the SC should be documented in minutes that are available to the membership.

The Minyan holds general meetings as needed, but at least once per year prior to the start of the new terms of office. The agenda for such meetings is set by the Rosh with input from the SC, and should include a financial report, summary of past activities, plans for the future, and any significant issues. (If the general meeting takes place on shabbat, financial details should not be discussed, but will be available for later consideration.) Any member of the Library Minyan can propose adding an item to the agenda of a general meeting with advance notice.

## II. MEMBERSHIP

Any person who wishes to attend the Library Minyan is welcome, whether or not the person is a member of Temple Beth Am. However, attendance at High Holy Day services requires a ticket. Only members of the Library Minyan may vote on issues or serve on a Minyan committee. Members must be of Bar or Bat Mitzvah age.

The Minyan describes membership with the phrase “**Come, Serve, and Belong.**” The first part of this phrase—**Come**—reflects the Minyan’s philosophy that those who attend the Minyan on a regular basis count as members. Those who attend infrequently are most welcome, but should refrain from voting on Minyan issues.

The second part—**Serve**—stems from the fact that the Minyan is lay-led. Therefore, all members are expected to give of themselves in one form or another. In addition to being a coordinator, service opportunities include ritual and non-ritual jobs, from reading Torah

to organizing meals for a family sitting shiva or welcoming a new baby; from serving on a committee to serving as Gabbai; from greeting people at the door on Shabbat morning to helping plan a Purim *seudah*.

The third part—**Belong**—means that voting membership in the Minyan requires being a paid member of Temple Beth Am. The TBA Executive Director is available to discuss membership levels to fit different financial circumstances.

### III. COORDINATORS and COMMITTEES

The diverse activities of the Library Minyan are fostered by 25 coordinators, some of whom have committees to assist them, providing many opportunities for Minyan members to serve.

The **Steering Committee** supervises the overall functioning of the Minyan by delegating responsibilities to coordinators, reviewing the ongoing activities of the Minyan, and discussing ideas proposed by the membership. The SC may create or remove coordinator positions as warranted. The SC also focuses on the Minyan's growth and plans for the future, with attention to the Minyan's place in the shul and the larger community, as well as to outreach, strategic planning, and financial oversight.

The members serving on the SC and their focus areas are as follows:

1. The **Rosh Minyan** leads the SC and convenes it as needed. The Rosh provides liaison with Temple Beth Am, helps coordinate the variety of Minyan activities, and ensures they are properly publicized (along with the Webmaster and Communications Coordinator). The Rosh serves as the point of contact for members and visitors who have questions concerning Minyan policy or practice and directs them to relevant coordinators for assistance. The Rosh ensures that decisions of the SC are recorded and made available.
2. The **Ritual** Coordinator determines the boundaries of ritual and spiritual expression for the Minyan (within the scope of Conservative practice and Temple Beth Am policies). They also seek ways to keep the prayer experience relevant and meaningful, such as *divrei tefillah* and special musically focused *tefillot*. They help resolve prayer conflicts through patient and thoughtful discussion and work with the Rosh to select a committee to plan High Holy Day Services.
3. The **Education** Coordinator arranges educational programming for the Minyan (open to all at TBA), whether within or outside of services. These may include talks on Jewish or societal matters. Group or individual classes may be arranged as requested on how to *daven*, be a gabbai, give a *drash*, and related skills.

4. The **Community** Coordinator arranges different types of outreach intended to strengthen the Minyan's sense of community. These include activities falling under other more specific coordinators such as Diaspora Potluck gatherings, *Chesed* meals, *Ohel Patuach*, the *Simcha* Coordinator, and the Greeters.
5. The Head **Gabbai** coordinates issues regarding weekly and festival prayer services, and recruits *gabbaim* and other coordinators in conjunction with the Rosh. Relevant coordinators are *Drash*, Torah, Haftarah, and *Megillah* coordinators. The Head Gabbai prepares the annual calendar and gabbai assignments for the year, which is then posted to the web page before Rosh Hashanah each year.
6. The **Membership** Coordinator helps create an inclusive and friendly community at the Minyan and reaches out to potential new members. They develop ways to increase participation in conjunction with other coordinators.
7. The **Communications** Coordinator helps maintain, update, and disseminate Minyan related information to members. This includes a weekly email to all members, updates to the website ([libraryminyan.org](http://libraryminyan.org)), and social media. They work with the Rosh to assure that events are coordinated across different Library Minyan areas and with the wider TBA community.
8. The **Finance** Coordinator ensures that the overall financial posture of the Minyan follows policies set by the SC, and that an annual financial report is prepared. The Minyan Treasurer handles day-to-day financial matters.

**The following coordinators do not serve on the Steering Committee:**

- The **Kiddush** Coordinator arranges enhanced kiddush lunches at Library Minyan for special events such as anniversaries, birthdays, *yahrzeit* observances, learning sessions, and Torah Club, matching the cost of the kiddush to donations obtained. Major events such as Bar Mitzvah or *aufruf* may be arranged through the *Simcha* Coordinator and directly with TBA Catering services.
- The **Children and Youth** Coordinator strengthens the connection of young people to the Minyan by expanding their participation in services, welcoming and involving children and their families, maintaining a child-friendly atmosphere, and addressing the needs of families with young children.
- **Gabbaim** recruit and guide those playing active roles in services, arrange for *aliyot* and other honors, and actively run the services for which they are assigned.

- The **Mishnah Study** Coordinator organizes the Mishna Study that precedes almost every Shabbat morning service.
- The **D'var Torah** Coordinator organizes the presentation of a talk at each Shabbat and holiday service, encouraging contributions from diverse perspectives from the full community.
- The **Haftarah** Coordinator organizes the reading of the Haftarah at each service.
- The **Torah** Coordinator organizes the reading of the Torah at each prayer service.
- The **Megillah** Coordinator arranges for holiday readings from the five *Megillot*.
- The **Greeting** Coordinator arranges for greeters to stand near the entrance to welcome people arriving.
- The **Webmaster** maintains the Library Minyan website based on inputs from other coordinators, sends email as requested, and posts any *d'var torah* that is offered in writing. The website provides a calendar showing gabbai and other volunteers for each upcoming service, a list of all coordinators and their email addresses, and a way to join the membership list.
- The **Treasurer** handles the ongoing donations and expenses for the Minyan and acknowledges donations to both the donor and the honoree, when applicable.
- The **Ohel Patuach** Coordinator creates and implements opportunities to “open the tent” of home hospitality by arranging for the hosting of newcomers and existing members for shabbat and holiday meals.
- The **Chesed** Coordinator arranges for support to Library Minyan members during the birth/adoption of a child, illness, or death in the family, and helps arrange transportation when needed.
- The **Diaspora Potluck** Coordinator arranges pot-luck dining and other social events, mostly off-site from TBA.
- The **20/30s** Coordinator recruits and welcomes young members and arranges activities appealing to this age group.
- The **Simcha** Coordinator helps people plan a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, *Aufruf*, or other major celebration at the Minyan. They can help connect families with the necessary ritual (gabbai), kiddush, and calendaring resources.
- The **High Holy Day** Coordinator arranges for all the participants needed for High Holy Day services.

#### **IV. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

This Charter has been adopted by majority vote and may be amended in the future by simple majority vote at a Library Minyan general meeting, on-line survey, or by mail ballot.