

Brief History of Beth Shalom Cemetery  
Page 1 of Booklet

*Since Biblical days, our Jewish tradition has taught the love and respect due to the deceased and survivors at the time of death. Our Congregation is proud of the beauty of our cemetery grounds and the quiet serenity that generations of members and Pittsburgh Jewry have found at times of personal sorrow and seasons of holy remembrance.*

*The clergy and staff of Beth Shalom are always available to assist you whenever possible. Please feel free to call upon them at any time.*

The Board of Trustees

## **----- Brief History of ----- Beth Shalom Cemetery**

Congregation Beth Shalom was chartered in September of 1917. In 1924 a search committee began to explore an area for cemetery grounds and in 1925 an agreement was made for the purchase of a 32-acre site in Shaler Township. The location was both fortuitous and magnificent. The grounds were at a high point among rolling hills and beautifully forested with silver maple, weeping willows, Japanese elm and fir. Much of the shrubbery was culled out, roads were planned and developed, and sections were architecturally established for immediate and future development.

Consecration of the Beth Shalom Cemetery grounds took place in January of 1926. As the years went by, more ground was purchased. The last 10 acres were acquired in 1968. At present, the cemetery consists of 61 beautifully manicured acres.

During the intervening years, a house was built on the grounds to be occupied, on a continuous basis, by the Beth Shalom Cemetery Caretaker. This insures constant access to the cemetery grounds, good security and the immediate handling of emergency situations. The work on the grounds of the Cemetery is performed by a crew of experienced ground keepers under the Caretaker's supervision. During the spring, summer and early fall season when heavy planting and repairs are necessary, there is an additional crew on site.

There have been over 25,000 interments and/or plot sales since 1926. As one section nears capacity, another is developed. It is estimated that Beth Shalom Cemetery has another 200 years of potential service to the Pittsburgh Jewish Community.

Within the Cemetery, there are many options open to meet personal family preferences. These include: a Holocaust Memorial Section, a Memorial Park with ground level markers, sections of plots with customary monuments familiar to us all, and a family Gardens section which include from 12 to 30 graves. Special plantings in these gardens make it possible to create a distinctly personal area. For centuries mausoleum entombment has been considered the finest tribute that can be paid to the dignity of man and the memory of a beloved one. Hillside mausoleum entombment is fully permitted by Jewish laws and

traditions. Today, Beth Shalom Cemetery has made this honorable form of entombment available in affordable price ranges and a unique design. Our mausoleum has been built into a hillside on the cemetery grounds.

The Congregation's active Cemetery Committee makes frequent inspections for the purpose of evaluating the roads, the ground care, the condition of mechanized equipment and the garage. The Committee exists to assure that our Congregation's high standards are met.

The members of Beth Shalom Congregation are indeed proud of their Cemetery. The quiet beauty, serenity, peace and love for those we so cherished are ever evident. We are secure in the knowledge that the loved ones who rest here lie in beautiful and maintained surroundings.

## **Pre-need Arrangements**

At the time of bereavement it is a great comfort to the survivors to have a place for burial already provided. Frequently in times of stress, and particularly in the winter or inclement weather, burial places are selected that afterwards the survivors find are not to their liking. Therefore, it is seriously recommended that families select a suitable location when their state of mind does not influence a hasty and unwise selection. The Cemetery Committee and the Executive Director are willing and ready at all times to give counsel in such matters.

Single graves or a multiple grave plot, when purchased on a pre-need basis, may be paid over a three-year period. However, no interment may be made until the full purchase price has been paid. All financial arrangements shall be made with the Executive Director or his designee. It is suggested that when a multiple grave plot is purchased, the graves be assigned to individuals for future interment. Right of burial(s) will be guaranteed by a Deed, issued to the owner of the plot (single or multiple graves), when the purchase price is fully paid.

Mandatory charges for interment include:

1. INTERMENT (opening and closing of the grave)
2. CEMETERY GROUND CARE (grassing and access to the grave)
3. CONCRETE LINER/VAULT (cemetery's or funeral director's)
4. ROAD MAINTENANCE FEE

Planting may be ordered at any time.

We invite you to visit with us and familiarize yourself with our range of offerings.

## ----- Rules and Regulations -----

### Definitions:

CEMETERY AUTHORITIES, as hereinafter referred to, shall include the BETH SHALOM CEMETERY COMMITTEE, who may delegate their authority to the Executive Director. The Board of Trustees has the final authority and is to be kept aware by the Executive Committee of all the Cemetery Committee's recommendations.

RIGHT OF BURIAL, as hereinafter referred to, shall mean interment in a selected plot or part of a plot or single grave in the Cemetery of Beth Shalom Congregation under and subject to the Provisions of the Congregation's Charter and By-Laws and of the Congregation's and Cemetery Authorities' Rules and Regulations, as they now exist and may be hereafter enacted and amended.

DEED OWNER, as hereinafter referred to, shall mean the owner of a plot or grave granting the Right of Burial in a plot or part of a plot or single grave. Single grave certificate or multiple grave plot deed will be referred hereinafter as "Deed".

A CRYPT, as hereinafter referred to, is an area as indicated by number and letter on the plans of the Beth Shalom Mausoleum and will accommodate either one or two entombments depending on the size of the crypt.

A PLOT, as hereinafter referred to, is an area as indicated by number or letter on the plans of the Cemetery that will accommodate a number of graves depending on the size of the plot. The term "PLOT" should not be confused with single grave.

THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS SHALL APPLY TO ALL PRESENT AND FUTURE DEED OWNERS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO FORMERLY RECEIVED DEEDS AS PLOT OR GRAVE OWNERS.

For any additional information please communicate with the Executive Director at the Synagogue office.

## Article I

---

### **Deed Owners of Plots, Single Graves, or Mausoleum Crypts.**

1. Rights of Owners in the Cemetery are conveyed by a Deed. All deeds shall be accepted from the Congregation subject to the Rules and Regulations now existing, or which may be hereafter adopted.
2. No deeds for any plots or crypt or part of a plot shall be issued, nor shall any right of burial pass to the purchaser until the purchase price is wholly paid; and if any part of monies due remains unpaid beyond the period agreed upon for payment, the Cemetery Authorities may, at their discretion, declare all rights of the delinquent purchaser forfeited. All graves must be fully paid for within three years of original purchase.
3. Rights of deed owners may not be transferred to any other person or persons nor shall the rights of burial or entombment in any grave, crypt or part of a plot be transferred to anyone for remuneration without the written consent of the Cemetery Committee.

## Article II

---

### **Interments and Disinterments**

1. Arrangements for interments or disinterments must be made by communicating with the Executive director or his designee.
2. Proper preparation of the body, according to Jewish Halacha, has to be arranged for by the funeral home prior to burial in the Cemetery. Cemetery may require a Tahara Certificate.
3. Only persons of the Jewish faith can be buried in the Beth Shalom Cemetery. In case of conversion, proper proof must be presented when arrangements for burial are made.
4. No interments or disinterments shall be made in any plot for which the entire purchase price of the Right of Burial therein has not been paid, or against which there are any other unpaid charges.
5. All interments must be made in burial containers of reinforced concrete or its equivalent. The Cemetery Authorities are prepared to furnish such a liner at a moderate price.
6. All interments in the mausoleum must be made in burial containers especially designed for this purpose.

7. Not more than one deceased body will be permitted in one adult grave space.
8. All interments or disinterments must be made under the direction of the Caretaker who will have entire control of the digging of graves and all the matters pertaining to burials.
9. In all cases of interments and disinterments in lots where parties applying are unknown to the Cemetery Authorities, or proof of their responsibility seems insufficient, a written permit from the deed owner of the plot must be received before the work may be done. If deemed advisable, the production of the Deed and the prepayment of all charges may be required.
10. No interments or disinterments are permitted on the Sabbath and on any religious holidays observed by the Beth Shalom Congregation.
11. All vehicles and funeral processions while within the grounds of the Cemetery are subject to the direction and under the control of the Caretaker.
12. When any deed owner or his agent orders the location of a grave, no change of location after work has been commenced will be made except at the expense of said owner.
13. The cemetery Authorities cannot be held responsible for any mistake resulting from lack of precise instructions.
14. The Congregation and/or the Cemetery Authorities shall not be liable to any undertaker or funeral director for bringing to the attention of a deed owner any material or service which, in the opinion of the Cemetery Authorities, is faulty.
15. Should any grave or crypt be vacated and the body removed to another location within the Beth Shalom Cemetery or removed from the Cemetery, the usual disinterment fee will be charged, and the space will revert to the Cemetery. In no case will money be refunded when a grave is vacated and this grave cannot be used again for another burial.

## Article III

---

### Monumental Work

Deed owners who plan to have any monuments and/or markers erected in the Beth Shalom Cemetery are advised to familiarize themselves with the Rules and Regulations covering same, and to be sure that the contractor with whom arrangements are contemplated is familiar with them, so that any contract signed for such work will not conflict with any Rule or Regulation.

1. Only one family monument may be erected on any lot. Where plots have been divided into two parts, the deed owners may agree upon a jointly owned monument to be placed in the center of the plot, but only in accordance with Regulation 2, with no exceptions. No monument will be permitted which is of a length greater than one half the width of the plot.
2. All monuments, head-markers, stones, etc., must be approved prior to installation by the Cemetery Authorities, whose judgement is final, and can only be done when all charges are paid in full.
3. No monument or base can exceed one half the width of a plot and in no case can it be more than eight feet wide. Permitted monument height varies according to location of plot.
4. Either a monument or marker may be erected on single graves, but not both. Only one monument may be erected on each plot. In addition to a monument, individual markers may be erected at each grave in a multi-grave plot.
5. The markers for the Memorial Section must be ordered through the Cemetery Office. Each grave must have its own marker.
6. Where plots have been divided by mutual request of the purchasers' deed owners, Regulation 1 through 5 will be enforced with no exceptions.
7. All foundation work shall be built by the employees of the Cemetery and must be paid for in advance by the monument contractor. Plans for such foundation must be approved by the Cemetery Authorities, whose judgement is final.
8. The Cemetery Authorities shall not be responsible for any mistake that may occur in the building of a foundation for lack of proper information from the monument contractor.
9. Contractors erecting monumental work in the cemetery are forbidden to alter foundations.
10. The Congregation and/or the Cemetery Authorities shall not be liable to any contractor for bringing to the attention of deed owner any material or workmanship which, in the opinion of the Cemetery Authorities, is faulty. Nor shall the Congregation and/or the Cemetery authorities be liable to any said owner for any faulty material or workmanship of a contractor.

11. If, in the opinion of the Cemetery Authorities, any monument, headstone, tomb or marker has, through disintegration or other causes, become offensive or detrimental to the Cemetery, the Cemetery Authorities shall have the right, and it shall be their duty, to remove such object 6 months after due notice is given to the plot or grade-deed owner, or without such notice if the owner cannot be located. However, if, in the opinion of the Cemetery Authorities, any such monument, headstone, tomb, or marker could be preserved by erecting a new foundation in which it might be reset, or by other repairs, the work shall be done at the expense of the plot or grave deed owner.
12. Builders, masons, stone cutters, and their workmen must enter and leave the grounds of the cemetery within the working hours of cemetery employees, and shall at all times be subject to the Rules and Regulations of the Cemetery. They must remove all rubbish and repair any damage caused by their operations. Any workmen failing to conform to the Regulations may be excluded from the grounds, and the person employing them shall be held responsible for injuries, damages and expenses sustained through their neglect.
13. Persons engaged in any work whatever are prohibited from attaching ropes or wires to trees and from scattering matter over adjoining plots. They must lay planks to protect the grass when removing materials.
14. Neither the Congregation nor the Cemetery Authorities assume any liability for personal injury to employees of outside contractors in the performance of their duties, nor any responsibility for any property damage caused by them.
15. No material for monumental work shall be delivered on the grounds of the Cemetery on the Sabbath, or on Jewish Holidays, nor shall any work be done by contractors on those days.
16. Erection of monument work will not be permitted between November 15<sup>th</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> except by the consent of the Cemetery Authorities.
17. No monument, tomb, headstone, or part thereof, shall be removed from the Cemetery unless a written order from the plot or grave-deed owner be presented to the Caretaker and permission be granted by the Cemetery Authorities.
18. All cleaning of monument work shall be done by employees of the Cemetery, under supervision of the Caretaker; proper charges will be made for such work.

## Article IV

---

### Care and Improvements of Plots

1. All grading or planting of any character whatsoever shall be done on the Cemetery grounds only by employees of the Cemetery under the direction and supervision of the Caretaker. Any planting done by those other than cemetery staff will be removed without notice.
2. To preserve the uniformity of the planting on graves, plants other than the varieties in general use by the Cemetery will not be permitted, unless the Caretaker and Cemetery Authority shall have agreed to said planting.
3. Landscaping or the planting of flowers, trees and shrubs on or around any grave, monument or plot shall be permitted only where, in the judgement of the Cemetery Authorities, there is sufficient space available for such planting. All plans for that type of planting must be approved by the Cemetery Authorities with respect to the type of plants or trees to be used and the space to be planted. Such planting can be done only by the employees of the Cemetery, for which a proper charge will be made. If, in the judgement of the Cemetery Authorities, any proposed landscaping would be considered objectionable, permission for such planting will not be granted. The prepaid mandatory cemetery ground care charge covers grassing. Standard planting orders can be processed through the Cemetery office.
4. If any tree or shrub in any lot shall, in the opinion of the Cemetery Authorities, become detrimental to any adjoining tree, lot, walk, or road, or shall become otherwise objectionable, the Cemetery employees shall have the right to remove the tree or shrub or any part thereof.
5. No tree or shrub shall be excessively trimmed, cut down, or removed without the consent of the Cemetery Authorities, and all such work shall be done by the employees of the Cemetery under the direction of the Caretaker.
6. No planting or other improvements shall be made on any plot or grave on which there remains an unpaid balance and/or on which any interment charges on said plot or grave have not been paid. Where bills remain unpaid for more than one year, the ground on graves will be leveled and planted with grass and no interment shall be made or work done on such plots other than cutting grass.
7. Flower containers of glass or other fragile materials may not be used on graves. Persons other than Cemetery staff are forbidden to remove flower containers from other than their own plots.
8. Benches of material other than granite or stone may not be used in the Cemetery. Such benches require a foundation, which must be approved and ordered through the Cemetery office and paid for before installation. When benches become broken or are otherwise in bad repair, the Cemetery



Authorities shall notify the family and unless adequate repairs are made within 30 days after notice, the benches will be removed at the expense of the deed owner.

9. Iron work, woodwork, temporary markers, ornaments, shells, trellises, tablets, easels, glass and chinaware are prohibited, and will be removed without notice. Artificial flowers will be removed at the end of the second week after they have been placed.
10. Signs of an advertising nature will not be permitted in the Cemetery.
11. Vases or urns placed on plots are in violation of the Cemetery Rules and will be removed without notice.
12. The Cemetery Authorities will not assume responsibility for articles removed in accordance with these Rules and Regulations.
13. No plot enclosures of any character whatsoever, such as coping, curbing, fences, etc. will be allowed.

## Article V

---

### Visitors

1. No person will be permitted to enter the Cemetery except through the gates; these will be opened at 8 A.M. and closed at sunset. The Cemetery is also closed at sundown on Friday and remains closed on the Sabbath. Any person found on the grounds during these hours will be considered a trespasser.
2. Children will not be admitted unless accompanied by an adult person responsible for their conduct.
3. Refreshments will not be permitted on the grounds.
4. No fire-arms are permitted in the Cemetery except at military funerals.
5. All persons are forbidden to sit, walk upon or otherwise occupy any private plot wherein they or any member of their family does not own the Right of Burial.
6. No person other than Cemetery employees in the conduct of their work shall be permitted to pluck or remove any plants or flowers, either wild or cultivated, from any part of the Cemetery.
7. Unseemly behavior, loitering, lounging, or other conduct unbecoming to the Cemetery, is strictly prohibited.

8. The Cemetery employees are instructed to prohibit the entrance of all improper persons, as well as those who have at any time transgressed the Rules and Regulations of the Cemetery.
9. Visitors are required to keep on the walks or roads and must not cross any burial plots.
10. All persons are reminded that the grounds are sacredly devoted to the burial of the dead, and that the provisions and penalties of the law will be strictly enforced in all cases of wanton injury, disturbance, or other disregard of the Rules. All persons will confer a favor by informing the caretaker or employees of the Cemetery of any breach or violation of law or decorum that may come under their notice.

### ----- Notes -----

- A. The Executive Director is charged with the enforcement of all Rules and Regulations adopted by the Board of Trustees.
- B. All Rules and Regulations heretofore adopted which are contrary to, or in conflict with, those herein contained are hereby rescinded and declared void.
- C. All the Rules and Regulations included herein may be changed or augmented from time to time without notice.

----- Family Yahrzeit Record -----

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_ English Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Space \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_ English Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Space \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_ English Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Space \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_ English Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Space \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_ English Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Space \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrew Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_ English Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Lot \_\_\_\_\_ Space \_\_\_\_\_

## Frequently Asked Questions/Answers

---

**Q. What is the meaning of the Hebrew letters that I see on most tombstones?**

A. These letters are the initials of the words in the phrase *tehei nishmato/nishmatah tzereurah bitzror hachayim*. "May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life."

**Q. What is the significance of the small stones that I see on a tombstone?**

A. Jewish custom indicates that stones, picked up at the gravesite, may be placed as a memorial sign on the tombstone.

**Q. Should I avoid stepping on a grave when walking through the cemetery?**

A. Yes. Respect for the sanctity of the deceased and his/her final resting place requires visitors to carefully avoid stepping on a grave.

**Q. After having attended a funeral, is it appropriate to visit other graves during this same visit to the cemetery?**

A. Direct mourners of the deceased should abstain from visiting other graves to avoid sharing their primary purpose for being at the cemetery. Others attending the funeral at the cemetery are permitted to visit other gravesites.

**Q. What is the reason for hand washing after a funeral?**

A. It is customary to rinse the hands as an act of symbolic purification when leaving the cemetery or before entering the home upon returning from the cemetery.

**Q. When do I observe Yahrzeit?**

A. Yahrzeit is observed on each anniversary of the day of death according to the Hebrew Calendar. One who is not certain of the day of a relative's death should select an appropriate date on which to observe yahrzeit each year.

**Q. When do I light the Yahrzeit Candle?**

A. A candle should burn in the home during the twenty-four hour period of yahrzeit, sunset to sunset, starting on the evening preceding the day of yahrzeit. When the yahrzeit coincides with Shabbat or a Festival, the yahrzeit candle should be lit before the candle-lighting for the Shabbat or the Festival.

One should also light the yahrzeit candle on erev Yom Kippur and on the Festival evenings prior to Yizkor on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Pesach, the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Shavuot and Shemini Atzeret.