

Beth Emeth Synagogue
Larchmont's Egalitarian Conservative Synagogue
Celebrating our 50th Year



**Information for
Interfaith Families**

Beth Emeth Synagogue

2111 Boston Post Road

(at Larchmont Avenue)

Larchmont, New York 10538

(914) 834-1093

www.BethEmethSynagogue.org

Email: information@bethemethsynagogue.org

Rabbi Arye Berk: rabbiarYE@verizon.net

Welcome

The Beth Emeth community extends a warm welcome to anyone who is thinking about or working towards becoming a Jew-by-choice or who is a *rey'im ahuvim*, a “beloved companion” who wishes to be supportive of Jewish family members, but who is not interested in converting to Judaism.

Interfaith families who are considering joining the Beth Emeth community may have questions about Beth Emeth and its practices. This booklet is intended to help answer some of those questions.

In addition, our rabbi will be happy to meet with you to discuss these issues in greater depth. You can contact Rabbi Berk by calling our synagogue office at (914) 834-1093.

Participation in Synagogue Activities

Anyone is welcome to participate in worship services at Beth Emeth, and in our educational programs and community activities.

If you attend worship services you may sit anywhere in the sanctuary. All men must cover their heads while in the sanctuary, and it is traditional to do so during other activities within the building. *Kippot* (head coverings) are available just inside the entrances to the synagogue. It is traditional for Jewish men to wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl) during worship; non-Jewish men do not.



While they may choose to do so, women are not required to wear *kippot* or *tallit*. However, we do ask that women cover their heads if called up to the *bimah* (altar) during services.

We have a number of *siddurim* (prayer books) in which the Hebrew is transliterated into English, for anyone not comfortable with Hebrew.

Naming a Baby

A baby boy is named at the time of the *brit milah* (ritual circumcision). The ceremony for naming a baby girl takes place in the synagogue. It is traditional for both parents to participate in the *mi she-berakh*, a prayer asking that God bless the child. Both parents (Jewish and non-Jewish) go up to the *bimah* (altar) with their child for the *mi she-berakh* and the declaration of the child's Hebrew name.

Bat/Bar Mitzvah

At a Bat/Bar mitzvah in our synagogue, the child typically is called to the Torah for an *aliyah* (honor). She or he also may participate in a reading from the Torah, may chant the *haftarah*, and may offer his or her own *d'var Torah* (interpretation of the readings).



Both parents have the opportunity to participate in the *mi she-berakh*, a prayer which asks that God bless the Bat/Bar Mitzvah child. A non-Jewish parent may

join the family on the *bimah* (altar) for the *mi she-berakh*, and is encouraged to do so in recognition of the special commitment made to raise their child as a Jew.

The Jewish parent of a Bat/Bar Mitzvah also has the opportunity to be called to the Torah for an *aliyah*. A non-Jewish parent is not asked to do so since the very nature of the *aliyah* acknowledges the particular covenant between God and the Jewish people. We respect the faith and life choices of those who are not Jewish, and do not ask them to make this affirmation.

The non-Jewish parent (or other non-Jewish family member) is encouraged to do a reading of her or his choice, or to lead the congregation in one of the several readings customarily done at our services.

Conversion

The Conservative Movement adheres to *halakah* (traditional Jewish law) of matrilineal descent. If a child is born to a Jewish mother, the child is Jewish; if the mother is not Jewish, the child must convert to become Jewish. Conversion at any age involves, among other things, immersion in a *mikvah* (ritual bath). For a young child to be converted, both parents must affirm orally and in writing that they agree to raise their child as a Jew. The *brit milah* (ritual circumcision) for a boy, or the naming ceremony in the synagogue for a girl, can be done only after the child's conversion.

An adult conversion requires a serious and substantial period of study under the supervision of a Rabbi.

Our Rabbi, Arye Berk, will be happy to discuss conversion issues for babies, children and adults with anyone who wishes to learn more about the process or the ritual.

Marriage

Rabbi Berk is available for consultation and discussion regarding interfaith marriages. As a Conservative Rabbi, he may not participate in a wedding unless both members of the couple are Jewish.

The Beth Emeth Synagogue Community

The members of Beth Emeth and our Rabbi welcome interfaith families to our synagogue community. We encourage your interest and your participation in our services and activities. We want to work with you and we believe that we can all learn together and grow as a welcoming community.

Beth Emeth Synagogue

Larchmont's Egalitarian Conservative Synagogue

Celebrating our 50th Year

2111 Boston Post Road (at Larchmont Avenue)

Larchmont, NY 10538

Phone: (914) 834-1093

Email: information@bethemethsynagogue.org

Online: www.bethemethsynagogue.org