

A Time To Live and A Time To Die

The Beth Emet Funeral Plan

What to Do and What Beth Emet Will Do for You
and Those Close to You

Beth Emet ^{בית אמת}

THE FREE SYNAGOGUE

1224 Dempster • Evanston, IL 60202

A Community for All Seasons

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

- from Chapter 3, Book of Ecclesiastes

At Beth Emet, we are committed to caring for each other throughout our lives. We help each other in times of both great joy and deep sadness. Knowing that a death often occurs unexpectedly, we have developed this simple resource to help you plan for and respond to the profound loss of a loved one. Beth Emet also has prepared a funeral plan for you and your loved ones to ease the burden of decision-making during a period of great emotional stress. Whether you have just lost a loved one or are discussing end-of-life planning with your family, the Beth Emet Funeral Plan offers the help of our community at a time when you need it most.

What To Do When Someone Dies

When a death occurs, call Beth Emet at 847-869-4230 and ask for Rabbi Andrea London. Please call even if it is Shabbat or during a holiday — Rabbi London needs to know of your loss. If you are calling after hours or for some reason do not reach Rabbi London, please follow the voicemail instructions for contacting our Executive Director, Bekki Harris Kaplan, during an emergency. Your call will be answered promptly.

Rabbi London will assist you with selecting a day and time for the funeral and offer guidance for appropriate practices during the mourning period. If you choose to use the Beth Emet Funeral Plan, contact one of the participating funeral homes and identify yourself as a Beth Emet member. All arrangements can be made by telephone.

With the Beth Emet Funeral Plan, the only decisions you will need to make are:

- ***The location of the funeral service.*** We strongly encourage you to have the service in the Beth Emet sanctuary. However, the Beth Emet Funeral Plan also covers services in the funeral chapel or at graveside.
- ***The cemetery.*** The Beth Emet Funeral Plan does not cover any cemetery costs. If you do not already own burial plots, the funeral director will help you make the necessary arrangements. Rabbi London and Bekki Harris Kaplan can provide you with a list of local cemeteries.

- **Optional arrangements.** At your request, the funeral home can arrange for services not included in the Beth Emet Funeral Plan, such as limousine transportation for your family on the day of the funeral. The costs of these services are determined by each funeral home. Additionally, the funeral home can arrange for *shomrim*, or guardians. In this Jewish tradition, the *shomrim* stay with the deceased from death until burial, usually reading from the Book of Job, Psalms, or other writings on the subject of death while sitting with the deceased. Family and friends can also be invited to serve one of the shifts of this around-the-clock *mitzvah*.

The Beth Emet Funeral Plan

The Beth Emet Funeral Plan is designed to simplify the process of arranging an appropriate Jewish funeral. Offered in cooperation with participating area Jewish funeral homes, the plan incorporates Jewish values and traditional Jewish funeral and burial practices. It is based on the principle of *K'vod HaMet*, "honoring the dead," and offers congregants a package of appropriate services at one predetermined moderate cost.

The Beth Emet Funeral Plan includes:

- Professional and administrative services of the director at the participating funeral home you choose. The funeral home takes care of the deceased prior to burial.
- *Taharah*, the ritual washing and preparing of the body for burial according to ancient Jewish tradition. Following ritual purification, the deceased is dressed in simple muslin *tachrichim*, a traditional burial shroud that reflects the equality of all people in death. The *taharah* is performed by the Progressive Chevra Kadisha (burial society) who are all volunteers from Beth Emet and other participating congregations.
- *Aron*, a preselected traditional wooden casket that emphasizes the concepts of humility and equality. A concrete vault is also preselected, thereby eliminating some of the most stressful aspects of making funeral arrangements.
- Hearse and graveside transfer vehicle.
- Staff and equipment for the graveside, chapel, or synagogue service.
- Death certificates and notices in the newspaper.
- Arrangements, prayer books, and yahrtzeit candles for *shiva*, the ritual period of mourning immediately following burial. The Beth Emet *Ozerim* Committee will provide prayer service leaders and can serve as a resource for shiva customs.

The Beth Emet Funeral Plan is available through participating funeral homes at a fixed cost negotiated for our members. This rate does not include or cover any cemetery costs. Other services can be arranged for an additional cost.

Beth Emet Funeral Plan: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who is eligible for the Beth Emet Funeral Plan?

A. Beth Emet members and their immediate family members are eligible for the funeral plan in any situation where Rabbi London or Cantor Luck officiates at the service.

Q. How much does the Beth Emet Funeral Plan cost?

A. The cost of the Beth Emet Funeral Plan is negotiated periodically with participating funeral homes. All cemetery-related costs—including plot and interment—are additional. There may be other costs if the death occurs out-of-town. The Rabbi and the Cantor do not charge to officiate at a funeral for members or family members eligible for the plan; however, voluntary contributions of appreciation may be made to the Rabbi's or Cantor's discretionary fund.

Q. Does Beth Emet have a cemetery?

A. No. Beth Emet does not have its own cemetery. The Beth Emet Office has information available about local Jewish and non-sectarian cemeteries for members who wish to purchase burial plots. If a plot is not purchased in advance, the funeral director can help make the necessary arrangements at the time of the funeral.

Q. What if I wish to use the services of a funeral home that does not participate in the Beth Emet Funeral Plan?

A. We are fortunate to have a number of fine funeral directors in our community. If you prefer not to use the Beth Emet Funeral Plan, you may select the funeral home of your choice, even one who does not offer the Beth Emet Funeral Plan. Our clergy and sanctuary, and the help of our Ozerim, are available to you whether or not you opt for the synagogue's Plan. However, the quoted fees apply *only* to the Beth Emet Funeral Plan.

Q. Where can I find more information?

A. Contact Rabbi London with questions about funeral practices and observances or about specific issues concerning you and your family. Contact Beth Emet Executive Director Bekki Harris Kaplan with questions concerning the Beth Emet Funeral Plan. Visit the Beth Emet website, www.bethemet.org, to find additional resources on Jewish values and customs surrounding death, funerals, mourning, and healing.