

**CONSTITUTION OF  
YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH  
OF GREATER WASHINGTON**

*(as of May 20, 2008)*

**Article I - Purpose and Name**

Section 1 - We, the Jewish men and women of Greater Washington, in order to encourage and support Torah-true Judaism, inspire and satisfy the desire for Jewish knowledge and learning and encourage Jews to live a wholesome Jewish life, do hereby establish an Orthodox Jewish Congregation.

Section 2 - This Congregation shall be known as Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington - a perpetual non-profit religious corporation as incorporated in the District of Columbia in 1952.

Section 3 - Among its activities, this Congregation shall conduct a synagogue in strict accordance with the Orthodox Jewish tradition.

**Article II - Membership**

Section 1 - Any Jewish man or woman who has reached the age of eighteen (18) and is of good character shall be eligible to be considered for membership by the Board of Directors. No person shall be eligible for membership who is married not in accordance with the traditional Jewish law. Any member so married forfeits all rights and benefits of this Congregation.

Section 2 - A married couple shall not be eligible to have more than one membership.

Section 3 - (A) Membership Categories - Membership categories shall be prescribed in the By-Laws.

(B) Voting Rights - Among members who are entitled to voting rights, single members are entitled to one (1) vote and married members are entitled to two (2) votes. Where husband and wife are present each is entitled to one vote. Where only one spouse is present that spouse may cast only one vote.

(C) A member family shall be as prescribed in the bylaws.

### **Article III - Dues**

Section 1 - Membership dues shall be set from time to time by a vote of the Board of Directors for each category of membership and within each category of membership. All dues and obligations shall be paid at such time as the Board of Directors may determine.

Section 2 - Any member failing to pay dues or other obligations may be suspended or expelled from membership in the Congregation. Members not in good standing and those leaving the community shall be contacted by the Shul to determine their interest in continued membership.

Section 3 - The fiscal year of the Congregation shall be set by the Board of Directors.

### **Article IV - Membership Meetings**

Section 1 - The membership of this congregation shall meet at least once a year.

Section 2 - The President, or “in his absence the highest ranking officer eligible for President according to Halacha, may call a special meeting in case of emergency at his own discretion. It shall also be his duty to call a special meeting of the membership of the congregation whenever requested to do so in writing by ten (10) members of the Congregation in good standing. Reasonable notice in writing shall be given to the members through the Secretary. The purpose of the special meeting must be specified in the notice and no other business may be transacted at this session other than that specified in the meeting notice.

Section 3 - Seven (7) members shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.

### **Article V - Officers**

Section 1 - The elected officers of the Congregation shall consist of a President, up to five (5) but not fewer than (1) Vice-Presidents in numbered order, the number to be fixed by the Board, Treasurer and Secretary in order of succession.

Section 2 - Only Sabbath observers are eligible to hold office.

Section 3 - Only a male member of the Congregation may serve as President.

Section 4 - No one shall serve more than three (3) consecutive terms in the same office.

Section 5 - No member shall hold more than one elected office at any one time.

## **Article VI - Nomination, Election and Installation of Officers and Board Members**

Section 1 (a) At least forty five (45) days prior to the election meeting of each year the President shall appoint a nominating committee including a chairman. Said nominating committee must consist of at least five (5) members, not more than 50% of whom shall be members of the Board of Directors.

(b) Following the appointment of the committee, the Secretary shall immediately inform the Congregation by mail regarding the date of the election meeting and the names of the nominating committee and its chairman. In addition, the Secretary shall include notification to the Congregation regarding the procedure (Article VI, Section 1(c)) for recommending individuals for consideration by the nominating committee.

(c) Upon receipt of the mailing mentioned in Article VI, Section 1(b), any member of the Congregation may propose to the nominating committee the name of any Congregation member for any office or board membership provided said nominee indicates a willingness to serve if elected.

(d) The nominating committee shall consider the proposed names in selecting their recommend slate of nominees.

(e) At least twenty (20) days prior to the election date the nominating committee shall inform the congregation by mail of their proposed list of nominees. All nominees shall have indicated their willingness to serve.

(f) Following this notice any two or more members of the congregation may submit in writing to the nominating committee any additional nominations for any office or board directorship. Said nomination(s) must be received no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the election meeting.

(g) If the final list of nominees differs from the proposed list sent in section (3) then, at least seven (7) days prior to the election meeting the nominating committee shall mail to the Congregation membership the final list of nominees. This list shall include those proposed in the initial mailing (Article VI, Section 1(e)) plus any additional nominees proposed in Article VI Section 1(f).

(h) No other nominations will be accepted.

Section 2 - No one may be nominated for any office or the Board of Directors unless he or she has been a member in good standing for the year preceding such nomination.

Section 3 - All officers shall be elected annually at a meeting before June 1 called for that purpose. Elections shall be the first order of business at this meeting.

Section 4 - No absentee or proxy ballots will be honored.

Section 5 - All elections for contested positions shall be by closed ballot. The candidate receiving a majority of votes cast shall be deemed elected. If no candidate for an office received a majority the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall be balloted upon and the one receiving the majority of votes cast will be deemed elected.

Section 6 - The elected officials shall take office on the first day of the month of June.

### **Article VII - Duties of the President**

Section 1 - The President shall preside at all meetings of the Congregation. He shall see that By-Laws and standing rules of the Congregation and their usages are observed, and that the officers discharge their duties faithfully. He shall appoint all standing and special committees with the approval of the Board of Directors. He shall neither make nor second any motion nor take part in any debate while in the chair.

Section 2 - He shall not vote except in case of election of officers and of new members. On any other subjects he may make or break a tie.

Section 3 - He shall have power to authorize the non-emergency expenditure of a sum not exceeding three thousand dollars (\$3,000) between regular meetings of the Board of Directors. From time to time the Board of Directors may set a higher limit for such expenditures.

### **Article VIII - Duties of the Vice-President**

Section 1 - In the absence of the President, the highest ranking male Vice-President shall assume the power and authority vested in the President.

### **Article IX - Duties of the Treasurer**

Section 1 - The Treasurer shall receive all monies for use of the congregation and give receipt for same. Within seven (7) days of receipt, he shall deposit in such bank as the Congregation may designate all monies received for the use of the Congregation. This duty may be delegated to the the Bookkeeper or other employee of the congregation.

Section 2 - The Treasurer or the Bookkeeper shall pay all orders drawn on his office by the Congregation signed by the President.

Section 3 - The Treasurer shall allow monies in the bank account of the congregation to be withdrawn only be check signed by two (2) of the officers authorized to co-sign checks.

Section 4 - The Treasurer shall render an annual report and interim summary reports of the transactions and business of his office showing the financial condition of the congregation.

Section 5 - The Treasurer shall deliver all monies, books and papers in his possession to his successor in office, or the presiding officer.

#### **Article X - Duties of the Secretary**

Section 1 - The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors. The records shall be available for inspection by any member of the Congregation within ten (10) days after each Board or Congregational meeting. The Secretary shall serve all notices to attend meetings, and perform all similar duties that the Congregation may assign upon him.

#### **Article XI - Duties of the Gabaim**

Section 1 - The Gabaim shall distribute aliyot and other honors during Services. Other activities of the Gabaim are included in the By-Laws.

Section 2 - Two Gabaim from each of the Shabbat morning minyanim and one from each weekday morning minyan shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Rabbi and Chair of the Ritual Committee. This section shall go into effect the first nomination and election cycle after its passage. Gabaim who were elected as officers shall remain elected officers until June 1 following the passage of this amendment.

#### **Article XII - Duties of the Board of Directors**

Section 1 – The Board of Directors of the Congregation shall consist of the Officers; the immediate past President, the President of the Sisterhood; and fifteen (15) trustees elected by the Congregation. They shall have custody of all property belonging to the Congregation and shall manage the affairs of the Congregation.

Section 2 - All trustees shall be elected for a three-year term. One-third of the trustees shall be elected each year. No trustee shall be elected for more than 2 consecutive terms.

Section 3 - Five (5) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Any five (5) members of the Board may appeal to the congregation any decision or act of the Board within ten (10) days thereafter. The appeal must be in writing, addressed to the President, whose duty it shall be to call a meeting of the congregation within fifteen (15) days of the filing of such an appeal.

Section 4 - Any decision of the Board of Directors may be appealed, within thirty (30) days, by ten (10) members of the Congregation. The appeal shall be in writing and presented to the President, or in his absence, to the succeeding officer, as prescribed in Article V, Sections 1 and 3. He shall follow the procedure outlined in Article IV for a Special Meeting

Section 5: Only one member of each married couple may hold elected office at one time.

### **Article XIII - Vacancy of Office**

Section 1 - Should a vacancy occur in any elected office or trustee, the Board shall proceed to elect another member, at the next meeting, who shall serve the remainder of the term.

### **Article XIV - The Rabbi**

Section 1 - A Rabbi shall be elected at the discretion of the Congregation by a majority of sixty percent (60%) of the votes cast at a special membership meeting of the Congregation.

Section 2 - The man eligible to hold or administer the office of Rabbi in the Congregation shall have true Rabbinical Ordination (Smicha) from a recognized Yeshiva or authority, and shall conduct himself in an Orthodox Jewish manner.

Section 3 - The Rabbi shall be the halachic authority for all religious aspects and functions of the Congregation and its constituent organizations.

Section 4 - He shall supervise educational activities conducted under the sponsorship of the Synagogue.

Section 5 - Additional specific duties of the Rabbi, not in conflict with the terms of this Constitution, may be incorporated in the contractual agreement arranged by the Congregation with the Rabbi.

## **Article XV - The Assistant Rabbi**

Section 1 – An Assistant Rabbi shall be elected at the discretion of the Congregation by a majority of sixty percent (60%) of the votes cast at a special membership meeting of the Congregation.

Section 2 - The man eligible to hold or administer the office of Assistant Rabbi in the Congregation shall have true Rabbinical Ordination (Smicha) from a recognized Yeshiva or authority, and shall conduct himself in an Orthodox Jewish manner.

Section 3 – An Assistant Rabbi shall be a halachic authority for all religious aspects and functions of the Congregation and its constituent organizations subject to guidance provided by the Rabbi.

Section 4 - He shall supervise educational activities conducted under the sponsorship of the Synagogue.

Section 5 - Additional specific duties of an Assistant Rabbi, not in conflict with the terms of this Constitution, may be incorporated in the contractual agreement arranged by the Congregation with the Assistant Rabbi.

## **Article XVI - The Cantor**

Section 1 - A Cantor shall be elected at the discretion of the Congregation by a majority of the votes cast at a special membership meeting of the Congregation.

Section 2 - The Cantor shall be an observant Jew who keeps the Sabbath according to the Shulchan Aruch.

Section 3 - The specific duties of the Cantor not in conflict with the terms of this Constitution may be incorporated in the contractual agreement arranged by the Congregation with the Cantor.

## **Article XVII - Employees**

Section 1 - The Board of Directors may employ such other members of the Synagogue staff as it may deem necessary and shall determine the terms of their employment and their duties. The Board of Directors may delegate this responsibility to a Standing Committee or to the President on a case by case basis.

Section 2 – The President shall sign all employment contracts.

## **Article XVIII - Religious Worship and Conduct**

Section 1 - All religious services, prayers and customs shall be conducted according to Orthodox Ritual and specified in the Shulchan Aruch and other accepted authorities.

Section 2 - Nusach of principal services, prayers and customs shall be Ashkenaz.

Section 3 - All official affairs of the Congregation and its constituent organization shall be in accord with the Shulchan Aruch.

Section 4 - In the absence of an elected Rabbi, the President shall immediately appoint a Halach-Nusach Committee, subject to the approval of two-thirds of the Board of Directors. The rulings of this Committee shall be binding until revoked by the procedure specified in the next Section.

Section 5 - Any disputes of a religious nature or appeal from rulings of the Halacha-Nusach Committee shall be referred to a court of three (3) Orthodox Rabbis not members of the congregation, whose qualifications are specified in Article XIV, Section 2.

Section 6 - No individual shall be invited to address the Congregation at a service unless the Rabbi is consulted and has given his consent.

## **Article XIX - Standing Committees**

Section 1 - The following standing committees shall be appointed at the first meeting of each new administration by the President in consultation with the Vice-Presidents, with the approval of the Board of Directors:

- Cemetery Committee
- Education Committee
- Finance Committee
- High Holiday Committee
- House Committee
- Kitchen Committee
- Nursery School Committee
- Ritual Committee
- Youth Activities Committee

The function and activities of these committees shall be included in the By-Laws.



## **Article XX - Amendments**

Section 1 - Any ten (10) members of the Congregation or five (5) members of the Board may submit, in writing to the President, for Board consideration at its next meeting, any proposed amendments to this Constitution. After the Board's approval by majority vote, the proposed amendment must be submitted for ratification at a special membership meeting. After Board approval, the membership must be notified in writing, within ten (10) days. The suggested amendment shall lie over for final action of the congregation at a special meeting at least thirty (30) days but no more than forty-five (45) days after notification. Ratification by the membership shall require at least two-thirds majority for adoption.

Section 2 - Should the Board not approve any amendment proposed in accordance with the provisions of Section 1, the provisions of Article XII, Section 4 shall be applicable to obtain initial approval. Then, Congregation notification, consideration and approval shall follow the provisions of Section 1 above. This Section is not applicable to Section 3 of this Article.

Section 3 - The provisions of Article I, Section 2, and Article XIV, Sections 2 and 3, and Article XVIII, Sections 1 and 3, shall be irrevocable and not subject to amendment, change or repeal, as long as there are ten (10) members voting against such amendment, change or repeal. A special membership meeting must be called for action upon such proposed amendment, change or repeal, and at least ten (10) days written notice of such meeting shall be given.

## **Article XXI - Miscellaneous**

Section 1 - This constitution shall become law by its passage and shall supersede all existing constitutions of the Congregation.

Section 2 - Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington shall abide by the Constitution of the National Council of Young Israel.

Section 3 - Any procedural issue not provided in this Constitution shall be subject to the provisions of the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

Section 4 - After adoption of this Constitution, all members of the Congregation will continue their membership status and all officers and trustees will continue in their previous status until the expiration of their terms. This Section shall be null and void after one year of its adoption.

**BYLAWS OF  
YOUNG ISRAEL SHOMRAI EMUNAH  
OF GREATER WASHINGTON**

**Cemetery Committee**

The duties of the Cemetery Committee shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Preserve the dignity of the cemetery to include maintenance of the grounds, equipment, and/or facilities and that all proper procedures are observed.
2. Establish procedures for management of cemetery property including determining the status of available sites, assigning sites and determining prices and practices for use of the cemetery.

**Education Committee**

The duties of the Education Committee shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Establish classes that are designed to meet the interests of YISE synagogue members and their families.
2. Schedule classes and recruit instructors.
3. Oversee and develop lecture series to address contemporary halachic issues.
4. Maintain the library and acquire materials that will improve the collection.

**Finance Committee**

The duties of the finance Committee shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Review financial records of the Synagogue to assure proper accounting of monies received and spent.
2. Review billing procedures for members to assure that statements are regularly issued, and that accounts receivable are promptly and properly posted.
3. Review the budgeting of special funds.
4. Insure that committees submit adequate budget proposals and within the required periods of time.

5. Assist the Treasurer in other ways as required.
6. Maintain the Standing Committee on the Rabbi's pension and compensation, which annually reviews and establishes the Rabbi's pension and other benefits.
7. Prepare and submit an annual budget based on standing committee requests and report to the Synagogue.

### **High Holiday Committee**

The duties of the High Holiday committee shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Assignment of seats in accordance with established guidelines.
2. Arrangement of seats and the transfer of siddurim and machzorim.
3. Supervision of activities that are designed to prompt the proper conduct and decorum of High Holiday services.
4. Selection of persons to conduct services, and receive aliyot and other honors.

### **House Committee**

The duties of the House Committee shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Maintain the inside and outside of all Synagogue properties, to include heating, air conditioning, plumbing, electricity, and associated equipment.
2. Report to the Board of Directors as required, on problems requiring the solicitation of bids, recommend contractors to the Board, and assure contractor compliance.
3. Coordinate, as necessary, all work performed by contractors with the synagogue office.

### **Kitchen Committee**

The duties of Kitchen Committee shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Assure that all food served at Synagogue functions has the proper hasgocha and that all requirements for preserving its Kashrut are met.
2. Assure that persons or caterers serving food are approved by the Rabbi to use the facilities of the Synagogue.
3. Provide training of volunteers and/or paid help with regard to Kashrut and the specific use of the Synagogue's facilities.
4. Recruit and train volunteers to work in the kitchen and/or to serve food.

### **Nursery School committee**

The duties of the Nursery School committee shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Establish policies governing the Administration of the Nursery School.
2. Assure that the Nursery School is managed in accordance with applicable state and local laws, and in a manner that is appropriate to an Orthodox institution.
3. Provide as appropriate, specific guidance with regard to the daily management of the budget, staff and programs of the Nursery School.

### **Ritual Committee**

The duties of the Ritual Committee shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Establish procedures to enhance the conduct of daily, Shabbat and Holiday services.
2. Provide the membership with a forum for the discussion of ideas relating to the conduct of services.
3. Insure that Yahrzeit lights are turned on before the Yahrzeit is to be commemorated.
4. Insure that the Kail Moleh is recited prior to the Yahrzeit for all people listed on plaques.
5. Keep records up to date on Yahrzeit plaques.
6. Maintain liaison with the Synagogue office with regard to Yahrzeits.

## **Youth Activities Committee**

The duties of the Youth Activities committee shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Establish policies and oversees the activities of YISE's youth program.
2. Oversee and monitor work performed by the Youth Director who is responsible to the committee for all of his/her activities.
3. Oversee the coordination of all youth programs conducted under the auspices of YISE, or that are conducted by other organizations when such programs are held within the facilities of YISE.

## **Duties of the Gabaim**

The Synagogue Gabaim shall distribute and maintain records on aliyot and distribute honors. They shall make arrangements with Baalei Smachot for aliyot and honors and adhere to Board passed motions. They shall select Baalai Tephilot for Shabbat, Yomim Tovim and select people to read Megillot during the respective Yomim Tovim. (High Holiday aliyot and Baalai Tephilot are under the jurisdiction of the High Holiday committee).

## Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws shall follow the same requirements as Article XX of the constitution of Young Israel Shomrai Emunah.

Categories of YISE Membership shall include the following:

1. Full Membership - All adults and any children living at home under the age of 23 or who are full-time students. Full Members are entitled to all member benefits.

2. Associate Membership – All adults and any children living at home under the age of 23 or who are full-time students. The Board may set additional requirements for Associate Membership.

Associate members have the following limitations on their membership rights:

- a) They are not entitled to vote at meetings of the Congregation, nor may they be a member of the Board of Directors nor hold any elected office of the Congregation;
- b) Their fee for High Holiday seats shall be 25% above the fee for Full Members;
- c) They may not reserve High Holiday seats from the previous year during any priority period established for Full Members;
- d) In accordance with halacha and with the discretion of the gabbaim, Full Members enjoy priority over Associate Members regarding honors and obligations ("chiyuvim") at religious services. Within these parameters Associate Members enjoy priority over non-members;
- e) Their rights to reserve the Congregation's facilities may be restricted by policies established by the Board of Directors. The cost of using the Congregation's facilities will be set by the Board of Directors.

General Limitations

1. A child's age for each year shall be determined as of the end of the Synagogue's immediately preceding fiscal year (currently, May 31)
2. The YISE Board of Directors and officers are authorized to set the dues rates for the various membership categories and within categories.
3. In cases of financial hardship, the YISE President is empowered to adjust dues for Full Members at his discretion.
4. Conversion from one membership category to another must be requested in writing.
5. Membership in the Synagogue does not automatically include cemetery privileges.
6. This amendment shall be effective June 1, 2001.