

## The Mission of B'nai Israel

It is with great pleasure that I write these words as an introduction to our website. It is my hope that our place on the web will both facilitate communication within our congregation, and provide a welcome for people seeking to get to know B'nai Israel for the first time. Whether you arrive here through many years of involvement with B'nai Israel, or via a Google search for the first time, you have, as the cliché states, “come to the right place”.

B'nai Israel is a traditional Conservative congregation. It is not Orthodox, but the level and standards of religious practice we follow here are high, and even rigorous. We do not call women to the Torah or count women in a minyan, but our women members are totally involved in our congregation's spiritual life and practical management. Our services are inclusive of everyone, at every level of observance and knowledge, and yet remain completely traditional, following halachic requirements for prayer and Torah readings. We enjoy having fun together, and when we socialize, the food served is strictly kosher, and there is no violation of Shabbat.

What purpose does a traditional Conservative congregation like ours serve? It allows people who, for whatever reason, are not comfortable within the framework of an Orthodox synagogue to still observe in a traditional manner. It provides a setting for the teaching of Torah and traditional Jewish observance that a significant segment of the Jewish community is comfortable with and can accept. Our synagogue is not a compromise. It is an alternative that allows those who choose it to grow and live as Jews, in a way that other variations of congregational life do not.

I am sure that when you attend services or a class or a special program at B'nai Israel you will notice the friendliness and warmth that pervades our congregation. Our members have a tremendous sense of “Ahavas Yisrael”, love of fellow Jews. Newcomers are immediately made to feel at home, and easily become part of our congregational family. People come to B'nai Israel and remain here for decades, because they are made to feel needed and wanted.

As this website shows, there is a lot going on at B'nai Israel. Involving yourself will make you a better Jew and a better person. Our doors are open; please come in!