

Thus saith the L-rd G-d, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

Isaiah 49:22

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Messiah, for it is the power of G-d unto Salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

## **BETH EL SHADDAI MESSIANIC JEWISH CONGREGATION**

### **ARTICLES OF COVENANT**

8/10/2019

#### **I. Foundation**

Beth-El Shaddai is a Messianic Jewish Congregation of Believers in Y'shua Ha'Mashiach (Jesus the Messiah), raised up by G-d to accomplish the following goals:

1. To reach the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel with the message and testimony of the Gospel of Y'shua HaMashiach and the Truth of Torah;
2. To support and work alongside the rest of the Body of Messiah, by assisting and teaching the Messianic Jewish vision expressed in Romans 1:16 and to proclaim the plan of G-d for this age regarding the "Church" and her relationship to Israel and the Jewish people;
3. To establish and support a community of Messianic Jewish Believers in which the traditions, cultural understanding and observances of Biblical Judaism as taught and practiced by the Messiah are upheld and performed according to the L-rd's command.
4. To carry out the "Great Commission" as expressed by the Messiah to His Disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 of making disciples (talmidim) of the entirety of scripture.
5. To work diligently towards the reunification of the whole house of Israel.

#### **II. Community**

- A. Beth-El Shaddai is a community of individuals who look to one another for fellowship, encouragement, and support. We firmly believe that G-d has endowed everyone who comes to Him in faith with unique talents and abilities. As a community, we strive to encourage each Believer to develop these gifts and incorporate them into their lives and in service of our Messiah.
- B. The Synagogue is the center of our community, our fellowship, and our corporate worship.
- C. This community should treat one another as 'brothers and sisters in Messiah', and act in Biblical accordance as described in: Gen. 13:8; Deut. 15:7; 24:14; Psalm 133; Matt. 5:22; 18:15, 21; 25:40; John 13:34; 15:12-27;

Romans 12:10; 1 Cor. 6; 8:13; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 4:9; 2 Thess. 3:15; Heb. 13:1; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:8; 2 Peter 1:7; 1 John 2:9; 3:17.

- D. We will endeavor to be Torah Observant in all things to the best of our understanding as is outlined in scripture, being patient and understanding to those just beginning their journey. At no time will there be a mandate on how each person shall observe as we believe each soul is led by Hashem for the calling he has chosen for them. However, the fruit of their efforts will be noted.
- E. Beth El Shaddai will observe the following Moedim (appointed times) as set forth in Torah. Leviticus 23
1. Shabbat – from Friday Evening to Saturday evening every week.
  2. Rosh Chodesh – The evening before the first of each Hebrew calendar month.
  3. Pesach & Unleavened Bread – beginning the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nissan for 7 days. Day 1 (evening Nissan 14 thru evening Nissan 15), and Day 7 (evening Nissan 21 thru evening Nissan 22) are Moed Shabbats. Unleavened bread must be eaten.
    4. Firstfruits.
    5. \*Counting the Omer- Beginning the Sunday after Nissan 15.
    6. \*Shavuot – Sunday 7 weeks later. This is a Moed Shabbat.

\*Note: These days may differ with the Traditional Jewish Calendar. Individuals may choose to observe on either interpretation.

7. Yom Teruah (Rosh Hashannah) – Tishri 1. Shofars are blown.
8. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)– Tishri 10 this is observed with a 24 hour fast.
9. Sukkot- begins the evening of Tishri 14 though the evening of Tishri 21. Day 1 is a Moed Shabbat.
10. Shemini Atzaret/Simchat Torah – Tishri 22, the eighth day. This is a Moed Shabbat.

We will also observe the Festival of Esther (Purim), the Festival of Lights (Hanukkah), and acknowledge other traditional observance days listed on Jewish calendars.

### **III. Membership**

Membership at Beth-El Shaddai is open to all who are called by G-d to commit themselves to this Messianic Jewish work. Those individuals who feel so led by G-d to participate in the Messianic Jewish lifestyle are encouraged to do so. Membership at Beth-El Shaddai represents a covenant among Believers to work together as we feel we are being led by G-d to serve Him in a Jewish context.

We recognize two forms of covenant participation in the community and work of Beth-El Shaddai: Regular Attenders and Full Membership.

#### **1. Regular Attenders**

Recognizing that a Messianic Jewish calling takes various forms, Beth-El Shaddai extends Regular Attender status to any Believer in Y'shua who feels the leading of the L-rd to involve himself or herself in the ministry of the congregation, while maintaining a primary spiritual commitment to another congregation.

#### **2. Full Membership**

Full membership in the congregation is extended to any Believer in Y'shua Ha'Mashiach who feels the call of G-d to commit himself or herself to the Messianic Jewish work and ministry which are central to Beth-El

Shaddai. Those individuals are encouraged to participate in the Messianic Jewish lifestyle in accordance with scripture. Following a period of regular attendance for minimum of 6 months and continued contact with congregational leaders and members, should a Regular Attender to Beth-El Shaddai feel the calling of the L-rd to make a membership covenant commitment to the congregation, he or she should approach one of the Elders of the congregation to schedule a meeting to clarify the mission and terms of membership of the congregation. If the applicant for membership remains confident of G-d's direction in this area, he or she will be welcomed into the fellowship as a Full Member during a regular Shabbat service.

- a. Full members are expected to support the congregation with their attendance, labor, spiritual gifts, and offerings. In turn, the congregation embraces them as family and is obligated to instruct, nurture, encourage, pray for, and uphold them, sharing equally in their joy and their sorrow.
- b. Full members are encouraged to attend all general meetings of the congregation and to participate in the government of the community by exercising their voice on any matter which affects the direction and ministry of the congregation, as they feel so led by G-d. Each member of the congregation over the age of thirteen shall be accorded the opportunity to participate in discussion on all matters presented to the congregation.
- c. Only members are eligible to serve in the office of Elder, Cantor, Shamash, or treasurer.
- d. Members may also be involved with other Biblically based organizations and Houses of worship especially where BES cannot provide the opportunity for ministry or training.
- e. A current list of members should be maintained and made available to the membership body upon request.

### 3. Termination of Membership

Membership at Beth-El Shaddai may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

#### a. Change of Circumstance

In the event that a member is required by circumstance to relocate to another city, he or she will leave with the blessing and prayers of the congregation. It is the position of the congregation that the covenant relationship transcends simple membership and that a bond of fellowship and kinship in Messiah will remain.

#### b. Transfer of Membership

Should a member feel an honest conviction that the L-rd is leading him or her in a new spiritual direction which would preclude continued membership at Beth-El Shaddai, he or she should schedule a meeting with congregational Elders to discuss the matter. If the Elder leadership of the congregation finds nothing in the decision to raise concerns regarding spiritual error or improper motivation, the member will leave with the blessing and prayers of the congregation.

### 3. Breach of Covenant

A member who violates the terms of the covenant through willful and unrepentant disobedience and sin will be subject to congregational discipline as set out in Section IV:E of this document. The goal of discipline is the restoration of the individual to fellowship. Should this goal prove unattainable, the final recourse of the congregation will be the termination of membership, and the termination of participation in congregational services and activities. This step will not be taken until every other Biblical recourse has been exhausted.

## IV. Congregational Government

- A. According to the will of G-d for His people, the congregation has established guidelines for self-government. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish and preserve G-dly order in all congregational matters and to create a standard of conduct and due process to which each member can in good conscience submit himself or herself. It is the position of the congregation that it is not the purpose of government to control individuals or restrict personal liberty, but to secure the rights of the individual and provide a stable environment in which G-d's people can do His will in harmony.
- B. All members shall submit themselves to the authority of congregational leadership government of Elders in all matters that pertain to congregational life. The congregational Elders shall be bound by the guidelines set forth in this document and shall be accountable to the congregation for their interpretation and exercise of governmental authority.

### C. Congregational Meetings

The congregation shall hold regular meetings to discuss matters of consequence to the direction and ministry of this body. An Elder shall be selected to preside over each meeting for the purpose of maintaining order.

1. A congregational Elder will prepare an agenda in advance of each congregational meeting and will present the topics of the agenda for general discussion. Any member may submit a topic for inclusion in the agenda by presenting it to an Elder leader at least one week prior to the meeting.
2. All decisions regarding the direction, ministry of the congregation, and the disciplinary action of a member, will be decided by the Elder leaders. This same body of Elders shall oversee the financial, building and administrative operations of the congregation. If a committee is formed to administer such operations, an Elder will chair the committee. All members are encouraged to support the leadership decisions, to assist in the building and administrative operations, and to express their views and concerns over matters of concern.
3. During the conclusion of each meeting, any member may raise an issue of concern for the consideration of the congregation.
4. Emergency meetings of the congregation outside of the regular quarterly schedule may be called in the following circumstances:
  - a. The Elder leadership of the congregation may call an emergency meeting of the congregation to present and discuss any pressing matter of importance to require the immediate consideration of the congregation.
  - b. An emergency meeting may be called by the Elders at the request of two-thirds majority of the members.

### D. Congregational Positions

Beth El Shaddai is an Elder led congregation. The Elders are responsible for the spiritual, financial and legal concerns of the congregation

### 1. Elders

The Elder leadership of Beth-El Shaddai shall consist of men who are recognized by the membership to be mature believers of good character and sound spiritual insight. They are charged with the responsibility of overseeing the services and operations of the congregation and bringing significant issues before the body for discussion. They will be the governing body of this congregation. The Biblical principles for their leadership are described in the following scriptures: 1 Tim. 3:8-13; Num. 11:16-17; James 5:14-15, 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Tim 3:1-7, and Titus 1:5-9

- a. Active Elders will serve rotating terms (length determined by the number of Elders) ending August 31 each year. At the end of his current term, each Elder will retain the right to stay active or become inactive. Should an elder decide to become inactive, he should inform the other active Elders by May 1, and the remaining active Elders will select his replacement pending approval of the membership at the next membership meeting.
- b. When considering a candidate for eldership the following criteria will be used –
  1. It is understood that when we call a man to elder leadership, we also consider his wife. Both must be active members of Beth El Shaddai and meet the Biblical standard set above.
  2. Their background and activities will be vetted privately by the active elders and the candidate will meet with all the elders before being asked to serve.
  3. The candidate must have the approval of all active elders. It is expected that in case of a family member candidate an active elder will recuse himself from the vote.
- c. Ordination and Reconfirmation of Elders will be an annual event held the last Shabbat in August.
- d. Inactive Elders who have served a minimum of 10 years will have the status of Elder Emeritus and may attend Elder meetings, but without voting privileges.
- e. If an Elder shall become unable or unwilling to execute the duties of his office, a replacement shall be selected by the remaining Elders from among the men of the congregation.
- f. At their discretion, the Elder leadership may elect to implement decisions without first bringing them before the membership for discussion at a congregational meeting. This authority is granted them to allow for the smooth operation of the congregation, unrestricted by unnecessary bureaucracy. All such decisions will be presented to the membership at the next congregational meeting.
- g. Any Elder may be removed from his position by a majority agreement of the total membership following a presentation and discussion of the reasons for such action during a membership meeting.

### 2. Cantor

It is also the desire of this congregation that we employ a 'Cantor' (Worship Leader), when and where feasible. The Cantor of this congregation must be a member of Beth El Shaddai with full responsibilities and conditions of membership as covered in Section II of this document. He/she shall serve in the leadership capacity of 'Cantor' and will also be an Elder. Such duties include –

- i. Preparing the congregation for a 'reverent and joyful' worship experience and celebration unto the L-rd. This Biblical principal may be found in Col. 3:16-17. The cantor shall have control of all aspects of the service.
- ii. Incorporating a 'Jewish flavor' into: Canting of Blessings, Shabbat songs, Jewish Praise and Worship segments and music.
- iii. Preparing Bar and Bat Mitzvah candidates and scheduling those events.

### 3. Treasurer

The congregation will also have a treasurer to oversee and maintain the financial transactions of usual business for the congregation. The duties of the Treasurer will include

- A. Weekly accounting of the tithes and offerings given. This also includes preparing annual statements of giving to be compliant with IRS guidelines.
- B. Payments to be made from the accounts of Beth El Shaddai not limited to tithes to other ministries, utilities, services, staff, maintenance, and supplies.
- C. Providing a quarterly summary statement to the Elders of total income and expenses and current bank balances in case controls need to be implemented.
- D. Training a backup Treasurer, selected by the Elders, in case of emergency.

#### 4. Shamashim

The position of Shamashim is one of recognition as a trusted servant of the congregation. A Shamash is one who has demonstrated a willingness and ability to serve as an example of the Messianic Jewish lifestyle within the congregation.

- A. Shamashim will be responsible for the physical needs of the synagogue including, but not limited to:
  - i. Making sure the physical property is maintained.
  - ii. Organizing and conducting the celebration of the feasts.
  - iii. Organizing and preparing for service and Oneg.
  - iv. Advising the Elders of any needs of the congregation or facility.
- B. Shamashim will serve rotating terms of 4 years. Terms will end on August 31. At the end of the current term, each Shamash will retain the right to stay active or become inactive. Should a Shamash decide to become inactive, he should inform the active Elders by May 1, and the remaining active Elders will select replacements pending approval of the membership at a subsequent membership meeting.

#### 5. Youth Director

The youth director will be responsible for coordinating all youth activities from weekly Torah teachings to activities during Moedim. This includes arranging coverage during absences. Youth shall be defined as all those between the ages of 5 and 12 years old. Although teenagers may be asked to assist with larger groups, there must always be an adult present and in charge.

#### 6. Director of Security

The Director of Security will be responsible for coordinating all security activities including

- Assigning weekly duties
- Selection the security team
- Training of the security team
- Advising the elders of security needs

#### 7. Special Council

In the event of an unusual circumstance that would affect the safety and security and well-being of the congregation, the Elders may arrange for a Special Council to deal with a specific issue. Those to be included will be the Elders, Representatives from the Shamashim, the Director of Security, Treasurer, and any other person whose expertise would be invaluable to aid in decision making (i.e. – lawyer, real estate specialist, doctor, etc. according to need.)

## **E. Congregational Discipline**

It is the position of the congregation that the relationship between G-d and an individual is primarily the concern and responsibility of that individual. This community of Believers is obligated to do everything possible to uphold one another in faith and to encourage one another to good works and right standing before G-d, but each man or woman who has reached the age of accountability must ultimately bear the responsibility for his or her own thoughts, words, and actions.

The congregation has a duty before G-d to confront overt sinful behavior within the community according to Biblical precedent laid down for us in the 18th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Actions of congregational disruption and disobedience shall not be tolerated. Should a member of Beth-El Shaddai be found to be in unrepentant sin, the following steps are Biblically prescribed:

### **1. Matthew 18:15**

The individual who has become aware of the transgression shall approach the person in question and deal with the matter in private discussion. If this confrontation results in a change of heart and a repentant attitude, the matter should go no farther.

### **2. Matthew 18:16**

Should the first meeting fail to result in repentance, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Elder leadership of the congregation and the member in question shall be approached by a group of two or three. If in the judgment of the parties involved, a truly repentant attitude is evidenced, the matter should not be pursued further. Pastoral counseling should be offered for a period of time to support and strengthen the individual in this area of weakness. Actions of congregational disruption and disobedience shall not be tolerated. Such individuals behaving in this manner may be subject to further disciplinary action, as described in paragraph 3 below.

### **3. Matthew 18:17**

Should the first two approaches fail to result in a true change of heart and a turning away from the sinful action or behavioral attitude, the matter must be brought before the congregational membership. If this final effort meets with failure, the member in question must be regarded as though he or she were an unbeliever and disqualified from membership in the congregation. Actions of congregational disruption and disobedience shall not be tolerated. Such individuals behaving in this manner may be subject to further disciplinary action, such as suspension, and or termination from congregational services and activities.

### **4. Restoration of Membership**

A former member who was deprived of membership by the process set forth above may be reinstated at a later time if, in the judgment of the Elder leadership, he or she has repented of the sinful behavior and has reestablished a right relationship with the L-rd. In such a case, the same process is followed that is established for new members. The two-month period of evaluation should be accompanied by regular meetings with leadership and congregational members so that the heart of the individual in question may be correctly assessed. The membership process shall also be accompanied by much prayer, both for and with the applicant for reinstatement of membership. At the conclusion of the evaluation period, if the leadership and the

congregational body are confident of a change of heart in the individual in question, he or she shall be reinstated to full membership, with all of the privileges and responsibilities of such membership.

## **V. Beliefs and Practices**

- A. The congregation holds to a common set of beliefs which define the environment of our community and the nature of our corporate worship. These beliefs and practices have been summarized in our Statement of Faith and Mission Statement, which are incorporated into this document as Appendix 1 and 2 and shall be considered an integral part of this document.
- B. Central to the beliefs and practices of the congregation are the following tenets:
1. The Tanakh and the B'rit Ha'dashah (The Old and New Testaments of the Bible) are complete and inerrant representations of G-d's Word to His people and stand as the ultimate authority for this congregation and each of its members.
  2. The restoration of Israel and the growing acceptance of Messiah among the Jewish people are prophetic events which represent a fulfillment of G-d's intent for His people and the world.
  3. The "Body of Christ" is ordained by G-d to be an instrument of the re-gathering of the Jewish people and a unification of 'all the Body of Messiah', Jew and non-Jew alike, which may require our nurturing, support, assistance, and teaching for the preparation to fulfill this work.
  4. We are called as a congregation to observe a Biblical Messianic Jewish Jewish identity in our praise and worship, which includes:
    - a) The observance of the Sabbath;
    - b) Traditional song, dance and music in a Hebraic styles;
    - c) Hebrew blessings, prayers and liturgies such as the Sh'ma, Amidah, Kaddish, and Aaronic Benediction, and blessings upon the lighting of Sabbath candles, the reading of the Torah/Haf-Torah/B'rit Ha'dashah and the bread and the wine (baruchas);
    - d) The wearing of the kippa (yarmulke) and the tallit by the men, and scarves by the women in following the Orthodox tradition, as one feels so led by G-d;
    - e) The observance of the Biblical Feasts of the L-rd and other days of significance to the Jewish people such as Chanukah (The Feast of Dedication), Purim, Yom Ha'atz Maot (Israeli Independence Day), and Yom Ha'shoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day);
    - f) The performance of Biblical rites and ceremonies such as the Brit Milah (Circumcision and Naming for a boy), Birkat Ha-gomel (Consecration and Naming Ceremony for a girl), Bar Mitzvah [boy] & Bat Mitzvah [girl], (Dedication of Children - Rite of Passage), and mikvah (Ritual Immersion and Sanctification);
    - g) The giving of tithe offerings as G-d leads the individual for the support of the community as well as investment of the congregation's resources in support of other organizations and individuals who are doing the work of the L-rd in an effective and responsible manner.



## VI. Affiliations

Beth-El Shaddai is a part of the Body of Messiah and desires to establish and develop meaningful contacts with our brothers and sisters where such contacts may prove edifying and beneficial to the furtherance of the Kingdom of G-d.

- A. Beth-El Shaddai may establish affiliations with organizations whose goals and methods are compatible with the work that G-d has established us to perform.
- B. Beth-El Shaddai's affiliations in no way constitute a commitment to maintain doctrine or practices, which may be mandated by outside agencies. Beth-El Shaddai reserves the right to add or drop affiliations with various entities as deemed necessary. Beth-El Shaddai is an autonomous congregation, which establishes and administers its own goals and methodology through prayerful consideration and forthright discussion among the membership. We are accountable to G-d and to one another for the administration of our responsibilities as parties to this covenant.

## VII. Amendment Process

This constitutional document may be expanded or revised by the following process:

1. Any full member of the congregation may propose an amendment to this document if he or she becomes convinced that such proposal is in the best interests of the congregation and will facilitate the work of the L-rd.
2. Any amendment proposal shall be submitted in writing to the Elder leadership, who will evaluate it and decide whether it should be brought before the congregation for consideration.
3. Any amendment brought before the general meeting of the membership shall be subject to discussion for acceptability before action is taken. At the conclusion of discussion, the Elders of the congregation shall make a determination whether to hold the proposal over for a future meeting or to act upon it immediately.
4. All amendments must be approved by the Elders.

Once accepted and enacted, all amendments become integral parts of this document and carry the full force of congregational governmental authority.

## VIII. Enactment

- A. This document (Appendix I) is enacted as of Rosh Hashanah, 1st of Tishri, 5759 (Mon, Sep 21, 1998) by a unanimous vote of the existing membership. By our signatures to this document, we commit ourselves to the principles and procedures set forth herein, in the sincere hope and firm belief that they will provide the order and stability required for Beth-El Shaddai to accomplish the Great Commission that has been set before us.
- B. This document (Appendix II) is enacted as of the 2nd of Elul, 5760 (Saturday, Sep 2, 2000) by a majority vote of the membership in attendance in a quarterly congregational meeting. We commit ourselves to the mission statement set forth herein, in the sincere devotion to our Messiah, and in order to fulfill our obligation to the Great Commission that has been set before us.
- C. This document (Appendix III) is added to address the presence of those who must legally announce their presence to leadership.
- D. This Articles of Covenant has been revised and enacted on \_\_\_\_\_ by a majority vote of the existing membership and replaces all previous revisions

**We ask the L-rd's blessing on all that we do and His daily guidance as we seek to do His will until He comes.**

**May the L-rd Y'shua always be with us and in all things!**