

22 Shevat, 5774

Dear Friends:

For decades, people with dedication and commitment have sought to ensure that Beth Am be a place where people of all abilities are welcome. From a wheelchair accessible bimah, sign interpreted services, and the Amanda Sham Resource Center for Special Needs, it is clear that such efforts place Beth Am in the forefront in terms of 'inclusiveness'. The Congregational Inclusion Committee (CIC) was formed in 2010 to build on this foundation and to see to it that congregants with special needs and their families continue to be able to meaningfully participate and experience a sense of true belonging to the Beth Am community.

Working towards our Mission, the CIC has developed a "10 Commandments of Inclusion Planning" checklist which we hope each Committee will consult and find useful in planning meetings, programs and events. Though designed to be comprehensive in scope, we do not believe the Checklist is exhaustive of the types of considerations that may be relevant to a particular situation. *Please call on us - the members of the CIC would be happy to help your Committee identify and address issues related to inclusion at the planning stage and/or help respond to requests for special accommodation.*

With warm regards,

Hilde Sham, CIC Co-chair  
(215) 233-1193  
[hsham7@aol.com](mailto:hsham7@aol.com)

Jennifer Abramson, CIC Co-chair  
(215) 519-5660  
[Abramson.Jen@gmail.com](mailto:Abramson.Jen@gmail.com)

# CONGREGATIONAL INCLUSION COMMITTEE

## Mission

The mission of the Old York Road Temple-Beth Am, Congregational Inclusion Committee is to facilitate the accommodation, acceptance and appreciation of individual differences so that all members of our synagogue community may participate together - in Torah study, prayer and spirituality, communal life and acts of loving kindness to all humanity.

## Vision

In pursuing its Mission, the Congregational Inclusion Committee will: 1) identify areas of needs within the congregation; 2) educate and raise awareness of lay leaders, staff and congregants about issues relating to inclusion; and 3) facilitate necessary changes working within Old York Road Temple-Beth Am and collaborating with the community at large.

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF INCLUSION PLANNING

Thou shall consider everybody's ability to participate when planning an event.

Thou shall use inclusive language in advertising, and inclusive practices for outreach, registration and implementation.

Thou shall plan in advance such that there will be time to communicate the availability of, and make arrangements for, necessary accommodations.

Thou shall evaluate the venue for accessibility prior to reserving/booking.

Thou shall consider accessibility issues for getting to, from, around and through event space to allow for full participation by all.

Thou shall prepare program participants to work with an inclusive audience.

Thou shall ask for help when accessibility questions and accommodation requests arise.

Thou shall ensure, to the extent possible, that all aspects of inclusion/accessibility are in place on the day of the event.

Thou shall evaluate the end result and provide feedback for future events.

Thou shall remember that Old York Road Temple – Beth Am is an inclusive congregation where individual differences are accommodated, accepted and appreciated, and where all members of our synagogue community participate together.



OLD YORK ROAD  
TEMPLE-BETH AM

Congregational Inclusion Committee