

Cemetery Rules and Fees

Congregation Shaara Tzille

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Cemetery Rules and Fees

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CONGREGATION SHAARA TFILLE SARATOGA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER CONGREGATION BEIS MASHE

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Cemetery Rules and Fees

I. Introduction

The Congregation Shaara Tfillle Cemetery/The Saratoga Springs Jewish Community Center Cemetery was founded over a half century ago to provide for halachic burial under Jewish laws. At the time, Congregation Shaara Tfillle was an Orthodox congregation. In 1991, when Congregation Shaara Tfillle became affiliated with the Conservative movement, a portion of the (former) congregation remained as an Orthodox congregation (Beis Mashe). While Congregation Shaara Tfillle has accepted the responsibility for the care and maintenance of the cemetery, the members of Beis Mashe have the same rights for burial and plot acquisition under the same rules and fee schedules as the members of Congregation Shaara Tfillle. Throughout this document reference to qualified and unqualified members of Congregation Shaara Tfillle or “The Congregation” is intended to also include qualified members of Beis Mashe. Because of this dual eligibility many of the practices used for interment and/or cemetery maintenance follow the stricter Orthodox or Conservative practice.

The Rabbi of Congregation Shaara Tfillle shall be informed of the desired date and time of all funerals. The Rabbi’s decisions are final on all matters relating to religious, burial, and cemetery practices.

The Cemetery Chairperson will obtain a membership list from Beis Mashe annually for the purpose of identifying their qualification status for cemetery rights.

In 2010, additional land was acquired to provide for the future needs of the Jewish cemetery. It was the intention of the Congregation to set aside a portion of the new property for the purpose of interment of intermarried couples, i.e., the non-Jewish spouses of Congregation Shaara Tfillle members (See Rules, II.2). This section of the property will be clearly separated from the Jewish cemetery.

II. Definitions

Chevra Kadisha - An organization of Jewish men and women who see to it that the bodies of deceased Jews are prepared for burial according to Jewish tradition and are protected from desecration, willful or not, until burial. Two of the main requirements are the showing of proper respect for a body, and the ritual cleansing of the body and subsequent dressing for burial. It is usually referred to as a burial society in English.

Members of the Congregation: This applies to a married couple (or single adult) and unmarried children (under the age of 25 living with their parents), in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Congregation’s constitution. This does not include family members other than those indicated (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles or in-laws)

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Shemira – Shemira refers to the Jewish religious ritual of watching over the body of a deceased person from the time of death until burial. A male guardian is called a *shomer* (שומר) and a female guardian is a *shomeret* (שומרית). *Shomrim* (plural, שומרים) are people who perform *shemira*.

III. Cemetery Rules

1. Only a person who is Jewish may be buried in the consecrated cemetery owned by Congregation Shaara Tfillle/The Jewish Community Center, 84 Weibel Avenue, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. It is also known as the Jewish Community Center Cemetery.
2. A person who does not qualify for membership in the Congregation cannot purchase or reserve any burial plots. The non-Jewish spouse of an intermarried couple, with a family membership in the Congregation, is considered a Member of the Congregation.
3. Purchase of Plot
 - a) Purchase of plot for members: No rights to a burial plot shall be issued unless payment in full has been made. Plots reserved or purchased must be paid for within one year or prior to interment in the event of death.
 - b) Purchase of plot for non-members who are qualified for membership: No reservation or rights to a burial plot shall be valid until paid for in full.
 - c) At the discretion of the Rabbi and President, a plot may be provided for an unclaimed destitute Jewish individual.
4. All dues, fees and previous pledge donations owed to the Congregation by the deceased at the time of death shall be paid in full prior to the funeral services. In addition, burial costs (according to the fee schedule) shall be paid in full prior to moving the deceased to the cemetery. Payment shall be made in cash, certified check, or bank check.
5. All burials shall be conducted according to traditional Conservative Jewish law, as prescribed by United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism(USCJ). A recognized Chevra Kadisha shall prepare all persons for burial. In the event that a Chevra Kadisha other than the local society conducts the preparation, a certificate shall be sent to the congregation prior to the burial for approval by the Rabbi of Congregation Shaara Tfillle.

(The Rabbi will consider the recommendations in "The Guide to Jewish Funerals" as published by the Congregational Standards Committee of USCJ. The final decision is up to the Rabbi.)

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6. A headstone must be erected within eighteen (18) months of the date of the funeral (see Attachment 3 for requirements of a headstone design). If not, then a marker will be selected by the cemetery chairperson and placed on the grave using the headstone deposit for this purpose.
7. Members who wish to purchase specific burial plots may do so. The purchase fee is \$900 per plot in addition to the prorated membership assessment fee (see rule #9 below).
8. Membership Assessment Fee: Eligibility for burial is dependent upon Congregational membership in good standing for at least two years at the full family membership rate. If membership has been for less than two years, a membership assessment fee per Attachment 1 shall be charged. Deviation from this requirement shall require the approval of the President and Cemetery Chairperson of Congregation Shaara Tfillle.
9. Plots purchased will be assigned to an individual name/person and cannot be sold or reassigned to another person. Unwanted plots shall be returned to the Congregation, with no reimbursement of fees, for reissuance to another person. Plots returned to the Congregation will be acknowledged as a charitable donation to the Congregation at the current cost.
10. The Rabbi and his/her immediate family living at his/her residence as described above shall be considered members of the Congregation with respect to burial rights in the congregation's cemetery. The two-year membership requirement rule (#9) will be waived for the Rabbi and his eligible, immediate family.

IV. Cemetery Fee Schedule

The fee schedule is described and shown in Attachment 1. All fees associated with the cemetery shall be deposited into the cemetery account and funds will be dispersed as appropriate.

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V. Perpetual Care

Perpetual care activities are limited to maintaining the gravesites level wherever possible, and mowing the grass.

Walls elevated above ground level, bushes or plantings of any kind, with the exception of ground cover plantings, are not permitted. Maintenance of ground cover plantings is not included in perpetual care activities and may be replaced with grass if not maintained by relatives or friends of the deceased.

VI. Nonsectarian Section

The nonsectarian cemetery is located on a plot of land on the upper side of the Synagogue property. A Jewish spouse may be buried next to his/her non-Jewish spouse if both gravesites have been purchased/reserved.

A person who is not a member of the Congregation cannot be buried in the nonsectarian portion of the Cemetery. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Membership assessment fee noted in Attachment 1 applies for gravesites in this section.

VII. Shemira

Shemira for a Jewish deceased prior to the funeral are the obligation of the family, but every effort will be made to assist in the mitzvah by members of the Congregation.

VIII. Use of the Synagogue Sanctuary for Funerals

1. Only members of the Congregation may hold funeral services in the Sanctuary of the Synagogue or in the building. Services for non-Jewish spouses of members of the Congregation with a Household membership may be held in the Social Hall.
2. Funeral services for non-members may not be held in the Congregation building.
3. Use of the building for funeral services shall be at the option of the immediate family members.
4. Use of the Synagogue for funeral services shall be available only when there has not been any scheduled event for those rooms or when Hebrew School classes are not in session.
5. No preparation of the deceased for burial may be performed in the Congregation Shaara Tfillle building.

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6. The Casket with the deceased shall not be allowed into the building earlier than two hours prior to the scheduled funeral service.
7. No viewing of the deceased is permitted in the building.

IX. Casket Requirements

1. Caskets for burial in the Jewish section shall be kosher (made of wood with no metal and be biodegradable).
2. Caskets for burial in the nonsectarian section shall be wooden and biodegradable.

X. Interment of Cremated Remains

Cremation is against Jewish Conservative and Orthodox tradition. As such, cremated remains shall not be allowed in the Jewish sectarian section of the Congregation's cemetery.

Even though cremation is against Jewish tradition, there is still a positive mitzvah to bury the ashes if the body has been cremated. Cremated ashes may be buried in the nonsectarian section of the Congregation's cemetery noted in Section VI. These ashes shall be buried in a biodegradable urn and either in the same plot as the pre-deceased Jewish spouse or an area chosen by the Congregation's Cemetery Chairperson.

XI. Meal of Comfort

This gathering after the interment is intended to allow family and friends to share their feelings and offer support and comfort to those in mourning. It is not intended to be a full meal, a sit-down dinner or an endless buffet. A simple buffet is prepared by the Congregation's volunteers. If this is not sufficient, the family may hire a kosher caterer who is approved by the President of Congregation Shaara Tfilla and/or the President of the Sisterhood of the Congregation.

The family of the deceased must meet with Congregation's Office Manager during the process of funeral arrangements to discuss the meal, and complete the Attachment 2 form.

1. The meal is an optional offering for a fee.
2. The community room must be available and not already scheduled for another event.
3. There must be "workers" available to ready the community room, prepare the meal, present the food and drinks (typically on buffet tables), and clean up afterwards.

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4. The family must estimate the number of people that might attend the Meal of Comfort so that there will be sufficient food prepared for the event.
5. The basic 'Meal of Comfort' charge of \$700 in the fee schedule (see Attachment 1) is for fewer than 50 people and is the minimum charge for all the work involved. There is no refund if less people attend the meal. For 50 to fewer than 100 people, the basic charge is \$800. If more people attend than estimated, there is no way to create more food.
6. The family will review a basic menu and the estimate of attendees. The menu offerings will be at the discretion of the Congregation but we will be flexible in deference to the family's requests. Special meal item requests, if granted, will also incur an additional fee. The family will sign a document that states what was agreed to, i.e., the proposed menu, the number of attendees, and the total fee. This is to prevent any misunderstanding of what was expected from the Congregation.
7. No food provided by the family or family friends shall be permitted within the building unless approved by the Rabbi and/or President of Sisterhood of Congregation Shaara Tfillle.

XII. Remote Access to Funeral Proceedings

Pending availability of resources, remote access (via Internet streaming capabilities such as Zoom and Google Meet) of funeral proceedings may be provided if requested by the family and approved by the Rabbi.

XIII. New York State Regulations and Guidelines

New York State mandatory health requirements for religious and funeral gatherings, including burial and committal services, shall be followed. Procedures to meet these requirements, for Congregation Shaara Tfillle religious and funeral gatherings, are kept up to date to incorporate changes to applicable state and federal requirements, guidelines and resources.

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Attachments

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Attachment 1 - Fee Schedule per Grave

Congregation Shaara Tille Cemetery Fee Schedule

	MEMBER - 2 OR MORE YEARS	MEMBER - LESS THAN 2 YEARS	IMMEDIATE FAMILY NOT MEMBER	NON-MEMBER BURIED IN CEMETERY	NON-MEMBER BURIED ELSEWHERE	NON-MEMBER OWNING OWN BURIAL PLOT
MEMBERSHIP ASSESSMENT FEE	No charge	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	N/A	\$2,500
PURCHASE OF A PLOT (may be paid in advance)	\$900	\$900	\$900	\$900	N/A	N/A
GRAVE OPENING						
LOWER CEMETERY	\$600	\$600	\$800	\$950	N/A	\$950
UPPER CEMETERY - M/F	\$900	\$900	\$950	\$1,000	N/A	\$1,000
UPPER CEMETERY – SUNDAY	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,350	\$1,350	N/A	\$1,350
INFANT/LESS THAN 4 YRS	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	N/A	\$350
CREMATED REMAINS	\$550	\$550	\$550	\$550	N/A	\$550
OVERTIME EXPENSE						
AFTER 3PM WEEKDAYS	\$175	\$175	\$175	\$175	N/A	\$175
WEEKENDS	\$175	\$175	\$175	\$175	N/A	\$175
ADDITIONAL FEE FOR FROZEN GROUND DURING WINTER	\$100-Lower Cmtry \$275-Upper Cmtry	\$100-Lower Cmtry \$275-Upper Cmtry	\$100-Lower Cmtry \$275-Upper Cmtry	\$100-Lower Cmtry \$275-Upper Cmtry	N/A	\$100-Lower Cmtry \$275-Upper Cmtry
WINTER MONTHS FEE AS REQUIRED (e.g. snow removal)	\$275	\$275	\$275	\$275	N/A	\$275
HEADSTONE DEPOSIT (see p4, item6)	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	N/A	\$1,000
GRAVE PERPETUAL CARE	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$1,100	N/A	\$1,100
SYNAGOGUE EXPENSES	\$200	\$200	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300
INCIDENTAL EXPENSES	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
SERVICES OF THE RABBI	Discretion of family	Discretion of family	\$650	\$650	\$650 (if needed)	\$650
MEMORIAL PLAQUE (IF REQUESTED)	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
SERVICES AT SYNAGOGUE (OPTIONAL)	\$500	\$500	\$500	N/A	N/A	N/A
MEAL OF COMFORT (OPTIONAL)	\$700(minimum) Attachment 2	\$700(minimum) Attachment 2	\$700(minimum) Attachment 2	N/A	N/A	N/A

Payment Requirements-

- All fees are evaluated on a yearly basis and are subject to change.
- Payment by cash, certified or bank check, or credit card is required prior to burial. A 3% surcharge is added when using a credit card.
- All synagogue obligations (e.g. pledges, full membership dues for the current (July to June) year) are required to be paid in full prior to burial.

Burial Requirements-

- All Jewish burials require Chevra Kadisha preparations, with required payment made directly to the funeral home.
- Both Orthodox and Conservative burials must have a concrete Orthodox liner in the Upper (i.e. new) Cemetery. Liners are not used in the Lower Cemetery.
- Non-denominational burials must use a biodegradable (wood) casket as well as a concrete liner.
- All cremations require a biodegradable urn.

Revision – January 30, 2023

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Attachment 2 - Meal of Comfort

The gathering after the interment is intended to allow family and friends to share their feelings and offer support and comfort to those in mourning. It is not intended to be a full meal. A simple buffet is prepared by the Congregation's volunteers.

The family of the deceased must meet with the Congregation's Office Manager or delegate during the process of funeral arrangements to discuss the meal and have the following contract completed.

- I am requesting a Meal of Comfort _____
- Availability of the community room: Date _____ Time _____
- Volunteer availability to ready the social hall with tables and chairs, shop, prepare and present the meal, and clean up afterwards
 - Yes _____
 - No _____
- Estimate of the number of people _____
- The foods we can offer vary at the discretion of the Office Manager, requests made by the family, and availability of volunteers.
 - Egg salad
 - Tuna salad
 - Green salad
 - Kugel
 - Desserts/pastry items
 - Bread products including crackers, challah, bagels, bread or rolls
 - Sliced tomatoes and onions
 - Beverages including soft drinks, coffee, teas
 - Cheese
 - Paper goods and plastic utensils
 - Special Requests
 - _____
- Basic Fee:
 - \$700 – up to 50 guests
 - \$800 – 51 to 100 guests

• Additional Fee: _____

• Total Fee: _____

Agreement to above Items and Fees: (signature and date)

Office Manager

Family Representative

Date

Date

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Attachment 3 - Headstone

The headstone, in addition to including the Hebrew for “Here Lies” and “May His/Her Soul be Bound in the Bond of Life” (per location illustrated below), shall include, as a minimum, the deceased Hebrew and English name, and the Hebrew and Gregorian date of death. The headstone design shall be approved by the Rabbi of Congregation Shaara Tfilla and/or the Cemetery Chairperson.

