


בֵּית זַיִת

(House of the Olive Tree)

Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation

CONGREGATIONAL STANDARDS OF
PRACTICE AND HALAKHA

Guidelines for Messianic Community Life,
Worship, and Conduct

	Congregational Standards of Practice and Halakha	SOP #	MJH-001
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Introduction to Congregational Standards of Practice and Halakha

Shalom and blessings. It is our fervent desire to express the vision, mission, and values of this congregation to you and to the community. As the leaders of this congregation, we wish to make clear our positions and biblical views while establishing a more defined stance within our local community.

While not every Messianic community has a *Halakha* or formal Standards of Practice, we have been led to adopt such standards to clearly define our biblical and communal practices. This direction and guidance have been influenced by both the Scriptures and the broader standards of the Messianic Jewish community. Our goal is to be obedient to our Father in Heaven and to walk faithfully as disciples of Yeshua—both in our personal lives and as a congregation—by presenting standards that are biblically sound and consistent with accepted practices within the larger Messianic Jewish world.

Among the organizations we look to and agree with are Tikkun America, the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC), and the Messianic Jewish Rabbinic Council (MJRC). These bodies uphold beliefs and observances that align with the direction and convictions expressed in these Standards of Practice. We affirm the *MJRC Halakha*, which remains the first and currently only comprehensive *Halakha* within the Messianic Jewish world. We seek to follow many of its principles and practices. However, in areas where there are minor differences in opinion or application, these variances will be noted within this document, along with the original section number from the *MJRC Halakha* for reference.

Sections of significant importance from the *MJRC Halakha* will be incorporated directly into this Standard of Practice, marked by their original section numbers. Any references or excerpts from other organizations whose values and standards align with ours, or with the broader Messianic community, will also be identified as such within this document.

We recognize that differences of opinion and interpretation have emerged within the Messianic Jewish worldview and belief structure over time. However, this document is intended to serve as a unifying measure, not a divisive one. It is not designed to undermine any individual or group, either within or outside our community, but rather to provide clarity, transparency, and shared understanding.

We desire to be open and transparent with all members of our congregation and community, reflecting the standards held by the greater Messianic Jewish world with which we are aligned. Love, temperance, and great care have been invested in this document for the sake of the congregation and all its members.

It is our hope that the clarity provided here will be helpful to all who have questions about how we operate. Ultimately, our aim is to promote unity within the entire Body of Messiah—among the broader Messianic Jewish community, Christian churches, and all followers of Yeshua who together comprise His Body.

Table of Contents

Introduction to Congregational Standards of Practice and Halakha

- Current Leadership of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation
- Mission and Vision Statement
- Shared Values
- Shared Statement of Faith
 - Tikkun America Statement of Belief
 - BZMC Statement of Faith

Main Document Section

- 1.0 Purpose
 - 1.1 Our Covenant Identity
 - 1.2 Our Instructional Calling
 - 1.3 Our Proclamation of Faith
 - 1.4 Our Greatest Commandments
 - 1.5 Our Mission to Israel
- 2.0 Scope
 - 2.1 Community and Welcome
 - 2.2 Invitation to Seekers
 - 2.3 Inclusivity and Love
 - 2.4 Restoration of Jewish Practice
 - 2.5 Educational Opportunities

3.0 Core Beliefs

- The Nature of God and Love for Others

- 3.1 The Torah as Foundation
- 3.2 Authority of Scripture
- 3.3 Righteousness through Yeshua
- 3.4 Jew and Gentile in One Covenant
- 3.5 Unity of Believers Worldwide
- 3.6 The Continuing Jewish Calling
- 3.7 God's Covenant with Israel
- 3.8 Messiah's Unified Community
- 3.9 Participation of Non-Jews
- 3.10 Equality in Covenant
- 3.11 Tikkun Global's Twofold Vision
- 3.12 Purpose of the Torah
- 3.13 Obedience as the Fruit of Redemption
- 3.14 Prayer for Jerusalem and Israel
- 3.15 Hope of Messiah's Reign
- 3.16 Family and Congregational Life
- 3.17 The Five-Fold Ministry
- 3.18 The Return of Messiah Yeshua
- 3.19 Salvation and New Life in Messiah

4.0 Responsibilities

- Living a Life of Holiness

- 4.1 Acts of Righteousness and Restoration
- 4.2 Being Good Witnesses of Yeshua
- 4.3 Relationships with Other Faith Communities
- 4.4 Respect for Leadership and Partnership
- 4.5 Dignity and Honor for All
- 4.6 The Great Commission
- 4.7 Commitment to the Scriptures
- 4.8 Community Giving and Congregational Support

5.0 Procedures

-Purpose of Procedures

- 5.1 Community Member Status
- 5.2 Information Table
- 5.3 Community Development and Giftings
- 5.4 Counting the Tzedakah Box
- 5.5 Chavurah, Outreach, and Intercommunity Activities
- 5.6 Bringing Concerns and Conflicts to the Elders
- 5.7 Warnings and Disciplinary Action

- 5.8 Inciting Congregants Against One Another
- 5.9 Public Offenses and Public Corrections
- 5.10 Discipleship and Training
- 5.11 D'rash Preparation and Scheduling
- 5.12 Biblical Conflict Resolution (Matthew 18:15–17)
- 5.13 Abuse and Assault
- 5.14 Leadership Appointment and Accountability
- 5.15 Use of Congregational Facilities and Resources
- 5.16 Confidentiality and Privacy
- 5.17 Code of Conduct for Communication (Digital and In-Person)
- 5.18 Emergency and Safety Procedures

- 6.0 Introduction to Congregational Halakha
 - 6.1 Halakhic Stance of Beit Zayit Leadership
 - 6.2 Definition and Nature of Halakha
 - 6.3 Conduct Regarding Disputes About Torah
 - 6.4 Halakhic Authority, the Bilateral Ekklesia, and the Wounded Two-Fold Tradition
 - 6.5 Head Coverings and Respect for the Torah
 - 6.6 Women Wearing Tallitot and Kippot
 - 6.7 Respectful Handling of the Sefer Torah Scroll
 - 6.8 Requirements of Correct Behavior When Near the Torah Scroll
 - 6.9 Exception to MJRC's Ruling on Involvement with the Sefer Torah
 - 6.10 Procedure for Handling the Torah Scroll Outside of Normal Services
 - 6.11 Cohen and Levite Honors
 - 6.12 Adult Supervision and Appropriate Meeting Conduct
 - 6.13 Ritual Purity
 - 6.14 Value for Individual P'sak (Halakhic Decision-Making)
 - 6.15 Listening Ear to Christian Tradition
 - 6.16 Commandments That Carry More Weight and Prioritizing Authorities
 - 6.17 Pronunciation of the Sacred Name
 - 6.18 Participation in Weekly Shabbat Services
 - 6.19 Mixing Personal Business with Ministry
 - 6.20 Clean Food and Storage
 - 6.21 Kashrut and Separation of Meat and Dairy
 - 6.22 Doctrinal Boundaries and Fringe Movements
 - 6.23 Conversion to Judaism
 - 6.24 Who Is Considered a Jew (According to the MJRC)
 - 6.25 Brit Milah and Baby Naming
 - 6.26 Bar Mitzvah / Bat Mitzvah Ceremony
 - 6.27 Bar Avraham / Bat Avraham Ceremony
 - 6.28 Marriage Counseling

- 6.29 Wedding Ceremony
- 6.30 Funerals and Mourning
- 7.0 Definitions
 - 7.1 Common Terms from the MJRC
 - 7.2 UMJC Definition of Messianic Judaism
 - 7.3 Definition and Statement of Yeshua the Messiah
- 8.0 Governance and Leadership
 - Foundations of Governance
 - 8.1 Eldership and Decision-Making
 - 8.2 Appointment and Oversight of the Rabbi
 - 8.3 Alignment and Qualifications of Leadership
 - 8.3.1 The Messianic Jewish Rabbi (MJRC Definition & Commentary)
 - 8.4 Leadership Titles and Roles
 - 8.5 Current Leadership Definitions and Roles
 - 8.6 Conflict Resolution and Appeals
 - 8.7 Leadership Terms and Evaluation
 - 8.8 Transparency and Records
 - 8.9 Women in Leadership
- 9.0 Additional Documents
 - Introduction and Purpose

Current Leadership of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation

Congregational Leader

Allen Burner

Worship Leader

January 6, 2019 – Present

Elder

Bruce Dotson

Security and Hospitality

January 6, 2019 – Present

Elder

Garrett Snider

Pastoral Care and Instruction

January 6, 2019 – December 27, 2024

Shamash

Pastoral Care and Instruction

December 28, 2024 – Present

Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation's Mission and Vision Statement

Mission Statement

To develop, teach, and grow a community of disciples who follow, serve, share, and worship the God of Israel, through His Son Yeshua, in the Shenandoah Valley and beyond.

Vision Statement

Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation desires to be a healthy community of disciples, made up of both Jewish and Gentile (non-Jewish) believers, who grow together in faith, worship, and obedience to the God of Israel through Yeshua. We aim to be a welcoming community where seekers can explore the Messianic claims of Yeshua and where believers are equipped to follow Him with sincerity, love, and integrity. We strive to be a bridge between the nations and the Jewish people and to demonstrate the unfailing love of Yeshua to all people.

Shared Values

In this Shared Values section, there is a beautiful and meaningful statement from the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) that we seek to emulate at Beit Zayit. Since Messianic Judaism is composed of many different people and Jewish believers from a variety of backgrounds, branches of Judaism, and expressions. Diversity is a vital part of the strength that Messianic Judaism carries. Beit Zayit strives to follow this same principle and to continue building relationships with others within the broader Messianic community.

Unity in diversity

The UMJC represents diverse congregations united in our commitment to the authority of Scripture as the Word of God, the ongoing significance of the Torah for Jewish life, and the centrality of Yeshua as Lord and Messiah. Deference and respect are key elements in our fellowship.

Community relationships

As a movement for Yeshua within the people of Israel, we stand in solidarity with the larger Jewish community, including the state of Israel. We are committed to the continuity of the Jewish people and to participation in our common tradition. As a movement for Yeshua, we also value and affirm our place within the entire community of Messiah and are committed to its genuine unity.

Communal growth

The local congregation is foundational to Messianic Judaism. Therefore, we are committed to the success of our member congregations as places where Jewish people can encounter Yeshua as Messiah and live for him as Jews.

Integrity

We seek to develop and apply biblically rooted standards of integrity and accountability in all that we do as an organization, and to foster them in the polity (life and leadership) of each of our member congregations.

Dignity & Inclusion

We recognize that all people are made in the image of God and therefore will endeavor to treat them with respect. We warmly welcome into our midst all who embrace our vision and core values and are committed to the success of our efforts. (<https://www.umjc.org/values>)

Shared Statement of Faith

This section includes the Tikkun America Statement of Faith, which Beit Zayit fully affirms and shares as a reflection of our beliefs.

Tikkun America's Statement of Belief

One God

There is one God, who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Every divine action in the world is accomplished by the Father working through the Son and in the power of the Spirit. This God has revealed Himself in creation and in the history of Israel as transmitted in Scripture. (Genesis 1:1; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:4-6)

God is the Creator

God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He created humanity in the divine image to serve as creation's priest and ruler. God's intention for creation involves an order of differentiation, interdependence, and mutual blessing. (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15; Ephesians 1:4-6)

Human Disobedience

Through the exercise of free will, human beings disobeyed God, tarnished the divine image, and abandoned their privileged vocation. As a result, God's consummating purpose for creation met with initial frustration, and all relationships within creation became subject to violence and disorder. (Genesis 4:8, 6:5-7; Romans 8:20-20-22)

Chosen Nation

God chose Israel, the Jewish people, and entered into an everlasting covenant with them so they might be the firstfruits of a renewed humanity, who would mediate blessing and restoration to all the nations of the world. In gracious love, God gave to Israel the holy Torah as a covenantal way of life, and the holy Land of Israel as an inheritance and pledge of the blessing of the World to Come. (Genesis 12:1-3; Jeremiah 31:34-36, 35-37; Romans 11:28-29)

Messiah

In the fullness of time, the Divine Son became a human being – Yeshua the Messiah, born of a Jewish virgin, a true and perfect Israelite, a fitting representative and one-man embodiment of the entire nation. He lived as a holy tzaddik, fulfilling without blemish the mitzvot of the Torah. He brings to perfection the human expression of the divine image (Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:1-4, 4:15)

Yeshua died as an atonement for the sins of Israel and of the entire world. He was raised bodily from the dead, as the firstfruits of the resurrection promised to Israel as its glorification. He ascended to heaven and was there enthroned at God's right hand as Israel's Messiah, with authority extending to the ends of creation. (Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalms 110:1; Matthew 28:18; Mark 14:61-62; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Philippians 2:9-11)

Holy Spirit

God poured out the Divine Spirit on the community of Yeshua's followers, so that they might be joined intimately to the Messiah as His Body and become the preliminary representation of the New Covenant fullness promised to Israel. Being filled with the Spirit is a definite experience that enables us to share the Gospel with power and to more readily receive the supernatural gifts of the Spirit. These gifts are important in enabling God's people for all kinds of service. To the early Jewish community of Yeshua's followers, God added partners from among the nations, who heard the news of God's work in Yeshua and responded to the good news with faith. (Isaiah 66:20-21; Acts 2:1-21, 10:44-48, 15:8-9; 1 Corinthians 12, 14; Romans 12; Ephesians 1:13, 2:11-22)

Community

Messiah's community is a single community expressed in diverse forms within the Jewish community and among the nations. All are called to a dedicated life of worship, neighborly service, and public testimony to Yeshua. Unity and love throughout the entire community confirm Yeshua's role, as the One sent by the Father, and God's purpose in Messiah for Israel and the Nations. (John 17:20-21; Acts 21:20; Galatians 2:7-8)

Spiritual Life

Spiritual life is grounded in godly family units within the relational framework of congregations, whereby persons are to be encouraged, trained, and disciplined. Families in Messianic Jewish congregations should be strengthened and established in their Jewish calling to covenant life.

Messianic Jewish congregations are called to connect in Messianic Jewish associations, where they will find mutual enrichment and accountability. (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1-2; Romans 9:1-5; 1 Corinthians 7:17-20)

Torah

The Torah is God's gift to Israel. It serves as the constitution of the Jewish people and thus also of the Messianic Jewish community, which comprises Israel's eschatological firstfruits.

The Torah does not have the same role for Messianic communities from the nations, though it does provide spiritual nourishment as a witness to the Messiah. The Torah also provides universal norms of behavior and practical life teaching for all. The Torah is to be applied anew in every generation, and in this age as is fitting to the New Covenant order. (Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 7:17-20)

Forgiveness

Forgiveness of sins, spiritual renewal, union with Messiah, the empowering and sanctifying presence of the indwelling Ruach Ha Kodesh, and the confident hope of eternal life and a glorious resurrection are now available to all, Jews and Gentiles, who put their faith in Yeshua, the Risen Lord, and in obedience to His word are joined to Him and His Body through immersion and sustained in that union through Messiah's remembrance meal. Yeshua is the Mediator between God and all creation, and no one can come to the Father except through Him. (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; John 14:6; Romans 6:22-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-27)

Messiah's Return

Messiah Yeshua will return to Jerusalem in glory at the end of this age, to rule forever on David's throne. He will effect the restoration of Israel in fullness, raise the dead, save all who belong to Him, judge the wicked not written in the Book of Life who are separated from His presence, and accomplish the final Tikkun Olam in which Israel and the nations will be united under Messiah's rule forever. This restoration will bring everlasting joy for those who belong to Him. They will live forever in an order of mutual blessing and fellowship with God, in a cosmos perfected beyond description. (Isaiah 9:4-5/5-6; Romans 8:18-19; Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1-4)

Tanakh & Brit Chadasha

The writings of Tanakh and Brit Chadasha are divinely inspired and fully trustworthy (true), a gift given by God to His people, provided to impart life and to form, nurture, and guide them in the ways of truth. They are of supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

Jewish Tradition

The Jewish tradition serves as the living link that connects us as contemporary Jews to our biblical past and provides resources needed to develop a Messianic Jewish way of life and thought. Furthermore, the Christian theological tradition offers riches of insight into the revelation of the Messiah and His will, and Messianic Jews need to draw upon this wealth. (1 Thessalonians 2:15; Romans 13:7; Jude 3)

Five-fold Ministry

Understanding and embracing the meaning of fivefold ministry is crucial for equipping the followers of Yeshua to do their works of service. Leaders are called to exercise one or more of these gifts.

Understanding these gifts maximizes the potential for effective leadership and ensures that leaders and others not be placed in the wrong roles. In order to further this, apostles and prophets that are part of larger teams oversee and coordinate networks of congregations. (Ephesians 4:11-16)
(<https://tikkunamerica.org/our-beliefs/>)

Tikkun's Document section

This link is full of useful articles, ministry stances, and resources that will be helpful to answer questions and share the biblical doctrines we also seek to align ourselves by.
(<https://tikkunamerica.org/documents/>)

Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation's Statement of Faith

There is one G_d, who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This G_d has revealed Himself in creation and in the history of Israel as transmitted in Scripture. The Son is Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel and redeemer of the world who was sacrificed as our Pesach (Passover) lamb for the atonement of sins and restoration of his people Israel. The Father and Son are one and our bodies are a dwelling place for His Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit).(Genesis 1:1; Exodus 6:7; Amos 9:13-15; I Corinthians 8:6; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 John 4:14, 5:20)

G_d is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He created humanity in His image to serve as His priest and to be set apart without blemish in His presence and to rule over the earth.

Because of Messiah's sacrifice and the redemption cost of His blood, he redeemed for G_d, a kingdom which is comprised of all tribes and all nations, to be ruled by G_d. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15; Ephesians 1:4-6; I Peter. 2:9-10; Romans 8:16-17; Revelation 5:9-10)

Through the exercise of free will, human beings disobeyed G_d, tarnished His set apart image, and abandoned their privileged vocation. As a result, G_d's consummating purpose for creation met with initial frustration, and all relationships within creation became subject to violence and disorder. (Genesis 4:8; 6:5-7; Romans 8:20-22)

G_d chose Israel, the Jewish people, and entered into an everlasting covenant with them so they might be the firstfruits of a renewed humanity who would be a blessing to all the nations and bring restoration to the world through Yeshua. In gracious love, G_d gave to Israel His holy Torah as a covenantal way of life, and the holy Land of Israel as an inheritance and pledge of the blessing of the world to come.(Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:7-8; Jeremiah 31:30-36, Acts 3:21; Romans 11:28-29)

In the fullness of time, the Son of the Most High One became a human being – Yeshua the Messiah who was born of a Jewish virgin and was a true and perfect Israelite, a fitting representative of the kingdom of Heaven. He lived as a holy tzaddik, fulfilling without blemish the mitzvot of the Torah. He brings to perfection the human expression of His set apart image. (Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 1:1-4; 4:15)

Yeshua died as an atonement for the sins of the entire world, Jew and Gentile. He was raised bodily from the dead, as the firstfruits of the resurrection promised to Israel as its glorification. He ascended to heaven and was there enthroned at G_d's right hand as Israel's Messiah, with authority extending to the ends of creation. (Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalms 110:1; Matthew 28:18; Mark 14:61-62; I Corinthians 15:3-8; Philippians 2:9-11)

G_d poured out His Spirit on the community of Yeshua's followers, so that they might be joined intimately to the Messiah as His Body and become the preliminary representation of the New Covenant fullness promised to Israel. To this early Jewish community, G_d joined from among the nations, who heard the news of G_d's work in Yeshua and responded to the good news with faith. (Isaiah 66:20-21; Acts 2:1-21; 10:44-48; 15:8-9; Ephesians 1:13; 2:11-22)

Messiah's community is a single community expressed in diverse forms within the Jewish community and among the nations. All are called to a dedicated life of worship, neighborly service, and public testimony to Yeshua. Unity and love throughout the entire community confirm Yeshua's role as the One sent by the Father, and G_d's purpose in Messiah for Israel and the Nations. (John 17:20-21; Acts 21:20; Galatians 2:7-8)

Spiritual life is grounded in godly family units within the relational framework of congregations, whereby persons are to be encouraged, trained, and disciplined. Families in Messianic congregations should be strengthened and established in their biblical calling to covenant life. (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians. 6:1-2; Romans 9:1-5; I Corinthians 7:17-20)

Grafted in, Jew and Gentile, One in Messiah Yeshua

The Torah is G_d's gift to Israel. It serves as the constitution of the Jewish people and thus also of the Messianic community, which comprises Israel's firstfruits and those grafted in. The Torah provides our essential instructions for healthy behavior and practical life teaching for all peoples. The Torah is to be applied anew in every generation, and in this age as is fitting to the New Covenant order. (Matthew 5:17-20; II Timothy 3:16-17; I Corinthians 7:17-20)

Forgiveness of sins, spiritual renewal, union with Messiah, the empowering and sanctifying presence of the indwelling Ruach Ha Kodesh, the confident hope of eternal life, and a glorious resurrection are now available to all, Jews and Gentiles, who put their faith in Yeshua, the Risen Lord. In obedience to His word they are joined to Him and His Body through immersion and sustained in that union through Messiah's remembrance meal. Yeshua is the Mediator between G_d and all creation, and no one can come to the Father except through Him. (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; John 14:6; Romans 6:22, 23; I Corinthians 11:23-27)

Main Document Section

Purpose

1.0 Purpose:

We are a Messianic Jewish congregation located in the Shenandoah Valley, seeking to provide community fellowship, promote the study of the Word, and create a place of worship for both Jewish and non-Jewish congregants, who are all one in Messiah.

As with the majority of the Messianic Jewish movement, we are a pronomian (pro-law) congregation that regards the Torah (Law of God) as good, relevant, and holy in our modern world. We seek to apply all instructions of the Torah that are still applicable and life-giving today. The Torah has not been replaced but continues to serve its divine role—to teach, instruct, and edify all people who belong to God.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for restoration, and for training in righteousness, so that the person belonging to God may be capable, fully equipped for every good deed.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

The intended function of all our gatherings—whether in person or online—is to cultivate love for one another and to give glory to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through Yeshua (Jesus), the Messiah of Israel and Redeemer of the world.

1.1 Our Covenant Identity:

We exist to be a place where Jewish people and those from the nations can worship the God of Israel, walk faithfully in their callings, and live a redeemed life in Yeshua.

1.2 Our Instructional Calling:

We also exist to teach and disciple anyone who desires to learn more about the Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the New Covenant Scriptures from a Messianic Jewish perspective.

1.3 Our Proclamation of Faith:

We boldly and joyfully proclaim that Yeshua is the Messiah and Redeemer of the world, and that He is our Rabbi, Master, and Lord. He is the inaugurator of the New Covenant, as spoken of in the Book of Jeremiah, fulfilling the promises made to Israel and extending redemption to the nations.

1.4 Our Greatest Commandments:

Above all, we seek to live in peace and love toward our neighbors, and to love God with all our heart, mind, and strength, as both the Torah and Yeshua command.

1.5 Our Mission to Israel:

We exist to proclaim and share Yeshua with our Jewish brethren, so that they may come to intimately know Him and experience spiritual transformation from within. We believe in a heart and mind renewal, wherein God's Torah is written upon our hearts, just as the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel foretold in the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures).

Scope

2.0 This congregation welcomes all people who have a desire to further their study of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings (Tanakh), along with the Brit Chadasha (New Covenant).

2.1 Community and Welcome:

We seek to create a true sense of community for those who may not yet have one, providing a loving, caring, and compassionate environment that genuinely loves both God and people.

2.2 Invitation to Seekers:

Although we are a Messianic Jewish congregation, we warmly welcome all who come to examine the claims of the Brit Chadasha (New Covenant) and the teachings of Yeshua—even those who may not believe that He is the Messiah.

2.3 Inclusivity and Love:

Regardless of an individual's background, we are a place of welcome for all who have a heart for Israel, a love for the Jewish people, and reverence for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This invitation also extends to those who may not yet know God but are curious, seeking, or desiring to learn more about Him and His Word.

2.4 Restoration of Jewish Practice:

In connection with Purpose 1.1, we seek to equip and assist Jewish congregants and Jewish individuals in the continuation and restoration of Jewish practice, especially those who may have become estranged from their heritage for any reason, yet desire to reconnect with or continue in these treasured traditions.

2.5 Educational Opportunities:

We provide meaningful learning opportunities through weekly sermons, Torah Club studies, and other educational classes that are open to all who wish to learn more about biblical customs, Jewish traditions, and the foundational teachings of faith in Yeshua—taught from a Messianic Jewish perspective.

Core Beliefs

3.0 – The Nature of God and Love for Others

We believe that there is only one God, who has revealed Himself as our Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe in loving our neighbors as ourselves and in loving God with all our mind, soul, strength, resources, and all that we have.

He shows equal love and value to all who fear Him, love Him, and enter covenant with Him through Yeshua the Messiah, whether they are Jews or Gentiles (non-Jews).

Our identity is in Yeshua; therefore, we worship together in unity and show love to guests, fellow community members, and others in the public sphere.

Our beliefs should be reflected in both word and deed throughout our everyday lives.

3.1 – The Torah as Foundation

We believe the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) is good and holy, the foundation and beginning of God’s redemptive plan that began with Israel and continues—both within Israel and outward to the nations of the world.

3.2 – Authority of Scripture

We believe in all the words of the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures), the Besorah (Good News/Gospel) of Yeshua, the apostolic writings, and all of the Brit Chadasha (New Covenant/New Testament) as received and understood by the larger Body of Messiah (Christ).

“The writings of Tanakh and Brit Chadasha are divinely inspired and fully trustworthy (true), a gift given by God to His people, provided to impart life and to form, nurture, and guide them in the ways of truth. They are of supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and practice.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21) — Tikkun America

3.3 – Righteousness through Yeshua

We believe that Yeshua’s atoning work at the tree (cross) causes us to be seen as righteous before our Father in Heaven, enabling us to become sons and daughters of God—in covenant with Him through Yeshua.

3.4 – Jew and Gentile in One Covenant

We believe that entering covenant with Yeshua has grafted the righteous of the nations (God-fearers) into that covenant, making both Jew and Gentile equally valued participants in the New Covenant and equal disciples of Yeshua.

(Romans 11:11-31; John 1:12; Ephesians 2:19-22; Hebrews 2:11; Romans 8:14-17; Mark 16:16)

3.5 – Unity of Believers Worldwide

We serve the vision expressed in Yeshua’s prayer for unity among all true believers (John 17:21-23) and work to build the community of faith (Matthew 16:18)—the Ekklesia—both within local congregations and as part of the global family of faith.

(Tikkun Global – <https://www.tikkunglobal.org/values>)

3.6 – The Continuing Jewish Calling

We believe that Jews have a unique calling to continue living as Jews—faithfully following Yeshua—without forsaking their traditions or customs, but rather continuing them as part of Messianic Judaism centered in Yeshua.

3.7 – God’s Covenant with Israel

God chose Israel, the Jewish people, and entered into an everlasting covenant with them so they might be firstfruits of a renewed humanity, mediating blessing and restoration to all nations.

In gracious love, God gave to Israel the holy Torah as a covenantal way of life and the Land of Israel as an inheritance and pledge of the blessing of the World to Come.

(Genesis 12:1-3; Jeremiah 31:34-37; Romans 11:28-29) – Tikkun America

3.8 – Messiah’s Unified Community

Messiah’s community is one body, expressed in diverse forms within both the Jewish community and the nations.

All are called to a dedicated life of worship, neighborly service, and public testimony to Yeshua. Unity and love throughout the community confirm Yeshua’s role as the One sent by the Father and reveal God’s purpose in Messiah for Israel and the nations.

(John 17:20-21; Acts 21:20; Galatians 2:7-8 – Tikkun America / UMJC)

3.9 – Participation of Non-Jews

Together with the wider Messianic Jewish community, we believe that non-Jews are not obligated by covenantal decree to live according to Jewish law or custom, yet they are welcome and privileged to participate fully in festival observances, community events, and life-cycle celebrations as equally valued members of the congregation.

(Acts 15:1-35; MJRC Halakha § 2 “Jews, Gentiles, & Messianic Jewish Congregations: Introduction”)

3.10 – Equality in Covenant

We believe that Jews are not superior to Gentiles, nor Gentiles to Jews; all are equal in covenant with Yeshua the Messiah.

(Ephesians 2:11-3:6; Galatians 3:13-14, 28-29)

God shows no partiality, but loves all who fear Him.

Nevertheless, the Jewish people remain the first-fruits nation of God, and the promises and blessings spoken over them in the Tanakh continue both now and in the future.

Their responsibilities likewise endure.

Gentiles are not to replace Israel—neither covenantally nor in calling—but to stand beside them in love and partnership.

The community of Messiah must therefore walk in mutual respect and love, fulfilling the command, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

(Galatians 5:13-15 TLV; Romans 9:24-33 TLV; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:30-31)

3.11 – Tikkun Global’s Twofold Vision

We affirm Tikkun Global’s declaration: “Tikkun Global has a twofold vision: to Israel and to the nations. We are a global family, contending for the Acts 1:8, 2:17, and 3:19-21 vision of revival and restoration—from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth and back again to Israel. We seek to partner with believers from all over the world to this end. God’s One New Man (Eph. 2:15), His Olive Tree (Rom. 11), is made up of Israel and the nations; when we come together in Yeshua, blessing will follow (Ps. 133).” — Tikkun Global

3.12 – Purpose of the Torah

The Torah is God’s gift to Israel, serving as the constitution of the Jewish people and likewise of the Messianic Jewish community, Israel’s eschatological firstfruits.

Although the Torah does not hold the same covenantal role for Messianic believers from the nations, it provides spiritual nourishment, bears witness to the Messiah, and offers universal moral instruction. The Torah is to be applied afresh in every generation, as is fitting for the New Covenant order. (Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 7:17-20 – Tikkun America / UMJC)

3.13 – Obedience as the Fruit of Redemption

We believe that obedience to the Father through Yeshua is the fruit and evidence of redemption in the New Covenant—but not the means of salvation.

Followers of Yeshua should possess hearts that delight in pursuing the Mitzvot (commands) of Hashem (God) out of love for Him.

3.14 – Prayer for Jerusalem and Israel

We believe that praying for the peace of Jerusalem and for Israel as a nation is a biblical mandate for all followers of Yeshua.

(Psalm 122:1-9; Isaiah 62:1-12; Genesis 12:1-3; Romans 11:1-36; Zechariah 2:8; 2 Corinthians 3:14; Psalm 129:5-6; Psalm 55:9; 1 Samuel 12:22; Psalm 17:7-9; Romans 9:24)

3.15 – Hope of Messiah’s Reign

We eagerly await Messiah Yeshua’s return to rule and reign from Jerusalem.

(See “Additional Documents” – Yeshua’s Return to Rule and Reign on Earth from Jerusalem)

3.16 – Family and Congregational Life

Spiritual life is grounded in godly family units within the relational framework of congregations, where individuals are encouraged, trained, and lovingly disciplined.

Families in Messianic Jewish congregations should be strengthened and established in their Jewish calling to covenant life.

Such congregations are called to connect in Messianic Jewish associations for mutual enrichment and accountability.

(Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1-2; Romans 9:1-5; 1 Corinthians 7:17-20 – Tikkun America)

3.17 – The Five-Fold Ministry

Understanding and embracing the five-fold ministry is essential for equipping followers of Yeshua to perform their works of service.

Leaders are called to exercise one or more of these gifts.

Recognizing and cultivating these callings maximizes effective leadership and prevents individuals from being placed in unsuitable roles.

To advance this purpose, apostles and prophets, as part of larger leadership teams, oversee and coordinate networks of congregations.

(Ephesians 4:11-16 – Tikkun America)

3.18 – The Return of Messiah Yeshua

Messiah Yeshua will return to Jerusalem in glory at the end of this age to reign forever on David's throne.

He will restore Israel in fullness, raise the dead, save all who belong to Him, judge the wicked whose names are not written in the Book of Life, and complete the final Tikkun Olam, uniting Israel and the nations under His eternal rule.

This restoration will bring everlasting joy to all who belong to Him; they will live forever in mutual blessing and fellowship with God in a perfected cosmos.

(Isaiah 9:5-6; Romans 8:18-19; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-4 – Tikkun America)

3.19 – Salvation and New Life in Messiah

Forgiveness of sins, spiritual renewal, union with Messiah, and the empowering, sanctifying presence of the indwelling Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit)—together with the hope of eternal life and resurrection glory—are now available to all, Jew and Gentile alike, who place their faith in Yeshua, the Risen Lord.

In obedience to His Word, believers are joined to Him and His Body through immersion and are sustained in that union through Messiah's remembrance meal.

Yeshua is the Mediator between God and all creation, and no one comes to the Father except through Him.

(Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; John 14:6; Romans 6:22-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-27 – Tikkun America)

Responsibilities

4.0 – Living a Life of Holiness

As an organization, we are to serve God with our entire lives, and in so doing, reflect holiness in all our services, events, and activities that bring honor to His Name.

4.1 – Acts of Righteousness and Restoration

We are to practice Tzedakah (charity), make and instruct disciples, study the Word of God, live in obedience to our Father in Heaven, love our neighbor as ourselves, and be salt and light in this fallen world by performing Tikkun Olam (acts of restoring the world), just as Yeshua instructed.

4.2 – Being Good Witnesses of Yeshua

All people—including elders, community members, visitors, and guests—should show respect to everyone, being a good witness of Yeshua at all times.

Even when presenting truth, it must never be done in an ungodly or harsh manner, as such behavior can have long-lasting and, heaven forbid, eternal consequences, potentially leading someone away from God.

As followers of Yeshua, we carry the responsibility to represent our Messiah and His Kingdom faithfully before the world and all who are in it.

4.3 – Relationships with Other Faith Communities

We seek to maintain good relationships with local churches and synagogues, both within our local community and beyond.

We do not engage in attacks or divisive speech toward Gentile Christian churches, Jewish synagogues or organizations, Messianic Jewish or Messianic Gentile congregations, nor toward any individuals inside or outside of the faith.

Our calling is to walk in humility, peace, and love, building bridges rather than barriers.

4.4 – Respect for Leadership and Partnership

Congregation members are expected to show respect for the current leadership of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation (BZMC) as well as for leaders outside the congregation.

This includes demonstrating love and respectful behavior toward visitors, guests, and those we may partner with locally or abroad.

If disagreements arise, members are asked to refer to Section 5.6 for proper resolution procedures.

4.5 – Dignity and Honor for All

All leaders, community members, guests, visitors, and traveling speakers are to be treated with love and dignity at all times.

It is the obligation and duty of every member who desires to maintain active participation or community member status within the congregation to uphold this principle.

4.6 – The Great Commission

We are called to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24), so that others may come to the knowledge of Yeshua and His Kingdom.

Recommended resource: Dan Juster’s, “*Growing to Maturity*,” as a helpful guide for one-on-one or group discipleship.

4.7 – Commitment to the Scriptures

We are to read, study, discuss, and search the Scriptures—both individually and as a community.

Every Shabbat service will include a public reading of the Torah, Haftarah, and Brit Chadasha, as is customary in Messianic Jewish congregations and synagogues. Other services may include Scripture readings as appropriate but are not required to include all three.

4.8 – Community Giving and Congregational Support

We believe that giving from the heart is both an act of worship and a means of sustaining the ongoing life and ministry of the congregation.

Community giving enables Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation to continue its mission—to teach the Word of God, serve our community, support outreach, and maintain the daily functions of congregational life.

Every member and regular participant is encouraged to give according to the leading of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) and in proportion to the blessings they have received from Adonai.

Giving should not be done out of compulsion, pressure, or obligation, but freely and cheerfully, as an expression of gratitude and covenant partnership with God.

“Each one should give just as he has decided in his heart—not grudgingly or under compulsion—for God loves a cheerful giver.”

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

“On the first day of every week, let each of you set something aside and save up, as he may prosper, so that no collections need to be made when I come.”

(1 Corinthians 16:2)

These verses reflect both the heart attitude of giving and the principle of regular, intentional generosity. In the Brit Chadasha, giving is not viewed as a tax or obligation, but as a joyful act of worship and stewardship, enabling God’s work to flourish both within the congregation and in benevolence toward others in need.

While many traditional synagogues require membership dues or a fixed 10% contribution, Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation does not impose financial dues of any kind.

We believe that giving should be led by the Spirit, not enforced by policy.

Each person is encouraged to give what the Lord places on their heart, trusting that through collective faithfulness, all the needs of the congregation will be met in a way that honors Adonai.

Procedures

5.0 – Purpose of Procedures

We seek to have standards and organization that allow for clear dialogue and communication, and that provide a structure for mutual expectations within the congregational setting. This section will primarily include the who, what, when, where, why, and how. It will also detail membership, the leadership approval process, conflict resolution, disciplinary action, leadership development, and community development.

5.1 – Community Member Status

Our current Community Member Status policy allows anyone who abides by these Congregational Standards of Practice and Halakha, is in good standing with leadership, and maintains good standing with other community members to be recognized as an active community member. Attendees are considered community members after regular attendance for six consecutive months, while continuing to demonstrate commitment to the community. This includes maintaining a pattern of love, compassion, and respect and, most importantly, having a heart for God and His service. Anyone absent for more than six consecutive months will be considered an inactive community member, but may regain active status by attending regularly again for six months.

5.2 – Information Table

The information table is a place for relevant information used to communicate to the congregation about upcoming events, congregation information, visitor packages, BZMC bookstore items, keshet cards, and envelopes. Other items are not permitted to be placed there without leadership's permission. Please reach out to an elder and ask permission first.

This helps prevent excess material on the table; the main purpose is general information for the congregation and visitors.

5.3 – Community Development and Giftings

We cultivate gifts within our community. This includes putting your talents, interests, skills, and ministry gifts to use for the community and developing the next generation of leaders. Whether it is outreach to local churches and synagogues or service within this community, please request to speak with all the elders to learn current ministry needs and to propose opportunities you would like to contribute that may not yet have been considered. This congregation encourages participation and invites you to put those talents to work for the Kingdom.

5.4 – Counting the Tzedakah Box

Counting of the Tzedakah Box must be done by two different adults from two different families in good standing within the congregation. These individuals must be active members who have been attending regularly for at least six months. The counting, reporting/documenting, and sealing of the deposit envelopes must be attested to by both parties before the deposit is made.

5.5 – Chavurah, Outreach, and Intercommunity Activities

Chavurah gatherings (small groups), outreach events, and intercommunity activities are encouraged. We believe the Body of Messiah should meet regularly and interact outside of normal services and events. Whether there are public get-togethers, Torah studies, or home gatherings, they are permitted and encouraged. Leadership can assist or provide resources that expand the glory of Hashem's Kingdom on a case-by-case basis. If any outside group activity or gathering becomes a source of *lashon hara* or a venue for advancing a personal agenda that harms others or the congregation, a correction will be issued to the offending parties.

5.6 – Bringing Concerns and Conflicts to the Elders

If there is a dispute, conflict, concern, or issue of any kind, please bring it before all of the elders. You can request to speak with them at the end of services or set up a meeting. This helps all leadership remain on the same page and ensures that you are heard and that your concerns are taken seriously. If you do not communicate, no one can know what you are thinking, and the matter may remain unresolved. This also includes issues with leadership—please discuss them with all elders present.

We seek peace and unity in this congregation and the maintenance of biblical standards. There will be times when some may not agree with congregational direction or goals, but we must maintain unity and show love, even in disagreement.

5.7 – Warnings and Disciplinary Action

If agreement cannot be reached and there continues to be strife, malice, or outright sin against the congregation and/or leadership, the person will receive two private warnings to stop this behavior. If non-Yeshua-like behavior continues after that, disciplinary action will be taken, up to expulsion from the community.

(Titus 3:9–10: “But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about Torah, for they are unprofitable and useless. Dismiss a quarrelsome person after a first and second warning.”) This also includes unusual behaviors, constant arguing, attempts to “teach” in a contentious spirit, or continually finding fault in ways that stir dissension against leadership and others.

5.8 – Inciting Congregants Against One Another

Leading other congregants against other congregants will result in the same process as 5.7—two private corrections, followed by expulsion if the behavior continues.

5.9 – Public Offenses and Public Corrections

If an offense is committed against either leadership or a community member, and it is public (so that everyone heard it), there will be a public correction from leadership, using the same rules as 5.6 and 5.7.

5.10 – Discipleship and Training

Daily, weekly, or monthly discipleship and training for community members is highly encouraged. This follows the command in Matthew 28 to go into all the world and make disciples. As a community, we should sharpen one another regularly, especially new believers who have only recently come to faith in Messiah. It is critical that they are placed with someone who has the full trust of leadership and who has proven to be compassionate, strong in the faith, responsible, reliable, and biblically sound. The one performing discipleship should stay in contact with the one being disciplined. If the one disciplining encounters questions or problems they do not know or feel uncomfortable addressing, please refer the disciple to leadership. If the situation cannot be resolved by BZMC leadership, trusted leaders from the larger Messianic community (e.g., Tikkun) may be called upon for resolution and advice.

5.11 – D'rash Preparation and Scheduling

D'rash preparation involves sharing a brief message with the congregation on Shabbat mornings during Saturday services. This time is used to study the weekly Torah portion, Haftarah, and Brit Chadasha readings and to deliver a 5–7 minute message. The schedule should be followed as it is updated and published on the d'rash chat page, sent by email, or maintained by the d'rash scheduler. All d'rash messages must be submitted to the current leader, who is in charge of their review, by Wednesday night prior to being shared on Shabbat morning.

5.12 – Biblical Conflict Resolution (Matthew 18:15–17)

Concerns, questions, and problems with another person should first be addressed directly with the individual involved—do not skip this step by going directly to an elder or shamash. (Matthew 18:15–17)

A resolution should first be sought by the persons directly involved. If it cannot be resolved, invite a neutral individual to help mediate. If the issue remains unresolved, leadership may step in to attempt resolution. In extreme cases, an unrepentant offending party may be asked to leave the congregation until they repent. If the issue is with leadership, or a question is for leadership, the person(s) should meet with all three elders to address it.

5.13 – Abuse and Assault

Beit Zayit is committed to being a safe community for everyone, including leaders, volunteers, congregants, and visitors. Allegations of abuse, assault, sexual misconduct, grooming behavior, domestic violence, harassment, or credible threats will be taken seriously and addressed promptly, regardless of a person's role or position. Safety is the first priority. If there is immediate danger, emergency services will be contacted. Any allegation involving a minor or vulnerable adult, or any situation requiring mandated reporting under law, will be reported to the appropriate authorities,

and criminal matters will not be handled only within the congregation. Reports may be made to the overseeing leader, a designated safety contact, or any trusted leader. Leadership will listen without blame, document concerns, protect privacy as appropriate, and implement immediate boundaries, including removal from roles or restrictions from gatherings, to protect those involved while concerns are addressed. If wrongdoing is confirmed, leadership will require accountability and may enact discipline up to removal from leadership or the congregation. Care and support will be offered to the harmed, including referrals to professional counseling when needed. Forgiveness does not remove consequences, and any restoration will require demonstrated repentance, ongoing accountability, and verified safety for the community. **Leviticus 19:16** – Do not stand by, **Numbers 35:30** – Serious charges (witness standard), **Deuteronomy 27:19**, **Psalms 82:3-4** – Protect the vulnerable, **Proverbs 18:17** – Examine both sides, **Proverbs 31:8-9** – Speak up for the oppressed, **Romans 13:4** – Civil authority, justice, **1 Corinthians 5:11-13** – Remove unrepentant harm, **Ephesians 5:11** – Expose wrongdoing, **James 1:27** – Care for vulnerable, **1 Peter 5:2-3** – No abuse of authority, **Titus 3:10** – Warn, then separate.

5.14 – Leadership Appointment and Accountability

Elders and ministry leaders are appointed through prayer, discernment, and agreement among current leadership, in accordance with the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

Leaders are accountable to God, one another, and the congregation to live in integrity, humility, and service.

Periodic meetings or mutual evaluations among leadership ensure continued alignment with the congregation's mission and values. Any concerns regarding leadership conduct should follow the process in Section 5.6 (Bringing Concerns and Conflicts to the Elders).

5.15 – Use of Congregational Facilities and Resources

All requests to use congregational property, rooms, or resources must be approved by leadership in advance to ensure alignment with BZMC's values and schedule.

Events, studies, or meetings held on-site should reflect the congregation's mission, uphold its standards of practice, and not conflict with other planned activities.

Leadership reserves the right to deny or reschedule requests that conflict with the spiritual or operational priorities of the congregation.

5.16 – Confidentiality and Privacy

All conversations regarding personal or congregational matters should be handled with discretion, respect, and confidentiality.

Gossip, rumor, or public sharing of private issues violates the commandment against lashon hara (evil speech) and will not be tolerated.

Members are encouraged to seek resolution privately and biblically, protecting one another's dignity and trust.

Violations of confidentiality that result in harm to others will be addressed according to Sections 5.6 through 5.8.

5.17 – Code of Conduct for Communication (Digital and In-Person)

All communication—whether digital (group chats, social media, email) or in-person—should reflect the same honor, love, and integrity expected during congregational life.

Negative speech, personal attacks, or divisive conversation in online forums or social settings can damage the reputation and unity of the congregation.

When in doubt, use wisdom and refrain from posting, sharing, or saying anything that could be misunderstood, slanderous, or hurtful to others.

5.18 – Emergency and Safety Procedures

Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation prioritizes the safety and well-being of all attendees. In case of an emergency, follow the instructions of the Elder of Security and Hospitality or other designated leaders.

All community members are encouraged to remain calm, assist others, and ensure that children and guests are cared for appropriately.

Periodic safety checks and training may be conducted to ensure the congregation is prepared for medical, weather, or security-related situations.

Introduction to Congregational Halakha

6.0 The congregation seeks to be a place that honors and respects Jewish traditions and customs. Many of the same practices that are found in traditional Judaism are also found in Messianic Judaism. Because of this, this section will also define our views and approaches for what we see as applicable as followers of Yeshua, in the diaspora, and without a standing Temple.

We seek to align ourselves with what the UMJC defines as Messianic Judaism and with what the Bible says about the beliefs that Jews and Gentiles should continue living in their callings.

However, this section should also serve as a resource for information for all of us, and at the same time, a reference for how we would view an issue that may not have an immediate biblical answer that needs clarification or guidance. This would include Jewish customs, synagogue etiquette, and practices.

“The Jewish tradition serves as the living link that connects us as contemporary Jews to our biblical past and provides resources needed to develop a Messianic Jewish way of life and thought. Furthermore, the Christian theological tradition offers riches of insight into the revelation of the Messiah and His will, and Messianic Jews need to draw upon this wealth.”
(1 Thessalonians 2:15; Romans 13:7; Jude 3) (Tikkun America)

As such, we accept the MJRC (Messianic Jewish Rabbinic Council) as a legitimate organization, and by this recognition, we have adopted a large majority of their Messianic Jewish Halakha that they have enacted and will accept those rulings and recommendations. Any exceptions to this model will be listed in this section in greater detail if we find a ruling or guideline that we may differ with.

Some of the Halakha from the MJRC will be directly included, as we strongly align with many of their rulings and stances. However, we encourage the community members of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation to read the MJRC Halakha for themselves for additional reference. Those articles will be included as a separate document.

This Halakha should serve as the primary guide for disputes, direction, alignment, common practices, and how we are expected to conduct ourselves in and outside of the congregational space.

6.1 – Halakhic Stance of Beit Zayit Leadership

This is the Halakhic stance from all of the leadership of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation in this section 6.1. We do not enforce a systemic or all-encompassing Halakha for individuals while they are in their homes, with their families, or when they are in public.

The only exception to this ruling falls under Section 4 of this *Congregational Standards of Practice*, in which we are to live godly lives, respect others, and show Yeshua-like behavior at all times. This also includes being a good witness of Yeshua, Hashem, and this community.

We realize that others may have different degrees of personal Halakha, and we do our best to accommodate some of these practices, but we cannot accommodate all expressions entirely. This is due to the following reason from Tikkun America:

“Messiah’s community is a single community expressed in diverse forms within the Jewish community and among the nations.” (Section 3.8)

Due to this, we have a wide range of individuals who are members, non-members, and visitors who don't have the same Halakha in every aspect of their personal walk. However, we do have universal Halakha that applies to all when we meet together for any occasion, and these rulings are described in the following sections.

If someone asks a member of the community what their stance is on an issue, custom, or Halakhic belief, then that is perfectly acceptable—both to ask and to answer. As stated before, there are many expressions of Judaism commonly found in any given Messianic group, and many in Messianic Judaism that are from different branches of Jewish life.

On top of that, by sheer number, most people who go to a Messianic congregation or synagogue are not Jews themselves. Because of this, many congregations and synagogues will not have a Halakha that is mandatory on all of their members.

Commonly, it is acceptable to have one's own personal Halakha in Messianic Judaism. However, there are still universal norms that are implemented, and those will be shared in the remainder of this section.

As mentioned in the next section (6.2), Halakha is supposed to be dynamic, changing to adapt to life and the circumstances that arise. Furthermore, the MJRC is the only Halakha in existence that is accepted—or at the very least respected—as a guiding source in the Messianic Jewish community.

One should feel a connection with the larger community when they follow similar customs and practices. Participating in a Jewish space such as Messianic Judaism should have a familiar feel with other communities, but at the same time, each community should be unique and also dynamic, not too rigid in its practices. Being flexible and adaptive allows more people to enter the common Jewish space while having a chance to be involved in that community.

6.2 – Definition and Nature of Halakha

Halakha refers to the authoritative application of the rules of the Torah in the form of concrete decisions in response to the circumstances of daily life—all in the context of the covenant life of the people of Israel. Because every age, location, culture, and socio-political circumstance is unique, new questions inevitably arise which lead to fresh developments in Halakha.

Thus, while rooted in a stable ground of well-defined and universally recognized laws, Halakha remains dynamic—a living and growing organism rather than a static and inflexible legal code. Halakhic authority consists in the communally acknowledged competence to interpret, develop, and apply the rules of the Torah for a particular situation and social group. *(1.1.1 MJRC)*

6.3 – Conduct Regarding Disputes About Torah

There is to be no fighting or arguing about the Torah. Discussion and differences are permitted, but arguments and divisive discourse will not be tolerated, including consistent anger, showing signs of hostility, or conversation that incites arguments and dissension toward the larger Messianic Jewish community, including this local community.

Refer to Sections 5.6 through 5.9 if the issue cannot be resolved.

(Titus 3:9 – “But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.”)

6.4 – Halakhic Authority, the Bilateral Ekklesia, and the Wounded Two-Fold Tradition

Though the Sages of the rabbinic tradition are legitimate bearers of halakhic authority, they are not the only leaders with such competence. As the embodiment of heavenly Wisdom and the living Torah, Yeshua Himself is the ultimate earthly source of halakhic authority.

While He acknowledged the authority of some leaders in the wider Jewish community, He also formed His own messianic subcommunity and bestowed upon its designated leaders—the Apostles—the authority to bind and loose (Matthew 16:16–19; 18:18). In doing so, Yeshua was authorizing the Apostles to regulate the life of the messianic community according to their Master’s interpretation of the Torah and according to the guidance of His Spirit, who writes the Torah on the hearts of His disciples (Matthew 28:18–20; John 14:26; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:2–3).

Following their Master, the Apostles respected the authority of the wider Jewish community and its leaders for the governance of public Jewish life (Acts 23:4–5) but also asserted their freedom to diverge from its rulings when they were clearly incompatible with the commandments of the risen Messiah (Acts 4:18–20; 5:27–32).

The halakhic authority given to the Apostles by Yeshua had a bilateral character, in conformity to the bilateral character of the *ekklesia* in which it was exercised.

(The ekklesia of Yeshua is inherently bilateral in that it is constituted by two distinct yet united corporate spheres—one primarily made up of Jews and the other primarily made up of Gentiles.)

The halakhah appropriate to the Jewish ekklesia differed from the halakhah appropriate to the multinational ekklesia (Acts 15:19–21; Acts 21:17–26; 1 Corinthians 7:17–19), and it appears as though each of the Apostles had a mandate to function primarily in one or the other sphere (Galatians 2:7–10).

The tragic disappearance of the Jewish ekklesia and its halakhic tradition disrupted the transmission of this bilateral halakhic tradition. In losing its Jewish center and its bilateral context, the entire community of Yeshua’s followers suffered a grave wound which disfigured its understanding and application of the Torah.

Nevertheless, in its many diverse historical expressions and traditions, the multinational commission from the Messiah to shape a covenantally faithful way of life continued. Along with this commission came a type of “halakhic” authority (for a community of non-Jews attached to Israel) and the presence of the Spirit; the risen Yeshua continues to speak and act in its midst.

The disappearance of a messianic ekklesia within the Jewish people also damaged the halakhic and prophetic capacity of “catholic/universal Israel,” which remains incomplete without the presence of Jewish disciples of Yeshua at its very heart, and without a living connection to the multinational ekklesia which has been joined by the Messiah to Israel as its extension among the Gentiles.

Nevertheless, in their many diverse historical expressions and traditions, the Jewish people and their recognized leaders have retained their legitimate halakhic authority, and God continues to operate among them and through them in order to shape their life in accordance with the Torah.
(1.1.3 MJRC)

6.5 – Head Coverings and Respect for the Torah

Tallitot, scarves, and kippot are available for use during our services. All are welcome to wear a kippah or other respectful head covering during service, but no one is to force or coerce anyone to wear a head covering if the individual doesn’t want to or feel led to do so.

This ruling applies to all elders, guests, community members, visitors, or visiting speakers.

The only exception to this ruling—in which we would ask that a head covering be worn—is if one approaches the bima with the Torah scroll placed on it, and if someone holds, carries, or reads from the Torah scroll.

This is to show respect in the presence of God’s Word and in remembrance of the giving of His Torah at Mount Sinai, a most holy event.

6.6 – Women Wearing Tallitot and Kippot

While there are different beliefs in Judaism at large and some in the Messianic community on this topic, we are leaning more to the Orthodox understanding on this issue, due to the biblical *mitzvot* of not wearing the opposite genders or sex’s clothing (*Deuteronomy 22:5*.) This command states that a man should not wear the clothing of a woman and vice versa.

With the information we have reviewed and considered, it is our view that we highly discourage women from wearing *tallitot*. The only exception to this is *tallitot* that appear feminine in their design. There are several Messianic Jewish cantors that wear feminine *tallit*-styled garments, but many will wear a decorative shawl instead.

However, we have also considered that if a woman wants to fulfill the command of *tzitzit*, as cited from the quoted source in the Additional Documents under section 6.6, then she is free to do so— **only in that case**. But if the woman who wants to wear a *tallit* does so just to protest or in spite, showing a rebellious nature toward the tradition or understanding, then she should not wear one at all at any time during services.

No member of the congregation, however, will ask a woman to remove a *tallit* if there is someone wearing one.

We would like to establish a biblical underpinning by stating that a traditional *tallit*, *gadol* or *katan*, is a man's garment, and the Torah does not mention that a *tallit* is to be worn by anyone. The tradition of the *tallit* has always been a man's garment, historically; that is why we are not in favor of women wearing them as an established norm. (Please see Additional Documents under section 6.6 for more information.)

6.7 – Respectful Handling of the Sefer Torah Scroll

Respectful handling of the *Sefer Torah* scroll when coming into contact with the scroll is paramount and must be obeyed at all times with no exceptions. In our congregation, there is nothing more holy than the Torah scroll, the ark, and the *bima* on which it is read from.

Firstly, the list for respectful and correct handling is found in *Code of Jewish Law, Yoreh De'ah 282*:

“A special place should be designated for storing the Torah while it is in your home. One must always be fully dressed and respectfully behaved while in the room where the Torah is being stored, so the designated room should be chosen accordingly—not the bedroom or game-room... One may not sit or stand on a chair, table, or bed which the Torah is lying upon.

The Torah should always be held upright, resting against the right shoulder. When the Torah is being carried from one place to another, those nearby must rise and remain standing until the Torah reaches its destination or is out of sight. When the Torah is being transported, ideally it should be held by a person, instead of being placed on a car seat or in the trunk.

A Torah scroll may never be placed on the ground. No other item should be placed on top of a Torah. A Torah should always be placed upright; never upside down or on its face.”

Our congregation permits the Torah scroll to be brought out and viewed by others outside of normal services. Please refer to Section 6.10 for rulings concerning interacting with the Torah scroll outside of normal services.

(Chabad.org citation based on Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah 282:1–19. For more specifics, please see Sefaria.org:

https://www.sefaria.org/Shulchan_Arukh%2C_Yoreh_De'ah.282.1?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en)

6.8 – Requirements of Correct Behavior When Near the Torah Scroll

We understand that people are social creatures, and it is good to have discussions. This section describes the accepted and unacceptable speech and behaviors that are done in the Torah's presence.

Acceptable discussion includes describing the details of the Torah along with its history and any biblical connections, including historical insights. Also acceptable are helpful opportunities for learning about the scroll or biblical story, insightful remarks, rabbinic commentary, listing special markings throughout the Torah, or educational insights.

When the Torah Team is rewinding the scroll or finding the next readings, all of these previously stated rulings are acceptable to discuss, and the Torah Team is free to invite people to look at the weekly readings and discuss the portions and connections. It is also acceptable to laugh—respectfully so—in front of the Torah scroll and to speak good, wholesome remarks that uplift one another.

Prohibited discussion includes *lashon hara* (evil speech) that spreads libel, harms the reputations of others, or leads others against current leadership at any level. Creating factions and dissension along with causing undue strife are strictly prohibited. Such language includes gossip, speech that is not edifying nor respectful toward other individuals, and hateful intentions toward another brother or sister in Messiah or any outside the Body of Messiah.

No speech involving church bashing, synagogue bashing, anti-Semitic remarks, or negative comments about mainstream Christianity is to be tolerated in the presence of the Torah scroll.

The penalty for violating these rulings is severe, no matter if the offender is a Rabbi, elder, Pastor, member of the Torah Team, community member, guest, visiting speaker, or any other acting leadership at any level.

The correction procedure includes a minimum of a stern correction from the Elder of Pastoral Care and Instruction or a member of the Board of Elders. A maximum correction of two times will be granted based on the book of Titus (see section about dealing with contentious persons).

If the person who has received two formal corrections from the Board of Elders has shown continued attitudes of contempt, harshness, and general negativity toward any member of the community, then they will be temporarily suspended from handling the Torah scroll, up to expulsion from the community until repentance is made and amends are done, if applicable. The decision for temporary or permanent suspension is to be taken case-by-case by the Board of Elders.

If the offending person has not been removed from the community, they are, however, permitted to kiss the Torah, look at the Torah, and continue to be a part of the service even if they have been suspended from handling or carrying the Torah scroll.

The reason the penalty is so high is due to the holy nature of the *Sefer Torah* scroll, and it must be respected by all who attend our congregation, including all who handle and carry the Torah scroll, especially.

Other behaviors that are not to be done in the presence of the Sefer Torah scroll include:

loud clapping if the Torah is on the *bima* and uncovered, odious applause, undue noise during any Torah service, cuss words or ill-worded speech in the presence of the scroll, gossip or hearsay, disrespectful behavior toward others in the presence of the Torah scroll, yelling, displaying unclean body language or gestures, and harboring contempt in the heart of anyone holding the Torah scroll.

In the case where you find yourself angry with a neighbor or at an outside influence, that person should abstain from touching the scroll until such matters are resolved. If asked to carry the Torah, the person carrying, lifting, or dressing it should keep the above in mind before interacting with the scroll.

This ruling applies to all people who interact with the scroll. The only exception to loud voices or clapping is *Simchat Torah*, where it is appropriate to dance, clap, and praise more loudly in the presence of a covered *Sefer Torah* scroll.

During normal Shabbat Torah services, however, there should be no dancing up front near the *bima* or in the aisles during the Shabbat. This ensures that attention is focused on the Torah service with reverential respect and focus, and also maintains the safety of persons to prevent anyone from running into or tripping onto the Torah scroll by accident.

6.9 – Exception to MJRC’s Ruling on Involvement with the Sefer Torah

An exception to MJRC’s ruling on involvement of the *Sefer Torah* is cited here:

Their ruling states, “Lifting the Torah (*hagbah*) and dressing the Torah (*gelilah*) should normally be restricted to Jews.”

We do agree with the unique calling of the Jewish people to be those who have the responsibility to continue being the people of the Torah—the people of the Book—and we would like to grant the honor of *hagbah* and *gelilah* to a Jewish congregant if they would be interested or felt led to do so, along with joining the Torah Team.

We will, however, allow a Gentile to carry, lift, and dress the *Sefer Torah*. We feel that a person who has made covenant with Hashem through Yeshua, in the New Covenant, is permitted to be involved with the scroll.

However, and with no exceptions, this applies only if that Gentile has a commitment to the God of Israel, the sanctity of the *Sefer Torah* scroll, the Jewish people continuing to be the people God has chosen to keep His Torah throughout all generations, and shows respect to the holy nature of the Torah and all services that are connected to the *Sefer Torah*. Then they may be involved with the *Sefer Torah* scroll.

(Please see: 2.5.3.2 Torah Aliyot, MJRC.)

6.10 – Procedure for Handling the Torah Scroll Outside of Normal Beit Zayit Services and Events

When handling the Torah scroll outside of normal service hours or Beit Zayit's events—no matter what kind of event or ceremony is to take place—it must be done with the permission of Beit Zayit leadership, and the Torah scroll must be accompanied by at least one leader of the congregation.

However, the Torah scroll may be viewed, re-rolled, and handled by a member of the Torah Team outside of normal services for the purpose of finding the next Torah reading or for security initiatives.

The Torah Team may also check in to ensure that the ark is secure and should report any suspicious findings such as broken locks on the ark, signs of tampering, damage to the *bima*, or any other cause for alarm.

Such damage, suspicious activity, or ill will toward the community's ark, scroll, or *bima* should be reported immediately to leadership.

If any person is found to violate either of the above-mentioned rulings, it will result in correction up to a maximum of immediate expulsion from the community, suspension, or at a minimum, an official correction (only two of which are granted).

The scroll belongs to the community of Beit Zayit and not to any one person alone. Therefore, the sanctity and safeguarding of the *Sefer Torah* scroll are under the protection and oversight of the Board of Elders along with the Chief Elder/Rabbi, with the assistance of the Torah Team in their actions.

6.11 – Cohen and Levite Honors

If there is a Cohen or Levite among the congregation, or if there is a Cohen or Levite guest or visitor present during the Aaronic Benediction, they should be given the honor or privilege to recite the priestly blessing both during the *Amidah* and at the end of the services, if that individual is willing to do so in the spirit of their calling and continuation of this biblical tradition.

6.12 – Adult Supervision and Appropriate Meeting Conduct

There must be at least two adults present—whether it is for Shabbat school, any class, meeting, or event where children are present. If there are not at least two adults present for any of the above gatherings, then the event or gathering cannot be held, or it must be postponed until such a time when there are at least two adults present.

Along with this ruling, if a male leader of the congregation needs to meet with a female of any age—whether a community member, guest, or female in proximity to a Beit Zayit event—then he must have at least one or more people present. The leader’s wife should be present if at all possible. At the very least, there must be one other person present, with no exceptions.

This ruling also applies to others when meeting in the congregational space or any other meeting in proximity to Beit Zayit events and gatherings.

6.13 – Ritual Purity

Ritual purity, other than *Niddah* (a woman’s menstruation period) and requirements for purity of a Cohen (Levitical priest), is not valid while there is no standing Temple in Jerusalem or ruling Sanhedrin. Since those days, all are considered “unclean” or “not pure” unless they are cleansed by the ashes of a red heifer in the manner the Torah prescribes.

According to Chabad and other Jewish sources, there is no reason to concern ourselves with ritual impurity at this time, other than the *Niddah* or Cohen requirements. Because of this, someone who touches a dead body within the week before Passover or during that same week can still partake of a Passover *Seder* meal with their community and with this community.

Ritual impurity does not prevent participation in congregational worship or festival meals at this time, since there is currently no Temple service or sacrificial eating of holy foods. This includes impurity from contact with the dead and *niddah*. Women during *niddah* may be present and participate fully in Shabbat services, festival gatherings, and Passover Seders. Touching or carrying a Torah scroll is not prohibited on the basis of *niddah*, though some individuals may choose to refrain as a personal custom. We respect personal stringencies, but we do not exclude, restrict participation, or assign lesser standing to anyone due to ritual impurity. (Please see Additional Documents under section 6.13 for more information.)

6.14 – Value for Individual P’sak (Halakhic Decision-Making)

“The complexity and variability of life situations mean that MJRC standards do not, and will not ever, provide all that is needed by our rabbis in rendering halakhic decisions. Therefore, MJRC halakhic standards are not the final word on any given issue. MJRC member rabbis are empowered to render halakhic decisions contrary to the written standards in particular moments (not as an ongoing alternative position) if they encounter presenting factors which contraindicate the application of halakha presented in the standards. Of course, any issue which has yet to be addressed in written MJRC standards can be decided by individual rabbis based on their own engagement with the halakhic factors at hand.”

(Citation: MJRC, from section 5.1 Family Purity: Decision & Commentary)

6.15 – Listening Ear to Christian Tradition

(From the MJRC)

Considering the care, discernment, and guidance from our higher Messianic Jewish authorities, we will engage with the larger Christian world, where there are many common faith practices and similarities that we do share with the rest of the Body of Messiah. Some practices and systems will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

While we feel led to continue in a strong Jewish expression within our direct community and the larger Messianic Jewish world, we agree strongly with the MJRC, particularly in all related blessings and *mitzvot* involving our shared connection with the broader community of Yeshua.

“The MJRC will engage with the wisdom of the Christian Church in developing specifications, *gezeirot* (legal fences), and/or *takanot* (decrees rooted in communal authority), especially as they relate to *mitzvot mashiach*.”

(Citation: MJRC, from section 5.1 Family Purity: Decision & Commentary)

6.16 – Commandments That Carry More Weight and Prioritizing Authorities

Commandments that carry more weight and prioritizing authorities is crucial to be included in this *Halakha* due to confusions and misconceptions of where we draw our authority from. In other words, we place greater weight on the written Torah and the written words of the apostolic commandments than on other authorities.

While we do believe in the wisdom and rulings laid down by the sages, we will always defer to our Master Yeshua’s words, the *Brit Chadasha* (New Covenant Writings), apostolic writings, and our modern Messianic Jewish authorities over other authorities when it comes to the final word on any issue and as followers of Yeshua.

This is also the case if contrary writings or discourse occur, including any other rabbinic sources, sages, or rulings that contradict or oppose Scripture. We will always defer to the *Tanakh*, the *Besorot* (Gospels), *History* (Acts), *Epistles* (Apostolic Writings), and *Prophecy* (Revelation) as the Scriptures and authorities with the most weight in all matters.

This should by no means be taken to imply that we do not respect or believe that the sages, the *Mishnah*, the *Talmud*, or *Gemara*, along with other Jewish authoritative sources, should be ignored or seen as unimportant. There is much wisdom, order, history, cultural norm, and many rulings for practical, everyday life contained within them.

This section from the MJRC should serve as a guide from which we have derived this decision.

When Prioritizing Mitzvot from Different Sources, Please See the Following:

“Mitzvot d’oraita (commandments derived from the written Torah), mitzvot mashiach (commandments derived from the Apostolic Writings that are not otherwise made explicit in the written Torah), and mitzvot d’rabbanan (commandments instituted by the Sages) are all foundational building blocks of MJRC halakhic decisions.

In situations where conflicts may arise, both mitzvot d’oraita and mashiach carry greater weight than mitzvot d’rabbanan. That said, mitzvot d’rabbanan may still be regarded as normative halakha in MJRC decisions (partially because there is sometimes question as to whether or not a given mitzvah is d’oraita or d’rabbanan).

This position is congruent with the halakhic approach of Jewish tradition, which itself sets standards to safeguard mitzvot d’oraita, even in moments of potential conflict with mitzvot d’rabbanan.

This principle establishes a hierarchy to weigh priorities when conflicting values are present. It is not meant to undermine the importance of mitzvot d’rabbanan in establishing communal norms.”
(Citation: MJRC, 5.1 Family Purity: Decision & Commentary)

6.17 – Pronunciation of the Sacred Name

At Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation, we do not engage in or attempt to pronounce the sacred Name of Hashem (the God of Israel), our Father in heaven. In our prayers and public readings from the Bible, we will say: *LORD, God, Father, Elohim, Eloheinu, Hashem, or Adonai*, with no other exceptions except biblically attributive terms such as *Mighty One of Israel, The Most High, The Almighty, The Supreme Eternal One, The One Above, or The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc.*

These are examples of circumlocutions that can be used to avoid unintentionally blaspheming or making His Name common (unholy). Like the majority of Messianic Judaism, we do not speak His Name publicly or casually, nor refer to one of Hashem’s titles in a place of filth such as a restroom or shower house. Our Father is holy and remains so for all time, and His Name is not to be dishonored or disgraced by common use in non-sacred ways.

The following two articles from Jewish sources align with our view on this subject, and we wish to remain consistent with the larger Messianic Jewish community in this regard.

“The Tetragrammaton, referred to in rabbinic literature as *HaShem* (The Name) or *Shem Hameforash* (The Special Name), is the word used to refer to the four-letter word, *yud-heh-vav-heh* (יהוה), that is the name for God used in the Hebrew Bible. The name, which some people pronounce as Yahweh and others (mostly Christians) as Jehovah, appears approximately 6,828 times in the Hebrew Bible (about 1,820 of those in the Torah).

It is unclear what the original pronunciation of the word was, due to the longstanding Jewish prohibition on speaking God's Name aloud. Instead, a variety of pseudonyms are used, such as *Adonai* (Lord), *Elohim* (God), and *HaShem* (The Name). The four letters of the Tetragrammaton form the root meaning "to be," and some have understood the original meaning to be "He Who Is," or "He Who Brings Being into Being."

The origin of the taboo on pronouncing God's Name aloud—viewing this as irreverent or possibly even a violation of the commandment not to take God's Name in vain—is not entirely clear. However, some attribute it to a Temple practice in which only the High Priest was allowed to utter the Name, and only when in the Temple and reciting the priestly blessing.

In the Mishnah (in Sanhedrin 10:1), as Rabbi Louis Jacobs notes in *The Jewish Religion*, the sage Abba Saul declares that one who pronounces the Divine Name with its letters (i.e., as it is spelled) has no share in the World to Come. Some Jews and non-Jews have suggested that the Name itself has magical power—an idea that Maimonides dismissed but that is embraced in some Kabbalistic (Jewish mystical) texts."

(Citation: *MyJewishLearning.com*, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-tetragrammaton/> — numerical data verified via *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon* and *Encyclopaedia Judaica*)

"Actually, we are careful not to pronounce G-d's Names except when reading the Torah or prayers. Our caution is founded on an understanding of the third of the Ten Commandments: 'You shall not take His Name in vain.' Although this verse is classically interpreted as referring to a senseless oath using G-d's Name, the avoidance of saying G-d's Name extends to all expressions, except prayer and Torah study. In the words of Maimonides, the great Jewish codifier:

It is not only a false oath that is forbidden. Instead, it is forbidden to mention even one of the Names designated for G-d in vain, although one does not take an oath. For the verse commands us, saying: 'To fear the glorious and awesome Name.'¹ Included in fearing it is not to mention it in vain.

Therefore, if because of a slip of the tongue one mentions [G-d's] Name in vain, he should immediately hurry to praise, glorify, and venerate it, so that it will not have been mentioned in vain. What is implied? If he mentions G-d's Name, he should say: 'Blessed be He for all eternity,' 'He is great and exceedingly praiseworthy,' or the like, so that it will not have been mentioned entirely in vain.²

Considering the awe with which we are meant to approach G-d and His Names, the verses in the Prophets which speak of making G-d's Name known are not referring to His actual Name.

Rather, the prophet is saying that the Jewish people should let the world know about G-d's existence—how He is Creator of the world and constantly supervising and recreating every living thing.

Similarly, when the Psalmist regularly refers to praising G-d's Name, he refers to praising G-d's wondrous deeds. This brings us to the obvious question: If the Psalmist means to say that we should be praising G-d Himself, without mentioning His Name, why not just say 'praise Him,' instead of the constant use of the phrase 'praise His Name'?

This question is addressed by the great Chassidic master, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. In very short, he explains that praise, by definition, is the expression of some degree of appreciation—either emotional or intellectual—for the greatness or beauty of the object of praise. The greatness of G-d Himself, however, entirely transcends anything comprehensible to the human mind. Our praise of G-d is generated by the emotional or intellectual appreciation of His greatness, but only as He makes Himself known to us through His various manifestations—embodied and described in the various Names that the Torah calls Him. Hence, the expression ‘Praise His Name.’”

(Citation: Chabad.org, Rabbi Baruch S. Davidson; 1. Deuteronomy 28:58; 2. Mishneh Torah, Laws of Oaths 12:11; 3. Likkutei Torah, Behar 41a, et al.)

6.18 – Participation in Weekly Shabbat Services

One should participate in a weekly Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat service. It is highly recommended and encouraged that both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals participate in Shabbat within the Messianic Jewish community and come together to read, study, and worship the God of Israel through Yeshua the Messiah every week.

This is the responsibility of every observant Jew and should also be important for all in the Messianic community to observe, particularly for community members of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation.

(Please see Law of Messiah, Volume 1 by Michael Rudolph and Daniel Juster for more information.)

“Shabbat is a sign of God's eternal covenant with the people of Israel (Exodus 31:12, 16–17). As such, it is important that Jews gather before God as a community on this day, to honor the covenant and the One who gave it. Jews throughout the centuries have recognized the special importance of gathering on Shabbat for prayer and study.

It is noteworthy that one of the earliest Jewish documents attesting this practice is the New Testament (Luke 4:15–16, 31–33; Acts 13:13–15; 15:21).”

(4.1.3 Participation in Shabbat Services, MJRC)

6.19 – Mixing Personal Business with Ministry

The mixing of personal business or personal agendas is not permitted at the ministry. This includes selling a product or service, adding business material to ministry pamphlets or ministry cards, or promoting a personal website on Beit Zayit literature.

However, one is permitted to offer assistance to a congregant with their business, and a business may assist the ministry.

The reason for this ruling is to maintain the sanctity of worshiping Hashem, honoring our Messiah Yeshua, and studying His Word—without mixing business with ministry for personal profit or gain.

6.20 – Clean Food and Storage

We ask that no unclean meats or products containing unclean ingredients be stored in our refrigerators, storage containers, microwaves, or any other cooking appliances.

If an object is found to be contaminated, then cleaning must be done as soon as possible to ensure no further contact or contamination occurs. This should be followed by a *kashering* process.

(Please read Leviticus 11 for all unclean meats, which also includes shellfish products.)

6.21 – Kashrut and Separation of Meat and Dairy

The wider Jewish and Messianic Jewish community recognizes the separation of meat and dairy, and while many do not hold to this personally, we do ask that food containers be separated from each other as much as possible to ensure that cross-contamination is avoided while at the congregation.

The Oneg Team will ensure that dishes are separated before meals are served. Any meal brought in by a congregant or guest must not contain pork or shellfish at a minimum, which also includes food items made from unclean sources.

We are a congregation, like many others, that keep varying degrees of *kashrut* (rules of keeping kosher), but we require that **Leviticus 11 standards be applied, at a minimum, at all times.** Because of this, we ask that a label be used to list the ingredients—particularly if the food item contains both meat and dairy (including meat and dairy products) in the same dish.

We encourage congregants to bring dishes that contain either dairy or meat, and not both in the same dish if possible.

There are extensive rulings for *kashrut*, and some primary reasons are listed below (though not limited to the following):

- Separating meat from dairy,
- Abstaining from meats listed in Leviticus 11 as unclean,
- Avoiding containers, utensils, or surfaces that have been cross-contaminated with mixed dairy and meat products, and
- Ensuring that containers have not come into contact with unclean meat.

If a dish is discovered to violate the minimum Leviticus 11 command—which includes all shellfish—then the food item will be kindly set aside and not partaken of.

The Beit Zayit Oneg Team will do its best to separate all dishes so there is no cross-contamination of dairy and meat, and to accommodate those who are vegetarian, vegan, or have food allergies.

If an individual's *kashrut* observance, dietary needs, or other restrictions cannot be adequately accommodated—even with the Oneg Team's oversight—then a meal may be brought in and specially marked to ensure that person's meal is not put out with the other food. They will be solely responsible for handling and preparing their meal.

(Please read more from the MJRC in Section 3.1.4 "Separating Meat and Dairy.")

For those who hold to a stricter *kashrut*, please refer to this reference from the MJRC:

"When eating out, the above standards may be relaxed, but one should continue to avoid all meat (and meat products) from non-kosher animals (e.g., pig, shellfish). Beyond this basic practice, we recommend the eating of non-meat meals when eating in non-kosher facilities.

The practice commended here (but not included as basic practice) is taught within the Conservative movement: 'If it is necessary to dine in non-kosher facilities, meat and dishes containing meat may not be eaten. Some sanction only the eating of cold foods, such as salads, if the food contains no forbidden ingredients. Others approve eating permitted fish and other foods, even if cooked.'"

(3.1.5 Eating in Restaurants, MJRC)

6.22 – Doctrinal Boundaries and Fringe Movements

We do not support, endorse, or encourage strange ideologies, false doctrines, cult groups, or fringe movements centered on misconceptions of the Torah, Israel, or Jewish law.

Other behaviors and beliefs that are antithetical to Messianic Judaism and our congregation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *One Law* teachings,
- *Hebrew Roots* teachings,
- *Pseudo-Judaism* teachings and Modern Circumcision Faction groups,
- *Two-House Theory* and *Ephraimite (Twelve Gates)* movement teachings,
- *Replacement Theologys*, and
- *Dual Covenant* teachings.

The eldership seeks and desires to follow God's will, His Word, a respectful view of Jewish culture, literature, and texts, and to remain aligned with the larger Messianic Jewish community while not becoming involved with these movements or ideas.

As a congregation, we aim to be aligned with the wider Messianic Jewish world and, above all, with Hashem's Word and His direction for how we are to practice our faith.

6.23 – Conversion to Judaism

Responsible and authentic conversion to Judaism is acceptable and recognized by BZMC, as well as by the UMJC and Tikken. If a person has undergone the halakhic Jewish conversion process according to all Jewish laws required to do so, then that person is considered as the native-born and will be treated and seen as such in accordance with Judaism proper and by us.

Although many within traditional Judaism may not see a Messianic conversion as acceptable, the Messianic Jewish community will most certainly view it as full Jewish status.

However, there is no biblical commandment to convert in order to be in covenant with God under the New Covenant—that is, a Gentile does not have to convert to Judaism to have covenant relationship with Yeshua. *(Please see supporting documents in “Additional Documents.”)*

Circumcision is, however, required to convert to Judaism and become Jewish, as blood is required even if one is already medically circumcised. Judaism views a person as Jewish if their mother was Jewish, and Messianic Judaism views Jewish status by both mother and father.

While conversion is not generally the norm or encouraged in Messianic Judaism, there are legitimate reasons for someone to convert to Judaism and become Jewish.

This should be a very serious decision, as the individual converting will now be expected to live a Jewish life and apply all the laws of the Torah and Jewish law to their daily life.

Because of this, there are various warnings found in Scripture indicating that conversion is not required to be redeemed or to be in the New Covenant under Yeshua. Another reason, as found in Scripture, is that Paul warns that the individual who converts must follow all of the Torah, as they would then be Jewish and legally bound to live a Jewish life:

“Listen—I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Messiah will be of no benefit to you. Again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised, that he is obligated to keep the whole Torah. You who are trying to be justified by Torah have been cut off from Messiah; you have fallen away from grace.”

(Galatians 5:2–4, TLV)

Conversion is not an absolute within the Messianic community, as many rabbis and Messianic leaders hold differing opinions on the subject. However, this article by Rabbi Dr. Richard Nichol offers additional insight for those interested in the topic.

At this time, Beit Zayit does not offer a conversion process due to the absence of a rabbi to fulfill the Jewish legal requirements. Therefore, we recommend contacting the MJRC for more information and considerations for conversion.

(See also articles by Rabbi Dr. Richard Nichol, "On Conversion," at <https://ourrabbis.org/main/articles/on-conversion-mainmenu-32>, and Richard Harvey's "The Conversion of Non-Jews to Messianic Judaism" at <https://www.kesherjournal.com/article/the-conversion-of-non-jews-to-messianic-judaism-a-test-case-of-membership-and-identity-in-a-new-religious-movement/>.)

6.24 – Who Is Considered a Jew (According to the MJRC)

"Issues of Status, 2.0 Jewish Status: Introduction – Who Is Jewish?"

"NO MAN IS AN ISLAND, ENTIRE OF ITSELF. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main" (John Donne). The same could be said of our movement—we are not an island, entitled to do exactly as we please without reference to others. We are interconnected, not only with each other in our congregations and in our movement, but also with our people Israel, with Yeshua-believers from all nations, with all humankind, past, present, and future. Therefore, what we do must be done with due respect for all concerned.

Because Jews are a shrinking minority, the issue of who claims Jewish identity and on what basis is an especially heated one. Although being Jewish in 21st-century America exacts little or no social cost, this is a recent phenomenon. All of us who are Jews have parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents who endured persecutions, deprivations, and devastations simply because they were Jews.

And since we are connected not only to our immediate families but also to the Jewish people throughout time, when we claim Jewish identity we are laying hold of something precious and costly to a people who have suffered millennia for the privilege of calling themselves Jews.

The Jewish people exist today, and will exist forever, because God has promised that it will do so, and because God is faithful to His promise. At the same time, the primary causality of God is normally active in the world through intermediate causes.

In this case, one of the means God has used to preserve Israel has been Israel's concern for a national consensus on who is and is not a Jew. As a divine instrument employed for a holy end, this concern—and the discussion and decisions it has produced—should be treated with honor and respect.

Therefore, whenever we in the Messianic Jewish movement lay claim to Jewish identity, or whenever we attribute that identity to one of our number, we must take pains to do so in a manner that respects the norms of the wider Jewish world.

In a movement like ours, with many Gentiles who value Jewish life, it would be easy to succumb to the temptation to assign Jewish identity to whoever wanted to lay claim to it. We must not do so. People do not become Jews on their own terms, nor on the basis of their avowed spiritual testimonies. Jewish identity is a communal reality that can only be granted by appropriate community representatives, not something one grabs for oneself from the table of available options or establishes independently through private revelation.

This must not and does not mean that Gentiles are to be denied status in our movement, or that such persons should regard themselves—or be regarded by others—as second-class citizens, God forbid. Nevertheless, of those who are born Gentile, only those who have gone through a responsible halakhic conversion are entitled to claim the name “Jew.” Some, who have Jewish ancestors three or four generations past, should more properly identify themselves as persons of Jewish background.

For those of us who are Jews, or converts through a credible communal process, the definition provided in our standards is one the Jewish world can appreciate as being respectful of the wider community at whose table we are now claiming our place.”

(MJRC)

6.25 – Brit Milah and Baby Naming

The covenant of circumcision (*Brit Milah*) was commanded by God to Abraham and his descendants as the sign of the everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:9–14). For Jewish boys, circumcision on the eighth day is both an act of obedience to God and a sign of their inclusion in the people of Israel.

In Messianic Judaism, *Brit Milah* is observed as part of Jewish covenantal faithfulness, while recognizing that salvation is through Yeshua and not through circumcision (Acts 15:1–11).

For daughters and for Gentile children, a baby naming and blessing ceremony is conducted. This allows the congregation to celebrate the gift of life, bless the child and parents, and dedicate the family to raising the child in the ways of God.

Procedures and Expectations

1. Brit Milah (for Jewish boys)

- Performed on the eighth day after birth, unless health reasons require delay.
- Conducted by a qualified *mohel* (Jewish circumcision practitioner) when possible, with the rabbi or congregational leader present for prayers and blessings.
- Blessings are recited over the child, giving him a Hebrew name and affirming the covenant of Abraham.

- Family and congregation join in celebration, affirming their role in supporting the child's growth in Torah and Messiah.

2. Baby Naming and Blessing (for daughters and Gentile children)

- Conducted during a Shabbat service or in the home with leadership present.
- Parents announce the child's chosen name, and a Hebrew name is given.
- Elders and parents pray blessings from Scripture (Numbers 6:24–26; Luke 2:22–32).
- The child is dedicated to God, and the congregation commits to supporting the family in raising the child in the ways of Yeshua.

References

- **Genesis 17:9–14** – Covenant of circumcision given to Abraham and his descendants.
- **Leviticus 12:3** – Circumcision on the eighth day.
- **Acts 15:1–11** – Affirmation that Gentile disciples are not obligated to circumcision for salvation.
- **Luke 2:21–24** – Yeshua Himself was circumcised and presented in the Temple on the eighth day.

6.26 – Bar Mitzvah / Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

The Bar Mitzvah (age 13 for boys) and Bat Mitzvah (age 12 for girls) are recognized throughout the Jewish world as the traditional coming-of-age ceremonies that mark a child's transition into covenantal responsibility before God and the Jewish community. In the Messianic Jewish context, these ceremonies retain their Jewish covenantal significance while also bearing witness to faith in Yeshua the Messiah.

Through this rite of passage, young Jewish disciples of Yeshua affirm that they are embracing the Torah as their covenantal way of life, walking faithfully in their identity as members of the people of Israel. This milestone affirms both continuity with the Jewish people and fidelity to the New Covenant inaugurated by Yeshua.

Preparation

1. Study and Instruction

- o The youth preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah will meet regularly with a rabbi, elder, or appointed mentor.
- o Preparation includes study of Hebrew, Torah and Haftarah portions, Brit Chadasha readings, synagogue liturgy, and Messianic Jewish halakhic life.
- o Each student will learn to read or chant from the Torah scroll, and to prepare a d'rash (teaching) that shows their understanding of Scripture and their walk with Messiah.

2. Parental Involvement

- o Parents play a central role by encouraging daily prayer and Torah study, and by modeling Jewish life in Messiah within the home.
- o On the day of the ceremony, parents may recite traditional blessings, expressing joy as their child accepts covenantal responsibility.

3. Community Support

- o The congregation provides Hebrew and Torah education as available, and will support the youth in preparation.
- o Families and peers are encouraged to attend and participate in this significant milestone.

Ceremony Outline

1. Torah Service Participation

- o The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called to the bima during the Torah service.
- o They recite the blessings over the Torah and may read or chant a significant portion from the Torah and Haftarah.

2. D'rash (Teaching)

- o The youth presents their prepared d'rash, showing how the week's readings connect to their own faith journey and to Yeshua as Messiah.

3. Blessings

- o Parents recite the traditional blessing acknowledging the child's entry into covenantal responsibility.
- o Elders and leaders pray over the youth, commissioning them as responsible members of the Jewish community and disciples of Yeshua.

4. Community Recognition

- o The congregation affirms the youth with words of encouragement and prayer.
- o A certificate may be presented to commemorate the milestone.

Expectations After the Ceremony

Upon completion of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the young person is recognized as an adult member of the Jewish community, obligated to observe the mitzvot as part of their covenantal identity.

In the Messianic Jewish setting, this includes continued growth in Torah observance, prayer, and community life, while faithfully bearing witness to Yeshua as Messiah of Israel. Youth who have completed Bar/Bat Mitzvah are encouraged to begin serving in congregational life (hospitality, Torah team support, music, children's help, etc.), according to their gifts. The congregation should continue to support and disciple them as young Jewish adults in Messiah, walking alongside them through mentorship, encouragement, and opportunities to serve. This ongoing investment helps them deepen their covenantal identity, live faithfully as members of the people of Israel, and prepare for greater maturity and leadership within the community.

Footnotes & References

1. MJRC Halakha, Section 2.4 – affirms the ongoing covenantal obligations of Jews in Messianic congregations, distinct from those of Gentile believers.
2. UMJC Values Statement – emphasizes the centrality of Torah for Jewish life and fidelity to Scripture as God's Word.
3. Tikkun America, Our Beliefs – upholds the Torah as God's covenantal gift to Israel and the Messianic Jewish community as Israel's eschatological firstfruits.
4. Scriptural Basis – The coming of age in Jewish life corresponds with responsibility for mitzvot (Deuteronomy 6:7; Psalm 119:9; Luke 2:41–47, where Yeshua at age 12 participates in Temple worship).

6.27 – Bar Avraham / Bat Avraham Ceremony

Within our congregation, we affirm the unique covenantal responsibilities of Jewish boys and girls through the Bar Mitzvah (age 13) and Bat Mitzvah (age 12), in accordance with Jewish custom and MJRC Halakha. However, we also recognize that a large portion of our community is made up of Gentile believers who are equally disciples of Yeshua and members of His body. To affirm their place in the community without blurring Jewish covenantal identity, we have adopted the ceremonies of Bar Avraham (for boys) and Bat Avraham (for girls).

The name comes from Scripture itself. Yeshua called a woman “a daughter of Abraham” (Luke 13:16), affirming that both men and women who live by faith are children of Abraham (Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:7). Thus, we acknowledge non-Jewish youth as full participants in the covenant community of Messiah, while maintaining the distinct Jewish calling of Israel.

These ceremonies mark a young person's maturity in the faith, their public identification as disciples of Yeshua, and their readiness to take on greater responsibility in community life.

Preparation

1. Study and Instruction

- o Youth preparing for Bar Avraham / Bat Avraham will meet regularly with an elder or mentor appointed by the leadership.
- o Preparation includes study of the weekly Torah, Haftarah, and Brit Chadasha readings, learning how to read or chant a portion, and developing a short d'rash (teaching) to share.
- o They will also be guided in Messianic Jewish life: prayer, mitzvot of loving one's neighbor, honoring parents, and living as a disciple of Yeshua.

2. Parental Involvement

- o Parents are to take an active role in guiding their child's preparation, encouraging daily prayer and study.
- o On the day of the ceremony, parents or guardians may give a blessing over their child, affirming their growth in Messiah.

3. Community Support

- o The congregation may provide Hebrew or discipleship classes to support preparation.
- o Youth are encouraged to shadow peers who have already completed a Bar/Bat Avraham or Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Ceremony Outline

1. Torah Service Participation

- o The youth is called up to the bima during the Torah service.
- o They may carry or dress the Torah scroll (if trained), and will recite the blessings over the Torah reading.

2. Reading and D'rash

- o The youth reads or chants a portion from Torah, Haftarah, and/or Brit Chadasha.
- o They present a short d'rash (5–7 minutes) connecting the readings to faith in Yeshua and to their personal walk.

3. Blessings

- o Parents give a blessing.
- o Elders and shamashim pray over the youth, commissioning them as a maturing disciple of Yeshua.

4. Community Recognition

- o The congregation affirms the youth with words of encouragement and prayer.
- o A certificate may be presented to mark the milestone.

Expectations After the Ceremony

Upon completion of Bar Avraham or Bat Avraham, the young person is recognized as an adult member within the Messianic Jewish community.

In the Messianic Jewish setting, this includes continued growth in Torah study, prayer, and community life, while faithfully bearing witness to Yeshua as Messiah of Israel. Youth who have completed Bar/Bat Avraham are encouraged to begin serving in congregational life (hospitality, Torah team support, music, children's help, etc.), according to their gifts. They are encouraged to step into greater responsibility in study, prayer, and service to God, affirming their place in the community of Messiah alongside their Jewish peers who also mark maturity through Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The congregation should continue to support and disciple them as young adults in Messiah, walking alongside them through mentorship, encouragement, and opportunities to serve. This ongoing investment helps nurture their faith, strengthen their identity as sons and daughters of Abraham by faith, and prepare them for greater maturity and leadership within the community.

Footnotes & References

1. UMJC Statement of Faith (2012) – Emphasizes “godly family units within the relational framework of congregations... strengthened and established in their Jewish calling to covenant life,” while affirming the participation of Gentiles as full members of Messiah’s body.
2. Tikkun America, Our Beliefs – Stresses the importance of equipping all followers of Yeshua for works of service and establishing congregational accountability.
3. MJRC Halakha, Section 2.4 (“Jews, Gentiles, and Messianic Jewish Congregations”) – Clarifies that Jews and Gentiles have distinct responsibilities within Messianic congregations, while affirming the full participation of Gentiles in community life.
4. Scriptural Basis – Yeshua refers to a woman as a “daughter of Abraham” (Luke 13:16). Paul states that “those who are of faith are children of Abraham” (Galatians 3:7). These texts affirm that both Jewish and Gentile believers can rightly be called sons and daughters of Abraham by faith.

6.28 – Marriage Counseling

Marriage is a covenant established by God in creation (Genesis 2:24) and sanctified in Messiah as a picture of His relationship with His people (Ephesians 5:22–33). In Messianic Judaism, marriage is recognized both as a holy covenant between a man and a woman and as a testimony to the faithfulness of God to Israel and to the body of Messiah. Because of its sanctity, preparation for marriage is a serious responsibility of the congregation.

Pre-marital and marital counseling within BZMC exists to strengthen couples in their faith, prepare them for covenantal partnership, and root their relationship in Messianic Jewish life and values.

Pre-Marital Counseling

1. Requirements Before Marriage

- o Couples desiring to be married by BZMC leadership must undergo a period of pre-marital counseling, normally 6–10 sessions.
- o Counseling should begin no later than six months before the wedding.
- o At least one counselor will be a congregational elder, and where possible, a husband-and-wife counseling team will participate.

2. Content of Pre-Marital Counseling

- o Biblical Foundations: Covenant, headship and partnership, mutual love and respect (Genesis 2:18–24; Ephesians 5; 1 Peter 3).
- o Jewish and Messianic Traditions: Understanding *kiddushin* (sanctification of marriage), *ketubah* (marriage covenant), and the traditional *chuppah* (wedding canopy).
- o Communication and Conflict Resolution: Healthy patterns for dialogue, forgiveness, and peacemaking (Matthew 18).
- o Finances and Stewardship: Biblical principles for money, generosity, and household management.
- o Intimacy and Family Life: Sanctity of sexual union within marriage, building a home that honors Torah and Messiah.
- o Expectations for Congregational Life: Commitment to fellowship, shared service, and raising children in a Messianic Jewish home.

Marital Counseling

1. Ongoing Support

- o Couples may request counseling at any point in their marriage.
- o Counseling will be offered by elders or by approved Messianic Jewish counselors, with confidentiality and pastoral care maintained.
- o Sessions may address challenges such as communication struggles, financial pressures, intimacy issues, or spiritual stagnation.

2. Congregational Role

- o The congregation should encourage and support marriages through prayer, mentorship, and healthy community life.
- o Older married couples may serve as mentors to younger couples, modeling faithfulness and covenantal love (Titus 2:3–5).

Expectations and Boundaries

- Marriage is recognized only between one man and one woman, as established in Scripture.
- BZMC leadership will not officiate or bless unions that contradict biblical standards.
- Divorce and remarriage are weighty matters; counseling and prayerful discernment are required, in accordance with Messiah’s teaching (Matthew 19:3–9; 1 Corinthians 7).

- Counseling is not a replacement for professional therapy in cases of abuse or severe dysfunction; in such circumstances, leadership will refer couples to qualified Messianic or Christian counselors, while offering pastoral support.
-

6.29 – Wedding Ceremony

Weddings within BZMC to be conducted according to Messianic Jewish values, affirming both the biblical covenant of marriage and the richness of Jewish tradition. A Messianic Jewish wedding testifies to the union of man and woman before God, reflects the faithfulness of Messiah to His people, and honors the continuity of Jewish heritage.

The ceremony is performed under a *chuppah* (wedding canopy), signifying the new household being established, with blessings, Scripture readings, and traditional customs incorporated in light of faith in Yeshua.

Pre-Ceremony Elements

1. Ketubah (Marriage Covenant)

- o A *ketubah* is signed before the ceremony, serving as a written declaration of the couple's covenant.
- o The *ketubah* may incorporate Scripture and Messianic language, affirming Yeshua as the foundation of the marriage.
- o Witnesses, typically leaders or elders, sign the *ketubah* along with the bride and groom.

2. Processional and Music

- o Music may include psalms, traditional Jewish melodies, or worship songs.
- o Parents may escort the bride and groom to the *chuppah*.

3. Seven Circuits

- o In some Messianic Jewish ceremonies, the bride circles the groom seven times, symbolizing covenant completeness and the creation of a new household.

Ceremony Under the Chuppah

1. Opening Blessings

- o The officiant welcomes the congregation, explains the significance of the *chuppah*, and opens with prayer.
- o Traditional blessings such as the *Shehecheyanu* (“who has kept us alive to reach this season”) may be included.

2. Scripture Readings

- o Selections from the Tanakh (Genesis 2:24; Song of Songs; Malachi 2:14–16) and Brit Chadasha (Ephesians 5:22–33; Revelation 19:7–9) may be read.
- o Readings highlight both Jewish covenantal heritage and faith in Yeshua.

3. **Exchange of Vows and Rings**
 - o The bride and groom exchange vows, affirming covenantal commitment.
 - o Rings are exchanged as a visible sign of faithfulness.
4. **The Seven Blessings (Sheva Brachot)**
 - o A Messianic adaptation of the traditional *Sheva Brachot* is recited, blessing God for creation, joy, and covenant faithfulness.
 - o Each blessing acknowledges Yeshua as the Bridegroom of Israel and the ultimate fulfillment of covenant joy.
5. **Cup of Wine**
 - o The couple shares a cup of wine, recalling joy, covenant, and the promise of Messiah's return.
6. **Breaking of the Glass**
 - o The groom (and sometimes bride) breaks a glass underfoot.
 - o This symbolizes the destruction of the Temple and serves as a reminder that joy is incomplete until the restoration of Israel.
7. **Pronouncement and Benediction**
 - o The officiant declares the couple husband and wife.
 - o The Aaronic Benediction (Numbers 6:24–26) is spoken over the couple.

Post-Ceremony

- The couple is traditionally led away under a tallit, symbolizing God's covering.
- A joyful celebration follows, including dancing (*simcha*), festive meal, and communal blessings.

Expectations

- Weddings are encouraged be officiated or approved by BZMC leadership.
- Weddings conducted at BZMC will align with Messianic Jewish halakhic standards: one man and one woman in covenant, faith in Yeshua, and respect for Jewish heritage.
- Couples are encouraged to honor both sets of parents and to invite the congregation to share in the celebration, reflecting the communal nature of covenant.

Scriptural Foundations – Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:22–33; Revelation 19:7–9.

Wedding Procedures – Quick Reference Checklist

Before Ceremony

- Pre-marital counseling completed (6–10 sessions).
- Ketubah signed with witnesses.
- Chuppah prepared and set up.
- Music chosen (psalms, worship, or traditional).
- Bride and groom escorted to chuppah.

During Ceremony

- Officiant opens with blessing and prayer.

- Scripture readings (Tanakh + Brit Chadasha).
- Vows and rings exchanged.
- Seven Blessings (*Sheva Brachot*) recited.
- Cup of wine shared.
- Breaking of the glass.
- Pronouncement of husband and wife.
- Aaronic Benediction spoken.

After Ceremony

- Couple led away under tallit (optional).
 - Celebration meal and dancing (*simcha*).
 - Congregation affirms and blesses the couple.
-

6.30 – Funerals and Mourning

Death is a sober but holy part of life, and the way we honor the deceased reflects both Jewish tradition and our hope in the resurrection through Yeshua the Messiah. Funerals and mourning practices in BZMC are conducted with dignity, compassion, and sensitivity, balancing Jewish customs with the comfort of Messiah's promises.

Procedures and Expectations

1. Immediate Support

- o The leadership will provide immediate pastoral care to the bereaved family, including prayer, practical help, and guidance on next steps.
- o The congregation should rally in support, offering meals, comfort, and assistance.

2. Funeral Service

- o A funeral service will normally be held within a few days of death, in keeping with Jewish custom to bury quickly.
- o Services may include psalms, readings from the Tanakh and Brit Chadasha, a d'rash, eulogies, and prayer.
- o Messianic Jewish distinctives include affirming Yeshua's resurrection and the hope of eternal life.

3. Burial Practices

- o Simplicity and dignity are encouraged. A plain coffin is customary in Jewish tradition, but families may choose alternatives as needed.
- o Flowers are permitted, though traditionally minimized. Acts of charity in memory of the deceased are strongly encouraged.

4. Mourning Customs

- o Families are encouraged to observe a modified *shiva* (7-day mourning), including prayer gatherings in the home when possible.

- o *Kaddish* may be recited in a Messianic form, affirming God’s holiness while testifying to the Messiah.
- o The community should continue to support the family for weeks and months afterward, not only during the funeral period.

5. Remembrance

- o Anniversaries (*yahrzeit*) may be marked with prayer and remembrance.
- o The congregation is encouraged to honor the legacy of the departed by continuing their good works and testimony.

Messianic Application – Hope in Yeshua’s resurrection and eternal life (John 11:25–26; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).

Definitions

7.0 This section defines how our community, and the larger Messianic Jewish community, understands and uses certain terms. Establishing these definitions ensures clarity and transparency for all who engage with Beit Zayit, helping to explain Hebrew words, Messianic terms, and theological concepts that express our shared identity and convictions in Yeshua the Messiah.

7.1 Common Terms from the MJRC (Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council)

(Adapted from MJRC Appendix 2: Glossary)

The following are terms widely used in both Judaism and Messianic Judaism. They are provided here for reference and consistent usage within Beit Zayit’s congregational standards and halakhic practice.

<i>Al biur chametz</i>	The berachah recited before searching the home for chametz.
<i>Aleinu</i>	The prayer that marks the end of all three daily prayer services.
<i>Aliya (pl. aliyot)</i>	Calling of a Jewish member of the congregation to the bimah for a segment of the Torah reading.
<i>Am ha’aretz</i>	Lit., the people of the Land. In rabbinic literature it refers to Jewish people who are less scrupulous in their observance.

Amidah	HaTefillah (The prayer). Amidah is Aramaic for “standing,” called the “standing prayer.” It is the center of all three Jewish daily prayers. It is also called the Shemoneh Esrei, for the original 18 blessings in the prayer.
Apostolic Writings	Brit Chadasha, Newer Testament
<i>Avinu</i>	Lit., “Our father”
<i>Ayshet hayil</i>	“Woman of valor.” A poem from Proverbs 31:10–31 that is said each Shabbat in honor of the woman of the home.
Basic practice	Refers to standards of observance that members of the MJRC are themselves committed to follow in their own lives.
<i>Bar mitzvah</i>	“Daughter of commandment.” A coming-of-age commemoration of a Jewish boy becoming 13 years old at which time he is obligated to perform the mitzvot.
<i>B’rit milah</i>	Ritual circumcision of a boy on the 8 th day – ritual acceptance of a son into the covenant
<i>Bat mitzvah</i>	“Daughter of commandment.” A coming-of-age commemoration of a Jewish girl becoming 12 years old at which time she is obligated to perform the mitzvot.
<i>Bedi’avad</i>	“In retrospect”
<i>Beit din</i>	Lit., “House of judgement.” A rabbinical court usually consisting of three Jews knowledgeable in Jewish law.
<i>Benei Yisrael</i>	“Children of Israel”
<i>Berachah</i>	“Blessing.” The manner in which we acknowledge and thank God for everything (cf. Prov. 3:8).
<i>Besorah; pl., besorot</i>	Good news, Gospel
<i>Beyn hashamashot</i>	The time “between the suns.” Begins with the setting of the sun and concludes with the appearance of the stars.
<i>Birkat hamazon</i>	Blessing after meals

<i>Borey p'ri hagafen</i>	Lit., creator of the fruit of the vine." Berachah said over wine or grape juice.
<i>Chag; pl., chaggim</i>	Jewish Holiday or Festival
<i>Chametz</i>	Lit., "leaven, something fermented." Often translated "yeast." Refers to foods forbidden for Jews to eat on Pesach.
<i>Chanukah</i>	Commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem during the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. Also known as the "Festival of Lights."
<i>Charoset</i>	One of the symbolic foods eaten at the Pesach seder. It is made from fruits, nuts and wine to resemble the mortar and brick made by Jews as slaves in Egypt.
<i>Chol haMoed</i>	"Regular days of the festival". Specifically, Chol HaMoed refers to the intermediate days of Pesach and Sukkot.
<i>Cholent</i>	Yiddish. Refers to a traditional Jewish stew prepared on Friday and cooked overnight to be eaten on Shabbat.
<i>D'oraita</i>	Aramaic, "of the Torah." Ordained by the Torah.
<i>D'rabbanan</i>	Aramaic, "of the rabbis." Established by rabbinic authority."
<i>Davven; davvening</i>	Yiddish, "to pray"
<i>Decalogue</i>	Latin from Gk., lit., "ten words/sayings." The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20: 2-17)
<i>Diaspora</i>	Refers to Jews living outside of Israel or the land in which they live.
<i>Divrey Torah</i>	Discussion of Torah
<i>Ekklesia</i>	Assembly of Believers in Yeshua
<i>El Malei Rachamim</i>	Memorial prayer recited for the deceased,

<i>Etrog</i>	“Citron.” One of the four species required during Sukkot.
Expanded practice	refers to a more demanding level of observance, beyond basic practice, that includes a fuller expression of traditional forms of Jewish life.
<i>Gezeirah;</i> pl., <i>gezeirot</i>	Preventative halakhic legislation; legal fences.
<i>Get (pl. Gittin)</i>	Divorce
<i>Hagbah</i>	Lit., “lifting.” Refers to the lifting the Sefer Torah after it has been read.
<i>Halakhah</i>	The authoritative application of the rules of the Torah in the form of concrete decisions in response to the circumstances of daily life – all in the context of the covenant life of the people of Israel.
<i>Halbanat panim</i>	Lit., “whitening of the face.” Means shame or disgrace.
<i>Hamotzi</i>	“who brings forth.” The name of the blessing spoken to God over bread: “...who brings forth bread from the earth.”
<i>Hanotzri/t</i>	“The Christian”
<i>Havdalah</i>	Lit., “Separation.” Refers to the ritual ceremony held at the close of Shabbat.
<i>Hazan et hakol</i>	Lit., “Nourishes all:” In Birkat HaMazon it means “providing food for all.”
<i>Huppah</i>	Canopy under which the bride and groom stand in a Jewish wedding.
<i>Imeinu</i>	“Our mother”
<i>Inuy nefesh</i>	Self-affliction commanded on Yom Kippur
<i>Ishah hachamah</i>	“A wise woman”
<i>Kabbalat Torah</i>	Confirmation
<i>Kashrut</i>	Lit., “fitness.” Dietary laws dealing with permitted and forbidden foods
<i>Kehillot kodesh</i>	Holy communities

<i>Kehuna</i>	Priesthood
<i>Ketubah (pl., kettubot)</i>	Marriage certificate
<i>Kevod habriyot</i>	The honoring of one another.
<i>Kiddush</i>	Lit., “sanctification.” Refers to a blessing recited over wine or grape juice to sanctify Shabbat or Jewish holiday.
<i>Kitniyot</i>	Lit., “Legumes.” Refers to a larger group of foods that are traditionally prohibited for Ashkenazi Jews during Pesach, e.g., legumes, rice, grains, rice, corn and seeds.
<i>Klal Israel</i>	All of Israel. Parallel term to Am Israel.
<i>Kohen (pl., kohanim)</i>	A priest. A man who is born to a father who is a Kohen and a mother who is born to a Jewish mother.
<i>Kol sefeka d’rabbanan l’kula</i>	A matter of doubt which arises concerning an issue that is d’rabbanan is resolved in leniency.
<i>Kosher</i>	Lit., “fit or appropriate.” Any food permitted by Jewish dietary laws.
<i>Levi (Levite)</i>	A man who is born of a father who is a Levi and a mother who is either herself born to a Jewish mother or a convert to Judaism.
<i>Lizkor et meshicho</i>	A mitzvah berachah recited before eating bread in Zichron Mashiach.
<i>Lulav</i>	A closed palm frond. One of the four species bound together at Sukkot, which together are called “the lulav.”
<i>Ma’ariv</i>	The evening prayer service
<i>Mara d’Atra</i>	Aramaic. Lit., “Master of the Place.” The Mara d’Atra serves her/her community as Mentor, guide, and authority in matters of religious practice and teaching, encouraging growth and unity that express the life of the Spirit of God.
<i>Matrilineal</i>	Kinship based on the mother’s lineage

<i>Matronymic</i>	A name derived from the name of the mother or matriarchal ancestor.
<i>Megillah</i>	Lit., "scroll." The Megillah refers to the biblical Book of Esther read at Purim.
<i>Melechet avodah</i>	Servile work
<i>Mezuzah</i>	Lit., "Doorpost." Refers to a piece of parchment (klaf) with Deut. 6:4–9 and Deut. 11:13–21 written on it that is encased in a decorative case and affixed to the doorposts of Jewish homes.
<i>Mikra'ey kodesh</i>	Holy assemblies
<i>Mikveh</i>	A Jewish ritual immersion
<i>Minchah</i>	The afternoon prayer service and the afternoon sacrifice in the Temple
<i>Miney mezonot</i>	Blessing over grains and grain products
<i>Minhag</i>	Tradition.
<i>Minhag shtut</i>	Redundant or banned tradition
<i>Minyan</i>	Quorum of ten Jews
<i>Mishmerah</i>	Priestly order in 2 nd Temple Period
<i>Mishnah</i>	First and oldest major work of rabbinic literature
<i>Mitzvah (mitzvot)</i>	Lit., "commandment." Applies to commandments, ordinances, laws and statutes in the Torah.
<i>Mitzvah berachah</i>	The berachah (blessing) before performing a mitzvah
<i>Mitzvot Mashiach</i>	Commandments derived from the Apostolic Writings that are not otherwise made explicit in the written Torah.
<i>Moed; pl., moadim</i>	Appointed time(s)
<i>Na'aseh v'nishma</i>	We will do and we will hear (understand).
<i>Netilat yadaim</i>	Ritual handwashing

<i>Niddah</i>	Lit., "One who is excluded." Applies to a woman during menstruation.
<i>Okhel nefesh</i>	Lit., "Food for the soul." Applies to food allowed on Yom Tov (cf. Exodus 12:16).
<i>Omer; Counting the Omer</i>	Sheaf; counting the 50 days (barley sheafs) from Pesach to Shavuot
<i>Ona'at devarim</i>	Verbal abuse
<i>P'ri ha'adamah</i>	Lit., "Fruits of the ground" (including vegetables). The name of the blessing for food that grows in the ground.
<i>P'ri haetz</i>	Lit., "Fruit of the tree." The name of the blessing for food that grows on a tree.
<i>P'sak; pl., p'sakim</i>	Halakhic ruling.
<i>P'shat</i>	Literal meaning
<i>Pareve</i>	Yiddish. Lit., "neutral." Food that is neither meat or milk.
Patrilineal	Kinship based on the father's lineage.
Patronymic	Name derived from the name of the father or patrilineal ancestor.
Pesach	Festival of Passover, as well as the Passover lamb
<i>Pidyon haBen</i>	Lit., "Redemption of the son." It is a Jewish ritual ceremony in which the first-born son is redeemed by giving silver coins to a kohen (Ex. 13:12-15).
<i>Ploni</i>	Hebrew expression indicating an anonymous person, similar to "John/Jane Doe" in English.
<i>Posek; pl., poskim</i>	A rabbi or scholar who makes halachic decisions.
Porging	The processing and preparation of meat after shechitah.
Purim	Persian. Lit., "Lots." The holiday celebrates the saving of the Jews from massacre as recounted in the Book of Esther.
<i>Responsa</i>	Lat., lit., "answer." In modern times a responsa describes decisions and rulings made by Jewish scholars on religious law.

<i>Rosh Chodesh</i>	Lit., "Head of the month." Rosh Chodesh celebrates the arrival of the new moon on the Jewish Calendar.
Rosh Hashanah	Lit., "Head of the year." The Jewish New Year (Yom Teruah, Leviticus 23:23–25).
<i>Seder; pl., sedarim</i>	Lit., "Order." The traditional ceremonial Passover meal
<i>Sefer Torah</i>	Torah scroll
<i>Sekhakh</i>	Lit., "Covering." The material used as the roof of a sukkah.
Shabbat	Sabbath, Saturday, 7 th day of the week
<i>Shacharit</i>	The first of the daily prayers, said in the morning to coincide with the time of the morning burnt offering.
<i>Shaliach tzibur</i>	A person who leads a Jewish congregation in prayer and fulfills the obligation to pray on their behalf.
Shavuot	Lit., "Weeks." Feast of Weeks celebrated 50 days after Pesach at the end of the counting of the Omer.
<i>Shechitah</i>	Jewish ritual slaughter of animals
<i>Shehakol</i>	Blessing for all foods that do not grow from the ground or on a tree (e.g., meat, chicken, eggs, milk, fish).
<i>Shehecheyanu</i>	A blessing that celebrates special occasions, said when doing something for the first time or the first time that year.
<i>Shema</i>	"Hear of Israel..." (Deut. 6:4) followed by three Scripture passages Deut. 6:5–9, Deut. 11:13–21 and Num. 15:37–41.
<i>Shemoneh Esreh</i>	See Amidah.
<i>Sheva Brachot</i>	The seven blessings recited over the bride and groom in a Jewish wedding.
<i>Simchat or bat brit</i>	Public events initiating ritual acceptance of a daughter into the covenant

<i>Sukkah</i>	A temporary structure used during the 7 days of Sukkot
Sukkot	Feast of Tabernacles
<i>Tahor</i>	Ritually pure
<i>Takanah</i> ; pl. <i>takanot</i>	Lit., "Ordinance." A major legal decree by halakhic authority that revises an ordinance that no longer satisfies the requirements of time or circumstances. Takanot are enacted for the good of the community and its spiritual development.
<i>Tallit</i>	A Jewish prayer shawl with tzitzit on the four corners
<i>Talmud(s)</i>	The central text of Rabbinic Judaism that contains Mishnah and Gemara
<i>Tamei</i>	Ritually impure
<i>Tefillin</i>	A set of two black-leather boxes with Scripture verses written on parchment inside that are worn during morning prayer services. (Deut. 6:8)
<i>Teshuvah</i> (<i>teshuvot</i>)	Repentance
<i>Tevilah</i>	Immersion
<i>Tevilat Mashiach</i>	Lit., "Immersion of Messiah." Refers to immersion into the Body of Messiah.
<i>Tikkun olam</i>	Lit., "Repairing the World." Has become synonymous with repairing this earthy world through social actions and pursuit of justice.
<i>Tumah</i>	The state of ritual impurity
<i>Tzedakah</i>	Bible: "righteousness, justice." In modernity it refers to righteous behavior through charity or philanthropy.
<i>Tzitzit</i>	Fringes on a four-cornered garment
<i>V'ahavta</i>	A continuation of the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:5-9. It is the first of three scripture passages in the Shema.

<i>Ya'aleh ve Yavo</i>	"May [our remembrance] arise and come." A special prayer inserted into the Amidah and Birkat HaMazon on Chaggim.
<i>Yahrzeit</i>	Yiddish, "Anniversary." Anniversary of the death of a loved one where mourners remember and honor the life of the deceased.
<i>Yom HaAtzma'ut</i>	Israel's Independence day
<i>Yom HaShoah</i>	Israel's Holocaust remembrance day
Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement
<i>Zemirot</i>	Songs sung at the Shabbat table.
<i>Zichron Mashiach</i>	Lit., "Remembrance of Messiah." Eucharist, Lord's supper

7.2 UMJC Definition of Messianic Judaism

The following statement is provided directly from the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) website:

<https://www.umjc.org/defining-messianic-judaism>

Basic Statement

"The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) envisions Messianic Judaism as a movement of Jewish congregations and groups committed to Yeshua the Messiah that embrace the covenantal responsibility of Jewish life and identity rooted in Torah, expressed in tradition, and renewed and applied in the context of the New Covenant. Messianic Jewish groups may also include those from non-Jewish backgrounds who have a confirmed call to participate fully in the life and destiny of the Jewish people. We are committed to embodying this definition in our constituent congregations and in our shared institutions."

Expanded Statement

"Jewish life is life in a concrete, historical community. Thus, Messianic Jewish groups must be fully part of the Jewish people, sharing its history and its covenantal responsibility as a people chosen by God. At the same time, faith in Yeshua also has a crucial communal dimension.

This faith unites the Messianic Jewish community and the Christian Church, which is the assembly of the faithful from the nations who are joined to Israel through the Messiah. Together, the Messianic Jewish community and the Christian Church constitute the *ekklesia*—the one Body of Messiah—a community of Jews and Gentiles who, in their ongoing distinction and mutual blessing, anticipate the *shalom* of the world to come.

For a Messianic Jewish group (1) to fulfill the covenantal responsibility incumbent upon all Jews, (2) to bear witness to Yeshua within the people of Israel, and (3) to serve as an authentic and effective representative of the Jewish people within the Body of Messiah, it must place a priority on integration with the wider Jewish world, while sustaining a vital corporate relationship with the Christian Church.

In the Messianic Jewish way of life, we seek to fulfill Israel's covenantal responsibility embodied in the Torah within a New Covenant context. Messianic Jewish *halakhah* is rooted in Scripture (Tanakh and the New Covenant writings), which are of unique sanctity and authority. It also draws upon Jewish tradition, especially those practices and concepts that have won near-universal acceptance by devout Jews through the centuries.

Furthermore, as is common within Judaism, Messianic Judaism recognizes that *halakhah* is and must be dynamic, involving the application of the Torah to a wide variety of changing situations and circumstances. Messianic Judaism embraces the fullness of New Covenant realities available through Yeshua and seeks to express them in forms drawn from Jewish experience and accessible to Jewish people.”

(UMJC Theology Committee; affirmed by delegate vote, July 20, 2005)

7.3 Definition and Statement of Yeshua the Messiah

(In Accordance with the UMJC)

“The Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations holds that the One God—the God of creation, the God of Israel, the God of our ancestors, of Whom our tradition speaks—reveals Himself uniquely, definitively, and decisively in the life, death, resurrection, and return of Yeshua the Messiah.

Yeshua is the incarnation of the Divine Word through Whom the world was made, and of the Divine Glory through Whom God revealed Himself to Israel and acted in their midst. He is the living Torah, expressing perfectly in His example and teaching the divine purpose for human life. Yeshua is completely human and completely divine.

As the risen Messiah and the heavenly *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest), Yeshua continues to mediate God's relationship to His people Israel, to those of the nations who have joined the greater commonwealth of Israel in Him, and to all creation. God's plan of salvation and blessing for Israel, the nations, and the entire cosmos is fulfilled only in and through Yeshua. By virtue of His atoning death and bodily resurrection, God's gift of life to both Jews and Gentiles—in this world and in the world to come—is bestowed and appropriated only in and through Him.”

(UMJC Theology Committee Statement, November 12, 2003)

Governance and Leadership

Foundations of Governance

8.0 Beit Zayit's leadership structure reflects the biblical pattern of shared governance among the elders (*zekenim*) of Israel and the early Messianic community (Exodus 18:21; Numbers 11:16–17; Acts 6:3–4; Acts 15:6). Leadership is a sacred trust of service, humility, and accountability before God. All authority is exercised under the headship of Yeshua the Messiah, the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1–4), and functions to build up the body in love and good order.

Leaders at Beit Zayit are accountable to one another, to the congregation, and to the broader Messianic Jewish community through recognized networks such as Tikkun America and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC). This covenantal alignment promotes shared vision, doctrinal unity, and communal trust, ensuring that leadership functions are carried out with integrity and in continuity with the larger family of Israel.

8.1 Eldership and Decision-Making

The Board of Elders serves as the governing body of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation. The elders meet monthly to seek the guidance of the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) in matters of vision, direction, teaching, and congregational oversight.

If an issue arises that cannot be resolved internally or exceeds local authority, the board may request counsel or arbitration from recognized external leaders or organizations such as Tikkun America or the UMJC. This cooperative process preserves unity, ensures wisdom in judgment, and maintains accountability across the broader Messianic Jewish movement.

8.2 Appointment and Oversight of the Rabbi

The Board of Elders may appoint a Rabbi to serve the congregation either temporarily or permanently. The Rabbi functions as the chief elder, providing spiritual oversight, teaching, and pastoral care.

If a Rabbi is found to be in violation of Beit Zayit's standards or the expectations of oversight organizations such as the MJRC, Tikkun, or UMJC, the board has authority to remove that Rabbi from service.

In cases involving unrepentant sin, serious moral transgression, or open offense against the community, the elders must act decisively yet redemptively, following the steps outlined in Matthew 18:15–17. Oversight organizations will be informed and invited to participate in mediation, ensuring justice, transparency, and the opportunity for repentance and restoration.

The same standard applies to all elders or leaders found to be in breach of these principles.

8.3 Alignment and Qualifications of Leadership

All leaders within Beit Zayit must align theologically with Tikkun America before serving. This requirement protects doctrinal soundness and provides external accountability.

Any Rabbi serving Beit Zayit must have completed or be actively pursuing Smicha (ordination), preferably through the UMJC or Tikkun America. Ordination from the IAMCS is also recognized. If a candidate's Smicha was granted through another organization or individual, the Board of Elders, in consultation with Tikkun America, will review the ordination for validity and halakhic consistency before approval.

8.3.1 The Messianic Jewish Rabbi (MJRC Definition and Commentary)

The following statement is adapted directly from the Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council (MJRC) *Decisions & Commentary* to define the role and nature of a Messianic Jewish Rabbi within the larger Messianic Jewish community:

1.3.1 A Messianic Jewish Rabbi is a Jewish follower of Yeshua qualified by a supervised course of study, authorized by his or her ordaining authority, and empowered by the Spirit through the rite of ordination to expound and apply Torah as fulfilled in and mediated through the person, teaching, and work of Yeshua. As a custodian of Israel's revelation and holy tradition, including the Apostolic Writings, and as a disciple of *Mashiach Yeshua Rabbenu*, a Messianic Jewish Rabbi teaches Israel the ways of God and models this tradition for the members of the Messianic Jewish community in a manner imbued with the Spirit of God.

This definition of the nature of a Messianic Jewish Rabbi builds upon an understanding of the essence of what has been and continues to be common to all rabbis throughout every generation. A rabbi is defined first and foremost by his or her relationship to our sacred tradition and our community. In this role, a rabbi serves as a teacher and symbolic exemplar of Torah for the community, principally in matters of religious practice and instruction.

This historical understanding of the nature of a rabbi is reflected in the text of the MJRC's *Teudat Semikha (Ordination Certificate)*:

This document certifies that (insert full English name) has completed a course of study in the Tanakh and its interpretation, the Apostolic Writings, and the writings of the sages of the Jewish people and demonstrated exemplary character, spirituality, and fidelity to the commandments of Torah in order to become a spiritual leader and be known as a Rabbi and Teacher in Israel. May Adonai be with him/her and prosper him/her through the Holy Spirit in his work to elevate the Torah and reverence of God. May he merit to magnify and exalt the practice of Torah as it is fulfilled and mediated in the person, the teaching, and the service of the Messiah, Yeshua, to influence all streams of our people and to draw them near to Yeshua our Messiah. Amen.

According to the MJRC, **five qualifications** are necessary for one to serve as a Messianic Jewish Rabbi:

1. **Jewish Identity** — A Rabbi must be Jewish according to the standards of Jewish status affirmed by the MJRC, standing in continuity with the historic Jewish rabbinate.
2. **Faithfulness to Yeshua** — A Rabbi must be a follower of Yeshua who exemplifies commitment to Him in both word and deed.
3. **Supervised Course of Study** — Rabbinic ordination requires formal study under supervision of ordained Messianic Rabbis; self-study alone is insufficient.
4. **Ordaining Authority** — Ordination must be granted by a recognized ordaining body affiliated with the candidate's educational institution.
5. **Empowerment by the Ruach HaKodesh** — Ordination is conferred through prayer and laying on of hands, invoking the Spirit's empowerment for service (Numbers 27:18; Deuteronomy 34:9; Acts 13:2-3).

The MJRC further defines **four essential functions** of the Messianic Jewish Rabbi:

1. **Expounding and Applying Torah** — Teaching and interpreting Torah as fulfilled in Yeshua the Messiah, integrating Tanakh, Apostolic Writings, and rabbinic tradition through His lens.
2. **Custodianship of Israel's Revelation and Tradition** — Serving as guardians of Israel's sacred texts and interpretive heritage, linking the wisdom of the past to the present. Hebrew literacy and basic competence in Aramaic, Greek, and Modern Hebrew are strongly commended.
3. **Teaching Israel the Ways of God** — Calling the Jewish people to covenantal faithfulness and commitment to Yeshua as Messiah.
4. **Modeling the Tradition in Life and Spirit** — Living as an example of Torah faithfulness empowered by the Spirit of God.

"Messianic Jewish Rabbis should be attentive to the fact that their modeling of the tradition cannot be undertaken apart from the work of God's Spirit. They should seek to model this tradition for the members of the Messianic Jewish community in a manner imbued with the Spirit of God."
(MJRC, *Decisions & Commentary*, 1.3.1)

This definition affirms that the Messianic Jewish Rabbinate remains rooted in historic Jewish rabbinic calling while uniquely expressing that vocation in the light of Yeshua the Messiah.

8.4 Leadership Titles and Roles

In alignment with the broader Jewish world, the Rabbi and other synagogue leaders serve under the authority of the Board of Elders. The board may appoint, release, or reassign leaders as necessary for the health and direction of the congregation.

For further background on synagogue function and leadership norms, see:

https://www.jewfaq.org/synagogues_and_temples

Rabbi

The Rabbi is a fully trained and ordained spiritual leader, either through Yeshiva or apprenticeship under another Rabbi with recognized Smicha. As a Messianic Rabbi, he must affirm faith in Yeshua the Messiah as Israel's Redeemer. The Rabbi serves as chief elder and primary teacher, meeting monthly with the elders and overseeing all spiritual matters, teaching, and life-cycle events including Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, Brit Milah, weddings, and funerals.

Congregational Leader

The Congregational Leader serves as the chief elder in the absence of a Rabbi or may function as an acting leader who does not yet hold the formal halakhic title of Rabbi. This leader oversees final decisions, presides over elder meetings, and acts as the tie-breaker in the event of an unresolved vote or dispute among the elders. All major matters requiring disciplinary action or structural change must be brought before the Congregational Leader for final review before implementation.

Ro'eh (Pastor)

The Ro'eh serves in a pastoral capacity, offering spiritual care, counseling, and life-cycle services. The Ro'eh may officiate weddings, funerals, and *coming-of-age ceremonies*. It is strongly encouraged that anyone serving in this role pursue ordination through Tikkun America for accountability and recognition.

Elder

Elders serve as the governing council of Beit Zayit, responsible for major decisions regarding doctrine, finances, ministry structure, and appointments. Each elder oversees at least one Shamash (Deacon), providing mentorship and supervision. Elders handle complex issues escalated from the shamashim and ensure the community's spiritual and administrative health.

Shamash (Deacon)

The Shamash functions as a servant-leader under the elders. Shamashim handle daily operational concerns, assist congregants, and oversee specific ministry areas such as hospitality, security, or education. Matters beyond their scope are referred to the supervising elder.

This layered structure promotes order, accountability, and effective ministry flow throughout the community.

8.5 Current Leadership Definitions and Roles

Allen Burner – Congregational Leader and Worship Leader

Allen serves as head leader and chief elder, providing vision and oversight. He coordinates with other Messianic ministries, leads worship, and supervises the Treasurer to ensure transparent financial reporting to the Board of Elders each month.

Bruce Dotson – Elder of Security and Hospitality

Bruce oversees the security and oneg teams, ushers, and greeters. He manages safety policies, new-visitor outreach, and ensures adequate adult supervision for Shabbat School participants.

Garrett Snider – Shamash of Pastoral Care and Instruction

This Shamash/Deacon supervises weekly services, the Torah team, and festival coordination. He provides pastoral care, teaches, officiates marriages and funerals, and serves as Shaliach Tzibur (lay cantor). *D'rashot* must be submitted by Wednesday evening prior to each Shabbat service.

8.6 Conflict Resolution and Appeals

When disputes arise within leadership or between members, the Board of Elders will first seek resolution through prayer, private discussion, and biblical mediation (Matthew 18:15–17). If resolution cannot be reached, the matter may be referred to oversight bodies such as Tikkun America or the UMJC Regional Representative for impartial guidance and final determination.

All involved parties are expected to approach the process with humility, seeking restoration and truth rather than personal vindication. The congregation agrees to honor final decisions rendered by recognized oversight in the spirit of unity and peace.

8.7 Leadership Terms and Evaluation

Elders and shamashim serve indefinitely but are subject to periodic review (recommended every two years). These evaluations consider spiritual maturity, adherence to halakhic standards, and effectiveness in ministry. Such reviews ensure that all leadership remains accountable, respected, and fruitful in service.

8.8 Transparency and Records

The Board of Elders shall ensure that accurate meeting minutes, financial records, and policy documents are securely maintained. Financial reports are reviewed monthly and may be shared with oversight organizations upon request. Transparency between leadership and oversight fosters integrity and trust throughout the community.

8.9 Women in Leadership

Beit Zayit affirms that both men and women are called to serve the Kingdom of God and may hold positions of significant responsibility within the congregation. Women are encouraged to use their gifts in teaching, worship, administration, prayer, hospitality, children's education, and ministry coordination, reflecting the examples of Miriam, Deborah, Priscilla, and Phoebe.

However, in accordance with Messianic Jewish halakhic tradition and the biblical pattern of male eldership, the roles of Rabbi and Elder are reserved for qualified men (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). This distinction is not a reflection of spiritual hierarchy but of divine order within congregational leadership.

Women serving in other leadership capacities are to be honored, equipped, and given opportunities for full participation in ministry, decision-making discussions, and communal service under the covering of the elders.

Beit Zayit values the voices of women and regards their wisdom, prayer, and leadership as essential to the health and vitality of the community.

Additional Documents

Introduction

9.0 This section serves as a repository and reference point for supporting documents, official statements, and approved resources that complement the standards of Beit Zayit Messianic Congregation. These materials help maintain transparency, preserve institutional memory, and ensure that our halakhic practices, governance, and community life remain rooted in the greater Messianic Jewish framework.

Included in this section may be:

- Official correspondence or certification from affiliated organizations (such as Tikken America, UMJC, or MJRC) confirming alignment, ordination, or membership.

SOP no.	Effective Date	Significant Changes	Previous SOP no.