



**Central
Reform
Temple**

a progressive
Jewish
congregation
in Boston



Emmanuel Church *in the City of Boston*

Central Reform Temple and Emmanuel Church Covenant Reaffirmation 2022

Covenant Statement

"As for the promise we made to each other, may God be between you and me forever."

וְהַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבְרָנו אֱנֵינוּ זֹאת הַפָּה יְהוָה בֵּינוּ וּבֵינוּ כָּל־עוֹלָם:

1 Samuel 20:23:

Central Reform Temple (CRT) and Emmanuel Church desire to document a covenant relationship between our two congregations. As partners in this covenant relationship, each congregation is faithfully rooted in its own distinct religious traditions and deeply committed to our shared spiritual roots. We practice modeling compassionate encounters between Judaism and Christianity that affirm the difficult challenges of history and aspire to new levels of understanding. Attending to the deep and spiritual aspects of what it means to pledge commitment to a long-term relationship, we also mean to be deliberate about the very practical ones. We share the conviction that spiritual ideals, human creativity, and commitment to principles that elicit deep interpersonal connections are the underpinnings for advancing our core values. We cherish the same ultimate hopes for humanity.

Ideals and Values

The relationship between Central Reform Temple and Emmanuel Church is unique. While other churches and synagogues around the country share buildings, none, yet, has the depth and breadth of partnership that we have established in Boston. Our joint programs reflect our commitment to sharing our common values while creatively and respectfully exploring our differences. This relationship is no longer one of residency or community or even family, but all of these bound up together in a commitment to share this house and partnership in a long-term relationship.

The Emmanuel Center is a particular embodiment of the shared ideals and values of our two communities. This interfaith collaboration between Central Reform Temple of Boston and Emmanuel Episcopal Church joins with other organizations dedicated to serving the cultural, spiritual, and educational life of greater Boston. The Center seeks to create new programs to celebrate and nurture the human spirit. We affirm the core values that unite us: respect for the dignity of every human being, and engagement in the active pursuit of peace and justice in our society and in the world. We pledge to:

- Enter a covenant relationship now and for future generations of Episcopal and Jewish worshippers;
- Share a home in the historic edifice at 15 Newbury Street, Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Boston;
- Create a space where Jews, secure in their faith tradition, worship with the surrounding Christian symbols and objects;
- Create a place where Episcopalians, embracing their own roots and ties to Judaism, incorporate Jewish symbols and objects in their spiritual home;
- Commit to the preservation and renewal of this beautiful building;

- Explore creative new ways in which we can share our experiences and build a broader community;
- Build joint programs that reflect the intersection of our traditions, interests, and values;
- Commit to educating one another to deepen our understanding of our respective faith traditions;
- Build a language that honors the specific theology of both living traditions, not using “roots” as the “least common denominator”; and
- Appreciate the broad diversity of what true interfaith relationships can look like.

Operational Practicalities

We begin by trusting the best intentions of one another. In human enterprises, however, difficulties arise, so it is essential to have considered the nuts and bolts of covenant relations. What does this mean in our day-to-day work together? Beyond sharing our worship, programs, and office space, we affirm the following core principles and practices:

- This covenant can only be dissolved by mutual consent.
- This covenant will be reviewed and renewed biennially by the CRT Board and Emmanuel Vestry and their respective clergy.
- We expect CRT and Emmanuel clergy to be committed to this vision.
- We expect that lay leadership (anyone assuming executive-level leadership) in both congregations affirm this covenantal relationship.
- We expect the lay leadership of both congregations to explicitly put forth this as the criteria when interviewing and hiring future clergy.
- We encourage the continuation of CRT’s rabbi as the Rabbi-in-Residence at Emmanuel, preaching periodically as mutually agreed upon and undertaking opportunities for visible leadership.
- We support a Priest-in-Residence for the Temple, offering periodic teaching and opportunities for visible leadership.
- We encourage the continuation of Emmanuel’s rector’s presence and public message at High Holy Day services, Seder, and other observances.
- We value the Emmanuel Center as a unique interfaith partnership for shared programming at the intersection of spirituality and the arts.
- We commit to the Ark’s having a permanent place in the Emmanuel Church worship space, not to be removed for secular events or non-Jewish religious services.
- We allow for CRT to display festival symbols, such as a sukkah, and conduct festival occasions in and around the property at 15 Newbury.
- We provide for shared financial stewardship of Emmanuel Church by CRT.
- We commit to physical ways in which we share the building (public signage, door signs, banners, and other venues by which we proclaim our respective and joint residency).

- Unless decided by mutual agreement, one of the primary office spaces will continue to be reserved as the rabbi's study and the physical office of CRT. There will continue to be designated sacristy and storage spaces.

A Brief History

Born out of a personal and professional connection that Rabbi Howard Berman and the Reverend Bill Blaine-Wallace made while working together on the Coalition for the Freedom to Marry, Central Reform Temple (CRT) was invited from its inception to share space with Emmanuel Church. Rabbi Berman had recognized that there was an absence of a liberal, Reform Jewish presence in Boston's city center. After conducting High Holy Day services at the Arlington Street Church in September of 2004, Rabbi Berman concluded there was a population ripe to be served and convened a group of founders of Boston Jewish Spirit, the original entity which would mature into Central Reform Temple. Arlington Street was unable to accommodate a new congregation, but Dr. Blaine-Wallace offered them a home. Emmanuel Church has a long and storied history of serving and supporting the Jewish community in Boston. It supported the Vilna Shul in its acquisition of their property on Phillips Street. In addition, interfaith relationships and families were already welcomed and celebrated at Emmanuel Church.

Early in the relationship, the two communities spent a year exploring the ideas about how to live together and care for their shared home at 15 Newbury Street. The *Emmanuel Center* concept was conceived through this effort. This collaboration has been the centerpiece of how the two communities work together to provide programming at the intersection of spirituality and the arts. Beyond Emmanuel Center, signs of the true interfaith partnership have been demonstrated through initiatives such as CRT's support of the restoration of the back wall of the sanctuary, and the two communities offering hospitality to one another by ushering at special services (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Christmas, and Easter). As we continue our covenant relationship, we recognize that our life as communities of faith working and living together is just unfolding.

Endorsement page

Affirmed by the Vestry and Clergy of Emmanuel Church

Date 12-18-2023

Pamela Werntz

Pamela Werntz, Rector

Liz Levin

Liz Levin, Senior Warden

Rebekah Shore

Rebekah Shore, Junior Warden

Mary Beth Clark

Mary Beth Clark, Clerk of the Vestry

Mark Fernau

Mark Fernau, Treasurer

EBM

Edgar Brenninkmeyer, At-Large Member

Christopher Connors

Christopher Connors, At-Large Member

Dawn Dreisbach

Dawn Dreisbach, At-Large Member

Peter Dutilloy

Peter Dutilloy, At-Large Member

Gaten Gilbert

Gaten Gilbert, At-Large Member

Peter Johnson

Peter Johnson, At-Large Member

Sarah Moyer

Sarah Moyer, At-Large Member

Elizabeth Richardson

Elizabeth Richardson, At-Large Member

Affirmed by the Board and Clergy of Central Reform Temple

Date 12-9-2023

Michael Shire

Michael Shire, Rabbi

Richard Daynard

Richard Daynard, President

Lawrence Isaacson

Lawrence Isaacson, Board Member

Jill Silverstein

Jill Silverstein, Board Member

Leslie Warshaw

Leslie Warshaw, Board Member

Lillian S. Weigert

Lillian Weigert, Board Member

Martin Trick, Vice President

Robert Frank, Clerk

Gail A. Carpenter

Gail Carpenter, Treasurer