

A Cemetery for Our Unique Community

In 2006, Brooklyn Heights Synagogue purchased 100 newly-created gravesites for the use of our community, in Maimonides Cemetery in Elmont, New York. More than half of these plots have already been purchased by congregants, and several interments have already occurred. Our *genizah* is opened annually to bury damaged prayerbooks, as is appropriate. Landscaping, plantings and signage continue to improve, and upgrades to irrigation have been completed. In the fall of 2016, members of the community visited our grounds and planted lovely flowering plants.

The Maimonides Cemetery, administered by the Maimonides Benevolent Society, is a small, quiet cemetery adjacent to the much larger and busier Beth David cemetery in Elmont, on the Queens border, about a mile from the Cross Island Parkway. There is easy access via train, bus, and car.

One of the reasons we chose this particular cemetery was their willingness to create a new section, just for us, that will meet the needs of our diverse community. In our section, known as *Beit Haverim* (House of Friends) all members of our Synagogue can be buried, whether or not they are Jewish.

Purchasing a Plot

How much does a plot cost? The current cost of a cemetery plot is \$2,500 for members of Brooklyn Heights Synagogue.



Many congregants have purchased plots in anticipation of their needs, and we encourage you to do this; it will be one less detail and one less bill to be paid when your family is in a moment of crisis. However, if you are a member and need or choose to purchase a plot at the time of interment, you may do so by making an immediate payment to the synagogue.

Is there a maintenance cost for a cemetery plot? There is no maintenance cost for a grave until it is used, and then the plot owner/family member may make arrangements with the Maimonides Cemetery Office. As of 2015, Endowment Care, also known as Perpetual Care, is \$2260 (single gravesite) or \$4519 (double gravesite). Annual Care is \$134/year (single gravesite) or \$253/year (double gravesite).

Who can be buried there? All members (regardless of their religion) of a BHS membership family, as defined by our by-laws, may be buried. This includes all the immediate family members of a BHS family unit, including the member's parents, siblings, and children.

What makes this a Jewish cemetery? In addition to allowances for who may be buried within our cemetery, our rules comply with traditional Jewish practices.

In this cemetery, bottomless grave liners are required. Burials are not permitted on Shabbat or on Jewish holidays. Ceremonies can be performed only by Jewish clergy. If religious symbols are used on markers, they must be Jewish symbols only.

If I change my mind about using this cemetery, can I sell my plot? Plots may be resold only to Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, with the approval of the Cemetery Committee. Unwanted plots may also be donated to BHS, for resale or for the burial of an indigent member of the Jewish community.

If you have designated a grave for a particular person, but wish to use it instead for a different person, you can do so if you are the owner of the plot. (For example, a BHS member buys two plots for herself and her husband, but finds that she needs it for her parents who predecease her.) To do this you must make arrangements with the cemetery and inform the BHS office. Both keep track of the gravesites.

What about cremation? You are encouraged to discuss this choice with the Rabbi. Although Reform Judaism does not encourage cremation, cremated remains may be buried in the BHS cemetery. As many as two sets of cremated remains, or one casket and one cremated remains may be buried in one plot.

Brooklyn Heights Synagogue
Beit Chaverim at Maimonides Cemetery
Cemetery Plot Reservation / Purchase

Please reserve ____ gravesites for me / my family.
I am a member of Brooklyn Heights Synagogue.

Name(s) _____

Best phone number to call
(for any questions we may have) _____

Number of sites @ \$2500 _____

Total of enclosed check \$ _____
(made out to Brooklyn Heights Synagogue)

Please mail this form to us or leave it with our office staff:

Brooklyn Heights Synagogue, 131 Remsen Street,
Brooklyn NY 11201.

718-522-2070 or office@bhsbrooklyn.org



You will receive a deed for the gravesite(s) from the Maimonides Benevolent Society.

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At the time of bereavement

What about a funeral home? BHS has experience with a number of Jewish funeral homes in the area and can advise you on location and provide contact information. BHS does not endorse any specific recommendations, and does not have special arrangements with any funeral home.

Are there other costs involved in a funeral?

In addition to the plot and funeral home or mortuary expense, there are cemetery charges at the time of interment. These currently range from \$2600 to \$4000, depending on the time of day and day of the week: Sundays are more expensive than weekdays; interments after 3:30 pm on weekdays or noon on Sundays incur higher labor charges.

If you choose to conduct the funeral as a graveside service, there will be additional cemetery charges.

These charges are made by Maimonides Benevolent Society, the cemetery administrator, not by BHS. The charges are current as of this writing, but like most service charges, are subject to adjustment over time. Maimonides must file its current charges with the New York State Division of Cemeteries, and changes in charges must be approved by the State.



After the interment

Who maintains the grave after the burial?

Gravesite owners are required to purchase a Perpetual Care program from Maimonides at the time of burial. The current cost of this program is \$2260 (single gravesite) or \$4519 (double gravesite). This covers planting of evergreens, trimming, and weeding of the gravesite. It also provides for general maintenance of pathways and plantings in the cemetery.

Can I maintain the gravesite myself with flowering shrubs or flowers? In addition to Perpetual Care, family members are welcome to add their own plantings, with the understanding that Maimonides staff cares only for its own plantings. Please note that family plantings may not extend beyond the boundaries of the gravesite.

When should a monument be erected?

It is traditional to erect a headstone approximately one year after the interment date, and to dedicate the monument at an unveiling ceremony. This unveiling ceremony, like the interment ceremony, may be conducted only by family members or Jewish clergy. The scheduling of your unveiling ceremony should be done in coordination with both the Synagogue and the Maimonides office.

What kind of monument may be erected?

You may choose from a variety of styles and materials. However, only single and double headstones are permitted in our section of the cemetery. The heights and sizes of all headstones will be uniform, as provided by the BHS Cemetery Committee. No non-

Jewish icons may be displayed on headstones, footstones or monuments. Fencing or walling of 'family plots' is not permitted; neither are mausoleums or other gravesite buildings.

Can we erect a memorial bench or plant a memorial tree? There are a limited number of places in the cemetery for memorial benches or additional trees. Please contact the Cemetery Committee for availability.

Are there any additional fees connected with monuments? Before the monument can be set in place, the cemetery must provide a foundation for it. Current charges are \$632 for a single headstone foundation, and \$1131 for a double headstone foundation. The cost of the monument itself is generally paid directly to the monument makers.

Questions?

Please call on Sue Gold, our Executive Director, with questions about our cemetery. You can reach her by phone at 718-522-2070 ext. 122, or by email at executivedirector@bhsbrooklyn.org.

If you have questions about the rituals of mourning and burial, speak with Rabbi Lippe.

A good web resource is MyJewishLearning.com; a good book is *Saying Kaddish: How to Comfort the Dying, Bury the Dead, and Mourn as a Jew* by Anita Diamant.



Brooklyn Heights Synagogue

Cemetery Guide



Brooklyn Heights Synagogue

131 Remsen Street

Brooklyn, NY 11201

718-522-2070 office@bhsbrooklyn.org

www.bhsbrooklyn.org

Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism

