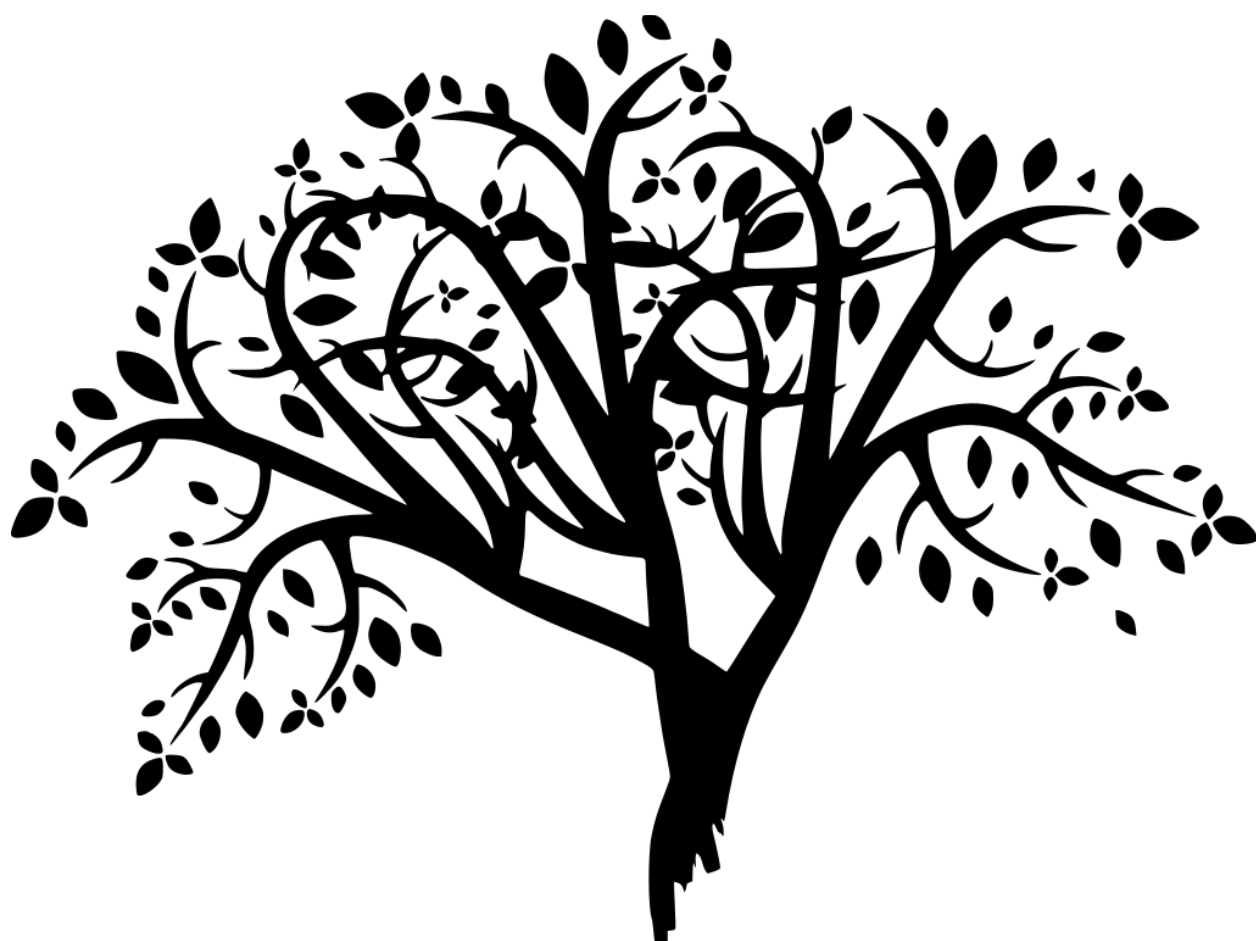


LOCAL RESOURCES WHEN A LOVED ONE DIES



Prepared by the Congregation Tikkun v'Or Bereavement Support Group, Ithaca, New York
bereavementsupport@tikkunvor.org

PREFACE

This is one of three guides prepared by the Bereavement Support Group of Congregation Tikkun v'Or, a progressive Reform congregation in Ithaca, New York. Our *kavana* or intention is to assist Congregation members and others in thinking about how we would like to honor and remember loved ones, and be remembered ourselves at the end of life. The three guides are:

- ***Jewish Practices and Rituals for Death and Mourning*** describes traditional and alternative Jewish practices during the period leading up to the end-of-life and for the year following a death.
- ***When a Loved One Dies: Local Resources*** focuses on resources in the Ithaca area, and lays out the chain of communications and decisions needed when faced with the death of a loved one.
- ***Ma'ariv for a House of Shiva: Evening Service for the First Week of Remembrance*** is a compilation of traditional and contemporary prayers, poetry and other readings for gatherings during the initial period of mourning, traditionally the week following burial.

These guides honor the spirit and traditions of Judaism, but also suggest ways of adapting traditional practices for modern times and for our multicultural community.

While the guides are organized for easy reference at times of crisis, familiarizing oneself with the material *before* the death of a loved one would provide invaluable opportunity to consider how to approach this sacred time, discuss it with others, and lay plans.

The Congregation Tikkun v'Or Bereavement Support Group formed following an adult education class offered by Rabbi Brian Walt in 2012-13: *The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning*. We thank Rabbi Walt for offering the class and giving impetus to forming this group with the *kavana* of providing support at times of bereavement.

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ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOKLET

Local Resources begins with information that those organizing funeral preparations need first: what decisions must be made and whom to call.

The booklet continues more-or-less in the order of the sequence of events: The second section lists criteria one might consider to identify and select a cemetery and funeral home equipped for Jewish funerals. Detailed information is given about such facilities in the Ithaca, New York, area.

Traditional (and modern) Jewish rituals that take place before and following the funeral are described in the next sections, with a focus on local resources for carrying out each ritual and adaptations to the traditional rituals that one might want to consider. These rituals include preparing the body for burial (*tahara*), sitting with or 'watching over' the deceased prior to burial (*shmira*), the funeral and burial, the initial week of mourning following burial (*shiva*), and placing a marker at the gravesite.

As an example of an adaptation, *shiva* has traditionally involved the seven days following burial when the bereaved stayed home to mourn and receive visitors. Now, however, it is more common that families in our Congregation specify times when they will be prepared to receive visitors. The *shiva* section in this guide concludes with information about where to access resources one might want for the *shiva* period (e.g., long-burning *shiva* candles) and contact information for people in the Ithaca area who are prepared to lead *shiva* services.

The Bereavement Support Group's companion guide ***Jewish Practices and Rituals for Death and Mourning*** delves into greater detail about the rituals and traditions mentioned here.

FIRST STEPS

Decisions to Make When Anticipating the Death of a Loved One or After a Loved One Dies

When a death can be anticipated, it is best to think through and communicate decisions in advance. Otherwise, decisions such as those listed here will need to be made almost immediately following a death:

- Select a funeral home
- Decide whether to bury or cremate the body of the deceased
- Select a cemetery or other place of burial. Purchase a plot
- Decide type of service: funeral, graveside, memorial, or no service
- Select and communicate with the funeral service leader.

- Decide when the service will be held
- Will *tahara* (ritual washing) or other ritual be performed to prepare the body for burial
- Will *shmira* (“accompanying” or sitting with the deceased before burial) be observed during the period between death and the funeral (*aninut* is Hebrew word for this period)
- Decide about visiting hours: dates, times, and location when bereaved will receive visitors (“sit *shiva*”)
- Decide if *shiva* services will be held (in person &/or virtual), and who will conduct them
- Obituary: In addition to telling the story of the deceased, the obituary should—as appropriate and relevant—tell the time and place of the service and burial, of gatherings following the service or at other times, and of *shiva* services
- Inform extended family, friends, and colleagues about the death. How will they be informed and by whom.

Contacting Congregation Tikkun v’Or

Congregants are encouraged to draw on the resources of the Congregation when anticipating a death or after the death of a loved one has occurred.

Naomi Wilensky, TvO administrator, 607-280-6781, Naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org.

Naomi can communicate whatever information the family would like to share with the congregation about the loss and let the congregation know the time and location of the funeral, *shiva* services, etc. Naomi can also make arrangements if the family would like to hold the funeral service or a gathering at the Tikkun v’Or building.

The Tikkun v’Or **Bereavement Support Group** was formed to assist congregants when they are anticipating the death of a loved one or after a death has occurred, whether the death and funeral are local or out-of-town. Members of the BSG can listen, explain both traditional rituals and adaptations, assist in arranging for rituals, talk through options for cemeteries and funeral homes, assist in making arrangements for service leaders, and more. Contact bereavementsupport@tikkunvor.org.

FUNERALS & FUNERAL HOMES

Support You Can Expect to Receive from a Funeral Home

Funeral Homes can answer questions, provide a place to hold services and calling hours, and provide or sell items such as caskets. New York State law requires that a licensed and registered funeral director is responsible for certain arrangements for the care, moving, preparation and

burial (or cremation) of deceased persons.

Thus the funeral director will, at the least, file the death certificate, transfer the body, coordinate with cemetery or crematory representatives, and move the body to the cemetery or crematory. These legal requirements and other assistance that the bereaved can expect to receive from a funeral home are explained in the New York State Department of Health booklet, ***A Consumer's Guide to Arranging a Funeral***.¹ The **Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Finger Lakes, Inc.** (FCAFL) is also a source of information about funeral planning, practices and costs (<http://www.fingerlakesfunerals.org/>).

Funeral directors welcome inquiries before a death has occurred. They can help process and weigh options. The funeral director can explain the customary procedures following a death, whether at home, in a hospital, nursing home or elsewhere. These procedures may be somewhat different when the deceased is under care of a hospice. They may also be somewhat different when Jewish rituals will be performed prior to or during the funeral and burial. The family should discuss with the funeral director their wishes concerning Jewish rituals.

What Constitutes a Jewish Funeral

A Jewish funeral typically takes place soon after death, in part because in Jewish tradition the body of the deceased is not preserved with embalming fluids. This is in keeping with the Biblical "*For dust you are and to dust you shall return*" (Genesis 3:19). However, it is entirely acceptable within Jewish practice to delay the funeral to enable far-flung loved ones to gather.

Traditionally, the purification ritual (*tahara*) and the 'guarding' or 'watching over' ritual (*shmira*) precede the funeral. These rituals are described in the section ***Jewish Rituals Before Burial***, which begins on page 8.

In preparation for burial, the body of the deceased is wrapped in a plain linen shroud and—if a coffin is used—placed in a plain wooden casket. The casket is kept closed, not open for viewing. These and other practices are explained more fully in the Tikkun v'Or Bereavement Support Group's ***Jewish Practices and Rituals for Death and Mourning: A Guide***.

What often sets a Jewish funeral home (as well as funeral homes equipped to conduct funerals in a Jewish tradition) apart from others is that they are sensitive to Jewish traditions and sensibilities and can accommodate some or all of the following:

The funeral home:

- does not prominently display symbols or icons of other religions
- sells (or is able to rapidly acquire) plain wooden caskets and cloth shrouds for burial
- does not assume that the body will be embalmed or that the casket will be open for viewing
- is able to keep the body of the deceased cold prior to burial—either in a refrigerated

¹ https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/patients/patient_rights/funeral.htm (PDF 16pp) Revised June 2017.

space, with dry ice, or by other means—because the body will not be embalmed

- can accommodate the purification ritual of *tahara* (or a modification of the traditional ritual that fits with the wishes of the family)
- can accommodate the ritual of *shmira*, which involves having an individual or a small group of people, the *shomrim*, or ‘guardians,’ remain with the deceased from the time of death until burial (or a modification of the traditional ritual that fits with the wishes of the family)
- can supply black *k'riah* ribbons for the mourners, symbolizing the ritual of *k'riah*, or tearing clothing of the mourners

A Note about Embalming and Cremation

Jewish funeral practices are guided by *k'vod hamet*, respect for the dead. Practices that disturb, attempt to preserve, or are invasive of the body have traditionally been viewed as disrespectful. Thus cremation and embalming have not been part of Jewish tradition.

However, for any of a variety of reasons, some Jews choose these practices. These are personal decisions that will be treated with respect by Congregation Tikkun v'Or. However, if cremation and/or embalming are being considered, it should be understood that many Jewish cemeteries will not permit burial of embalmed or cremated remains. (See the section **Cemeteries** beginning on page 15 of this booklet for information about restrictions and options for burial of cremated remains in the Jewish sections of local cemeteries.)

Local Funeral Homes

Congregation Tikkun v'Or has worked most closely with the following funeral homes in the Ithaca area that are knowledgeable and experienced with Jewish funerals and burials. When possible, discussions with a funeral home should begin before an anticipated death. This will give the family an opportunity to think through how they would like the funeral and burial to be handled, and how they may want to incorporate Jewish rituals, calling hours, etc. The funeral director can explain options and associated costs.

Bangs Funeral Home

PHONE: 607-272-1922
EMAIL: bangsfuneralhome@gmail.com
ADDRESS: 209 West Green Street, Ithaca, NY 14850
CONTACT: Joe Bowers
WEBSITE: <http://www.bangsfuneralhome.com/>

Bangs Funeral Home is able to provide simple wood caskets and cotton shrouds, and to prepare the deceased without use of embalming fluids. The funeral home can accommodate both traditional and modified versions of *shmira* (keeping

watch) and *tahara* (purification) rituals.

Lansing Funeral Home

PHONE: 607-533-8600
EMAIL: lansingfh@aol.com
ADDRESS: 32 Auburn Road, Lansing, NY 14882
CONTACT: Kyle L. Sharp
WEBSITE: www.lansingfuneralhome.com

Lansing Funeral Home is certified by The Green Burial Council. A green burial involves returning remains to the earth as directly and simply as possible, with minimum environmental impact. Green burial favors use of a simple wood casket or a 100% cotton shroud, without use of embalming fluids or burial vaults.

Lansing Funeral Home is able to accommodate both traditional and modified versions of *shmira* (keeping watch) and *tahara* (purification) rituals.

Ness-Sibley Funeral Home

PHONE: 607-387-8151
EMAIL: service@ness-sibley.com
ADDRESS: 23 South Street, Trumansburg, NY 14886
CONTACT: Alison Weaver
WEBSITE: ness-sibley.com

Ness-Sibley Funeral Home is able to provide simple wood caskets and cotton shrouds, and to prepare the deceased without use of embalming fluids. The funeral home can accommodate both traditional and modified versions of *shmira* (keeping watch) and *tahara* (purification) rituals.

JEWISH RITUALS BEFORE BURIAL

Purification Rituals to Prepare the Body for Burial

These rituals can be performed in a traditional manner, accompanied by specific prayers, or modified in ways that may be more meaningful to the mourners.

Traditional *Tahara*

Tahara is the Jewish purification ritual for the deceased. It involves a specific process of washing the body of the deceased while reciting certain prayers. The *Chevra Kadisha* ('sacred society') of Ithaca's Temple Beth El will perform a traditional, ritual *tahara* for members of

Congregation Tikkun v'Or as well as for members of their own Congregation. The Temple Beth El *Chevra Kadisha* uses facilities at Bangs Funeral Home for this purpose. Several members of Tikkun v'Or are now part of this *Chevra Kadisha* and can more fully explain what a traditional *tahara* involves. Tikkun v'Or families should contact the Tikkun v'Or Bereavement Support Group if they wish to arrange for *tahara* by the Temple Beth El *Chevra Kadisha*.

Alternative Purification Ritual

Elements of *tahara* can be adapted for a purification ritual performed by friends or loved ones of the deceased who may want to wash the body, sing, read poetry and prayers, or remain quietly with the deceased. If the family would like to consider doing this, the Bereavement Support Group suggests that these intentions be communicated to the funeral director as well as to staff of the facility where the death occurs, if it is not at home.

Both Lansing and Bangs Funeral Homes can accommodate traditional *tahara* as well as modified purification rituals, providing washing vessels and a gently slanted washing table designed to drain the wash water.

Shmira – ‘Watching Over’ or ‘Guarding’ the Body between Death and Burial

Shmira (also transliterated as *shemirah* and *sheemira*) is the traditional Jewish practice of *accompanying* (being with) the deceased from the time of death until burial. *Shmira* is an act of respect and an expression of the idea that a Jewish funeral is a *l'vayah*, an accompanying, of the body to the grave. *Shmira* typically takes place at the funeral home.

Shmira is carried out by having an individual (*shomer*) or a small group of people (*shomrim*, which means ‘guardians’ or ‘watchers’) remain near the closed coffin or enshrouded body of the deceased.

Traditionally and in some contemporary situations, *shomrim* remain with the deceased around the clock. The *shomrim* may be volunteers who come in rotation or, in some communities, *shomrim* are paid to remain for the duration.

In the Ithaca community, the hours of *shmira* may be limited by restrictions of the funeral home, by availability of sufficient volunteers, or by the wishes of the family to have a ‘modified *shmira*’ during a shorter period of time.

People serving as *shomrim* often ask what they should do while sitting. *Shomrim* traditionally recite Psalms 23, 91 and selected verses from Psalm 119, and read from the Book of Job. But *shomrim* may instead choose to be silent or read from contemporary writings and poetry. The essential *kavana* of *shmira* is to create a respectful and sacred space.

The family should discuss their preferences with the BSG and with the funeral director. The funeral director will be able to explain how and where *shmira* will take place at their facility and also discuss additional costs that may be incurred by holding *shmira* during non-business hours.

The Bereavement Support Group’s experience is that *shmira* is a comforting, community-strengthening practice. If requested, the BSG will make every effort to recruit a pool of

volunteer *shomrim* from the Tikkun v'Or membership and the broader community, coordinate a schedule for *shmira*, and provide a selection of traditional and contemporary readings and poetry. It is helpful if the family is able to provide names and contact information for friends and relations who may be able to join the volunteer pool of *shomrim*.

FUNERAL SERVICE

Leader for the Funeral Service

Funeral services need not be conducted by ordained clergy, but if the family wishes to obtain the services of a Cantor or Rabbi, the following individuals are available to lead services for the Tikkun v'Or community. Typically, payment to the funeral service leader can either be made directly or incorporated into the bill paid to the funeral home.

Hazzan (Cantor) Abbe Lyons

WEBSITE: <http://www.abbelyons.com/>

EMAIL: cantorabbe@yahoo.com

CELL PHONE: 607-275-6899 text or call and be sure to leave a message.

NOTE: It is best to try to reach Cantor Lyons both by text and email or phone. Cantor Lyons will lead traditional, Reform and custom services and gatherings according to the wishes of the family. She will meet with the family before the funeral and oversee or craft the eulogy as well as conduct the service. Cantor Lyons will also conduct *shiva* services customized according to the wishes of the family.

Cantor Lyons may be able to travel to locations in Central New York outside the Ithaca area to conduct funeral and *shiva* gatherings.

Her fees vary depending on the type of funeral or *shiva minyan*, travel distance, and ability to pay. They are typically in the range of \$300-\$500 for a funeral service and \$75-\$100 for a *shiva minyan*.

Rabbi Lenore Bohm

EMAIL: rabbilenore@gmail.com. Email is checked regularly.

PHONE: 760-916-5072. Please leave a voicemail message if no answer.

NOTE: Rabbi Lenore is available to officiate at funerals, *shiva minyanim* and unveilings when she is in town, but she does travel to the west coast with some regularity.

“If I have met with the deceased, I try to honor their wishes. If I don't know the person, I am guided by what their family members request. If different family members have different views, I try to include elements of what each person desires. “I will not include rituals from religions other than Judaism. I have officiated at many funerals that include Jewish elements but no overt mention of God (except in Hebrew prayers). I welcome music at any ceremony.”

“When a person is well known and well loved, I find it most meaningful for loved ones to speak about the person whose life has ended, and I don't write a eulogy. I meet with the family to learn about them and create a dedicated opportunity for them to share memories. This enables me to choose prayers/readings that best reflect the person's life and worldview. I intersperse brief reflections throughout the ceremony/service.”

“If someone with whom I don't have a relationship asks me to be an officiant, my fee is \$500 for a funeral; I offer to lead one shiva minyan as part of that arrangement (no extra fee). Each additional shiva minyan is \$100. My fee for an unveiling is \$250. If I am told or sense that finances are an issue, I tell the person/family that my fee for a funeral is \$500 but I would like to make it comfortable for them so they should pay me what they can, no questions asked. The same for an unveiling.”
Rabbi Lenore charges for transportation if officiating at a funeral (etc.) out of town.

Rabbi Tziona Szajman

WEBSITE: <https://www.rabbitziona.net/>

EMAIL: tszajman@gmail.com

CELL PHONE: 607-232-6766

NOTE: Rabbi Szajman is a Chaplain at Cayuga Medical Center. She offers counseling, gathering of stories to write the eulogy, and guidance through rituals. Rabbi Szajman is a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary, a member of Tikkun V'Or, and teacher in our Jewish Learning Experience program. Rabbi Szajman has sliding scale rates. Please contact Rabbi Szajman to discuss details.

Cantor Richard Rosenfield

EMAIL: rerosenfield@gmail.com
PHONE: 607-257-1638
NOTE: Cantor Rosenfield received his ordination as a Cantor from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in May 1994 and served as Spiritual Leader and Educator of Temple Beth-El in Geneva, NY, from February 1995 through June 2010. His fee for officiating at a funeral is \$360.

Location for the Funeral or Memorial Service

Funerals can be conducted graveside as well as at funeral homes, at the locations listed here or at any location of one's choosing. If the funeral will be held at a location where large gatherings are not customary, we suggest notifying the Sheriff (or police department) and designating someone to direct parking. If the funeral itself is not graveside, a short service is typically also held at the cemetery. The Bereavement Support Group can assist in arranging for a leader for a funeral or memorial service and for a place to hold the service. There is typically a charge for renting any of these spaces, though no charge to TvO members for using our building.

Congregation Tikken V'Or

ADDRESS: 2550 North Triphammer Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
TO ARRANGE: Contact Naomi Wilensky, Congregation Administrator, by phone 607-280-6781 or email Naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org
WEBSITE: www.tikkunvor.org/

Sage Chapel and Anabel Taylor Hall Chapel

ADDRESS: Cornell University campus
TO ARRANGE: Call 607-255-6002, office of Cornell United Religious Work (CURW)
NOTE: The deceased or the family of the deceased must have a connection to Cornell. See also: <https://dos.cornell.edu/cornell-united-religious-work/how-can-we-serve-you/service-of-remembrance> .

First Unitarian Society

ADDRESS: 306 North Aurora Street, Ithaca, NY 14850
TO ARRANGE: Contact the Congregational Administrator at 607-273-7521, ext. 21, or cadmin@uuithaca.org or office@unitarian.ithaca.ny.us
WEBSITE: <http://unitarian.ithaca.ny.us/>

Foundation of Light

ADDRESS: 391 Turkey Hill Road, Ithaca, NY 14850
TO ARRANGE: Contact 607-273-9550, info@folithaca.org
WEBSITE: <https://www.thefoundationoflight.org/>

Treman Center

ADDRESS: 95 Hines Rd., Newfield, NY 14857
TO ARRANGE: Contact Leslie Carrere 607-351-8827, events@tremancenter.com
WEBSITE: <http://tremancenter.com/>

Mourner's Kaddish

The traditional Kaddish prayer was composed nearly 2000 years ago in Aramaic, the vernacular language of Jews in Talmudic times. Since the Middle Ages, the version known as the Mourner's Kaddish has been recited at burials, during a proscribed period following a death, and on annual *yahrzeits*.

The version of the Mourner's Kaddish used at Tikkun v'Or is reprinted below. It is also included in the Bereavement Support Group's compilation of poetry and prayers for a *shiva* service (***Ma'ariv for a House of Shiva: Evening Service for the First Week of Remembrance***). Several English-language contemporary interpretations of the Mourner's Kaddish are also included in this booklet.

Mourners Kaddish

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ וְנִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן
וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזַמַּן קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקוּדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעַלְמָא וְלְעַלְמָא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבְּחַתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא,
דְּאָמְרוּ בְּעַלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי
תְּבֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei rabah

*B'alma d'vra chirutei v'yamlich malchutei, b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon
uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael ba'agalat uviz'man kariv. V'imru: Amen.*

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varach l'alam ul'almei almaya.

*Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei, v'yit'hadar
v'yitaleh v'yithalal shemei d'Kudsha B'rich hu,*

*Le'eila min mikol birchata v'shirata, tushb'chata v'nechemata da'amiran
b'alma. V'imru: Amen.*

*Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya, v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael.
V'imru: Amen.*

*Oseh shalom bimromav. Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol
Yisrael, v'al kol yoshvei teiveil. V'imru: Amen.*

CEMETERIES

Congregation Tikkun v'Or has longstanding relationships with both Lake View Cemetery and Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve; both have sections that can accommodate various types of Jewish burials.

Lake View Cemetery

ADDRESS: 605 East Shore Dr., Ithaca, NY 14850

WEBSITE: <http://lakeview-ithaca.org>

TO ARRANGE: If the deceased already owns a plot at the Cemetery, tell the funeral director the plot number and location, and the funeral home will make burial arrangements.

If a plot has not already been purchased, Tikkun v'Or Congregants can purchase one of the few remaining plots that the Congregation has owned since 2007. The plots are in the Observatory Hill section, # 21-40 (they were initially numbered 1-20). To arrange to purchase one of the TvO plots, contact Tikkun v'Or member and Congregation secretary, Sally Ezra, sally.ezra@tikkunvor.org.

To arrange to see the available plots or to schedule a burial, contact Demetra Dentes, Vice President of the Lakeview board: demetra.dentes@gmail.com, (607) 272-1416.

JEWISH SECTIONS: In accordance with the tenets of Reform Judaism, both Jewish and non-Jewish immediate family members of Tikkun v'Or Congregants (partners, children, parents) may be buried in the Tikkun v'Or section of Lake View Cemetery. Cremated remains are permitted in this section.

Two other sections of Lake View Cemetery are reserved for Jewish burials: One is for Jewish members of Ithaca's Temple Beth El, a Conservative synagogue. For information about the other area, known as the Shalom Section, contact Lesly Lempert: 607-592-1400 (cell) or 607-257-6541 (home).

Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve

MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 315, Newfield, New York, 14867

LOCATION: 293 Irish Hill Rd, Newfield, NY, 14867

WEBSITE: www.naturalburial.org

TO ARRANGE: If there is no urgency, call or email the office (607-564-7577 or info@naturalburial.org) to discuss purchase of plots, arrange for a tour, etc. If considering burial in the TvO section of Greensprings, we recommend scheduling a tour and selecting site(s) in advance.

However, if a death has occurred and burial will be within a week, the family or funeral director should contact Greensprings' Executive Director, Michelle Menter (607-216-2784), to make burial arrangements. A burial plot can be purchased at the time of death.

JEWISH SECTIONS: Three blocks of plots in Greensprings' Harrier Meadow are reserved for members of Tikkun V'Or and their families. Family members may be of any religion. While full body burials are encouraged, cremains are permitted in the Tikkun v'Or section. As of May 2025, about 55 plots are still available. Since the overall philosophy and practice of natural burial is consistent with Jewish tradition, a number of Tikkun v'Or members have purchased plots elsewhere in the Preserve.

In addition to the TvO section, Rabbi Scott Glass, former rabbi of Ithaca's Temple Beth El, has consecrated a section of Greensprings that is maintained according to standards of Conservative and Orthodox Judaism. While this section is not restricted to Temple Beth El members, only Jews may be buried in this area, including those who converted to Judaism under Reform auspices. Cremains are not permitted.

NOTES: If considering burial at Greensprings, one should first become familiar with the unique characteristics and requirements of the Natural Cemetery Preserve (see <http://naturalburial.org/>). Greensprings maintains the look and feel of a nature preserve. Although there are mowed paths through the burial meadows, the landscape is uneven. Grave markers must be made from natural fieldstone laid flat on the ground; markers do not stand upright as at most cemeteries. Only native vegetation may be planted at gravesites. Coffins and shrouds must be made of biodegradable materials (*e.g.*, coffins of untreated wood, cardboard, paper-mache or wicker, and shrouds of natural fibers). Embalmed remains are not permitted.

If a funeral home is unfamiliar with burial at Greensprings, they should read the *Information for Funeral Directors* section of the Greensprings website. They can also call or email to request Greensprings' information guide for funeral directors.

The cost for burial sites and for the burial service fee are listed on the website. As of May 2025: the cost of a full body burial site (15ft x 15ft) at Greensprings is \$1,000; the cost of a cremains site (7.5ft x 7.5ft) is \$450; in addition, a Burial Service Fee is charged at the time of burial to cover costs of opening and closing the grave: \$1,200 for a full body burial and \$550 for cremains.

SHIVA

Shiva (literally, seven) is traditionally the week-long period of mourning following burial, during which time the bereaved stayed at home, received visitors and were cared for by the community. It remains as a time when visitors bring meals and take on other day-to-day responsibilities of the bereaved (e.g., setting out and cleaning up after meals, walking the dog, driving children to activities). Details about *shiva* traditions are described in the Bereavement Support Group's guide ***Jewish Practices and Rituals for Death and Mourning***.

Meals During *Shiva*

Shiva traditionally begins with a 'meal of consolation' prepared by the extended family or the broader community to be ready for mourners on their return from the cemetery.

***Shiva* Supplies**

The Bereavement Support Group (as well as some funeral homes) can supply long-burning *shiva* candles and black *k'riah* ribbons for the mourners, symbolizing the ritual of *k'riah*, or tearing the clothing.

***Shiva* Services and Gatherings**

While bereaved families traditionally 'sat *shiva*' for the entire week following burial, it has become common, particularly among Reform and secular Jews, to specify limited times during the week when the bereaved are prepared to receive visitors. Sometimes these gatherings are simply a time for friends to visit, bring food and provide support, but the bereaved may wish to hold a *shiva* service on one or more evenings during the week of *shiva*.

The Bereavement Support Group can work with the bereaved to create a *shiva* service that reflects their wishes and beliefs. The group can also assist by arranging for religiously trained or lay leaders for the services.

The traditional *shiva* service is a typical weekday prayer service for the morning, afternoon or evening (i.e., there is no prayer service specific to *shiva*). The liturgy for these services is contained in the ***Mishkan Tefillah*** prayer book used at Tikkun v'Or. Other prayers, such as Psalm 49, are often added to the service. Traditionally, *shiva* services are not held on Shabbat.

As an alternative or complement to the traditional liturgy, the Bereavement Support Group has compiled a booklet—***Ma'ariv for a House of Shiva: Evening Service for the First Week of Remembrance***—that contains a selection of traditional and contemporary prayers, poetry and other readings suitable for gatherings during this initial week of mourning. Print copies of ***Ma'ariv for a House of Shiva*** can be borrowed from TvO for use during *shiva*. The BSG is happy to provide a digital PDF.

If requested, the Bereavement Support Group will provide ***Mishkan Tefillah*** prayer books and/or copies of ***Ma'ariv for a House of Shiva*** for use at *shiva* services.

The *shiva* service is usually also a time for the mourners and those present to share loving memories of the deceased and to honor their lives.

Shiva Gathering When the Funeral Occurs Out of the Area

If a funeral and/or *shiva* take place outside the Ithaca area, the family may want to ask the Tikkun v'Or community and other friends to gather when they return home. This gathering may include prayers and songs, or just be a time for talking and listening. It can provide mourners a chance to tell stories about the deceased, share their grief and allow the community to support them. The BSG can assist in creating a service for such a gathering.

Making a Shiva Call

Friends of the mourners and of the deceased as well as other TvO members are encouraged to visit during *shiva*. When visiting mourners during *shiva* it is customary to enter the home without ringing a bell and to bring a substantial food offering that can either be served during the *shiva* gathering or saved for later use by the mourners. Meals that can be frozen are usually gratefully accepted. Visitors are encouraged to make themselves useful and—while maintaining a tone of respect—not be afraid to laugh and tell funny stories that involve the deceased.

THE GRAVE MARKER & UNVEILING

Traditionally, it is Jewish practice to wait until after the eleventh month of mourning, but before the first *yahrtzeit*, to install and 'unveil' a marker for the grave (*matzevah*). Conducting a service at this time (an 'unveiling') is a relatively recent practice originating in the United States. This practice, as well as traditional text for the grave stone, is described in more detail in ***Jewish Rituals for Death and Mourning***. The BSG or any of the funeral officiants can offer guidance to mourners in organizing and carrying out the unveiling.

Stone carvers in the Ithaca area include:

For Lake View Cemetery: Larry Weaver has experience creating stones for Jewish sections of the Lake View Cemetery (Glenside Monument, 607-273-4522).

Dryden Monument Company (607-844-8161) can carve on both quarried and field stones, *i.e.*, on stones suitable for either cemetery.

For Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve:

Markers at Greensprings must be natural fieldstone. The stone may be any length or width, but with a total area less than 400 square inches and recommended 3 to 5 inches thick. A selection of such stones is available at Greensprings or with engravers. Greensprings requires that their staff install the selected stone on a bed of gravel laid flat on the earth.

Several local carvers are adept at working with this type of stone:

Beth Rounds in Montour Falls can hand-carve designs and work on natural, uneven surfaces (607-742-5292, betharounds@yahoo.com).

Also Rich Vogt (607-387-4190) and Dryden Monument Company (607-844-8161).

COUNSELING RESOURCES

Congregation Tikkun v'Or offers pastoral counseling services to TvO member families at no cost. Members seeking pastoral counseling should contact **Naomi Wilensky**, our temple administrator, for an annotated list of people contracted to provide counseling (607-280-6781, Naomi.wilensky@tikkunvor.org).

Other counseling resources in the Ithaca area:

Hospicare & Palliative Care Services, serving Tompkins and Cortland Counties, offers bereavement counseling: <https://www.hospicare.org/grief-support/>, 607-272-0212.

Family & Children's Service of Ithaca, located in downtown Ithaca, offers grief counseling: 607-273-7494. www.fcsith.org.

Grief therapists in the Ithaca NY area:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/ny/ithaca?category=grief>.

Cantor Abbe Lyons recommends the book ***Mourning & Mitzvah: A Guided Journal for Walking the Mourner's Path Through Grief to Healing*** by Rabbi Anne Brener, LCSW.

The American Cancer Society booklet, ***Coping with the Loss of a Loved One***, describes typical stages and variations of the grieving process:

<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/end-of-life-care/grief-and-loss.html>.