

Giving Guidelines and FAQs

We are excited to present a new model of membership, **Pay What You Can**. This model responds to our emergence from the isolation at the height of the pandemic, embraces the transition in our spiritual leadership, and respects the values of Shir Libeynu to be an inclusive, diverse and equitable community.

Why are we changing our dues structure ?

Similar to many shuls and other cultural and spiritual organizations, Shir Libeynu explored different funding models that will be both financially sustainable and consistent with our values. After speaking with shuls who have adopted new approaches, and reviewing our own shul's finances and culture, the Board unanimously voted to adopt a new model that better reflects and supports Shir Libeynu's values and principles.

Our new **Pay What You Can Model (PWYC)** encourages potential members to join our community and allows existing members to remain even when family structures, financial realities, or life circumstances change. Importantly, it reflects our belief that we are a community where belonging is a personal and shared responsibility. Giving generously will support the inclusion of those who are less able to pay.

How do the shul's finances work?

The shul's expenses include:

- Salaries (Spiritual Leader, Chazzan and Administrator);
- Shabbat, Holiday and High Holy Day services and programs (e.g. venue rental, tech support, kiddushes, childcare, musicians);
- Communications (e.g. Shalom Cloud, Tech Support, Website, Zoom);
- Honoraria; and
- Other Administration (e.g. Professional Fees, Insurance, Bank Fees).

The shul's funding comes from:

- Membership Contributions including Simchas;
- Donations/ Fundraising; and
- Reserves (when necessary)

During the last two years when COVID forced us online, our revenue and membership suffered, as did those of many congregations. As we were also looking for a permanent spiritual leader during this period, our ambitions for new programs slowed and activities were reduced. Many of you have come to us with great ideas for future programs and activities but these can only be made possible by increasing our funding and membership.

The purpose of PWYC

One of the factors that makes this model possible is members contributing generously. This enables those who do not have the financial resources to maintain their membership and community involvement. Members who are able to contribute the suggested amount or more will allow us to improve and increase our offerings. This is consistent with our mission of creating an inclusive and welcoming community. Our goal is to be able to increase the support we currently receive from our members, the majority of whom do pay the full membership. It will also ensure we have contingency funds.

How will PWYC work?

The PWYC model replaces our existing membership fee model and allows members to make an annual contribution in an amount that is financially feasible.

The Giving Guidelines are structured to encourage contributing at the highest level possible, while maintaining flexibility.

Each member is asked to make an annual pledge in an amount that is meaningful to them. Members can pay their commitment in full, or via a payment plan of their choosing. Memberships will be for one year and will need to be renewed annually.

How much should I give? Is there a minimum?

Members have always given at a range of levels. To help determine your level of giving, the shul has created guidelines for commitment levels. See the chart below. Although there is no required minimum giving level, all members over age 12 are expected to contribute some amount. The hope and expectation is that most working or retired adults will contribute the suggested minimum of \$650. Regardless of the amount you contribute, all members have equal benefits.

SUGGESTED PWYC MINIMUM COMMITMENT LEVELS PER PERSON

0	\$200	\$650	\$2,400+
↑	↑	↑	↑
minimum suggested for children 12 and under	minimum suggested for full-time students, anyone on a limited/fixed income, young adults (13-18), new members	Minimum suggested for those who have the financial capacity to do so	enable us to fund our expenses/ambitions and provides additional support for households unable to contribute the suggested minimum amount

***100% of your contribution is tax deductible.**

What are the Benefits of Membership?

Membership provides an opportunity to belong to a vibrant, diverse and unique Jewish community in downtown Toronto, and includes:

- Access to Cantor Wunch for spiritual guidance and support for life cycle events
- Admission to all our High Holy Day services*
- Unlimited opportunities to actively participate in our services and programs -- read Torah, read in English, join the choir, sound shofar and more!
- Open access to our adult education program and speaker series
- Monthly newsletters packed with information and inspiration
- Having a B'Mitzvah for your child at Shir Libeynu
- Opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors of the shul
- Receiving Yahrtzeit and simcha reminders
- Voting at our Annual General Meeting
- Access to the larger Toronto Jewish community through alliances and sharing of information
- Access to purchase cemetery plots in the Shir Libeynu section of Beit Olam, which welcomes people of Jewish faith, interfaith families and those with Jewish connection

* We are pleased to provide both interactive online streaming and in person offerings

Admission to monthly Shabbat Services and our other special holiday services during the year, such as Purim, Lunch and Learn, Pride, etc. will remain open to the community. Frequent attendees are encouraged to become members or donate generously.

It is impossible to overstate the value of the generous contributions of time, expertise and talent by volunteers from our membership. Our finances could not support this level of commitment. Thank you to all the volunteers!

The Board is very excited to introduce this new model. We hope you agree and together we look forward to the continued success and future growth of our Congregation and community.

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