

## Choosing Congregation Shir Libeynu for your B'Mitzvah celebration

A warm mazal tov on your child's upcoming lifecycle milestone! This is an exciting time for you, your child, and your family and we can't wait to share your *simcha* (celebration) with you. With our strong tradition of embracing diversity and welcoming everyone, regardless of your level of Jewish experience or education, your family can count on a fulfilling B'Mitzvah experience at Congregation Shir Libeynu.

Together with Cantor Wunch, Congregation Shir Libeynu's Spiritual Leader, you will decide if learning a Torah portion is right for your child, or if other appropriate options would be better suited to creating a unique experience. There are many options to consider.

Working with the Cantor, you will choose readings, poetry and/or prayers to include in the service, and you will be able to honour special family members and friends with the role of your choice in the service, whether they are Jewish or not.

We hope you will find the following information about how having your child become B'Mitzvah in the Congregation Shir Libeynu community will be as meaningful and as unique as your B'Mitzvah child and family.

### Prerequisites

- B'Mitzvah classes with Cantor Wunch (or equivalent<sup>1</sup>)
- At least one parent must be a member ([Please contact our administrator Amanda for membership info](#))
- B'Mitzvah service preparation tutoring<sup>2</sup>

## Why "B'Mitzvah"?

Congregation Shir Libeynu embraces diversity and inclusion. We felt it important to ensure that all of our children and their families are seen. For this reason, we have moved to gender expansive language, rather than using the gender-binary language of "bar" or "bat" (son or daughter). Please read on for more information about how Congregation Shir Libeynu's approach to B'Mitzvah ensures a unique and meaningful experience for each individual child and family.

## Creating Meaning Through Connection

### Attending Services

Cantor Wunch and Congregation Shir Libeynu believe that becoming B'Mitzvah within a community that is familiar only adds to its meaning. For this reason we ask B'Mitzvah

<sup>1</sup> "equivalent" to be approved by Cantor Wunch only after mutual determination that CSL's B'Mitzvah classes are not appropriate for the student.

<sup>2</sup> tutor to be approved by Cantor Wunch

families to attend our High Holy Day services and as many of our regular Shabbat services as possible in the year leading up to your *simcha*. This way your child and your family will be familiar with the liturgy and music, and will be able to fully participate on the big day. You will also come to know other members of the CSL community, making your celebration with this community even more meaningful.

### **Meetings with Cantor Wunch**

In the lead up to the B'Mitzvah service, Cantor Wunch will meet with you and your child several times. At these meetings she will discuss with you and your family the significance of a B'Mitzvah, and together you will plan a service that is meaningful, reflecting the uniqueness of your child and your family.

### **Participation of Family Members and Friends**

Attending services so that you know the community in which the B'Mitzvah is celebrated is important. The impact of this *simcha* is deepened with the participation of family, friends, and members of the congregation. At Congregation Shir Libeynu, we welcome the participation of all family and friends chosen for individual honours, whether or not they are Jewish.

### **Readings in English**

Chosen by you in consultation with Cantor Wunch, these readings can be poetry, prayers or songs that will be used during the service and that will be included in the English handout provided to the congregation at the service.

### **Hebrew Prayers**

At Congregation Shir Libeynu, we follow the order of a regular liberal Shabbat service. Our *siddur* (prayer book) includes both translation and transliteration of all of the Hebrew prayers, making the services accessible to all.

If you would like to honour family and/or friends by having them lead some of the Hebrew prayers, that would be most welcome.

### **Torah Honours**

It is our tradition at Congregation Shir Libeynu to have group *aliyot* (coming up to the Torah to say the blessings). In planning with Cantor Wunch you may select one, two, or several members of your family/friends to whom you would like to give this honour and we will make sure they all have the opportunity to take part.

You will also want to think about which of your family or friends will have the honour of opening the ark, removing and undressing the Torah, dressing the Torah and closing the ark.

## B'Mitzvah Education

### B'Mitzvah Classes with Cantor Wunch

An important part of preparing to become B'Mitzvah is our year-long B'Mitzvah class taught by Cantor Wunch.

This class focuses on various facets of Jewish identity, and will give students an opportunity to delve more deeply into their own Jewish lives and practices. It is open to anyone entering grade 6, 7, or 8 in September 2024, and is a required element in preparation for celebrating this important rite of passage with Congregation Shir Libeynu. It can be taken either prior-to or concurrently with private B'Mitzvah tutoring.

For information about cost, please [contact our administrator, Amanda](#). For further information about the course curriculum, please [contact Cantor Wunch](#).  
[cantorwunch@gmail.com](mailto:cantorwunch@gmail.com)

### Chanting/Reading Torah

We understand that every child has different strengths. Please know that chanting/reading Torah is **not** a requirement of becoming B'Mitzvah with Congregation Shir Libeynu, but it is a popular option.

If you and Cantor Wunch decide together that your child will prepare a Torah portion for the *simcha*, we will provide you with a list of approved tutors. Some tutors will only teach Torah, some will also teach Hebrew reading. In consultation with Cantor Wunch, you will choose what's right for your child. Please note that the cost of these private lessons are not included in the CSL B'Mitzvah fees, and will be paid privately to the tutor.

If it is determined that a Torah reading isn't right for your child, other options are available and will be shared by Cantor Wunch with you.

**D'var Torah** (Teaching offered by the B'Mitzvah student to the congregation)

Part of the preparation for B'Mitzvah is crafting a *D'var Torah*, a teaching that your child will research, write, and deliver during their *simcha*. Cantor Wunch will work with your child to help them understand their Torah portion and write their speech.

## About our Shabbat Services

### In Person and Online

Our Shabbat services are currently held once a month, generally on the first Saturday of the month, in-person at the [Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre | Downtown Toronto](#) (MNJCC) at 750 Spadina Avenue, Toronto and simultaneously online via Zoom.

If your preferred date does not coincide with our regularly scheduled Shabbat services, see Appendix B for more information.

### **In Person**

Our space at this venue provides for a maximum of 90 people, 30 of which are reserved for members of Congregation Shir Libeynu and up to 60 for your guests.

### **Online**

We can accommodate up to 60 on-line guests in addition to your in-person guests. If your on-line guest number exceeds 60, there is a charge for the technical adjustments required.

### **Health and Safety**

While we no longer require masking at our services, we ask that anyone feeling unwell please stay at home and join us via Zoom. Masking is welcomed for anyone who chooses to do so.

### **Booking with Us**

A deposit equal to half the fee is required at time of booking with the balance due no later than two weeks before the simcha.

See the fee schedule at Appendix A.

## **Questions? Ready to book your date?**

If you have questions related to classes, or to book a date, please [contact Cantor Wunch](#). For questions about costs or any other aspect of the B'Mitzvah planning process, please [contact our administrator, Amanda](#).

## **With Gratitude**

Thank you for giving consideration to celebrating your child's B Mitzvah with Congregation Shir Libeynu where we put meaning and joy at the front of everything we do.

Most sincerely,

*Congregation Shir Libeynu Board of Directors*

## APPENDIX A - B'Mitzvah Fee Guide

**B'Mitzvah service during a regularly scheduled shabbat at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre (typically the first Shabbat of the month) - \$2100\***

Includes:

- Clergy fee
- Admin support
- Printing of siddurim and supplements
- Tech fee
- Challah for the congregation and guests

Does not include:

- B'Mitzvah classes
- B'Mitzvah service preparation tutoring
- Zoom boost (extra fee charged by zoom to expand the number of zoomers beyond what is possible with our current zoom account)
- Decorations
- Additional Food<sup>3</sup>
- Candies if you choose to throw them

**B'Mitzvah service on another date/at another venue - \$2500\***

Includes:

- Clergy Fee
- Admin support
- Printing of siddurim and supplements
- Torah insurance

Does not include:

- B'Mitzvah classes
- B'Mitzvah service preparation tutoring
- Zoom/Live streaming<sup>4</sup>
- Venue rental, including sound system
- Challah for the congregation and guests
- Food (including candies to throw)
- Decorations

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<sup>3</sup> While CSL provides a basic kiddush for members (challah, juice, fruit), families are welcome to supplement this offering with dairy/vegan food of their choice.

<sup>4</sup> CSL is unable to provide Zoom or other technical support for services held outside of the MNJCC room 318. Families are welcome to hire their own tech-support companies if they desire an online component.

**Cantor's Discretionary Fund - suggested minimum donation \$180**

The Cantor's Discretionary Fund is used by the Spiritual Leader as an emergency fund to support members of our congregation who are in need. It is also used to support charitable organizations in our community, and enhance synagogue programming not covered by our annual budget. We ask that all B'mitzvah families make a suggested minimum donation of \$180 to the Cantor's Discretionary Fund in honour of your simcha. This donation is not included in your fee, but you will receive a tax receipt.

**Appendix B - Other considerations**

If you are interested in the MNJCC room 318 for your simcha on a date *other* than one of our regular monthly Shabbat services:

- If the room is available, we can facilitate the arrangement with the MNJCC and you will benefit from the Congregation Shir Libeynu special pricing.
- If you would like your event to be online as well as in person, and you are not planning on holding your celebration at our regularly scheduled Shabbat service, we can ask if our Zoom tech support person is available, and help to facilitate an arrangement for his services (cost approx. \$150 for the service). This option is only available for services held in room 318.

**Appendix C - Additional resources****Alternative venues for services**

- [Hart House](#)
- [Trinity St. Paul's Church](#)
- [The Symes](#)
- [Cecil Street Community Centre](#)

You can find more venues at [www.eventsource.ca](http://www.eventsource.ca).

**Caterers<sup>5</sup>****[Kosher Caterers](#)**

For non-kosher, non-meat options search online for Dairy, Vegetarian or Vegan caterers

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<sup>5</sup> For simchas at the MNJCC food must be kosher-style, defined as either dairy or vegan in accordance with both the MNJCC and CSL Kashrut policies.