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**CBST50**

1973-2023



**PLAZA JEWISH**  
Community Chapel, Inc.

# Funeral Pre-Planning: Everything You Wanted To Know But Were Afraid (And Didn't Want) To Ask!

Gregory Katz (he/his/him) - Senior Funeral Director and Director of Communal Partnerships

# About Plaza Jewish Community Chapel

- Founded 2001 by Jewish community leaders & the Jewish Communal Fund
- Non-profit (one of only a few in the U.S.)
- Dedicated to serving the Greater NY Jewish Community
- LGBTQ+ welcoming (SAGE credentialed & Keshet supporter)
- Warm, welcoming and caring staff, available 24/7
- Modern, clean & inviting facility. Located at ground level, no steps. Elevators throughout building.
- Community led by a board of Rabbis and Jewish communal leaders



# About me

- Working in funeral service for over 26 years; 23 as a funeral director
- Native New Yorker
- Proudly Gay
- Jewish
- Married to Michael Katz since May 2022
- Joined Plaza in February 2023

# Services Provided

- Pre-arrangements at your convenience & pace; in your home or ours
- Transfers across the U.S. and repatriations to-and-from Israel
- Chapel Services with accommodations for up to 250 people
- Live stream services provided
- Graveside Services across the metropolitan area and beyond
- Shomers (guard) available from the time of death, to the time of disposition
- Tahara (ritual washing) completely on-site. Various non-Jewish funeral homes ***do not have on-site facilities***
- Traditional or *New Reform* Chevrah Kadisha (Jewish burial society)
- We provide hand sewn linen shrouds, shiva candles, shiva benches, Israeli earth, yarmulkes, veils and k'riah ribbons



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# Green Burials – What they Entail

- Jewish tradition is the original Green & Natural Burial
- No chemicals used for cleaning or preservation of remains
- Options for simple, unfinished boxes (pine, whicker, bamboo, shrouds) that are devoid of metal hinges and locks, stains, varnishes, paints and seals
- No outer interment receptacles or grave liners of steel or concrete to line a grave before placing the remains
- Nothing interrupts the return of the remains to the earth
- Everything entering the ground is fully biodegradable
- Cemetery stones are unpolished and roughly cut
- No fertilizers or chemicals used to treat grounds of cemetery for maintaining grass appearance
- Cremation utilizes fossil fuels to breakdown the body but damages the environment by the vaporization of CO<sub>2</sub>
- This approach follows through on returning to the earth naturally, some may say even recycling ourselves properly



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# Reform Chevrah

- Conceived by Plaza Jewish Community Chapel, Temple Shaaray Tefila, Beth Elohim and seminarians from HUC-JIR
- Launched March 2023
- Follows Jewish tradition but performed by an egalitarian group of Jewish members
- Will comfortably provide services to the LGBTQ and/or secular Jewish community

# Selecting a Cemetery, Plot and Stones

- CBST plot at Cedar Park – Beth El Cemetery, Paramus, NJ
- Dozens of other Jewish cemeteries in the Metro New York area
- Plot types – Individual, Couples or Family
- Stones can be selected from a variety of stone types and sizes customized to your own individual or family needs. Hebrew, Yiddish, and photo etchings all available

# Pre-Planning

- Rabbis and cantors in concert with funeral directors play an integral role in guiding families & individuals through the age-old Jewish funeral rites
- We want you and your members to know we are there for them whenever they need us
- Educational seminars such as this one today on a variety of topics are available to clergy & congregants
- Design a service and burial that suits your personal wishes
- We utilize NYS PrePlan in Albany, NY. It is partnered with the New York State Funeral Directors Association and their funeral home members. We as a participating NYSFDA member firm adhere to an enforceable Code of Ethics
- Funds are always 100% government secured & backed, providing Revocable and Irrevocable (Medicaid) Contracts, as well as guaranteed pricing and year end tax statements
- We are both on this sacred journey together. However, there is only what is right *for you*
- Above all, tell loved ones & friends about your wishes and pre-arrangements and where documents are located



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# Costs to Consider

- Funeral Home Services – Body removal, transfer, permits, services at the funeral home and/or graveside
- Clergy Fees – Rabbi or Cantor honorarium
- Repatriation – if applicable, fees include paperwork, transfers and flights (Metro New York area, Florida, Israel and around the world)
- Plot – Fees will vary based on location, location, location. Also, the number of graves, cemetery rules & regulations
- Stone – Fees will vary based on stone type, size, design and inscription

# Resources

- New York State Appointment of Aging Form
- Exit Strategy Podcasts
- Drop-in Bereavement Group: Emotional and Spiritual Tools for Coping with Loss
- Coping after Suicide
- Jewish Community Services Support Group
- Compassionate Friends
- Support at the JCC in Manhattan
- New York Legal Assistance Group
- UJA-Federation Resource Line
- Widowed Persons Service (WPS)



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Questions?

# For Further Information

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We are available 24/7, 365 days a year



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