

**Alternative Erev Shabbat Tefilot Proposal**  
**For**  
**Board of Governors Meeting**  
**February 10, 2011**  
**From Meeting of the Ritual Committee**  
**February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

This proposal for **Alternative Erev Shabbat Tefilot** is the result of the proposal that was submitted to the Ritual Committee on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011 by Rabbi Creditor. It reflects the ongoing conversation across the Jewish spectrum inside and outside of Conservative synagogues, the recent joint meeting attended by Rabbi Creditor of the Washington Board of Rabbis & Washington-Baltimore Rabbinical Assembly of nearly fifty Rabbis deliberating on these matters, besides discussions at recent Board of Governors Meetings. It reflects the guidelines developed for the Shabbat Under the Stars program. The development of the music in the Main Sanctuary Shabbat tefilot is ongoing and those tefilot continue in their current modality. The purpose of this proposal is to widen the opportunities at Temple Beth-El by increasing the formats for tefilot. Perhaps with wide publicity it will attract diverse and numerous participants. It is a challenge and an opportunity. The Ritual Committee and Rabbi Creditor deliberated at length and depth. The committee enthusiastically welcomed and embraced this proposal. After modest modification it was passed unanimously.

1. In order to maximize lay (congregational) participation, investment and responsibility, while addressing the widest possible range of desires, the Alternative Erev Shabbat Tefilot will be lay-led and lay-managed. The Rabbi will gladly serve as a resource for help, guidance and tefilah materials.
2. The lay-management need(s) to coordinate efforts with the Ritual Chairman, keeping the Rabbi notified of all developments.
3. At the outset, the tefilot could be as infrequent as once a month, but, if desired, could increase eventually becoming bi-monthly or even weekly.
4. The tefilot **are not** required to conform to a halachic structure. That enables greater flexibility. Therefore there is no attached tefilot outline. If desired, the halachic framework of the Shabbat Under the Stars can be utilized.
5. Only non-electrical instruments may be used.
6. It is vital to create a sense of community at Temple Beth-El. It will be best achieved by these tefilot being held in the synagogue building [social hall, Kiddush room, Okun Chapel] and can meet simultaneously with the Main Sanctuary tefilot, at 6:00 P.M. or, in coordination with the executive director, scheduled at an alternative time. People can worship in different venues at the same time, coming and going together. People can alternate venues on the same evening. It is intended to realize a greater unity while providing greater choice. Until such time as an appropriate space is available, the "Shabbat Under the Stars" could be conducted at the Religious School, while maintain the Main Sanctuary Tefilot.

7. If desired, there can be refreshments at these tefilot. If so organized, participants in the various tefilot venues could come together at the conclusion of the different tefilot at the same refreshments, augmenting the sense of community.
8. These tefilot may use Siddur Sim Shalom or other materials that are in concert with Conservative Judaism. Within those parameters, self designed tefilah materials can also be used.
9. An attractive title should be created for its identity and adequate publicity initiated. Target populations (including university groups) should be considered.
10. When a major program or Shabbat dinner is scheduled, the alternative Shabbat Tefilot should be scheduled at 6:00 P.M. in order increase participation in a synagogue wide event and add to the sense of community.