

Same-Sex Commitment Ceremonies

Liberal Judaism is pleased to announce that committed same-sex partnerships between two Jews can now be recognised by appropriate Jewish ritual and those Rabbis in membership of the Liberal Judaism Rabbinic Conference who wish to officiate at such ceremonies have its support to do so. The Rabbinic Conference recognises that holiness may be present in committed same-sex partnerships and in December 2005 created liturgy for same-sex commitment ceremonies, entitled [Brit Ahavah \(Covenant of Love\)](#).

This development places Liberal Judaism in the vanguard of institutions offering equity and fairness to gay and lesbian partners. The Liberal Judaism Council welcomed the timely policy on this important issue and commended both the clarity and the choices it offers to Liberal Judaism Rabbis and constituent congregations.

As Liberal Judaism stresses equality and inclusion, offers respect to all conscientious options and encourages the synthesis of Judaism and modernity, this addition to our accepted practice is fully consistent with our ideology. Whether or not a Rabbi participates in such an act of prayer is to be determined by their own individual conscience. When the ceremony is to take place in a synagogue, it must be with due regard to the views of its rabbinic and lay leadership. While these ceremonies remain an extension of our inclusive nature, they have no status in either Jewish or civil law.

When same-sex partners are from mixed faiths, as in the case of heterosexual partnerships, Liberal Judaism would stress the benefits of the non-Jewish partner converting to Judaism, but would, if the Rabbinic Conference's conditions were met, offer the couple a mixed faith blessing.

In the case where one partner in a same-sex relationship is the natural or adoptive parent of a child and the intention of the couple is to raise the child jointly in the role of parents (providing the consent of any natural parents involved in raising the child has been given) the couple will be jointly recognised as the parents of the child for religious purposes. Where those parents are of mixed faith, the faith of the child will be determined in accordance with the same Liberal Judaism policy that applies to children of heterosexual mixed faith couples.

As the civil legal status of same-sex partnerships evolves, the Rabbinic Conference will consider the manner of registering and de-registering them accordingly.

Liberal Judaism's new policy means that many gay and lesbian Jews, (roughly 10% of our population), who were previously disenfranchised, can now be more fully included in Liberal Jewish life. This, we truly celebrate.