

The History of Congregation Beit Kodesh

In 1958, when Livonia was a budding community, a group of visionaries new to the area began holding Shabbat services at the Clarenceville Central Elementary School. As word got out, more people became interested and services were held in individual's homes. High Holy Day services that year were held at the historic Botsford Inn in Farmington. The 200 people in attendance showed a strong need for a permanent congregation. In 1959 the Livonia Jewish Congregation was officially organized.

In 1990 the congregation changed its name to Beit Kodesh to better reflect the scope of its membership, which was drawn from throughout the Detroit area including Canton, Farmington Hills, Milford, Northville, Novi, Oak Park, Redford, Southfield, Wayne, Westland, West Bloomfield, and White Lake. Beit Kodesh was the only Conservative synagogue in Western Wayne County. Beit Kodesh was the first Conservative congregation in the area to elect a woman president (Helen Bayles in 1978).

Over the years, the congregation has held services in many locations including a farmhouse on Seven Mile Road, a tent on the grounds of the Botsford Inn, Carpenter's Hall in Redford, and a church on Six Mile Road. Finally, in 1971, we moved to the Molly and Samuel Cohn Building on West Seven Mile Road in Livonia.

From 1959 until 2011, the congregation has had three rabbis. Rabbi Steinberg served in the 1960's. Rabbi Martin Gordon served for 22 years from 1967 to 1989. Rabbi Craig Allen led the congregation from late 1990 to 1998. In between and since Rabbi Allen's tenure, lay members have conducted services for the congregation. Rabbi Jason Miller, the associate director of the University of Michigan Hillel Foundation in Ann Arbor, served as the Rabbinic Advisor until 2011 when we became part of Congregation B'nai Moshe.

Beit Kodesh has operated a Sunday school, sisterhood, youth group, men's club, adult education classes, Bar and Bat Mitzvah classes, social events, and many other activities.