

Adas Israel Traditional Egalitarian Minyan Governing Principles, Policies, Procedures

The purpose of this document is to serve both as a record of our current policies as well as the basis for considering several policy questions, which will be discussed at the October 26 Meeting

What is the Minyan? Who are we?

The Adas Israel Traditional Egalitarian Minyan (the Minyan or TEM) is a lay-led *davening* (prayer) community, one of several diverse *davening* and learning communities that make up Adas Israel Congregation. TEM members are members of Adas Israel who primarily attend the TEM when they come for Shabbat services. TEM members take part in the full range of Adas Israel activities and are involved in governance and leadership roles at the synagogue.

The TEM follows Conservative movement *halachah* (laws and regulations) in consultation with the *Mara D'Atrah* (senior rabbi) of the synagogue. Within that *halachic* framework, the Minyan sometimes engages in practices or *minhagim* (customs) that differ from other services within Adas Israel.

The TEM strives to be as inclusive as possible, to ensure any member can participate as fully and as completely as they are able within our rules and customs.

The TEM publishes a weekly e-newsletter to communicate with the membership about information or activities specific to the TEM.

What is the role of the Coordinating Committee and its relationship to the synagogue?

The TEM makes major policy decisions about its own practices, including *minhagim*, at regular meetings. A volunteer Coordinating Committee (TEMCC) serves as a liaison between the TEM and the Adas Israel clergy and staff. This Coordinating Committee schedules and chairs the meetings and sets the agenda based on input from TEM members. The Coordinating Committee also handles logistical issues and makes interim policy decisions when necessary. When appropriate, these decisions are made in consultation with the *Mara D'Atrah*, the Adas Israel Religious Practices Committee, or any other relevant committee or governing body.

What other volunteer roles are required to run the Minyan?

The TEM also has volunteers who fill a number of other coordinating positions, including Service Coordinator, Davening Coordinator, Leyning Coordinator, D'var Torah Coordinator, Announcements Coordinator, Hospitality Coordinator, Publicity Coordinator, Friday Night

Service Coordinator, B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, Simcha Coordinator, and High Holiday Coordinator. Sometimes two co-coordinators will share a role. Each of these volunteers is encouraged to serve a minimum of six months. When someone resigns, the TEMCC announces a vacancy in the e-newsletter and at services for at least two weeks to attract volunteers. If no one steps forward, the TEMCC or the departing coordinator may actively recruit a new coordinator.

What Ritual Practices are followed by the Minyan?

Over the years, the TEM has made a number of decisions concerning its Shabbat morning and holiday services. The TEM made most of these decisions formally during TEM meetings or in consultation with the clergy. Others were made informally. Below is a description of the most important current TEM policies and practices:

- Shabbat services begin at 9:30 A.M. with *p'sukei d'zimra* (preliminary prayers and psalms). With advanced notice either in the oral announcements or the e-newsletter (preferably both), we may start services at 9:00 or 9:15 if the service is expected to run long, e.g., for *b'nai mitzvah* or for *Shabbat chol hamo'ed* (interim) *Sukkot* and *Pesach*.
- We do not use a microphone on Shabbat in TEM services. We use the “flat mike” during combined services with Smith congregants. We do not use other microphones.
- A man must cover his head with a *kippah* (yarmulke), or other appropriate head covering, while in services and don *tallit* (prayer shawl) when approaching the *Torah* or leading the service.
- A woman may choose whether to cover her head or don *tallit* while in services, approaching the *Torah*, or leading the service.
- The TEM uses the same *siddur* (weekday and holiday prayer book) and *machzor* (High Holiday prayer book) as the other Adas Israel services.
- The TEM does not skip any of the traditional Hebrew prayers in the *siddur*. However, the Service Coordinator may opt to skip *Shir Hakavod* (aka *Anim Z'mirot*) in the interest of time.
- Except for the prayer for our country, (and on special occasions, the prayer for peace), all prayers are recited in Hebrew.
- The *shaliach tzibur* (person leading services) may decide whether to include the *Imahot* (Matriarchs) in the repetition of the *Amidah*.
- There are several variations of the Musaf service regarding the sacrifices that are approved by the Conservative Movement. The *shaliach tzibur* may decide which version he or she recites.
- Only one person at a time may be called up to recite the blessings over the *Torah*.

- The first blessing over the *Torah* is reserved for a *Cohen* or *Bat Cohen*, and the second for a *Levi* or *Bat Levi*. A *Cohen* or *Levi* may not recite any of the other blessings over the *Torah* unless the reading has been appropriately divided to create *chosafot* and *acharon* (extra readings).
- A woman who is a *Bat Cohen* or *Bat Levi* may choose to accept the honor of the first or second blessing, respectively, or not to do so, but she should choose one or the other as her consistent *minhag*.
- As is the practice in other Adas Israel services, during *b'nai mitzvah* or other family *s'machot* (celebrations), we reserve two *aliyot* (honors of blessings over the *Torah* reading) for members of the congregation whom it may be appropriate to honor. We will sometimes release those to be used by the family celebrating the *simcha* on the “day of” if the Service Coordinator is not aware of someone else in the congregation on whom it would be appropriate to bestow the honor.
- In the case of a non-Jewish parent of a bar or bat mitzvah, we follow Adas Israel policy, and work with the *Mara D'Atrah* when questions arise.
- *Yizkor* (the service of remembering the deceased) is recited on the second day of all *chagim* (major holidays) and *Yom Kippur*. *Yizkor* is recited after the *d'var Torah*.
- While we prefer one *shaliach tzibur* to lead an entire service—whether *psukei d'zimra*, *shacharit*, or *musaf*—on occasion, a different person will lead *birchot hashahar* (the morning blessings), *Hallel* (celebratory psalms on a holiday), *birchat hachodesh* (blessing a new month), or the Torah Service to accommodate additional participation and enable those with special skills to lead those parts of the service.
- Children who have not yet attained the age of *b'nai mitzvah* are encouraged to participate in the service as much as is *halachicly* appropriate. Children may volunteer to:
 - lead *Ashrei*, *Eyn Keloheinu*, *Anim Z'mirot*, *Adon Olam*;
 - accompany an adult to open the ark;
 - follow the *Torah* as it is marched around the synagogue; or
 - accompany a parent or other adult who recites the blessings over the *Torah*.

What is the Minyan governance structure?

The TEM is currently governed by a Coordinating Committee, composed of five individuals sharing equal responsibilities and governing by consensus. Each individual must have been a member of Adas Israel for at least two years prior to serving on the TEMCC, and members serve staggered two-year terms to allow overlap. The committee membership is selected through a volunteer process in which volunteers are solicited at the time a member plans to step down and are expected to serve a two year term. Recently, the TEMCC assigned particular roles to individual members (treasurer, ritual matters, liaison with the synagogue).

Other volunteer coordinators serve specific functions to ensure the smooth functioning of the Minyan. These other coordinating roles are described in detail in Appendix A.

Unresolved Questions Regarding TEM Coordinators:

There are some unresolved questions related to the individual coordinator positions:

- What, if any, should be the requirements to be a member of the Coordinating Committee? [Currently, they are required to be members of the shul for at least two years.]
 - Option A: Retain current requirements.
 - Option B: Reduce requirement to one year of Adas Israel membership.
 - Option C: Require one year of Adas Israel membership plus self-identification of Minyan-goer status by signing up for electronic membership list.

- Should coordinators of parts of the service also perform that function for all non-Shabbat functions, including High Holidays?
 - Option A: Yes
 - Option B: No, there should be separate coordinators for High Holiday and non-Shabbat functions.

- Should some of the coordinator positions always be shared positions?
 - Option A: Continue current process under which coordinators can choose to serve alone or with a co-coordinator.
 - Option B: Designate which positions should always be shared/not shared.

- What kind of training, if any, should we offer to volunteers about to undertake various leadership opportunities?
 - Option A: Continue current process of having departing coordinators provide training to incoming coordinators.
 - Option B: Develop documents for each position listing roles and responsibilities.
 - Option C: Have each incoming coordinator “shadow” current coordinators 3 months <or some period of time> before their term is to begin.
 - Option D: All of the above
 - Option E: Other ideas _____

Unresolved Questions Regarding TEM Governance

There are also a number of unresolved issues related to TEM governance. We have presented these below with suggested options for resolution. They include the following:

- How should Coordinating Committee members or other coordinators be selected? (Currently, members are volunteers, and regular requests are made to the community by the committee for volunteers to replace departing members).
 - Option A: Retain volunteer process
 - Option B: Adopt yearly elections utilizing online voting. Those eligible to vote would be

- members of Adas Israel who self-identify as minyan-goers by signing up for the online listing (which will serve as the “voters list”) at least one month prior to any vote.
- Option C: Adopt yearly elections at an in-person meeting (with secret ballot)
- If elections are not used, how do we decide among qualified volunteers on the occasions where more than one person steps forward?
 - Option A: Retain current process in which incoming coordinators decide through informal negotiation which person will serve.
 - Option B: give the position to the first person to volunteer.
 - Option C: expand the number of members of the Coordinating Committee to capture the interest to serve.
 - Option B₁: Retain an odd number to make it easier to resolve disputes
 - Option B₂: Set a maximum total number of members
 - How should the internal structure of the Coordinating Committee be arranged? (Currently, five members have equal responsibilities and govern by consensus).
 - Option A: Retain current structure
 - Option B: Adopt a three-person committee to govern by consensus
 - Option C: Adopt a structure consisting of a chair or two co-chairs, a secretary, a treasurer, the Davening Coordinator, and the Leyning Coordinators.
 - How often should Minyan meetings take place? (They are currently quarterly).
 - Option A: Retain quarterly schedule.
 - Option B: Move to twice-per-year schedule
 - Option C: As decisions arise that require a meeting?
 - Option D: When called by a minimum number of Minyan members?
 - For minyan meetings, what, if any, quorum requirement is appropriate?
 - Option A: 10 members present
 - Option B: 20 members present
 - Option C: 30 members present
 - Option D: 40 members present
 - Option E: 50 members present
 - Option F: a (small) percentage (15%?) of currently registered membership?
 - When should meetings take place?
 - Option A: Shabbat at 1pm
 - Option B: Sundays
 - Option C: weeknights
 - Option D: TEM CC sets the time to try to maximize attendance
 - Where should meetings take place?
 - Option A: at synagogue

- Option B: in someone's home

- What procedures are appropriate before putting an item on the quarterly meeting agenda?
 - Option A (procedure proposed by Governance Committee):
 1. It is first appropriate to determine if the proposed agenda item is a matter of administration, *minhag*, or *halachah*. If it is not clear, can be determined in consultation with the *Mara D'Atrah*.
 2. If the matter is determined to be *halachic*, the *Mara D'Atrah* should be consulted to determine the appropriate options for resolution, if any, and the decision will be made as to whether to pursue studying the matter as a group using relevant texts or other materials. Following that study, an item may be brought for consideration at a future minyan meeting.
 3. If the proposed item is a matter of *minhag*, the item may be proposed in a Minyan meeting and the decision will be made as to whether to pursue studying the matter as a group using relevant texts or other materials. Following that study, an item may be brought for consideration at a future minyan meeting.
 4. If the proposed item is a matter of administration, it may be considered by the TEM, with consultation as appropriate with the synagogue administrators.
 - Option B: other ideas? _____

- How often and under what circumstances may decisions made at a Minyan meeting be reconsidered?
 - Option A: 2 years, or if new information or material arises which necessitates the reconsideration of the decision
 - Option B: 3 years
 - Option C: 5 years
 - Option D: a minimum number of congregants petitions the TEMCC (5? 10? 20?)

- How can we increase participation in Minyan meetings?
 - Option A: Continue current efforts to encourage participation through announcements, publication of the newsletter and availability of listserv
 - Option B: In person elections
 - Option C: Online voting
 - Option C: Proxy Voting
 - Other ideas _____

- What kinds of decisions are TEM members comfortable delegating to the Coordinating Committee?
 - Whether a service time may be changed.
 - Which service dates will be combined with the Smith?
 - How to spend monies in the TEM Fund up to a certain amount?
 - On what dates the Minyan will sponsor a Kiddush and the menu?
 - On what dates to plan programming (whether or not co-sponsored)
 - Whether to divide readings to accommodate more honors on Shabbat?

- Appoint, if requested, TEM representatives to synagogue committees
- Other _____

- Do you have ideas for how the minyan can ensure quality of its services and activities while encouraging creativity?

- In what areas could or should the TEM take a leadership role in programming?

- What kinds of programs, if any, should be open only to Minyan attendees?

- Where should written copies of these and other guidelines be maintained?
 - Option A: in the Adas Israel Library
 - Option B: in the Executive Director's office
 - Option C: online on the Traditional Egalitarian Minyan page of the Adas Israel website
 - Option D: all of the above
 - Option E: other _____

Appendix A
Descriptions of Coordinator roles and responsibilities

(a) **Service Coordinator** (one for each service):

- Welcomes visitors to the Minyan and gives them guidance about the services, as appropriate.
- Assigns honors for blessings before the *Torah*, except those connected to *b'nai mitzvah* or *aufrufs* (ceremonies celebrating an upcoming wedding), ensuring a representation of both men and women.
- Assists those assigned honors if they are not familiar with Minyan customs.
- Chooses two *Gabbai'im* to oversee the Torah service.
- Assigns honors for opening the ark.
- Assigns honors for lifting and dressing the *Torah*.
- Announces pages or arranges for someone to do so.
- Determines whether *Shir ha-Kavod* will be recited or skipped because of the length of the service.
- Assigns someone to make *Kiddush* at the end of the service.
- Makes sure that noise and other distractions do not interfere with Minyan services as much as possible.
- Makes sure that books are returned to the shelves.
- Assures that all aspects of the service run smoothly.

(b) **Davening Coordinator:**

- Arranges and ensures prayer leaders for all Minyan services.
- Coordinates with the Ritual Director for combined services.
- Maintains a list of individuals who are able to lead and who have led services on which dates.
- Rotates prayer leaders and attempts to include a variety of leaders over time.
- To the extent feasible, includes at least one man and one woman as a prayer leader on each Shabbat.
- Identifies and recruits competent and musical congregants to lead.
- Encourages congregants to learn how to lead as a fulfilling enterprise and an important contribution to the community.
- Arranges for recordings or other appropriate assistance if necessary.

(c) **Leyning Coordinators:**

- Arrange and ensures readers to cover each Torah reading, the *haftarah*, and appropriate holiday readings at all Minyan services.
- Coordinate with the Ritual Director for combined services.
- To the extent feasible, include at least one man and one woman reader in each service, or work with the Service Coordinator to ensure a representation of both men and women during the Torah service.
- Maintain a publicly available list of upcoming readings and individuals assigned to those

readings.

- Maintain a publicly available list of historical reading assignments going back at least one year (but preferably further).
- Identify and recruit competent congregants to read and encourage congregants to learn how to read as a fulfilling enterprise and an important contribution to the community.
- Arrange for recordings or other appropriate assistance if necessary.

(d) D'var Torah Coordinator:

- Arranges for a speaker to talk about the week's reading at Minyan Shabbat services, including a diversity of congregants across the year.
- Coordinates with the clergy of the synagogue to reserve dates on which they would like to speak.
- Arranges guest speakers, as appropriate.
- Gives guidance, as needed, to volunteer speakers about appropriate topics, sources, structure, and timeframe.
- Maintains a collection of past *divrei Torah* as examples for future speakers.
- Coordinates with the synagogue librarian to update the library collection.

(e) Announcements Coordinator (one for each service):

- Prepares the oral announcements that are delivered during an appropriate break in the service, either after the *d'var Torah* or after the last Mourner's *Kaddish*.
- Prepares and arranges for copying and distribution of any information sheet distributed at Shabbat services.
- At his or her discretion, offers congratulations or condolences, invites visitors or newcomers to introduce themselves, and informs the congregation about service times, events in the upcoming week, or other information of interest to the Minyan, synagogue or Jewish community.

(f) Hospitality Coordinator:

- Arranges Shabbat and holiday meals by bringing together hosts and guests who need or desire hospitality.
- Finds overnight hospitality, on occasion, for guests who observe Shabbat and need a place within walking distance of the synagogue.
- Encourages and recruits congregants to host so that hosting is available when the community is asked.

(g) Publicity Coordinator:

- Prepares the weekly electronic Minyan newsletter and any information sheet distributed at Shabbat services.
- Maintains other electronic communication programs for the Minyan.
- Maintains and updates the Minyan directory on a regular basis.

(h) Friday Night Service Coordinator:

- Plans for all aspects of the TEM's Friday night service offerings (once each month).
- Recruits volunteers to lead the service or deliver *divrei Torah*.
- Coordinates with the synagogue regarding other events and facilities on those evenings.

(i) **B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator:**

- In conjunction with the other coordinators, assists families whose sons and daughters will be celebrating *b'nai mitzvah* in the Minyan.
- Provides timely information to such families about Minyan customs and procedures.
- Acts as a liaison between the family and the Minyan.
- Ensures all necessary arrangements are made by the family in advance so the day of the celebration runs smoothly.

(j) **Simcha Coordinator.**

- In conjunction with the other coordinators, assists congregants celebrating a *simcha* other than *b'nai mitzvah*, such as an *aufruf* or baby naming.
- Provides timely information about Minyan customs and procedures.
- Acts as a liaison between the celebrants and the Minyan.
- Ensures all necessary arrangements are made in advance so the day of the celebration runs smoothly.

(k) **High Holiday Coordinator:**

- Plans for all aspects of the TEM's High Holiday service offerings (first day of Rosh Hashanah, Kol Nidre, and Yom Kippur).
- Recruits volunteers for *davening*, *leyning*, *divrei Torah*, various kinds of honors, and ushers to keep order.
- Coordinates with the synagogue regarding events and facilities on those days.