



Visitor Guide



Welcome to Temple Beth El!

This guide provides information about attending worship and events at Temple Beth El. If you have questions or would like an informational tour, please contact our office at office@tbemadison.org.

The comfort of TBE members and guests who gather with us in person is an important factor as we determine our guidelines. We will continue to livestream our worship in our ongoing commitment to reach everyone.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

We strive to create and sustain an accessible and inclusive Reform Jewish community where everyone is valued and feels a sense of belonging.

Please see "Inclusivity and Accessibility" on page 4 for more information about accessibility measures at Temple Beth El.

In particular, please note:

- An all-gender restroom with wheelchair accessibility and changing table is available on the main floor.
- We offer a Loop System for assistive hearing devices in our large communal spaces. Please see an audiologist to learn how to connect hearing aids to this technology.

Security and Police Presence

To ensure the security and comfort of our members and guests, Temple Beth El routinely engages Madison Police Department officers to appear at our events.

You may notice them at the Temple Beth El doors or in squad cars in front of the building. Please know they are present for our safety.

No Weapons Allowed

With the exception of law enforcement, Temple Beth El prohibits firearms or weapons in the building.

COVID-19 Guidelines

We continue to monitor COVID-19 statistics for Dane County and may adjust these recommendations as needed.

- Temple Beth El welcomes and recommends masks in the building for all worship, events, and meetings. We ask that everyone continue to be honest about your personal needs and be respectful of the needs and preferences of others in our congregation.

- Temple Beth El strongly recommends vaccinations and boosters for everyone age 6 months and up who is eligible. We do not require proof of vaccination.

Parking and Transit

- We have a very small parking lot. To the extent possible, please leave spots in this lot open for those who may not be able to walk from available spots on the adjacent streets.
- Four spots in the parking lot are reserved for those with accessible parking permits.
- Street parking is available in the surrounding neighborhood. Please allow a few extra minutes to park and walk to our building.
- The closest Madison Metro bus stop is located at Monroe and Knickerbocker, just around the corner from Temple Beth El.

Arriving for Worship

- Worship begins promptly at the scheduled time. Doors will typically be opened 30 minutes before the start time.
- Please enter through our main Arbor Drive doors. This entrance has a ramp for accessibility.
- The side door to the parking lot is reserved for those using the accessible parking. These doors are locked for security. If you need to use this entrance instead of the main entrance, please call the office at 608-238-3123 in advance during office hours.

What to Wear

- When attending worship in our sanctuary for Shabbat, holidays, b'nai mitzvah, or other sacred times, please dress respectfully.
- Typical clothing choices range from "business casual" (pants, sweaters, etc.) to suits (ties optional), dresses, etc.

- Bulky coats or large bags should not be brought into the sanctuary. These can be stored in the coatroom, located in the hall to the right when facing the sanctuary.
- Do not wear clothes with graphics or messages that are discriminatory, hateful, or inappropriate for a worship environment (e.g., clothing that includes messages or symbols that are hateful against others based on gender, sexual orientation, race, age, national origin, or religion).



Kippot and Tallitot

- The kippah (plural kippot) is the head covering many people wear during worship. Wearing a kippah (also called yarmulke in Yiddish) is a sign of respect for God and for our community's purposes.
- Any person entering the synagogue may wear a kippah.
- The tallit, or prayer shawl, may be worn by Jewish adults (people age 13 and over) during worship. Each tallit (plural tallitot) has braided tzitzit (fringes) attached to the corners, which represent the 613 sacred obligations of the Torah.
- Kippot and tallitot are optional.
- Everyone is welcome to borrow a kippah or tallit from those available outside of the sanctuary. Please remember to return them when leaving the sanctuary.

Prayer Books

- Our prayer books can be found on a cart or table as you enter the sanctuary.
- We use two primary prayer books: *Mishkan T'filah* (Shabbat prayer book) and a Torah commentary.
- Large print prayer books are available on the cart.
- A Kindle version of *Mishkan T'filah* can be purchased from CCAR Press.

Where to Sit

- Seating is not assigned, so please choose the seats that work best for you.
- We encourage people to sit as close to the front as possible to help everyone feel part of the worship experience, which is more easily achieved when attendees are closer to those leading the worship.
- Some seating may be reserved for those using wheelchairs or other mobility assistance, and their companions.



Customs During Worship

- If you are able to, please stand when the worship leader invites the congregation to rise.
- You are welcome to enter and exit the sanctuary as needed. Note that it is more appropriate to exit while the congregation is seated.
- Although you may be moved by a song, a b'nai mitzvah speech, or another part of worship, we ask that you not applaud.

- Everyone is welcome to join in communal readings and songs and to say a loved one's name when invited to by clergy.
- Please do not interrupt the service unless there is an emergency (e.g., medical or safety/security).

Electronic Devices During Worship

- As a general rule, photos and videos are not allowed in the Temple Beth El sanctuary. Please do not take pictures or videos unless you are a professional who has been hired for an occasion and preapproved by Temple Beth El.
- Please keep your cell phone on in case of an emergency, but please silence it and refrain from using it during worship.

Children in the Synagogue

- We love having children of all ages join us for worship and life-cycle events.
- We ask that a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult accompany young children at all times and ensure that young children do not run around the building unsupervised.

Food Policy

- No food is allowed in the sanctuary or library. Food may be consumed in other parts of the building.
- No shellfish or pork products are served or permitted at Temple Beth El.
- Please note that we do not have a kosher kitchen, though arrangements for kosher food can be made with local caterers.
- We will do our best to label items for common allergens; however, please avoid consuming an item if you are concerned that it may contain an ingredient to which you are allergic.

Office Hours

Monday–Thursday 9:00 am–5:00 pm
Friday 9:00 am–3:00 pm



Judaica Shop

The Judaica Shop provides lovely items relevant to Jewish life as a service to the congregation and the greater Madison Jewish community. The Judaica Shop is typically open during Religious School hours or by appointment.

Individual Needs and Questions

Please contact Executive Director Stefanie Kushner at 608-238-3123 or exec@tbemadison.org with any questions or specific needs.

Please Note

Temple Beth El wishes to maintain a warm and welcoming environment. We reserve the right to require a guest to leave Temple Beth El's premises if they do not comply with these guidelines or if a guest is disruptive in any way.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Temple Beth El firmly believes in the Jewish value of *b'tzelem Elohim*, that we are all created in God's image. We aim to create a community based on inclusion, collaboration, kindness, and equity—both in our congregation and in the wider community.

We strive to create and sustain an inclusive Reform Jewish community where everyone is valued and feels a sense of belonging.

Here are some of the ways we strive to welcome and include everyone in our community:

Accessibility:

- Accessible entrances and parking spots
- Accessible seating in the sanctuary

- Elevator in building
- Lowered mezuzah on main entrance
- Large-print prayer books available
- A Loop System for assistive hearing devices, in large communal spaces
- Wheelchairs available on site (contact staff for assistance)
- All-gender restroom on main floor with wheelchair accessibility and changing table

Worship and ritual inclusion:

- English transliteration of all Hebrew texts and prayers
- Ceremonies and life-cycle events for interfaith and LGBTQ+ couples
- Livestreaming of worship for those unable to attend in person
- Gender-inclusive language throughout our prayer books and communications
- Working with every individual student to ensure a consistent and enriching Jewish education
- Flexible requirements for b'nai mitzvah to ensure that students of all ability levels can achieve success
- Dedicated inclusion specialist on staff
- Financial options available for membership, program fees, and education to avoid barriers to participation (contact Executive Director Stefanie Kushner at 608-238-3123 or exec@tbemadison.org)

In 2021, we began to listen more intentionally to voices in our community by engaging in the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion assessment process. Through this process, we are continuing to improve our inclusivity and accessibility and working toward accomplishing additional goals we have identified.

