

Shalom!

Shabbat Morning Guide



temple israel

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Welcome to Temple Israel!

ברוכים הבאים!

We're glad you are with us today! We hope that you enjoy *davening* (praying) with us today. We try to make our services meaningful and relevant and want you to feel comfortable. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask any of our clergy or congregation. Immediately following the services, you are cordially invited to join in the community meal called the *Kiddush*. On Shabbat we greet each other with the greeting, "*Shabbat Shalom!*" or "*Gut Shabbos!*" (Sabbath Peace to you – Hebrew or Yiddish)

Temple Israel of Charlotte

Temple Israel is the oldest synagogue in Charlotte. Founded in 1895, over 550-member families find their spiritual home here. Temple Israel is a Conservative congregation. We all connect in various ways—through prayer, through education, and through our social events. This is what makes Temple Israel a *kehilla kedosha*, a holy community.

About the Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary

Seating approximately 600 people, our beautiful sanctuary is graced with the Gorelick Stained Glass Windows. In the book rack in front of you, is a book that describes the Biblical stories in the windows and how the windows were designed with commentary by the glass artist, Leslie Wicker.

In the middle of the *bimah* (the raised platform at the front of the sanctuary), is the *Aron Kodesh*. The Holy Ark is where the Torah scrolls are kept. Above the Ark is the inscription of the monotheistic statement of faith central to the Jewish religion. *Shema Israel, Adonai eloheinu, Adonai ehad*. ("Hear O Israel, the LORD, our God, the LORD is one.") This statement from Deuteronomy 6:4 is recited four times a day and is a *mitzvah* (commandment). Parents teach their children to say it before they go to sleep at night. Hanging above the ark is the *Ner Tamid*, the eternal light, which is never extinguished. We believe this represents the eternal presence of God in the Sanctuary, our community and in our lives.

What is Judaism?

Judaism is the ancient tradition of people originally called Hebrews, or Israelites. The word Jew (Yehudi) is taken from the name Judah (Yehudah), who was one of Jacob's twelve sons. After the kingdom split, Judea was the southern state ruled by King David's family.

Judaism is an ancient civilization emphasizing the oneness of God, the observance of *mitzvot* (commandments), love of our fellow humans, the study of Torah, and the importance of community and family.

For millennia, there have been differences in opinion on how to interpret the Torah and how to practice Judaism. In modern times, these differences are reflected in three major streams of Judaism – Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Temple Israel is a Conservative synagogue. We follow traditional rituals, but understand them in a modern, egalitarian context. We are traditional in that the service is primarily in Hebrew, but modern in that men and women may sit together and participate in the service equally and fully. Temple Israel is an inclusive community that values relationships and welcomes all.

What is Shabbat?

Shabbat is the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, a day of rest and spiritual enrichment in Judaism. *Shabbat* is observed from sundown on Friday until Sundown on Saturday, for a total of 25 hours. The word comes from the root word meaning to cease or to rest. Therefore, we do not write, use electronics, phones, or cameras on *Shabbat* and kindly ask that you do not use them while in the synagogue or on the campus during *Shabbat*.

What is the Torah?

The Torah is the first five books of Moses, handwritten by a scribe with a quill on a parchment. It generally takes about a year to write and contains 304,805 individual letters. We read the entire Torah every year from beginning to end in a series of set readings. Each week, most synagogues across the globe read the same portion. The Torah is written without vowels, punctuation and musical notation, so readers must learn their portions in advance.

Respect is shown to the Torah by standing when the ark is opened, as well as by dressing it in a beautiful cover and silver adornments. When reading from the scrolls, we do not touch the parchment, as the oil in our fingers can smudge the ink. We follow with an ornate pointer made of silver, called a *yad* (hand).

Prayer

T'fillah, the Hebrew word for prayer, is derived from the word which means "to consider". It is different from the root of the European word for prayer, which means "to ask." This gives a sense of what is behind Jewish prayer. Most Jewish prayer is praise and gratitude for the miracles which sustain us daily and which have sustained our people for millennia, and which will keep us for the future.

Some of our prayers are mandated and are written out in the *siddur*, our prayer book. At other times, we are free to converse with God—offering up the meditations of our own hearts and just listening. While we most often pray in Hebrew or sometimes even in ancient Aramaic, prayer is valid in all languages, but the best prayer is in the language of your heart! Immerse yourself in the singing, chanting and your own prayers. Let yourself have a transformative experience.

The Hebrew Language

Our services are conducted primarily in Hebrew, our people's ancient language. The Torah and our prayer books are written in classical Hebrew. Modern Hebrew is the spoken language in Israel. The prayer book is written in Hebrew, and includes some transliteration, in addition to being translated into English on the opposite page. Feel free to read along in English or Hebrew. Not all of our members fully understand Hebrew, but many do know enough to read some prayers and sing along. We invite you to join in as you feel comfortable.

Guide to the Shabbat Morning Service

If you are unfamiliar with the service, we offer the following guide to both the substance and style of today's Shabbat observance. As a sign of respect for God, we respectfully ask all males regardless of faith, to wear a head-covering (*kippah*-Hebrew, *yarmulke*-Yiddish). Ladies have the option of doing so. As a reminder of the biblical commandment to perform *mitzvot* (commandments), a *tallit* (prayer shawl) is worn by all adult Jewish males and adult Jewish females who chose to do so, but since this serves a religious purpose, non-Jewish people do not need to wear one. At various times during the service, we rise or bow to show honor and respect to God and the Torah (the scroll of the Law).

The service blends elements of communal and personal prayer, recitation of various Psalms, and readings from the Torah and the prophets. Our service follows our prayer book, *Siddur Lev Shalem* (smaller red book), except during the Torah service when we switch to the *Etz Hayim - Torah and Commentary* (large burgundy book). It is easy to get lost during the service. Pages will be announced, but please do not hesitate to look over your neighbor's shoulder or to ask when you cannot find the place. Certain passages are chanted aloud, followed by silent readings and a return to chanting for the last few sentences. Since everyone is a welcome participant, we encourage you to sing or hum along, even when you are not entirely sure of the Hebrew or the melody.

Hebrew is a language that is read from right to left, so our books may seem to open backward, but they really open in the correct direction.

About the Service

The Morning Service is divided into several main sections:

- I. **Shacharit** - The formal morning service includes the *Barchu*, or call to prayer; the *Shema*, a proclamation of Judaism's essential beliefs; and the *Amidah*, meaning "standing," which is the devotional center of the prayer service. The *Amidah* is first said in silence and is then repeated by the *Shaliach Tzibur* (the prayer leader) or the *Hazzan* (Cantor) for the benefit of those unable to read it. Kaddish, a prayer of glorification of God, punctuates the major divisions of the service.
- II. **Torah Service** - The Torah scrolls are removed from the Ark with a rather majestic, formal service and processional. Out of respect, we rise whenever the Torah is lifted. In contrast to the private *Amidah*, the Torah service is public and communal. A weekly portion (*parasha*) is chanted aloud from the Torah, a handwritten scroll. The Torah reading is divided into seven parts. For each of these parts, a person is honored with an *aliyah* (literally, "a going up") to recite the blessings over the Torah. Participation in any part of the Torah service is an honor. Often, an *aliyah* celebrates some significant life cycle event such as a birth, forthcoming wedding, or anniversary. After reading from the Torah, the *Haftarah*, (a

specific selection taken from the books of the Prophets) is chanted, at the conclusion of which the Torah is returned to the Ark with a processional that is parallel to that at the beginning of the Torah service. At the end of the Torah service, the rabbi normally delivers a sermon about the week's Torah portion.

III. **Musaf** - The "Additional Service" begins with another *Amidah*. Thus, two *Amidot* frame the Torah service. The *Musaf* service contains a final *Kaddish*, recited by mourners or those observing a *yahrzeit* (the anniversary of the death of a loved one). After we say the *Kiddush*, the blessing over the wine, and *haMotzi*, the blessing over the bread, a final hymn concludes the service. Please join in the joy of Shabbat as we eat together as a congregational family immediately following the service in the Leon & Sandra Levine Social Hall.

Thank you for joining us today!

We hope that your time at Temple Israel was meaningful and that you found our synagogue to be a warm, welcoming, and engaging congregation. If you would like further information about Temple Israel, or information on how to become a member of the congregation, please contact:

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