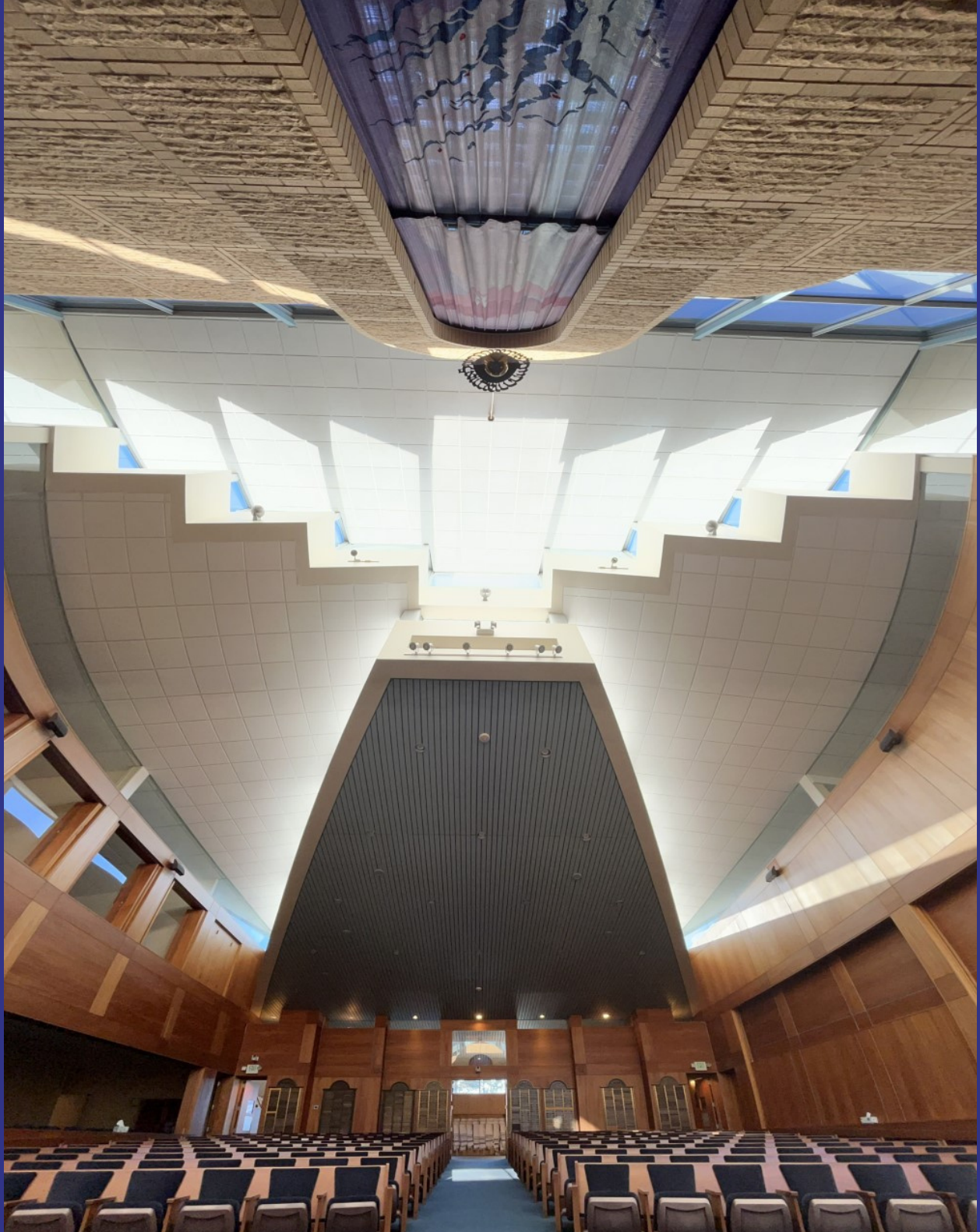


Guide to the Shabbat Morning Prayer Service AT BETH MEYER SYNAGOGUE



“How lovely are your dwellings, Jacob;
your sanctuaries, people of Israel!
As for me, through Your great kindness I enter Your house;
in awe of You, I bow toward Your holy sanctuary.
Adonai, I love Your house, the place where Your glory dwells...”
-excerpt from *Mah Tov* (“How Lovely”) prayer
Complete Hebrew, transliteration, and English translation found on page 101 in *Siddur Lev Shalem*

WELCOME to Beth Meyer Synagogue. We are so glad to have you join us for our *Shabbat* morning prayer service. Here, we pray with our whole hearts in song and in silence, in times of joy and in times of struggle, in the words of our tradition and in the words that only souls can express. We offer an array of spiritual opportunities to pray as a community – but the pinnacle is *Shabbat* when we gather to reflect on our lives, study our holy *Torah*, and join with others to walk the spiritual path together.

We want all people – whether this is their first service or they’re here every week – to feel as comfortable as possible. The following information is a guide to help you understand and participate in our service. Included in this booklet are a history of Beth Meyer Synagogue, a description of the art and architectural elements in our sanctuary, and an explanation of the different components of our Saturday morning prayer service.

We come from different backgrounds, but we pray together as a community. In this room there are:

- People who don’t read any Hebrew, and people whose first language is Hebrew.
- People who have a relationship with God, and people who don’t know what to believe.
- People who know when to bow, and people who cannot bow.
- People who love to sing, and people who don’t.
- People who feel uncertain about prayer, and people who pray every day.

Everyone who’s chosen to pray together today is an important piece of our *kehillah kedoshah* (holy community). Relax, and be welcome. *Shabbat Shalom!*



HISTORY OF BETH MEYER SYNAGOGUE

In 1874, Beth Meyer's founding congregation — Raleigh's entire Jewish population — convened for worship in a single room of Michael and Regina Grausman's home. By the time a jubilant procession carried the synagogue's *Torah* scrolls from West Johnson Street to Newton Road in 1983, more than 200 families called Beth Meyer Synagogue their spiritual home. During these 150 years, the tiny *shul* of our founders has blossomed into a thriving, diverse and welcoming congregation of nearly 500 households. As the only Conservative synagogue in Raleigh, Beth Meyer attracts more members every year and is committed to offering dynamic new ways to serve our diverse needs and egalitarian values.



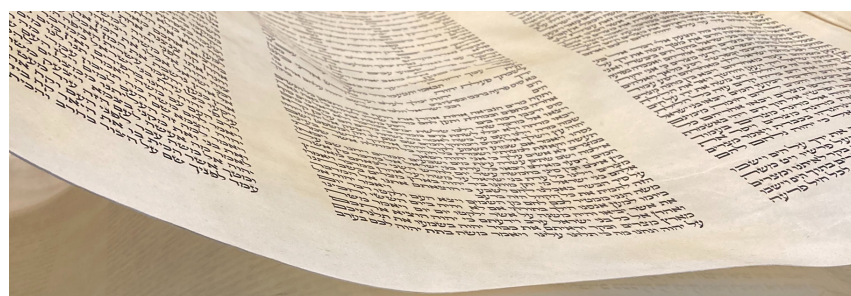
SANCTUARY DESIGN AND SYMBOLS

The focal wall in our sanctuary, which represents the Western Wall in Jerusalem, was designed by the late Ezra Meir — an active congregant and world-class engineer. Just as the Western Wall stands alone, our sanctuary wall also stands alone and is only connected to the rest of our synagogue by open glass — and very deep pilings for support.



The arches in the center of our wall represent the arched gates to the Old City. Dr. Elmo Scoggin, a friend of Beth Meyer who worked on archeological trips near the Western Wall, brought back a piece of Jerusalem stone to be placed in the back wall (look for the stone that slightly protrudes in the center of the top arch).

In the center of the back wall stands the *aron kodesh*, or the ark. The glass ark itself, which houses our *Torah* scrolls, recalls to mind the glassed gate in Jerusalem said to welcome the Messiah. Our ark holds three *Torah* scrolls, each containing the *Five Books of Moses* written by hand on animal skin parchment. It takes a trained scribe approximately a year to complete a single scroll!



The curtain in front of the scrolls features an artistic reference to the burning bush in the lower portion. At the top of the curtain, the Hebrew letters תנא appear diagonally in silvery printing; it reads *ehad*, which means “one.”



Hanging in front of the ark is the *Ner Tamid*. This eternal light represents the flames kept kindled in the ancient Temple of Jerusalem and the eternity of God. The Hebrew on the *Ner Tamid* essentially translates to “That a person may bask in the light of life” and is from *Job 33:30*. This verse refers to God as One who helps human beings come back from sad, dark places towards light.



The architect repeats the theme of large blocks in the wood paneling along the sides of the sanctuary. To complete the enclosure symbolically, the Western Wall look is repeated over the *tallitot* rack which, when one stands on the *bimah* and looks up the aisle toward the lobby, gives the appearance that our temple has been completed.

And to give the illusion that we are praying under the stars rather than a roof, our architect created the blue ceiling with star-like lights that seem to extend up to the ark. To add to the Jewish symbolism, the roof is designed to cast the sunlight into the shape of a *menorah*.

At the back of our sanctuary, there are memorial plaques that commemorate the passing of loved ones. Nameplates are inscribed with the English and Hebrew names of the departed along with dates of death in both the standard and Hebrew calendar. Beside each plaque is a memorial light, which is lit annually and during special services.



TRADITIONAL SYMBOLS OF OUR CONGREGATION:



KIPPAH

It is our custom that all people, regardless of age, religion or gender, cover their heads (by a *kippah*, hat, or other appropriate covering) while engaged in study or prayer. *Kippot* (traditional Jewish head coverings) are available in the lobby.



TALLIT

Many adults of the Jewish faith wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl). This is reserved for Jews above 13 years of age. Our custom is that anyone leading services, or given the honor of blessing, carrying, or reading from the *Torah*, should wear a *tallit*.



SIDDUR LEV SHALEM

A *siddur* is a Jewish prayer book. This bright red book in your pew contains the traditional Hebrew text, an English translation, and a phonetic transliteration for many of the major prayers in our liturgy. It also features commentary providing historical context, as well as poetry and prose that expand and enrich our relationship to the text.



HUMASH ETZ HAYIM

The Humash is our *Torah* in printed and bookbound form. Humash comes from the Hebrew word for five; the humash contains the *Five Books of Moses* with additional readings from *The Prophets* and *Writings*. You'll find English translations and commentary below the main text in this large, dark red book in your pew.

A GUIDE TO OUR SHABBAT MORNING PRAYER SERVICE

Shabbat and holiday morning services consist of the prayers before the reading of the *Torah*, the *Torah* service, and the closing prayers. If you'd like to follow along in our prayerbooks, the rabbi will announce the pages throughout the service. Hebrew is read from right to left and the book pages are numbered accordingly. You may also wish to close your prayerbook to take it all in — and enjoy the music and the flow of the service.

P'SUKEI D'ZIMRA

The rabbis and service leaders will select from traditional and new psalms, songs, and blessings to begin the service with gratitude and joy. There is a Jewish tradition of saying 100 blessings each day — a large number are said in these opening prayers.

SHAHARIT

Shaharit is the morning service. The *Shaharit* service contains several important prayers including the *Barekhu* (a formal call to pray as a community), the *Shema* (which proclaims our faith in one God), and the *Amidah* (standing prayer).

TORAH SERVICE

This service begins when the *Torah* scrolls are removed from the Ark. Both the beginning and the end of the *Torah* service are marked by processions in which the scroll is carried around the sanctuary. After the initial procession, the *Torah* is read publicly by our congregant volunteers. The honor of reciting the blessings over the *Torah* is called an *aliyah*, which means “an ascension.” This refers both to the physical ascent of the person to the *bimah* where the *Torah* is read and to the spiritual uplifting associated with participation in this hallowed ritual. Each week, a different *parashah* (portion) is chanted using a traditional cantillation system we call trope.

D'VAR TORAH

The rabbi or a guest will offer interpretations of the *Torah* reading or another traditional text. We study and discuss this piece of text as a community.

MUSAF

Literally meaning “additional,” we pray an extra *Amidah* to commemorate the additional worship that took place during the days when the Temple stood in Jerusalem.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

The service concludes with the Mourner's *Kaddish* and a closing song. The final prayers end with a blessing over wine/juice and bread. After the service, the entire congregation and visitors are invited for a *Kiddush* luncheon.

If you would like to learn more about the service, Torah reading, Haftarah, or prayer, please contact the synagogue office at (919) 848-1420. In addition, Beth Meyer Synagogue offers classes on Hebrew, liturgy, cantillation, Jewish concepts and more. For additional information, please visit bethmeyer.org.

GLOSSARY OF HEBREW TERMINOLOGY

ADONAI — The Lord or God; one of the terms by which we call God.

ALIYAH — in the *Torah* service, the honor of being called up to recite the blessings over our sacred scrolls; there are at least seven *aliyot* on *Shabbat*.

AMIDAH — a prayer that we recite while standing. During the week, there are 19 benedictions, and on *Shabbat* and holidays there are seven. This prayer forms the central part of Jewish liturgy.

B-MITZVAH — “children of the commandments.” This day marks a young person’s transition into spiritual adulthood. A *B-Mitzvah* ceremony formally marks the assumption of that obligation; a *B-Mitzvah* teen may participate in the service in various ways. Our community is egalitarian and gender-inclusive; the term *B-Mitzvah* supports students of all genders.

BIMAH — the altar/raised platform at the front of the sanctuary.

BRAKHAH — blessing, expressed in ritual formula.

D’VAR TORAH — “a word of *Torah*”; a sermon or discussion of the week’s reading.

HAFTARAH — a selection from the books of the *Prophets* chosen for its relation to the weekly *Torah* portion.

KADDISH — blessings praising God that mark transitional points in the service; there are different versions of the *kaddish* (one is said by those in mourning); the *kaddish* is in Aramaic, rather than Hebrew.

KIDDUSH — a term used for the blessing over the wine/juice; also used to describe the *Shabbat* lunch.

KOL HAKAVOD — “all the honor”; used to mean “good job.”

MAZAL TOV — “good luck”; used to mean “congratulations.”

MINYAN — the quorum of 10 Jewish adults necessary for a complete service of congregational worship.

MITZVAH — a commandment. According to the Jewish philosopher Maimonides, there are 613 commandments in the *Torah*.

ONEG — “joy”; this is another word for food and drink enjoyed on *Shabbat* or holidays.

SHABBAT SHALOM — a traditional *Shabbat* greeting.

SHUL — word for synagogue; Yiddish.

TORAH — term used for the scrolls that contain the first five books of the Hebrew Bible; also a generic term for Jewish teachings and texts.

Yahrzeit — the anniversary of the death of a loved one; Yiddish.

PRACTICES AND CUSTOMS ON SHABBAT

Here are a few tips to help you better acclimate to our *Shabbat* morning *minhagim* (traditions). Out of respect, we request that there be a minimum of conversation during the service; we hope everyone will join us at the *kiddush* luncheon after the service for greetings and conversation.

STANDING AND SITTING

Throughout the service, the leaders will invite congregants to stand for special moments in the service. All participants are invited to stand, but no one should put themselves through discomfort to do so.

ENTERING AND EXITING THE SANCTUARY

It is acceptable to leave the sanctuary during the service. Taking a break is just fine! We ask that you avoid entering or leaving the sanctuary when the ark (the curtained space in which the *Torah* scrolls are housed) is open, when the congregation is standing in prayer, when the *Torah* is being read, or during the *d'var Torah* (sermon) and speeches. The ushers will guide you on appropriate times to re-enter the sanctuary. We ask congregants to continue to wear their head coverings after the conclusion of services while in the building, although they should remove their *tallitot* when leaving the sanctuary.

ELECTRONICS

Shabbat is a time in which we are here with each other and with God. We ask that you put away all electronic devices (phones, tablets, etc.) on *Shabbat*.

SACRED BOOKS

The *Siddur Lev Shalem* and *Humash Etz Hayim* are sacred books and should be treated respectfully. Please refrain from placing them on the floor, and return them to the pocket on the seat back in front of you. We have large-print editions of *Siddur Lev Shalem* available on the credenza just outside the sanctuary.



ACCESSIBILITY

CHILDREN

We welcome children in our sanctuary service. We do ask that parents be sensitive to the needs of other worshipers. You'll find two bins of *Shabbat*-friendly books and toys in the annex, our wing seating area.

Complimentary childcare is also available on *Shabbat* mornings from August-June, for children aged 2 years through second grade, beginning at 9:30 a.m. We offer a supervised play space for children as well as *Shabbat* stories and songs. The play space is located on the lower level of this building, at the far end of the hallway.

RESTROOMS

Gendered, multi-occupancy bathrooms are located near the front door, and single-occupancy, gender neutral restrooms are downstairs, immediately on your right.

ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICES

If you have difficulty hearing or understanding speech in the synagogue, our portable listening devices in the lobby can help you to hear sound directly in your ear, free from distance issues and background noise. Even if you don't use hearing aids, you can still benefit from these devices. Please tell an usher if you would like to use a listening receiver so that we may assist.

SCENT-FREE SEATING

Any time a large group of people gather together, sensitivity to conditions that affect others is necessary. We offer scent-free seating in the back rows and wing areas of the sanctuary. Please do not sit in these rows if you are wearing perfume, cologne or other strong scent-producing products.



SERVICE LEADERS AND RESOURCES

OUR RABBIS

Our rabbis are the spiritual leaders and religious teachers of our synagogue. Throughout the year, our rabbis are available to discuss matters of Jewish law, provide pastoral care, and guide individuals on their spiritual journeys. During a worship service, a rabbi may deliver a sermon, teach about the prayers and *Torah* reading, or celebrate lifecycle events with members of the congregation.



Rabbi Eric Solomon



Rabbi Dr. Jenny Solomon

Our **USHERS** are stationed at the entrance to the sanctuary to assist with anything that is needed. Please let them know if they can be of assistance to you with such things as locating the appropriate book to use, or how to proceed to the *bimah* if you have an honor. Our **SECURITY TEAM** is comprised of trained volunteers and off-duty City of Raleigh police officers that patrol our grounds and respond to emergencies.

A **SHABBAT BULLETIN** is distributed each week that describes the appropriate portions that are read from the *humash*. The synagogue is not only a place of prayer and study, but also a place in which we celebrate milestones and lifecycle events together. The *Shabbat Bulletin* also includes information about the *s'mahot* (joyous occasions) in our community which may be a part of our *Shabbat* service in a particular week, such as a *b-mitzvah*, an *aufruf* (the honoring of a couple about to be married), or a baby naming. The bulletin also lists *yahrzeits*, as well as synagogue news and events.

**TODAY IS A SPECIAL DAY IN OUR WEEK, AND WE ARE PLEASED
THAT YOU HAVE JOINED WITH US TO CELEBRATE SHABBAT.**

“

Prayer cannot bring water to parched fields, or mend a broken bridge, or rebuild a ruined city; but prayer can water an arid soul, mend a broken heart, and rebuild a weakened will.”

—Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel



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PLEASE FEEL FREE TO TAKE THIS BOOKLET WITH
YOU OR SIMPLY PLACE IT BACK IN THE PEW SO
THAT OTHERS MAY ENJOY.