



TALLIT WEARING PRACTICES AT THE FORT TRYON JEWISH CENTER

FTJC seeks, as it always has, to uphold the honor of the Torah (*kevod haTorah*) at all times. Historically, one means of honoring *Kevod haTorah* at FTJC has been through the custom (*minhag*) requiring the wearing of a tallit by men to perform certain duties and in receiving certain honors.

Since becoming egalitarian in 2008, FTJC has had men and women performing all the religious duties, without formally updating our *minhagim*.

Communal Custom

It is the *minhag* of FTJC that anyone receiving one of the listed duties and honors (*Kibbudim*) is expected to wear a *tallit*¹ when performing these functions or receiving these honors. These include:

- Leading davening,
- Opening and closing the Torah ark,
- Holding or carrying the Torah,
- Leining or reading the Torah or Haftorah,
- Receiving an aliyah,
- Lifting the Torah (*hagbahah*),
- Wrapping the Torah (*gelilah*)

Performing the Priestly Blessing (*Birkat Kohanim*)

Kohanim (priests) wishing to take part in the priestly blessing are required by *halacha* to shield themselves from the congregation and provide a shield for the congregation from their hands². Wearing a *tallit* for this ritual is a way that *kohanim* and the congregation observe this *halacha*. At FTJC, *kohanim* taking part in this ritual are required to wear a *tallit* for the ritual, but will not be required to wear one for the duration of the service.

Individual Custom and Affirmation

While FTJC wishes to promote a communal standard and practice, we understand there are differences in individual custom and practice. Those with an affirmative custom not to wear a tallit while receiving such an honor are asked but not required to observe community standards except in the case of *birkat kohanim*.

¹ *Tallit* in this policy refers to *tallit gadol* which is worn over the outer-garments during a prayer service and not *tallit katan* or more commonly referred to *tzitzit* worn underneath garments.

² It is said that the *shechinah* or divine presence is present in the hands of the *kohen* during this practice and one must be shielded from direct visualization of it.