

Welcome to Temple Israel

A SABBATH SERVICE: WHAT TO EXPECT

Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, is a weekly holiday that celebrates creation and offers a respite from the hectic pace of the rest of the week. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and ends with Havdalah – a short ceremony that separates Shabbat from the rest of the week – on Saturday evening.

Many Jewish communities hold Shabbat services on both Friday night and Saturday morning (and sometimes also on Friday afternoon and on Saturday afternoon and evening). Each congregation is autonomous, although many are linked by their denominational affiliation. Reform congregations in North America are members of the Union for Reform Judaism. **Temple Israel holds an evening service every Friday at 6:15 p.m., preceded by an Oneg Shabbat (light refreshments) at 5:30 p.m.** The first Friday of each month is a family service – slightly abbreviated, using a different prayerbook, with a story instead of a sermon.

Although each Shabbat worship service differs from the others (and every congregation does things its own way), there are some Shabbat customs, traditions, and practices observed in one form or another in synagogues and Jewish communities throughout the world. Whether you attend services on Friday night or Saturday morning (or both), rarely, sometimes or often, these are some of the things you may see or hear in and around the synagogue (also known as a temple or a shul, which is a Yiddish word and often is used interchangeable with the other two).

OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

Our building is called Beit Ha'am (House of the People). We share this facility with Shaaray Torah Synagogue (a Conservative congregation) and the Canton Jewish Community Federation and Community Center. We have a police officer at every service to ensure the safety of everyone who comes to Temple Israel. This need for security is an unfortunate reality of modern Jewish life.

IN THE LOBBY

You will notice the stained glass windows that were originally in the sanctuary of Temple Israel's building on 25th Street. In the lobby, you will also see a stand with a box of yarmulkes (kippah is the singular, kippot is the plural in

Hebrew) or head coverings. Historically kippot were worn by Jewish men and boys during worship (and at other times) as a sign of respect to God. In Reform congregations today, both men and women – whether they are Jewish or from another faith or cultural tradition – wear kippot if they choose to do so as a sign of respect, spirituality or prayerfulness. If their kippah falls to the ground, some people will kiss it as they place it back on their head.

Kippot are optional at Temple Israel worship.

Beyond kippot, customs regarding dress vary from congregation to congregation (and standards for dress have loosened in recent times), it is best to avoid wearing shorts, tank tops, t-shirts, sweatshirts, athletic clothing, or flip flops to a worship service. “Business casual” for both men and women is an appropriate guide for Shabbat worship. Suits for men and dresses for women are appropriate when attending a bar or bat mitzvah or another celebratory event held in a synagogue sanctuary.

IN THE SANCTUARY

There may be ushers or greeters at the door of the sanctuary or worship space, but unless the service is extremely crowded, the ushers do not generally seat worshippers. Instead, seating is open, and worshippers can sit wherever they’d like. People most often sit with their families and friends, and there are no reserved seats. Visitors and first-time attendees should feel free to sit in any available seat or ask to join people who are already seated in a pew.

At the front of the sanctuary is the bimah (raised stage or platform from which a worship service is conducted), which includes these items:

- Ark (Aron HaKodesh): an enclosed space that houses Torah scrolls on which is hand- scribed the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, which Jews call “the Torah.” Torah scrolls are dressed in “attire” that mimics the garb of the ancient priests. The art on the ark doors represents the burning bush that Moses encountered.
- The ner tamid (eternal light) is hanging above the ark and remains lit as a sign of God’s eternal relationship with humanity. In a different interpretation, the light is a representation of the fire used during the sacrifices in our people’s ancient history.
- Lecterns and podiums for the service leaders.
- A Torah scroll holder.
- Chairs for people who sit on the bimah, including service leaders and lay leaders (e.g., the president of the Temple Israel board).

DURING THE SERVICE

The rabbi and soloist will lead the service from the bimah. The service follows a set structure that is generally consistent among congregations, but the readings and customs can vary widely.

The service will be conducted using a prayer book (siddur) in Hebrew and the local language. Like many Reform congregations, Temple Israel uses the most recently published Reform prayer book, Mishkan T'filah (Tent of Prayer), which includes traditional prayers in Hebrew, English phonetic transliterations, literal translations, and interpretive readings based on traditional prayer themes.

The prayer book may open from left to right because Hebrew is written from right to left. (English books open from right to left to accommodate English, which is written from left to right. Avoid putting the prayer book on the floor. If it is accidentally dropped, some people will kiss it when retrieving it from the ground, and at the end of the service as a sign of devotion and respect.

The prayer leader will announce the page numbers at regular intervals. If you get lost, it's okay to ask a neighbor the page. You should feel free to participate as you are comfortable.

SHABBAT LITURGY

In Reform congregations, Friday evening services often include Kabbalat Shabbat (Receiving the Sabbath), which comprises a selection of six psalms and the poem L'cha Dodi (focused on meeting the Sabbath Bride), combined with the evening (ma'ariv) service. Prayers that highlight the themes of God's creation of the world and God's redemption of the Jewish people from Egypt are the focus of the Shabbat liturgy. Because Shabbat is a day of rest for humanity and for God, prayers generally do not include requests of God, but rather praise for God.

There will be a lot of music during the service. Much of it will be participatory (melodies can vary widely), but some is meant to be listened to, or as a backdrop to meditation or silent prayer. To the extent you're comfortable, feel free to join in reading and singing during the service.

Typically, the rabbi will share a sermon, d'var Torah (message about that week's Torah portion), or other, short teaching during the service.

ON FRIDAY NIGHT: SITTING, STANDING, BENDING, BOWING

Throughout the worship service, the prayer leader will direct the congregation about when to sit and when to stand (as people are able). If you are not familiar with the service, it is practical to follow what others are doing if you're able. Of course, if you are not able to rise or remain standing comfortably, you are not obligated to do so.

The congregation will be asked to rise at these points in the service:

- During the singing of the last verse of “L’cha Dodi.”
- For the Bar’chu, which is the call to prayer.
- During the Amidah (Standing Prayer), which is the central portion of a Jewish worship service.
- Whenever the ark is opened.
- For the Aleinu prayer.
- Kaddish: Includes the recitation of names of those who are being remembered because they have died within the last week (shiva) or month (sh’loshim), or because it is the yearly anniversary of their death (yahrzeit).

Although it does not involve sitting or standing, at some point during the service (during the Torah service, if there is one in the congregation on Friday nights), the leader will read a list of names (mostly in English, although there may also be some names in Hebrew) and/or ask people to call out names of people who are sick and in need of healing – physical, spiritual, or emotional. After the names have been spoken, the congregation will recite or sing a prayer for healing which is known as the Mi Shebeirach.

AFTER SERVICES

At the end of the service, people come up to the bimah to enjoy a piece of challah (bread) before departing. Because our services end after about an hour, many choose to have dinner after leaving the temple.

What is Reform Judaism?

Reform Judaism affirms the central tenets of Judaism — God, Torah, and Israel — while acknowledging the diversity of Reform Jewish beliefs and practices.

Temple Israel is a Reform congregation. Throughout history, the Jewish people have remained firmly rooted in Jewish tradition – and yet, since its earliest days, Reform Judaism has asserted that a Judaism frozen in time cannot coexist effectively with those who live in modern times. In this way, Reform Judaism has enabled the Jewish people to introduce innovation while preserving tradition; to embrace diversity while asserting commonality; to affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt; and to bring faith to sacred texts without sacrificing critical scholarship.



WHAT DO REFORM JEWS BELIEVE?

We see the Torah as a living, God-inspired document that enables us to confront the timeless, timely challenges of our everyday lives, and believe that Judaism must change and adapt to the needs of the day to survive.

Reform Judaism affirms the central tenets of Judaism — God, Torah, and Israel — while acknowledging the diversity of Reform Jewish beliefs and practices. We believe that Judaism must change and adapt to the needs of the day to survive, and we see the Torah as a living, God-inspired document that enables us to confront the timeless, timely challenges of our everyday lives.

Indeed, Reform Judaism asks us to renew our living Covenant with God, the people Israel, humankind, and the earth by acknowledging the holiness present throughout creation – in ourselves, in one another, and in the world at large – through practice that includes reflection, study, worship, ritual, and more.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE ONGOING WORK OF PURSUING JUSTICE.

Central to Reform Jewish beliefs is the idea that all human beings are created b'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God, and that we are God's partners in improving the world. Tikkun Olam, the repair of our world, is a hallmark of Reform Judaism as we strive to bring about a world of justice, wholeness, and compassion.

Reform Jews strive to make thoughtful choices about how we put our values into action. Organizationally, we are led, in part, by the work of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, a nonprofit advocacy center in Washington, D.C., that educates and mobilizes North American Jewry on legislative and social concerns.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO INCLUSION, NOT EXCLUSION.

We believe that there is more than one authentic way to be Jewish, and we stand for a Judaism that is inclusive and open. Crucially, we recognize that we can become a stronger, more vibrant Jewish community only when we fully welcome and incorporate the diversity that is the reality of modern Jewish life.

We embrace the concept of “audacious hospitality,” a focused effort to embrace Jewish diversity and reach out to those currently not engaged in Jewish life. This includes but is not limited to: Jews-by-choice and those exploring Judaism; Jews of color; LGBTQ+ Jews; Jews with physical, mental, and/or intellectual disabilities; interfaith and intermarried couples and families; multiracial families; and families with young children – as well as the intersection of many identities.

We welcome interfaith families: Since 1978, the Reform Movement has been reaching out to Jews-by-choice and interfaith families, encouraging them to embrace Judaism. Reform Jews consider children to be Jewish if they are the child of a Jewish father or mother, so long as the child is raised as a Jew.

We welcome Jews of color: A strong Jewish community must ensure that the lifestyles, stories, and perspectives of Jewish individuals and families – particularly those whose stories are underrepresented – are heard and incorporated into Jewish life. Through initiatives such as the Union for Reform Judaism’s JewV’Nation Fellowship and our Wholly Jewish podcast, as well as our work with synagogues, Reform Judaism seeks to raise up the voices and experiences of Jews of color so that all Jews and spiritual seekers may see themselves represented in every facet of Jewish life.

We welcome LGBTQ Jews and their families: Reform Jews are committed to the full participation of LGBTQ+ individuals in all areas of Jewish life and beyond, and we have worked tirelessly to fight discrimination and support equality. In 1977, Reform Judaism formally affirmed the rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual Jews (since expanded to include the entire spectrum of the LGBTQ+ community).

We welcome Jews with disabilities. Ensuring that people with disabilities can participate fully in the Jewish and broader secular communities has long been a Reform Jewish priority. We work in collaboration with Jewish, secular, and civil rights partners, as well as those in synagogues and summer camps, to ensure inclusion, accessibility, welcome, and, ultimately, the full participation of individuals with disabilities in Jewish life and beyond.

We are committed to gender equality: The Reform Jewish seminary Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion began ordaining female rabbis in 1972, making Reform Judaism the first Jewish movement to ordain women rabbis, invest women cantors, and elect women presidents of our synagogues. In 2015, Reform Judaism became the largest religious movement in North America to affirm its commitment to the equality, inclusion, and acceptance of people of all gender identities and gender expressions.

Materials adapted from the Union for Reform Judaism –
www.reformjudaism.org.

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