

**Q: What if I am asked to open the Ark doors?**

A: The Rabbi will call up the honorees to open the Ark doors. Once the doors are open, take your prompt from the Rabbi; at times you will return to your seat, and at others you will remain on the *Bimah* and close the doors following that section of the service. One is not required to wear a *tallit* or *kippah* when opening the Ark if you are not Jewish. Everyone is welcome to participate in this honor.

**Q: When should I enter or exit the sanctuary?**

A: Our most reverential times occur when standing, so people should avoid exiting or entering the sanctuary at such times. This is especially true when the Ark is open, the Torah is being read, congregants are reciting the *Mourner's Kaddish*, or the sermon or *d'var Torah* is delivered.

**Q: What are the guidelines for accepted dress at Shabbat services?**

A: TBT has a smart casual dress code. Please consider the event; your attire should reflect the significance of the occasion. Attire should always be modest, respectful, and not create a distraction. It is our expectation that shoulders should be covered when on the *bimah*.

**Q: What happens after the service?**

A: At the conclusion of Shabbat worship, refreshments are served. Before eating we say blessings over the wine/juice and *challah*. On Friday evening, this gathering is called an *Oneg Shabbat*, which literally means "the joy of the Sabbath". On Saturday morning, it is called *Kiddush*, which is also the term for the blessing over the Sabbath wine. Everyone, both members and visitors, are welcome to attend and enjoy the *Oneg* and the *Kiddush*. It is also an opportunity to meet the Rabbi, Cantor and members of the congregation.

**Q: Who should I contact if I have any questions about these customs or membership in Temple Beth Torah?**

A: Contact information for the Rabbi, Cantor and all board positions can be found on our website listed below. If interested in membership contact [membership@bethtorah.net](mailto:membership@bethtorah.net)



**Temple Beth Torah**

**Rabbi Kenneth Block**

**Cantorial Soloist Lauren Laird**

Website [www.bethtorah.net](http://www.bethtorah.net)

Phone 703-263-2252

Mailing Address P.O. Box 2020  
Centreville, VA 20122

Street Address 4212-C Technology Ct.  
Chantilly, VA 20151



**OUR  
REFORM  
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**TEMPLE BETH TORAH  
CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA**

A REFORM JEWISH CONGREGATION  
MEMBER, UNION OF REFORM JUDAISM

**Q: When are Shabbat (Sabbath) services held?**

A: Shabbat services are customarily held on Friday night at 7:30pm and Saturday morning at 10:30am. B'nai Mitzvah services begin at 10:00am and typically start on time. Service times may vary depending on the occasion. Check the Temple calendar on our website at [www.bethtorah.net](http://www.bethtorah.net) for the calendar of events. You may also request to be added to the weekly electronic mailing list which includes a schedule of all upcoming services and events.

**Q: How will I be greeted and how should I greet those I meet before and after services?**

A: When you enter the building, you may be welcomed with one of the traditional Sabbath greetings, either *Shabbat Shalom*, which means "a peaceful Sabbath", or Good *Shabbos*, which means "a good Sabbath". It is appropriate to respond with either of these phrases.

**Q: What should I do with my cell phone?**

A: To honor the sanctity of Shabbat and show respect for the service and fellow congregants, all worshippers must turn off cell phones before entering the sanctuary.

**Q: What is the raised area in the sanctuary called? What ritual objects should I be aware of?**

A: The raised area in the center of the sanctuary, where services are conducted, is called the *Bimah*. On the *Bimah* is the most sacred place in the sanctuary, the *Aron Kodesh* (Holy Ark), which houses the Torah scrolls. Above the Ark hangs the *Ner Tamid* (Eternal Light), which burns constantly as a reminder of G-d's eternal presence.

**Q: Is photography allowed in the sanctuary?**

A: No photography, including the use of cell phones, regardless of flash, is permitted in the sanctuary during services. On occasion, with pre-approval, photos of certain events may be taken after conclusion of the service.

**Q: Do I need a prayer book?**

A: All synagogues provide worshippers with a *Siddur* (prayer book). TBT uses the "*Mishkan T'filah*", the newest Reform *Siddur*, which contains Hebrew, English and Hebrew transliteration of the Reform service. It also contains supplemental information and visitors are encouraged to follow along. During the Saturday morning service we also use "The Torah A Modern Commentary" (*Chumash*), which contains the five books of Moses and is used by congregants to follow the Torah and *Haftarah* (prophetic) readings.

**Q: Should I wear a Kippah?**

A: The tradition of wearing a head covering, a *Kippah* (skullcap or yarmulke), is a sign of respect and reverence for G-d. While optional for women, it is customary for men. *Kippot* (pl.) are provided at the entrance of the sanctuary.

**Q: Should I wear a Tallit?**

A: A *Tallit* is a prayer shawl which contains fringes on each corner called *Tzitzit* which remind us of G-d's commandments. The tradition of wearing a *tallit* varies widely within the Reform Movement. For worshippers, a *tallit* is only worn by Jews during Saturday Shabbat morning services or Holy Days. At TBT, out of respect for the congregation, it is our custom that Jewish people are required to wear a *tallit* if on the *Bimah* to recite the *Aliyah* (blessings before and after the Torah reading) or at any time a congregant is holding the Torah. A rack of *tallitot* (pl.) for use by visitors is available just inside the sanctuary. *Tallitot* should never be worn into the restroom (hooks are provided).

Note: For the honor of lifting the Torah, holding the Torah and leading an *Aliyah*, the Jewish honoree should wear a *tallit* and *kippah*.

**Q: Will I be expected to participate in the service? How will I know what to do?**

A: The Rabbi or Cantor will announce the page you should be on and indicate when you are to stand or sit. However, be aware that everyone is expected to stand when the Ark is open.

During Shabbat services, congregants may be called to the *Bimah* to assist in the service by blessing the Shabbat candles, opening and closing the Ark, holding the Torah for the *MiShebeirach* or reciting the *Aliyah*. These honors are prearranged, and you do not need to be concerned that you might suddenly be invited to the *Bimah* without warning.

During the Saturday morning service, before the reading of the Torah, there is a procession with the Torah scroll around the sanctuary. This procession is called the *Hakafah*. At that time you may see congregants reach out and, as the Torah passes, touch it with their prayer book or the corner of their prayer shawl. This custom conveys reverence for the Torah, and although it is a Jewish custom, no one is obligated to participate.

If called up for an *Aliyah*, the Jewish member(s) should begin by kissing the Torah with their *tallit* or use the Torah belt, prior to reciting the blessing. A transliterated version of the blessing will be available on the *Bimah*. Following the Torah reading the honoree(s) should repeat kissing the Torah prior to reciting the blessing after the reading. Non-Jews may be included in an *Aliyah*.

**Q: Are there any other courtesies I need to be aware of?**

A: We ask that people refrain from personal conversations during services to avoid distracting others.