

# RITUAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

North Suburban  
Synagogue  
*Beth El*  
בית כנסת בית אל

North Suburban Synagogue Beth El, a congregation of more than 1000 families, is affiliated with the Conservative movement as a member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. We have adopted synagogue ritual practices that are consistent with Conservative Halacha (Jewish law) and standards. These practices are based on our understanding of the conceptual framework of Conservative Judaism and the decisions of the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. They are also based on our appreciation of the particular traditions and history of our own synagogue. These standards have been adopted, re-evaluated, and revised over the past twenty years by the members of the ritual committee along with our Rabbis and Hazzan.

These standards include our practices for all synagogue rituals and for every life-cycle event. As synagogue members, we are all participants in ritual practices, and we will all participate, either individually or as a family unit, in one or more of the life-cycle events. Therefore, we present this summary of Beth El's ritual standards and practices in an effort to encourage full understanding of and appreciation for our interpretation of Halacha and standards. Please feel free to contact the Rabbis or the Hazzan to discuss these synagogue standards in more detail.

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## Minhagim – Synagogue Etiquette

In order to maintain the dignity and beauty of our services, we request your cooperation in following the standards of conduct that are to be observed while attending services at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El.

Please join us in prayer. We welcome your participation in congregational singing.

Jews conduct prayer in a community, represented by a minyan, a minimum of 10 adults. At Beth El, all those above the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, male and female, are counted toward a minyan, may receive aliyot (other than those reserved for Kohen or Levi), and may read from the Torah. The Field Family Sanctuary and the Sager Beit Midrash are the special communal places in our synagogue building reserved for prayer. As such, proper respect should be demonstrated at all times.

- Pagers and cell phones should be silenced or turned off during all prayer services.
- Smoking is prohibited on synagogue premises at all times.
- All men and boys must wear a kippah (yarmulke) at all times while in our building. Kippot and talitot (prayer shawls) are available outside the sanctuary doors.

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## Minhagei Shabbat – Synagogue Etiquette on Shabbat and Holidays

- Jewish men and boys who are at least 13 years old are expected to wear a talit (prayer shawl) while in the Field Family Sanctuary or the Sager Beit Midrash for Shabbat and holiday services. Kippot and talitot are available outside the sanctuary doors.
- There is to be no picture taking, writing, or use of electronic equipment, such as tape or video recorders, electronic games, or cameras on Shabbat and holidays.
- Pagers should be silenced and cell phones should be turned off. Electronic equipment may not be used in the building on Shabbat and holidays.
- The use of pens, pencils, crayons, or other writing or coloring instruments in the synagogue or on our grounds is not allowed on Shabbat and holidays. Also, please refrain from chewing gum.
- Please do not bring gifts, whether checks or packages, to the sanctuary on Shabbat.
- Please dress modestly, in a manner appropriate for traditional worship. Please see the section in this guide titled Guidelines for Appropriate Dress on Shabbat and Holidays for more detail.
- Children's services for 3rd through 5th graders and parent/child Mini-Minyan and Tot Shabbat services begin at 11:00 a.m. Please refer to posted signs or ushers for children's service locations.
- Children, of course, are encouraged to attend services in the Field Family Sanctuary. However, children should not congregate in the hallways outside of the sanctuary or in the front foyer. Please help us maintain decorum and safety by knowing where your children are at all times.
- Idle conversation during services is inappropriate and disruptive.

Thank you for helping us maintain the dignity and tradition of our services at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El.

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# Guidelines for Appropriate Dress on Shabbat and Holidays

*Some thoughts on dress...*

## “דע לפני מי אתה עומד”

“Know before Whom you stand.” This quotation sits above the Ark in many synagogues around the world. It is a very powerful message to the congregation, suggesting that there is an omnipotent being, greater than ourselves, to whom we pray and give thanks for all we have. We would like to suggest that you consider this message when you are planning to dress for congregational worship. It is appropriate and important that you, your family, and your friends be dressed in a dignified manner that is consistent with this principle. Styles and fashions come and go, but modest attire in the synagogue is a traditional Jewish value that must prevail. Please keep the following guidelines in mind when dressing to come to the synagogue for worship.

In order to avoid any discomfort or embarrassment, please share these suggestions with your family, especially those who will be given honors on the bimah. People who are not appropriately dressed may not be permitted on the bimah.

### **Head coverings and talitot:**

Men and boys of all ages (whether Jewish or not) are required to wear a kippah at all times while in the synagogue. All Jewish men and boys who are at least 13 years old are expected to wear a talit while in the sanctuary during morning services. A man who is not wearing a talit will not be permitted on the bimah. A woman is required to wear a head covering while on the bimah. Many women in our congregation wear head coverings in the sanctuary. Women are welcome to wear talitot in our Synagogue. Head coverings and talitot are provided in the vestibule outside the sanctuary for use during services.

### **Proper attire for men:**

Men are encouraged to wear a suit and tie or dressy slacks, a sport coat, and tie. Open shirts or casual pants should be avoided. Jeans and shorts are not considered appropriate dress for services at Beth El. Dress shoes and socks are required. Persons receiving aliyot or other honors must be appropriately attired.

### **Proper attire for women:**

Women are encouraged to wear dresses or skirts chosen with modesty. Shoulders should be covered and dresses should have sleeves. Necklines and skirt lengths should be conservative. Please note that our bimah is raised several feet above the synagogue floor. Persons receiving aliyot or other honors must be appropriately attired.

### **Sager Beit Midrash:**

Prayer service leaders and those receiving aliyot must be appropriately attired, and men must wear long trousers and sleeved shirts.

### **Summer services:**

During the summer, when services are more informal, appropriate dress is still expected and serves to dignify the sanctity of Shabbat and the sanctuary.

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naming  
Mohel  
synagogue  
alayah  
Hazzan  
tradition  
Jewish law  
grandparents  
baby  
naming  
Jewish tradition  
Brit Milah  
Rabbis  
eight days  
parents  
prayers  
celebrate  
bimah  
blessing  
ceremony  
girl  
Torah  
boy  
recite  
mitzvah



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The birth of a baby is truly a miracle! There is no better place to celebrate than in the synagogue. We can arrange an aliyah to the Torah for the proud parent or grandparent so that this simcha can be shared with the entire congregation.

If the baby is a girl, she is given her Hebrew name at the conclusion of an aliyah anytime the Torah is read. One of the parents is called up to the Torah to recite the blessings. The other parent and the siblings are also invited to the bimah to recite the shehechyanu and to listen as the Rabbi asks for God's blessings. Girls should be named as soon as possible after birth because of the tradition that it is always best to fulfill a mitzvah as soon as possible. The naming of newborn (under six months) daughters or granddaughters of Beth El members will be arranged for Shabbat morning, if desired. All other girls may be named any other time the Torah is read.

If the baby is a boy, he is given his Hebrew name as part of the Brit Milah ("Bris") ceremony. In accordance with Jewish law and tradition, the Brit Milah is performed on the eighth day of life by a mohel who is specially trained in the medical and religious requirements of the ritual. The ceremony includes recitation of appropriate prayers and asking for God's blessings.

The Rabbis or Hazzan will be happy to help you in any way, such as in selecting a Hebrew name, arranging the Brit Milah, or assisting in supplemental naming ceremonies at home.

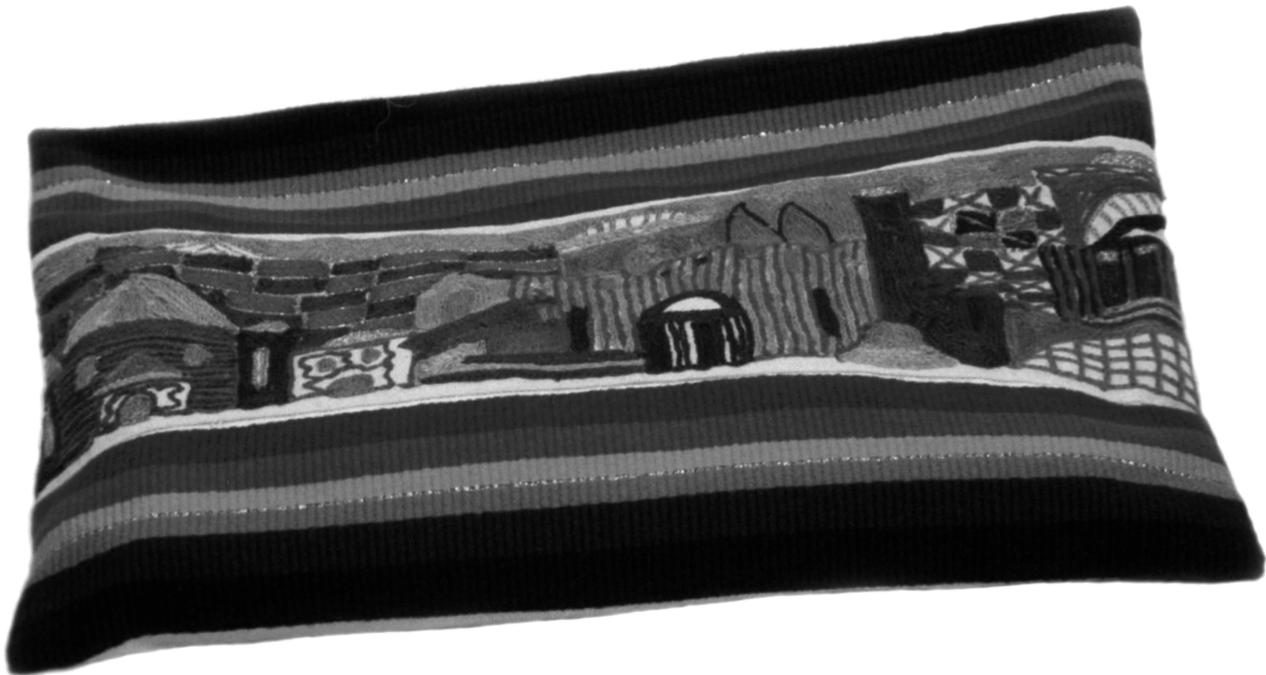
They will be pleased to attend, depending on their availability and personal schedules. Please free to contact them by e-mail or by calling the synagogue office at 847-432-8900.



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preparation  
significant  
obligation  
Torah  
congregation  
Shabbat  
kiddush  
Haftarah  
responsibilities  
thirteen years  
celebration  
family  
b'nai mitzvah  
Jewish adult  
Rabbis  
joyous  
Hazzan  
privileges  
ceremony  
kosher

# Bar / Bat Mitzvah



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A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a most joyous and significant event in the life of a child, and all members of the family, including the synagogue family. It signifies the point at which the child chooses to publicly accept the responsibilities and privileges of being a Jewish adult. The child is called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Shabbat morning services in front of the entire congregation.

According to Jewish law, the Bar Mitzvah takes place after a boy reaches the age of thirteen years and one day, calculated according to the Jewish calendar. Girls must be at least twelve years old, but are encouraged to wait until they are thirteen years old to have their Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. The synagogue staff assigns the dates for an entire school year's Bar/Bat Mitzvah class, in consultation with the Rabbis, the Hazzan, the director of the religious school, and the ritual vice president. Many factors are considered in the distribution of dates: birthdates, appropriate pairings, number of non-vacation Shabbatot, and attempts to honor special requests. Parents are notified of the date for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah when their child is in the middle of the fourth grade of secular school.

Preparation for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an ongoing educational process for all of our students. At the appropriate time, Torah and Haftarah reading skills are added to the curriculum. At a special parents' meeting, the clergy and professional staff present a handbook to the families, detailing policies and fees relating to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. ([www.nssbethel.org/worship/handbook.php](http://www.nssbethel.org/worship/handbook.php)) Our professional staff is intimately involved with the Vav class members and B'nai Mitzvah families as they pray and study together.

Because of the importance of B'nai Mitzvah to the entire synagogue, these events are scheduled to take place as part of our regular Shabbat morning service. If there are special circumstances, alternative arrangements may be made with the ritual vice president and Rabbis at their discretion.

A kiddush is held following the services for the B'nai Mitzvah guests and the entire congregation. In planning any additional private celebrations, please remember the deep religious significance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Since the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reflects the acceptance of Jewish adult obligations, we urge you to have a Kosher or appropriate dairy meal. We also ask you to consider the appropriateness of the location and festivities, and to respect Shabbat observance. Congregants are encouraged to have their celebrations at Beth El. Please contact the Executive Director if you wish to reserve a room for the special day. If you wish to co-sponsor or have an extended Kiddush, please contact the Executive Director at 847-432-8900 x224.

The professional staff will be happy to help you in any way, and will answer any questions you may have regarding special requests or arranging your celebration at Beth El.

Auf Ruf  
 Torah  
 religious  
 chatan  
 tradition  
 Shabbat  
 groom  
 kallah  
 shehechyanu  
 Hazzan  
 bride  
 Chupah  
 sweet life  
 kiddush  
 ceremony  
 aliyah  
 Rabbis  
 bimah  
 wedding canopy  
 Weddings  
 together  
 union  
 showers  
 candy



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One of the first decisions you will make in preparing for your wedding is selecting a date. You should contact the Rabbis to make certain that the dates and ceremony starting times you are considering will be consistent with Jewish law and tradition.

We hope that you will consider having your ceremony and/or celebration in the synagogue. Since marriage is a religious, as well as a civil, ceremony, there is no place that is more appropriate. The Rabbis will schedule all ceremonies in the synagogue and will be happy to invite the participation of other Rabbis and Hazzanim. The Rabbis and Hazzan will be pleased to participate in wedding ceremonies that take place in other locations.

The meal following the service under the chupah (wedding canopy) is an integral part of the Jewish marriage ceremony. Therefore, the meal must be a certified Kosher or appropriate dairy meal in order for the Rabbis and Hazzan to participate in, or attend, the ceremony. Furthermore, the Rabbis and Hazzan will not officiate at, or attend, a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. If desired, they will arrange for appropriate counseling and education that may lead to conversion.

One lovely tradition surrounding the wedding ceremony is the Auf Ruf. At a Shabbat morning

service, usually the Shabbat before the wedding ceremony, the bride (kallah) and groom (chatan) are called up to the bimah. The kallah or chatan is given an aliyah to the Torah, they both recite the shehechyanu, and the Rabbi asks for God's blessing upon their union. The congregation then "showers" the couple with candy to symbolize their wishes for a sweet life together. The candy is provided by Beth El. The family may decide to co-sponsor the kiddush that day. Please call the Senior Rabbi's Executive Assistant at 847-432-8900 x221 to schedule an Auf Ruf.



support  
 minyan  
 synagogue  
 aliyah  
 Hazan  
 yahrzeit  
 taharah  
 kaddish  
 spiritual needs  
**Funerals**  
 mourners  
 tachrichim  
 Field Family Sanctuary  
 emotions  
 shiva  
 Judaism  
 Rabbin  
 questions  
 Jewish law  
 guidance  
 meal of consolation  
 halachic standards



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Judaism touches all aspects of life, and death is an integral part of life. When we are confronted with a death, many deep emotions and questions may arise. Our synagogue is a place for you to turn as you seek guidance and support. As there is a Jewish way of life, there is a Jewish way of death. The Rabbis and Hazzan will guide you and your loved ones through this very difficult time.

We encourage our members to contact the Rabbis, Hazzan, or synagogue office before making funeral arrangements. Please remember that the telephones at the synagogue, and those of the Rabbis and the Hazzan, are not answered on Shabbat or holidays. If a death occurs on one of these days, you may contact the Rabbis or Hazzan directly by coming to their homes or to the synagogue immediately before or after worship services.

The Rabbis or Hazzan will assist you in ensuring that all Halachic (Jewish law) standards are followed. These include taharah (ritual washing of the body), tachrichim (funeral shroud), and the use of a wooden casket. The Rabbis and Hazzan will only participate in those funerals that adhere to these standards.

To make your burden easier, Beth El subscribes to the United Synagogue Funeral Plan. This Plan has been adopted so that all synagogue members can easily order Halachically correct funeral arrangements at a fixed cost through one call to a participating funeral director. A summary of the operation of the plan, including what items

are and are not covered and current pricing, is available from the Beth El office.

The congregation considers it a mitzvah to assist the bereaved family in a number of ways. The funeral service for synagogue members may be held in the Beth El Field Family Sanctuary. The traditional meal of consolation immediately following the funeral will be provided by the Sisterhood, if requested. If desired, synagogue members will help maintain a minyan in the house of shiva and will serve as minyan leaders and Torah readers. Twice daily religious services are held at the synagogue where mourners can pray and recite Kaddish. Annual notices of Yahrzeits are sent to family members in subsequent years. Those observing a Yahrzeit are offered an aliyah during the week of the anniversary of the death, on days when the Torah is read, other than at Shabbat and holiday morning services.

The Rabbis and Hazzan are available to help you make funeral arrangements and meet your practical, religious, and spiritual needs. Please feel free to contact them at 847-432-8900.

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## Other Life-Cycle Events

During the course of the year, there may be special birthdays, anniversaries, or other occasions that are appropriately celebrated in the Synagogue. You may contact the Synagogue office to arrange for an aliyah, sponsor a kiddush, or schedule a celebration.

Prayers for those who are ill, Yahrzeit memorials, and aliyot of thanksgiving may be arranged. Visits to the ill, counseling, and teaching are all ongoing functions of our professional staff, affiliates, and volunteer members. We encourage you to contact the synagogue so that we may fulfill the mitzvah of helping you with these life-cycle events.

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## Mission Statement

We are a congregation of families and individuals who come together to pray, to study, and to create a warm and welcoming community. We seek to preserve and enhance our People's traditions within the context of Conservative Judaism. We aspire to strengthen our Jewish identity to meet the challenges of a changing environment. We endeavor to provide resources to help us relate to God, understand the ways of God and enrich the Jewish content of our lives. We encourage our members to serve worthwhile causes within our Congregation and the wider Jewish and world communities. We are committed to support Israel. We educate our children so they commit to the cultural, spiritual, and ethical values of our People.

