



## About Beth David Synagogue



Nestled serenely on a wooded lot in a quiet residential area, Beth David Synagogue is home to a vibrant congregation of 450 families. Founded December 15, 1944, as the Greensboro Hebrew Congregation, Beth David represented then, as it does today, a continuing commitment to traditional Judaism.

We seek to create a Jewish environment where we can study and pray and where our children can learn and play. We devote tremendous time and energy to strengthening our Judaism, to creating innovative programming, and to encouraging growth and involvement as individuals and as a community. This strong sense of caring, concern and fellowship has been evident since the early days of our congregation.

**Our Mission:** *Beth David Synagogue is an egalitarian and inclusive synagogue of the Conservative movement that brings an authentic and caring Jewish tradition to embrace and repair our world. We encourage members to grow in Jewish learning through study of Torah and in Jewish practice through mitzvot. We strive to build a welcoming and innovative Synagogue that engages our diverse members and that shares Jewish values with the general community.*

Beth David is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. To learn more about Beth David, visit our web site: [www.bethdavidsynagogue.org](http://www.bethdavidsynagogue.org). To learn more about conservative Judaism, visit [www.uscg.org](http://www.uscg.org).

## **WELCOME AND SHABBAT SHALOM**

Shabbat, (Sabbath), the weekly anniversary of God's rest after the creation of the world, is a spiritual pause during which we can re-evaluate our lives and our relationship to the world in which we live.

It is an occasion to renew our energies for the task of bringing the real world more in line with the kind of world God intended when God created it.

To accomplish these ends, Jewish practice sets aside the Sabbath day (sundown Friday to nightfall Saturday) for rest, prayer, meditation, study, and renewal.

## **BAR AND BAT MITZVAH**

Bar or Bat Mitzvah means "obligated to the commandments." It is a proclamation of the beginning of Adult Jewish identity and heritage. It is also a renewal of commitment to Abraham's covenant with God. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah is allowed and obligated to fulfill the responsibilities of Jewish tradition and to enjoy its privileges.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah is an institution that dates back at least to the Middle Ages. It is the celebration of a boy's thirteenth or a girl's twelfth birthday, at which time legal and religious rights are attained. It marks the commencement of obligation and commitment. Because the "child" is now viewed as a participating adult member of the Jewish people, our entire congregation celebrates this milestone and reaffirms this ancient heritage and tradition.

The Bar and Bat Mitzvah student has been learning about his/her Jewish heritage since birth, with his/her parents serving as primary instructors for religious education. In addition for formal Jewish schooling, the student has also spent the previous year preparing to read from the Torah and lead the service.

## Ufruf/ The Wedding Blessing



*Ufruf* is the [Jewish](#) custom of a [groom](#) being called up in the synagogue for an [aliyah](#), i.e., recitation of a blessing over the [Torah](#). It is an opportunity for our congregation to offer blessings to a couple just prior to their wedding day. Often our congregation has watched the bride and groom grow up in the synagogue, and we are particularly joyous to see them begin this new chapter of life.

## Baby Naming

A name is particularly important in Jewish tradition. A child might be named in memory or in honor of a relative, or a particular event in his/her family.



A baby boy is typically given a Jewish name at his *brit milah*/ritual circumcision on the eighth day after birth. We may celebrate his birth and name afterwards as well.

A baby girl's naming is often celebrated in synagogue, parents and grandparents having an opportunity to thank God for a safe and healthy pregnancy and delivery and a won-

## BETH DAVID'S SANCTUARY

The stained glass windows of the sanctuary depict important holy days in the Jewish calendar. Beginning at the right rear, they represent:

*Shabbat*, The Sabbath – *Challah and Candles*

*Rosh Hashana*, the Jewish New Year – *Shofar and Machzor*

*Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement –

*Succot*, the “Festival of Booths” symbolizing the Israelites dwellings in the wilderness – *Lulav/Etrog and thatched roof*

*Simchat Torah*, the holiday commemorating the completion of the annual cycle of the Torah reading – *Torah Scroll*

*Hanukkah*, the “Festival of Lights” commemorating the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian Greeks – *Chanuka Menora*

*Purim*, the celebration of Jewish deliverance from their threatened destruction by Haman in the days of Esther and Mordechai – *Scroll of Esther*

*Passover*, the celebration of the Exodus from Egypt – *Seder Plate and Elijah's cup*

*Yom Hashoa* and *Yom Ha'azma'ut* the Holocaust Memorial Day and Israel Independence Day – *Israel Flag*

*Shavuot*, the holiday commemorating God's giving of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai – *Ten Commandments, first fruits*

The **Aron-HaKodesh**, Holy Ark, is the focal point of the synagogue. When the ark doors are opened a Hebrew inscription is revealed meaning “Know before Whom you stand”. The Ark doors at Beth David Synagogue depict artistic scenes of Jerusalem. Above the ark is the new Tamid, the eternal light, which symbolizes the everlasting nature God. It also reminds us of the lamp which was kept burning continuously in the Temple of Jerusalem. Behind the ark doors rest the Torah Scrolls. Also adorning the Sanctuary are menorah, candelabrum, and an inscription: “Out of Zion shall come the Teaching, and the word of God from Jerusalem”.

## THE TALLIT, KIPPAH, AND SIDDUR

*Tallit* (or Tallis) is the traditional prayer shawl worn during the worship service. The fringes or *tzitzit* tied to the four corners of Tallit are symbolic reminders of the 613 commandments Jew are required to fulfill. While in the Synagogue, all males wear *kippot* (head covering) as a symbol of humility and as a reminder of divine Presence. In our synagogue, men and women participate equally in the many rituals and practices of the tradition. Women may cover their heads with a hat or piece of lace and may wear a tallit. The Jewish service follows a structure and guiding text found in the *Siddur*, prayer book. The congregation participates in the worship service, singing, chanting responsively, and in quiet prayer.

## FRIDAY EVENING SERVICES

The Friday evening service is known as *Kabbalat Shabbat*. The congregation welcomes the Shabbath with selected readings, songs, and prayers. Thus begins the Day of Rest creating time for personal reflection, family, and communal worship.

The “centerpiece” of the service is a liturgical poem-*Lecha Dodi*. Written by the kabbalist, Solomon HaLevi Alkabetz in 1529, it personifies the Sabbath as a bride and we, Israel, as the welcoming bridegroom. The author’s name is found in the form of an acrostic at the beginning of each stanza. After *Kabbalat Shabba*, the evening service, *Ma’airiv*, is recited with additions for the Sabbath.

## SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

The Saturday morning services is comprised of three main parts:

*Shacharit* (morning prayers) recited daily with additions appropriate for the Sabbath. The Shacharit includes the Shema Yisrael, which is an affirmation of the unity and sovereignty of God. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" is one of Judaism's central beliefs. The *Amidah* is the silent, standing devotion and incorporates the combination of private and community prayer.

The *Torah* reading is the spiritual heart of the service. The Torah scroll contains the *Five Books of Moses*, handwritten on parchment. For Jews throughout the world, when the Torah is taken out of the Ark and read in public assembly, we are reminded of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. The taking out and procession of the Torah are accompanied by song and prayer. The Torah scroll is adorned with ceremonial art which reflects our affection and reverence for this sacred text which we see as God's living gift to the Jew and humanity.

The *Five Books of Moses* (the *Chumash*) are divided into fifty-four portions which are read consecutively each Shabbat morning throughout the year. Each weekly portion is further divided into seven smaller sections; members of the congregation and family of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah will be honored by receiving an *Aliya* (going up) to recite a blessing before and after each section.

The Bar or Bat Mitzvah or other honoree will be called to the Torah to chant, the *Maftir* (last) portion. Following this, the Torah will be lifted (*Hagba*) and dressed (*G'lilah*). The *Haftorah*, an additional reading from the Prophets, will then be chanted. Afterwards, candy will be gently tossed at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah expressing our hope for a sweet joyous life.

*Musaf* is the additional service reminiscent of the additional sacrificial offerings brought on the Sabbath and holidays to the temple in Jerusalem. After the Torah service, a sermon may be given by the Rabbi.

Following the final prayers, the children will be invited up to the Bimah and blessings over the wine and bread will be chanted.

An appropriate greeting for any joyous occasion is "Mazel Tov", or simply "Congratulations." More formal blessings that we offer are: May these parents (continue to), raise this child to a life filled with Torah & Mitzvot, (good deeds); For couples about to be wed: May this couple establish a loving home, which will be a blessing to the Jewish people and to all humanity.

