



עמנואל

The Emanuel Synagogue

PASSIONATE JEWISH LIVING

FAQ's about Religious Services at The Emanuel

Who is welcome at services?

As the Prophet Isaiah said, "My house shall be a house of prayer for all people." At the Emanuel we welcome people of all faiths to come and participate in the service. The young, the old, those with physical handicaps and special needs – all join together to infuse our services with warmth and spirit.

What time do services begin and end?

A good question. The answer depends on which services you attend. Shabbat morning (Saturday) services always begin at 9:00 a.m. and go until about 12:00. Holiday services sometimes begin earlier and end later. We have daily services every morning, afternoon and evening and usually last from 30 to 90 minutes depending on the season and if there is a holiday to celebrate. Call the synagogue office at (860) 236-1275 or consult our website www.emanuelsynagogue.org for current information.

What should we wear?

Clothes should be clean, neat and modest. On Shabbat, jacket and tie for men, dress or skirt for women are appreciated. Tailored pants for women, and sweater and slacks for men are also acceptable. Please avoid sweatsuits, work-out clothes, jeans, torn sneakers tank-tops, sleeveless shirts or dresses, short pants, mini-skirts, tight pants, low-riders or outfits that expose your belly. At week-day services in the chapel, more casual clothes may be worn.

What about a *talit* and headcovering?

At the Emanuel Synagogue, Jewish men age thirteen and over are expected to wear a *talit* (fringed prayer shawl). Jewish women may also choose to wear a *talit*. Non-Jewish guests do not wear a *talit*. All men and boys (non Jews as well as Jews) are expected to cover their heads in the synagogue as a sign of respect for God. Head covering is optional for women, but required on the *bimah*. Head coverings (*kipot*) and *talitot* are available in the lobby.

Can we bring in cell phones and beepers?

We request that you do not bring a cell phone or beeper into the service unless you are a physician on-call. If you are an on-call physician, please set your device to "silent" mode. If it is necessary to respond to a call, please find a private spot to do so. Usually our Executive Director's office is available for this purpose.

Can we bring food, drinks or gum into services?

Please do not bring any food, drinks or chewing gum into the synagogue unless you have a very young child who will need a snack. We have a water fountain near the parking lot entrance to the building if you are thirsty. Some people eat breath mints or cough drops during the service as needed. Please do not crinkle the wrappers or leave them in the pews.

What about entering and leaving services? Is it okay to leave services to go to the restroom?

Our ushers, who stand at the door of the Sanctuary, will give you guidance on when it is appropriate to enter and find a place to sit. Shabbat and Festivals services have open seating. If you need to get up and leave the service at any time, you may, but please try to avoid leaving or entering the service during the silent prayer (*Amidah*), Mourner's *Kaddish* or when someone is in the midst of giving a talk from the podium. Restrooms are provided off the lobby.

Can we have conversations with those we sit near in services?

While in the sanctuary during services, please talk in low tones only. There are a few times when we request that no one talks at all. These include the silent prayer, or *Amidah*, the Mourner's *Kaddish*, and whenever the Rabbi or another person, such as the *Bar Mitzvah* or *Bat Mitzvah* boy or girl is speaking at the podium.

The Emanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford, CT 06117, (860) 236-1275, www.emanuelsynagogue.org

Does everyone sit and stand at the same time?

Unless you are physically unable to stand, there are parts of the service where everyone stands. There are also parts of the service where everyone sits. During the Mourner's Prayer (*Kaddish*) only those in mourning or those commemorating the anniversary of a death stand. Please take note and stand or sit along with the congregation.

What am I supposed to do during the Torah procession?

The Torah scroll is carried around the congregation before and after the Torah is read. Many people will touch the Torah as it goes around. You do not have to do this if you do not wish to. If you are near the aisle, the Cantor or Rabbi may smile and extend their hand to greet you.

Are there ways in which non-Jews can participate on the *bimah*?

Yes. During a *bar/bat mitzvah* service, non-Jewish parents are invited to the *Bimah* to recognize their role in raising a child and to extend good will and honor to them. When the Jewish spouse is called to the Torah for an *aliyah*, the non-Jewish partner stands to their right side at the table. The Jewish spouse says the blessing. Afterwards, the Rabbi will greet both of you. There are several English readings or prayers that may be offered to non-Jewish relatives or friends. Parents or grandparents may also be invited to walk in procession when the Torah goes around the congregation. Please speak to one of our Rabbis for guidance. When anyone goes onto the *bimah*, Jewish or non-Jewish, he or she must wear a head covering.

Are there ways in which non-Jewish family and friends cannot participate?

Yes. Judaism is a covenantal religion. There are things that only a person born into the covenant, or who chooses to become a part of the Jewish covenant, can do. In the service, leadership of group Hebrew prayers and honors related to the Torah are done by people who have made the commitment to join the Jewish people and take on the covenant.

Are children welcome in services?

We delight in having children in our services. Babies and toddlers are welcome, and happy-child gurgling is a pleasure to hear. Realistically, we all know that most children cannot sit through the entire service. If your child needs to get up and move around, please take them to the lobby. You may bring quiet toys, bottles and little snacks into the service. At the close of the service, all children under *Bar & Bat Mitzvah* age (13) are invited up the stairs onto the *Bimah*. Babies and toddlers are invited and should be accompanied by a parent. Any parent who feels it would be helpful to accompany a child is invited on the *bimah*.

What happens after services?

After services, we relax, chat and of course, have a bite to eat at the *Kiddush* (reception). Many children like to gather and play and eat together at this time. We want the children to have fun, but they must be safe and accounted for. Although we understand the appeal, playing behind the curtain on the stage is not safe. Please be aware of your child's whereabouts and be responsible for his or her behavior at all times.

If I have more questions, who do I ask?

Our professional staff will be happy to answer your questions. They are available after services to chat during the *Kiddush* or you can have a more private conversation by contacting them personally. Our Board President and officers will also be happy to speak with you. Here is some helpful contact information:

Rabbi David Small – rabbismall@emanuelsynagogue.org, 236-1275 ext 115

Cantor Sanford Cohn – cantorcohn@emanuelsynagogue.org, 236-1275 ext. 114

Moshe Pinchover (Ritual Director) – mpinch@emanuelsynagogue.org, 236-1275 ext. 117

Myra Emrick (Synagogue Administrator) – myra@emanuelsynagogue.org, 236-1275 ext. 112

Judith T. Fox (Director of Education – judyefox@emanuelsynagogue.org, 233-2774

Ira Henowitz (President) – emansyn@emaneuelsynagogue.org, 236-1275