



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 disabilities and special needs – all join together to infuse our services with warmth and spirit.

What time do services begin and end?

- **Shabbat morning (Saturday) services** always begin at 9:00 a.m. and last until about 12:00. Holiday services sometimes begin earlier and end later.
- **Daily services every morning, afternoon, and evening** usually last 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 visit the [website front page](#) for the most updated schedule details.

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, miniskirts, 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 (Jewish and non-Jews) are expected to cover their heads in the synagogue as a sign of respect for God. Head covering (kipot) is optional for women but required on the bimah. Head coverings Kipot and tallit are available in the lobby; please return after use upon leaving the Sanctuary.

Can we bring in cell phones and beepers?

We understand due to safety reasons people may feel more comfortable coming into the sanctuary with a cell phone should an emergency arise necessitating immediate external communication. We require that all devices be set on "silent" mode. Should you need to respond to an incoming call or text please find a private spot outside of the sanctuary, 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.

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. We have books and quiet games in the Sanctuary. Feel free to use them and please return to the shelves before you leave so others can use them* (*No shared use items available during Covid-19 restrictions)

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 play and eat together, but **we always require parents to be aware of their child's whereabouts and be responsible for his or her behavior**. We want the children to have fun, but they must be safe and accounted for; **playing on the stage behind the curtain is not permitted**.

If I have more questions, who do I ask?

Our professional staff will be happy to answer your questions, please visit our [contact us page](#). Staff are available after services to chat 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.

(*During Covid-19 restrictions, no shared use items or large in person gatherings permitted. Please consult our [Operations Procedures during Covid 19](#) for more details.)