

## ***Welcome to Beth Shalom Synagogue!***

Beth Shalom "House of Peace" is affiliated with the Conservative branch of American Judaism. Our worship is conducted mostly in Hebrew with English translation available on every page of the prayer book and Chumash (Torah). The Shabbat (Sabbath) evening and morning services in which we participate is a tradition that dates back well over epochs and is repeated in synagogues throughout the world.

### **Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an important religious event in the life of a Jewish boy or girl, marking the time when he/she makes the transition to a young adult member of the Jewish community. Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a call to responsibility where the demands of G-d's commandments falls on their shoulders.

### **Kippot (head covering) and Tallit (prayer shawls)**

You may wonder why so many Jewish men in the synagogue wear a prayer shawl (tallit), with long fringes. That's because of G-d's command in Numbers 15:37-41: The Lord said to Moses as follows: "Speak to the Israelite people and instruct them to make "fringes" on the corners of their garments throughout the ages. Thus you shall be reminded to observe all my commandments and to be holy to your G-d." \*The wearing of the Tallit is optional for women. When entering the sanctuary, all men and boys are required to wear a head covering or Kippah. This is a long-standing tradition and a sign of respect for G-d. Women are required to wear a head covering when called to the Bimah (the raised platform in front of the synagogue). Many will wear a Kippah as a sign of their devotion to the Holy One.

\*In other words, we wear the tallit to be mindful of what God wants from us.

### **Attire**

Men/Boys: Dress shirts and slacks (no jeans). Kippah head covering for all men provided upon arrival. Women/Girls: Dress pants, skirts or dresses. (no spaghetti straps or low-cut tops).

### **The Sanctuary**

As you sit in the main sanctuary, the raised platform in front of the synagogue is called a bimah. Located in the middle of the bimah is the Holy Ark containing the Torah (Scroll of the Law), in which is written the Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses. Our synagogue has more than one Torah scroll, but it should be noted that all are identical; in content, writing and length, and are always produced by specially-trained scribes. The scribe may require a year to write a Torah scroll. All writing is taken from an existing scroll, and each word is pronounced aloud by the scribe before copying it. There can be no mistakes. If an error is made the entire sheet of parchment is set aside and buried. There are no punctuation marks and no vowels in the Torah. There is no decoration or pictorial art in a Torah scroll. Reading from the Torah is the central element around which the Sabbath morning liturgy is built. Hebrew is read from right to left, so the reading of the prayer book also moves in that direction.

Each Shabbat and Holy Day the Torah is removed and a designated portion is read. The Ark is located on the eastern wall of the synagogue, facing

Jerusalem, the site of the ancient Temple. The Torah scrolls are velvet or satin covered and are adorned with silver ornaments. Hanging above the Ark is an ornate lamp called the "Ner Tamid" or Eternal Light. It is continually lit to remind us of the constant watchfulness of G-d.

### **The service is divided into three main parts:**

**Shacharit Service:** This service includes introductory prayers, psalms, affirmation of faith and silent devotions.

**The Torah Service:** This portion of the service centers on the chanting of the text from the Torah and a text from the Prophets (Haftarah). The Torah contains the first five books of the Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Torah describes the origins of the Jewish people and the laws by which we are expected to live.

This begins with the opening of the Ark and removal of the Torah Scrolls. The Torah will be carried around the sanctuary for all to see and touch. The scroll is then opened and the weekly portion read. The weekly Torah portion has been sub-divided into small sections. For each section we call upon an honored adult who thanks G-d for the spiritual privilege of reciting a blessing over the Torah. This honor is called an Aliyah. Every Shabbat, at least seven Jews beyond Bar or Bat Mitzvah age are called to the bema to recite a blessing over the Torah (Aliyah). Then the weekly Haftarah portion will be read along with introductory and concluding blessings. The Haftarah is the lesson from the Prophets.

**The Musaf Service:** This relatively short service contains concluding prayers and hymns. After blessing over the wine and challah (ceremonial bread).

### **Notes:**

- *We always face the Torah.*
- *If a Holy book falls, it is to be kissed when picked up.*
- *The sanctuary is a "no-ring" zone for your cell phones & pagers.*
- *Men & women should be dressed in a "modest" fashion.*

***Thank you for joining us and we wish you a  
Shabbat Shalom (Sabbath of Peace).***

# BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE

5827 N. Trenholm Rd. Columbia, SC 29206  
(803) 782-2500

## Schedule of Services

**Shabbat evening services**  
Friday - 6:00 p.m.

**Shabbat morning services**  
Saturday - 10:00 a.m.

**Minyan**  
Monday-Thursday - 6:00 p.m.



## E-mail Addresses:

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