

Guide to the Service and Synagogue



Kehillat Bet Hamidrash

Kempsville Conservative Synagogue
5000 Corporate Woods Drive Suite 200
Virginia Beach, VA 23462-4429
(757) 495-8510

ברוכים הבאים

Welcome

kbhsynagogue@gmail.com
www.kbhsynagogue.org
www.facebook.com/kbhsynagogue



Brief History of Kehillat Bet Hamidrash

In 1977, a group of Jews joined to form Kehillat Yisrael, a synagogue in the Kempsville section of Virginia Beach. The next year, another small group of families formed the synagogue Bet Hamidrash. Soon, these two groups merged to become Kehillat Bet Hamidrash (House of Prayer).

After meeting in several locations, including a renovated house, the congregation purchased five acres of land in 1983. We built our first permanent structure in 1990, and moved to the Reba and Sam Sandler Campus of the Tidewater Jewish Community in 2025. No matter the location of our *minyan*, we created a synagogue rooted in Jewish faith and learning. Kehillat Bet Hamidrash (KBH), the Kempsville Conservative Synagogue, offers religious and social programming for a small, but participative and intimate congregation.

Through the ongoing hard work and dedication of volunteers, KBH maintains a respected position in the South Hampton Roads Jewish community. We affiliate with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and Machar, Kadima, and USY youth groups.

KBH offers traditional education and religious opportunities for all family members. We proudly express our commitment to the sustenance of Judaism.

Shabbat and Festival Etiquette

Jewish laws and customs require the congregation to stand during certain prayers. Movement to or from the sanctuary is inappropriate while the ark is open, when the leader speaks to the congregation, during our *Torah's* processional, or while the congregation stands in prayer.

Kindly treat the *Siddur Sim Shalom* and our *Chumashim* (books with the *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions) respectfully. Please do not sit on them, place them on a chair face down, set other items on top of them, or put them on the floor.



We ask all boys and men to wear a *kippah* (*yarmulke* or head covering) when entering the facility and to keep one on after the conclusion of services and while in the building. Please remove your *tallit* (prayer shawls) upon leaving the sanctuary. Only Jewish participants should wear *tallit*.

On *Shabbat* (the Sabbath, from sunset Friday through sunset Saturday) and the *Yom Tov* festivals our observances do not permit smoking or photography in the synagogue or on the grounds. Please be sensitive to others and turn off your cellular phone and all electronic devices during *Shabbat*, holidays, and all prayers services.

To honor the day's sanctity, please do not write notes or exchange gifts or money in the synagogue during *Shabbat* or on festivals. We also request that older children and adults do not eat food, drink, or chew gum in the sanctuary during the service.

We hope everyone joins us at the *Kiddush* after the service for greetings and conversations. Thank you for joining us to celebrate and worship.

The Synagogue

“Synagogue” comes from the Greek word meaning “to assemble.” Some refer to the synagogue as a *shul*, which derives from the Yiddish word for “school” and emphasizes its role as a place of learning. In Hebrew, we use the term *Beit ha-Knesset*, or “House of Assembly.”

Synagogues first appeared after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE, as exiled Jews, and those who remained in Judæa, worked to maintain as many symbolic and ritual practices as possible. Synagogues remained after the construction of the Second Temple, becoming places of prayer, meeting, and study.

We designed our sanctuary with the prayer table in its center, as in many old European synagogues. With seating on three sides, the service is at the heart of the congregation.



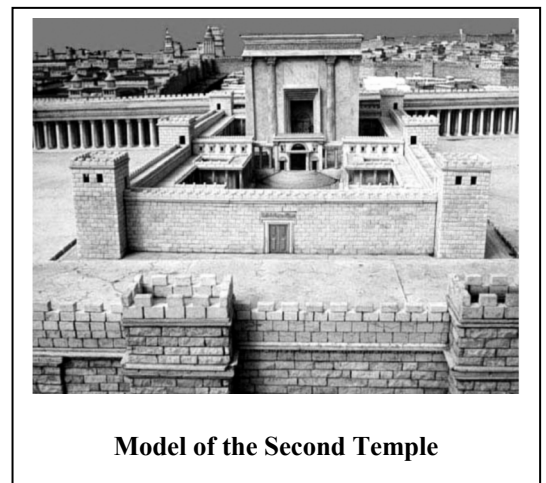
Bar'Am Synagogue in Northern Galile (Third Century, CE)

The Temple

The Temple (in Hebrew, *Bet ha-Mikdash*, or “House of the Holiness”) centralized Jewish worship and provided the only location for most sacrifices and many *mitzvot* (commandments). While standing, the Temple served as the focal point for the three pilgrimage festivals, ritual observances, and holiday services.

The First Temple stood in Jerusalem from the time of King Solomon until its Babylonian destruction in 586 BCE. 70 years later, Jews returned to their homeland, and built the Second Temple.

The Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE during the First Jewish Revolt.



Model of the Second Temple

Guide to the Service and Synagogue

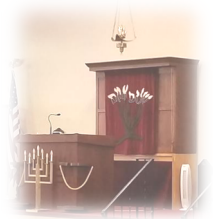
Jews mark the destruction of these Temples as the most somber of our calendar with a sunset-to-sunset fast on the 9th day of the Jewish month of Av (in July or August). The famous “Wailing Wall” (also known to Jews as the Western Wall or in Hebrew, the *Kotel*) is the remains of the western retaining wall of the Second Temple.

Traditional Jews believe we shall rebuild the Temple when the *Moshiach* (Messiah) comes. We wait for that day and continually pray for its arrival.

Symbols

The *Aron Kodesh* (Ark). In most cases, when possible, the Ark is located on the wall of the synagogue closest to Jerusalem and contains the *Torah* scrolls.

Reminiscent of the Temple’s *menorah*, the *Ner Tamid* (Eternal Light), located above the ark, stays lighted at all times. This also serves as a symbol of G-d’s continuous presence in our lives.



The *kippah* (Hebrew) or *yarmulke* (Yiddish) is a skullcap worn by men in Conservative synagogues. All men, Jewish and gentile, should wear one in the synagogue. Though not required, some women elect to wear *kippot*. Covering one’s head is an expression of humility and a reminder that G-d is above us.

The *tallit* (prayer shawl) refers to the *Torah*’s commandment to have fringes on a four-corner garment. A *mitzvah* reserved for Jewish people, many customs exist regarding its wearing.

Siddur – the Prayer Book

Siddur comes from the Hebrew root for “order.” A *siddur* (prayer book) has the daily prayers and the order in which we offer them. Kehillat Bet Hamidrash/Kempsville Conservative Synagogue uses *Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals*. Variations exist for the weekday service.

The *Siddur Sim Shalom* includes the traditional Hebrew text, an English translation and a phonetic transliteration for many of the major prayers. The *siddur*’s introductory section contains interesting information about its arrangement.

Shabbat and Yom Tov (Holiday) Services

Preliminary Service

A series of introductory, mood setting blessings, prayers, hymns, and psalms of praise concerning our relationship to G-d and our duty to worship G-d.

Birchhot ha-Shahar (Morning Blessings) (pages 61-82)

This introductory section contains blessings expressing our gratitude to G-d for awaking us in the morning and as we start our daily activities. These prayers are common to every *Shacharit* (Morning) service.

P'sukei D'Zimra (Verses of Songs) (pages 83-106)

This section consists primarily of verses from the Book of Psalms, although it uses elements from the *Torah*, Prophets, and Writings. This section prepares the worshipers for prayer through readings recounting the glory of G-d.

The Morning Service

K'riat Sh'ma uVirkhoteya – (The *Sh'ma* and its Blessings) (pages 107-114)

The section contains the *Barchu* – the formal call to worship, the congregation's response, and the blessing proclaiming G-d as the creator. Named for its central prayer, the *Sh'ma*, and for the blessings that precede and follow it, the first blessing praises G-d for His work of creation, emphasizing the creation of light. We sing *El Adon* (page 108) to celebrate G-d's mastery in designing the solar system, and we sing *V'haeir Eineinu* (middle of page 111) in hope of opening our eyes "to Your *mitzvot* (commandments)." This second blessing praises G-d for His most precious gift to us, the *Torah*.

The *Sh'ma* consists of three passages from the *Torah*. We join together to sing the opening verse taken from *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) 6:4-9 (top of page 112), which expresses Judaism's absolute monotheism, commanding us to love G-d at all times.

Devarim 11:13-21 (bottom of page 112) parallels the first passage, and adds our obligation to observe G-d's *mitzvot*. *Bamidbar* (Numbers) 15:37-41 (top of page 113) tells Jews to wear *tzitzit* (fringes) on the four corners of our garments as an aid in remembering G-d's *mitzvot*. This passage serves as the basis for the *tallit* Jews wear during the morning service.

The blessing following the *Sh'ma* praises G-d's saving power demonstrated when He freed us from slavery in Egypt. We recreate the crossing of the Sea of Reeds with the singing of *Mi Khamokhah* (Page 114) and pray for G-d's continued saving power in *Tzur Yisrael* (page 114).

Silent *Shacharit Amidah* (pages 115-120)

The *Amidah* prayer, recited silently by the congregation while standing, constitutes the heart of every formal Jewish worship service. In the presence of a *minyán* (10 Jews 13 or older), the *Ba'al Tefilah* (reader of the prayer) repeats most of the *Amidah* aloud. Only during this repetition do we recite the *K'dushah* (meaning "holiness" - page 116). This responsive chant between the leader and congregation describes the manner in which the angels worship G-d. If able, we remain standing in one place, not talking to one another, from the *Amidah's* start through the end of *K'dushah*.

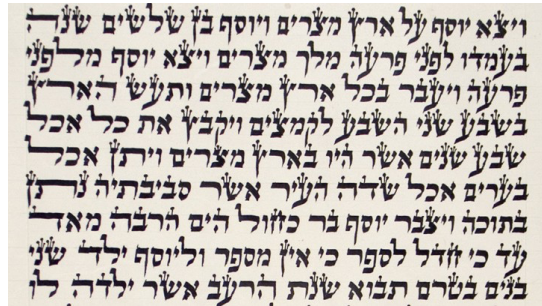
Hallel (pages 133-137)

Hallel means “praise.” Recited during festival days and when celebrating the new Jewish month, it does not constitute part of the regular *Shabbat* (Saturday) service.

Kaddish (page 138)

This prayer affirms G-d’s justice and the meaningfulness of life. We chant the *Kaddish* at the conclusion of each major portion of the service, using different melodies.

The Torah Service



During this part of the service, we read selections from the *Torah* and Prophets. The *Torah* scroll contains the Five Books of Moses, inscribed by hand on parchment in Hebrew characters written without vowel points, punctuation, or sentence divisions.

We precede the *Torah* readings with verses of praise for G-d and the *Torah* (page 139). We read a prayer in Aramaic, the daily language of

our people during Second Temple times (pages 139-140), concluded aloud in unison.

The *Torah* contains 54 *parshiot* (plural for *parsha* or “portion”), from which we weekly read one (and occasionally two or three) portions. We read different sections on festival days. It takes one year to finish reading the *Torah*. You may follow the *Torah* portion in any *chumash* (the printed form of the *Torah*), though we most frequently use the *Etz Hayim chumash*.

Some congregations read the entire weekly portion. Other congregations divide the portions in thirds, and read one-third of each weekly *parsha* in a triennial cycle. We follow the latter tradition.

During the *Shabbat Torah* reading, we honor 7 people with the invitation to come up to the pulpit (an *aliyah*) to recite the blessings over the Torah. We reserve the first *aliyah* for a direct paternal descendent from Aaron, the brother of Moses, the first Jewish *kohayn* or “priest.” A member of the Tribe of Levi receives the second. We also add special prayers from the pulpit in honor of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, newly born infants, and for couples about to be married (*Aufruf*).

Following the seventh *aliyah*, the cantor asks for names of people who need a “*misheberach*,” prayers for healing. If you know the person’s Hebrew name, please state it. If not, we accept English names.

We call an additional person forward for the *Maftir aliyah*, usually a repetition of the last few verses read or the concluding sentences of the *parshah*. The *Hagbah* then lifts the *Torah* and *Gelila* wraps it. The person called for the *Maftir* reads from the *Haftorah*, chosen from the Book of Prophets for its thematic connection to the *Torah* reading or for its applicability to a special day in the Jewish calendar.

After the readings, we may recite prayers for our community and country (page 148), Israel and peace (149), and for an upcoming *Rosh Chodesh* (new month, page 150). During this section of the service, we chant Psalm 145, otherwise known as *Ashrei*

(pages 151-152). We return the *Torah* scroll to the Ark while singing Psalm 29 on *Shabbat* (page 153) or Psalm 24 on Festivals (page 154). These both end with words comparing our *Torah* to a tree of life.

Musaf – The Additional Service

In Temple times, Jews offered an “additional” sacrifice on *Shabbat*, the New Moon, and festivals. Today, we have the *musaf*, or “additional” service (pages 155-187).

Silent Musaf Amidah (pages 156-161 or 166-178)

An additional *Amidah* commemorates the additional worship that took place on the *Shabbat* and holidays during the days when the Temple stood in Jerusalem. We recite the *Amidah* together through *K’dusha* (pages 156-157 on *Shabbat*, pages 166-167 on festivals and the New Moon) and then continue silently to the end of the appropriate selection while standing. We may sit upon completing the *Amidah* or personal prayer. This section of the service once again concludes with *Kaddish* (page 181).

Siyum Ha T’fillot (Concluding Prayers) (pages 182-187)

The service concludes with several prayers sung in unison. These selections include *Ein Keloheinu* (“There is none like our G-d,” page 182) and *Aleinu*, declaring our allegiance to G-d, Creator of the Universe (page 183).

Mourners and those observing *yahrzeit* (anniversary of loved one’s passing) rise to recite the **Mourner’s Kaddish** (page 184) and at other times during the service. We only recite *Kaddish* in the presence of a *minyan*.

The service concludes with *Adon Olam* (“L-rd of the Universe”), containing many of Judaism’s fundamental tenets (page 187).

לדור ודור

L’Dor VaDor – from Generation to Generation