



temple beth tikvah  
בית תקווה

# **We Welcome You!**

## **A Guide for the Members of Temple Beth Tikvah**

Temple Beth Tikvah  
196 Durham Road  
Madison, Connecticut 06443  
203.245.7028  
[www.tbtsshoreline.org](http://www.tbtsshoreline.org)



# TBT Mission Statement 2017

Temple Beth Tikvah is a vibrant, inclusive Reform Jewish community, guided by Torah and interconnected through our traditions and values of tikkun hanefesh (enriching our lives) and tikkun olam (improving the world).

## **Your Synagogue Home**

The Temple Beth Tikvah community on the Shoreline of Connecticut is home to Jewish individuals and households of diverse backgrounds, including interfaith households, all of whom are committed to our Jewish way of life. We hope that all of our members, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, find this guide to be helpful. We warmly open our doors and hearts to all of our members. We hope that our synagogue is a place that you can call home. You are a part of our Temple family.

Temple Beth Tikvah is affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). Being a part of the Reform Movement enables us to innovate while preserving tradition, to embrace diversity while asserting commonality, and to affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt.

## **Who May Be a Member of Temple Beth Tikvah**

Any person of the Jewish faith may become a member of Temple Beth Tikvah. Moreover, we welcome households, including interfaith households, in which at least one member of the household (whether an adult or a child) is of the Jewish faith. Once a member of our community, all members of a household may continue with synagogue membership regardless of a change in family circumstances (such as through death or divorce). We welcome a life-long commitment to our community for all of our members.

Through our worship, educational, and social programs, we seek to uphold Jewish ideals, including:

- to worship God in accordance with the faith of Judaism;
- to live communally according to the customs of Judaism;
- to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage;
- to foster bonds in the Jewish community and to strengthen connections with the Jewish people in Israel and throughout the world; and
- to participate in acts of “Tikkun Olam” (acts to "repair the world" -- *i.e.*, social action and social justice)

## **Who Is a Jew?**

At Temple Beth Tikvah, we adhere to the Reform Movement’s definition of Jewish identity. Reform Judaism accepts that to be a "Jew" one must be a member of the Jewish people, a status obtained either through birth or conversion (a process recognized and administered by the Rabbinat). Jews by birth are people who have at least one Jewish parent (mother and father, or mother, or father) and are raised in the Jewish faith. “Jews by choice” are people who have converted to Judaism through a formal conversion process.

Adults who are considering converting to Judaism are encouraged to come to services and meet with the Rabbi to learn more.

## **Membership Has Its Privileges!**

All members of Temple Beth Tikvah over the age of Confirmation have voting rights at congregational meetings.

All temple members, including those of different faith backgrounds, may serve on our Board of Directors and on all committees. They may also serve as the chairs of the Communications, Facilities, Programming, Social Justice, and Youth Activities Committees.

The Executive Committee positions of president, vice-presidents, treasurer, and secretary of the Board of Directors, as well as the chairs of our Education, Membership, and Religious Activities Committees, are the responsibility of Jewish members.

Temple Beth Tikvah welcomes all members to join and participate in Kol Ami (the TBT women's group), the Men's Club, and all of our committees.

## **Worship**

Our worship services are always open to everyone who wishes to attend.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, first day Rosh Hashanah, Kol Nidre, and Yom Kippur morning services members receive an entry card for admission. Temple members may arrange for extended family and friends to attend these High Holiday services by contacting the synagogue office. People new to the Shoreline, students and members of our military may also make arrangements to attend High Holiday services by contacting our office. Members in good standing at other Reform Jewish synagogues may obtain entry cards by having their home synagogues contact our synagogue office. Please contact our office if you have any questions about attending HHD services.

Whenever you attend our worship services, you are invited to participate with the congregation in any way that you feel comfortable. Please pray along with us, your participation is welcome and encouraged.

There are some specific leadership roles and honors in our worship that, by Jewish tradition, must be performed by a person of the Jewish faith. At any time, please contact the Rabbi to discuss any questions you might have.

If you or your loved ones, Jewish or not, are in need of prayers for healing, we will be glad to include their names in our Mi Shebeirach (Prayer for Healing). You may share their names at the time of the prayer, or you may have their names included on our Mi Shebeirach list by contacting our office.

If you have recently lost a loved one, Jewish or not, or are observing a yahrzeit (the anniversary of a loved one's death), we will be glad to add the name to our Mourner's Kaddish list.

Please contact the Rabbi to add a name to the Mi Shebeirach or Mourner's Kaddish list.

## **Study**

All of our congregation's adult study opportunities are open to all members, and some are also open to the public.

Occasionally, we teach a comprehensive Introduction to Judaism. The class is particularly helpful for those who are in need of a refresher, want to increase their basic Jewish knowledge, or are not Jewish but live in a Jewish household. Check our Adult Education listing at [www.tbtsshoreline.org](http://www.tbtsshoreline.org) or contact our office for information about when this class is next offered.

Adult Hebrew classes, whenever available, can facilitate your worship with us if you are unfamiliar with or in need of a refresher course on biblical Hebrew. And, if you have children who are learning Hebrew, you will be able to share the learning experience with them!

## **Marriage**

Our congregation rejoices with our wedding couples. We honor and recognize all marriages, whether between two Jews, or between a Jew and a non-Jew, whether between a man and a woman, or between two people of the same gender.

Our clergy officiate at marriage ceremonies between a man and a woman or for two people of the same gender, provided that at least one of the partners is Jewish and the couple seeks a Jewish ceremony. Our clergy do not co-officiate with clergy of other faiths.

Area residents may have marriages performed by our clergy when at least one of the parties is a member of our congregation. Our Temple may be the venue for these weddings. Similar standards apply for an aufruf (pre-nuptial blessing) on the Temple pulpit during a worship service.

In addition, our clergy would be delighted to bless you on your anniversary, and would also be happy to bless your marriage following the wedding, in almost every case. For more information, please contact the Rabbi.

## **Your Jewish Baby**

The child of a Jewish parent (either the mother or the father), by birth or by adoption, who is raised as a Jew, is Jewish here at Temple Beth Tikvah and in Reform Judaism. The fact that a child has a non-Jewish parent does not diminish the child's place in our community as a Jew in any way. Please consult with the Rabbi if you wonder about how your child's Jewish status is perceived among Reform, Conservative or Orthodox Jews, or in Israel. Please ask our Rabbi or Dr. Cassorla if you have any questions.

Non-Jewish parents and grandparents may enjoy significant roles in raising a Jewish child, beginning with the Brit Chayim (Baby Naming) or Brit Milah (Covenant of Circumcision). Rabbi Moss and Dr. Cassorla are eager to help make the occasion joyous for you and all members of your family. Please contact the Rabbi to discuss these rituals.

## **Temple Beth Tikvah Religious School**

Members' children who are being raised in the Jewish faith and not in another faith are encouraged to attend our Religious School. If you are a parent of a Religious School student, you should find that Jewish and non-Jewish parents are treated exactly the same. Please participate with your child in all opportunities for parental involvement in our Religious School. We encourage your involvement.

Our faculty is aware that many of our Religious School students have both a Jewish and a non-Jewish parent and many have at least one non-Jewish grandparent. If you have any questions or concerns about helping non-Jewish family members feel included, please contact our Religious School Director, Dr. Cassorla, to discuss your concerns.

## **Your Child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

We want your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah to be a joyous occasion for the entire family. Whether in the preparation leading up to the day, or on the pulpit during the service, we invite both our Jewish and non-Jewish parents and grandparents to have a significant role in a child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We honor your commitment and support.

The worship liturgy does require that some roles be fulfilled by those who are Jewish. Rabbi Moss will always make alternatives available to allow the full participation of family members who are not Jewish. During the year prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you will receive a list of all honors and who may fulfill them.

## **For Non-Jewish Members Considering Conversion**

While non-Jewish members are welcome to continue their Temple affiliation and involvement for a lifetime, we support conversion if that choice is appropriate for you. Please speak with the Rabbi at any time that you are interested in exploring conversion to Judaism.

### **In Time of Illness or Need**

If you or a member of your family is in the hospital or struggling with an illness or other challenge, please contact our clergy for pastoral guidance. Our clergy and our Caring Committee want to help you in any way possible. Please note that current hospital and health care facility rules often prohibit the facility from contacting Temple Beth Tikvah or our clergy to let us know when someone is in their care. Please call the synagogue or the clergy directly to let us know when someone is in the hospital or another health care facility.

### **When a Loved One Dies**

Temple Beth Tikvah, the congregation, Rabbi Moss, Dr. Cassorla, our Temple staff and fellow congregants are here for you in your time of loss. Whether your loved one is a Temple member, is Jewish or not, we will seek to provide comfort.

We include the names of both Jewish and non-Jewish relatives of members when we read the names of deceased loved ones at our worship services. Please let us know so we can include your loved one's name in our reading of yahrzeit (anniversary of the date of death) names at our services.

### **Funeral Observances**

Our clergy will officiate at the funeral services for all members, if it is the wish of the deceased and/or the family to have a Jewish service. Rabbi Moss or Dr. Cassorla will discuss the details of the funeral service based on your specific needs.

Our cemetery is available for the burial of any temple members, Jewish and not Jewish alike; however, all services must be Jewish and be conducted by our clergy.

Some non-Jewish members may prefer a service of another faith. In those circumstances, the service is held in a funeral home or another house of worship with another officiant.



Please consult the Temple Administrator with specific questions on how to purchase a cemetery plot in the Temple Beth Tikvah section of the Beaverbrook Cemetery in Clinton, CT.

Following the funeral, many of our families choose to observe a period of mourning which may include a meal of condolence immediately after the funeral and the sitting of Shiva. The word, Shiva, comes from the Hebrew for “seven” and refers to the seven days that the period traditionally lasts. It is a time to remember, to reminisce, and to share stories. It is a mitzvah to visit someone sitting shiva and to help make a minyan for the prayer services. Our clergy will help you decide how to observe the Shiva period.

### **Any Questions?**

If you ever have any questions – about your rights and privileges as a Temple member, about Judaism, or about a subject not covered in this guide – please contact Rabbi Moss, Dr. Cassorla, President of the Board of Directors, or Membership Chair.

Thank you for being a part of the Temple Beth Tikvah community.

We are eager to be your synagogue home and your Temple family. Please let us know whenever we can do better, and of course, feel free to let us know what we are doing well!

## Welcome!

### **Helpful Numbers and Addresses**

Temple Beth Tikvah  
196 Durham Road  
Madison, CT 06443  
203.245.7028  
[www.tbttshoreline.org](http://www.tbttshoreline.org)

Rabbi  
Rabbi Danny Moss - [rabbi@tbttshoreline.org](mailto:rabbi@tbttshoreline.org)

Cantorial Soloist & Religious School Director  
Leah Cassorla, Ph.D., M.F.A. - [drcassorla@tbttshoreline.org](mailto:drcassorla@tbttshoreline.org)

Preschool Director  
Jennifer Casillo - [nsdirector@tbttshoreline.org](mailto:nsdirector@tbttshoreline.org)

Temple Administrator  
Kim Romine - [admin@tbttshoreline.org](mailto:admin@tbttshoreline.org)

Administrative Assistant  
Bonnie Mahon – [office@tbttshoreline.org](mailto:office@tbttshoreline.org)

Rabbi Emerita  
Rabbi Stacy K. Offner