

# AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Since our congregation welcomes families that include a parent who is not Jewish, we encourage the participation both of Jews and those who are not Jewish in worship services in which our young adults are called to the *Torah* as a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*.

In doing so, we follow the general principle that those rituals that assume or imply Jewish identity are reserved for those who are Jewish, while those that do not are available to non-Jewish family and friends as well. In this way, we respect and maintain the identity of every one who participates in our worship, Jew and non-Jew alike, while affirming the integrity of each family.

Those rituals available to non-Jewish participants include:

- The Parents' Prayer
- Presenting the *Tallit*
- Reading "special readings" (those readings and poems that are not prayers)
- Opening the doors to the *Aron Kodesh* (the Holy Ark)

Those rituals that are available only to those who are Jewish include:

- Leading any portion of the worship service itself. Reciting any passage that would identify one as being Jewish, e.g., the "*aliyah*" (blessing over the reading of the *Torah*) which includes the words "...Who has chosen *us from among the nations...*"
- Holding or passing of the *Torah*

During the service for the reading of the *Torah*, when families pass the *Torah* from one generation to the next, non-Jewish family members are encouraged to stand as part of their family on the *bimah* (altar). However, when the *Torah* is passed, non-Jewish family members will not participate in the actual passing, since they have not accepted the *Torah* as their own.

In addition, non-Jewish parents or guests may stand on the *bimah* with a Jewish participant during an *aliyah* (blessing over the reading of the *Torah*).

At the end of the service, all members of each child's immediate family are invited to the *bimah* to stand together for the *Kiddush* (the blessing over the fruit of the vine) and the *Motzi* (the blessing over bread).