

Welcome to Alec Bloch's Bar Mitzvah

This program has been compiled to familiarize you with our synagogue and some of the traditions of the service.

Congregation Geshet Shalom ("The Bridge of Peace") is a conservative/egalitarian synagogue with traditional prayers and rituals. Today's service is a regular Shabbat service with addition of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony. It begins at 9:00 and will end at approximately 12 noon.

As a sign of respect, all men wear a kippah (skull cap) when in the synagogue. Women have the option to wear a head covering as well. Men (and some women) of the Jewish faith wear a tallit or prayer shawl. The eight fringes and five knots on the corner of the tallit remind us to live our lives in a holy manner by following the commandments.

Today as a mark of entering adulthood, Alec has the privilege of wearing a tallit for the first time. Alec's tallit is a gift from his grandparents, Ben and Carolyn Bloch.

"Bar Mitzvah" means "Age of the commandment". This day marks a young man's transition into adulthood within the religious community and take part in prayer services. A boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah at the age of 13— with or without any elaborate ceremony or celebration.

Today is the first time Alec will be called up to the Torah—the Hebrew text of the Five Books of Moses from the Hebrew Bible. The Torah is a sacred scroll that is handwritten by a special calligrapher. It is made of parchment and pieced together by hand onto wooden handles. Our synagogue has a number of Torah scrolls that are used for different occasions and celebrations.

The Torah reading is divided into weekly portions called "parshiyot", and when read in public it is further divided into smaller sections called "aliyot". As an honor, the congregation calls specific family members and friends to the Torah to recite the blessing before and after each aliya.

“Aliya” means “ascending”, because the Torah is always read on a raised platform and it also symbolizes the raised spirituality of nearing the Torah.

Aliyot Blessings

Dr. Benjamin and Carolyn Bloch, Grandparents

Craig and Rina Bloch, Uncle and Aunt

Jeremy Bloch, Brother

Acharon: Marc and Karen Bloch, Parents

Maftir: Alec Bloch

Alec will be called to recite the blessings over the Torah for the first time at the final aliyah—known as the “Maftir”. He will chant the portion using the traditional trope—a series of melodic chants meant to convey the feelings behind the text.

Alec will then chant the Haftarah.

The Haftarah is a concluding reading from the book of the Prophets, which were selected by the rabbis of old to complement or develop a subject or theme found in the Torah portion. Alec’s Haftarah is from the Book of Isaiah.

To mark the end of the morning’s formal services, we recite the “Aleinu”, a prayer that praises G-d as the one G-d. It looks forward to a time of peace foreseen by Zechariah, who prophesied, “the Lord shall reign over the earth. On that day, the Lord will be One, and His name shall be One”.

The Mourner’s Kaddish (prayer) is then recited by those in mourning or who are acknowledging the anniversary of a loved one’s death.

It affirms eternal justice and goodness.

Adon Olam, is the concluding prayer.

The blessings over the wine and challah are recited by Alec and his parents.

We thank you for attending this meaningful service and sharing with us this joyous day.

Shabbat Shalom!