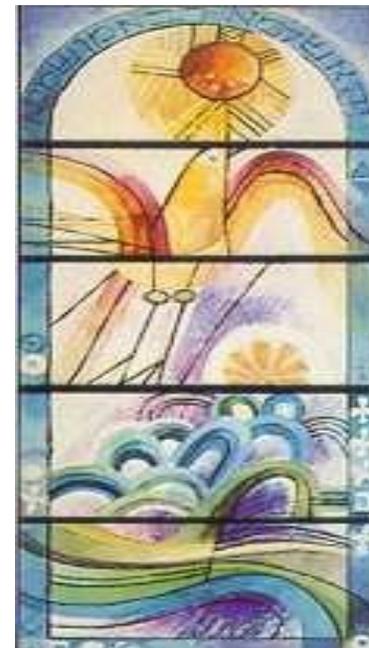


**Community Synagogue**  
**200 Forest Avenue**  
**Rye, NY 10580**  
**P: (914) 967-6262 F: (914) 940-6552**

(Revised June 2018)



*A Comprehensive Guide  
for Welcoming  
Your Interfaith Family*



## **Table of Contents:**

### **Introduction**

Your Synagogue Home.....	3
Who May Become A Member.....	3
Once You Are A Member.....	4

### **Worship & Study**

Worship.....	4
Sanctuary Events.....	5
Study... ..	5-6

### **Life Cycle**

Your Jewish Baby.....	6
Religious School.....	7
You and CSR Religious School.....	7
Camp Programs.....	8
Your Child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.....	8-9
Your Marriage.....	9

### **Funerals & Mourning**

When A Loved One Dies.....	10
What Happens When I Die?.....	10
Military/Non-Sectarian Burial.....	11

### **So You're Considering Conversion?.....**

### **Resources.....**

### **Helpful Numbers & Addresses.....**

### **Any Questions?.....**

## **Any Questions?**

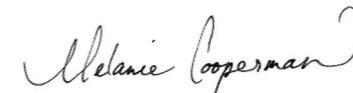
If you ever have any questions – about your rights and privileges as a synagogue member, about Judaism, or about a subject not covered in this booklet – please contact us (the clergy), or Glynis Conyer, Executive Director.

You are one of us, a member of Community Synagogue. We are eager to be your synagogue home and your synagogue family. Thank you for joining us on this journey!



Rabbi Daniel B. Gropper

Rabbi Leora Frankel



Cantor Melanie Cooperman

**Youth Engagement Director Yael Farber**

914-967-6262

Email: yfarber@comsynrye.org

**Executive Director Glynis Conyer**

914-967-6262

Email: gconyer@comsynrye.org

**Early Childhood Director Dale Oberlander**

914-967-6262

Email: doberlander@comsynrye.org

**Thanks To:** Donna DeLynn, Eileen Neiman, Cathy Rosenfeld, Lisa Sandler, Jim Seguljic & Karen Unger

Sources include “You’re a Member and You’re Not Jewish”- Temple Beth-El, San Antonio Texas & “Welcoming your Interfaith Family”- Temple Beth Sholom, Santa Ana, California.

**INTRODUCTION:**

**Your Synagogue Home**

Community Synagogue of Rye (CSR) endeavors to help create strong Jewish families. Interfaith marriages and Interfaith families are a significant part of those Jewish families in today’s congregations. We hope that all who want to create a Jewish family and be part of the Jewish community can take advantage of the many opportunities for participation and feel comfortable doing so at CSR.

Community Synagogue warmly opens doors and hearts to our non-Jewish members. Whether you are affiliated with another religious institution, or CSR is your only congregation, this synagogue is a place you can call your “spiritual home.” You are part of our synagogue family.

The information on the following pages represents a brief overview of Interfaith policies at CSR. Should you have additional questions after reviewing this brochure please contact a CSR Clergy Member.

**Who May Become a Member**

Spouses, partners, and significant others of Jewish members are invited to become CSR members. Including all who are part of our Jewish family is important to us, and we hope you will wish, as we do, for your inclusion to be permanent. If a Jewish spouse dies, or a couple is divorced, the membership rights of the non-Jewish partner continue. In addition, we welcome any custodial parents of a Jewish child to join our synagogue, no matter what the circumstances.

## **Once You are a Member...**

All members of Community Synagogue have voting rights at congregational meetings.

While only Jewish members may serve as committee chairs, officers and trustees of the Board, non-Jewish members often serve on committees and are involved in a wide array of congregational activities.

Community Synagogue's Women of Reform Judaism (Sisterhood) invites all women in the congregation to be active members. Our Men's Club similarly welcomes all men in the congregation into its activities.

## **WORSHIP & STUDY:**

### **Worship**

Our worship services are always open to the public, except on the High Holy Days-Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when tickets are extended only to those affiliated with Community Synagogue and their family members. All members receive tickets for admission to High Holy Day worship.

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, whenever the spirit so moves you.

If you or a loved one, Jewish or not, is in need of prayers for healing, we will be glad to include any names on our Mi Shebeirach list. Please contact the Clergy Assistant prior to a service.

The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) also provides a variety of resources. For more information, please contact:

Commission on Outreach & Synagogue Community  
Union For Reform Judaism  
633 Third Ave. New York, NY 10017  
Phone: (212) 650-4230  
Fax: (212) 650-4239  
Website: [www.urj.org/outreach](http://www.urj.org/outreach)

## **HELPFUL NUMBERS & ADDRESSES:**

**Community Synagogue**  
200 Forest Ave.  
Rye, NY 10580  
Phone: 914-967-6262  
Website: [www.comsynrye.org](http://www.comsynrye.org)

**Rabbi Daniel B. Gropper**  
914-967-6262  
Email: [dgropper@comsynrye.org](mailto:dgropper@comsynrye.org)

**Rabbi Leora Frankel**  
914-967-6262  
Email: [lfrankel@comsynrye.org](mailto:lfrankel@comsynrye.org)

**Cantor Melanie Cooperman**  
914-967-6262  
Email: [mcooperman@comsynrye.org](mailto:mcooperman@comsynrye.org)

**CJL Education Director Amy Rosenbaum**  
914-967-6262  
Email: [arosenbaum@comsynrye.org](mailto:arosenbaum@comsynrye.org)

**(Continues on Page 14)**

## **RESOURCES:**

The following are recommended:

### **Brochure:**

- Intermarried? Reform Judaism Welcomes You (URJ)

### **Books:**

- Kertzer/ Hoffman, *What Is a Jew?*
- Andrea King, *If I'm Jewish and You're Christian, What Are the Kids?* (URJ Press)
- Wendy Mogel, *The Blessings of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children*
- Stephanie Hubert Schneider, Ph.D. *Raising a Spiritual Child: A Jewish Perspective*
- Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, *Introducing My Faith and My Community: For the Christian in a Jewish Interfaith Relationship*, Jewish Lights Press
- Jim Keen, *Inside Intermarriage: A Christian Partner's Perspective on Raising a Jewish Family*, URJ Press
- Ted Falcon & David Blatner, *Judaism for Dummies*, F.D. Publishing
- *Rituals of Remembrance: A Guide to Jewish practices on the death & mourning of our loved ones*, CSR

The Synagogue Office can help provide a warm, sensitive approach to your questions:

Community Synagogue  
200 Forest Ave.  
Rye, NY 10580  
914-967-6262

## **Sanctuary Events**

Anyone may be invited to participate on the *Bimah* (stage). Anyone who is invited to do so may walk in the Torah procession, read appropriate sections of the service, and may be invited to be blessed on the *Bimah* for a birthday or anniversary. *Kaddish* (prayer in memory of the dead) may be recited for both Jews and non-Jews.

Because Jews believe we are “commanded” by God to perform certain rituals a person must be Jewish to conduct the following Community Synagogue sanctuary rituals.

- Light the Shabbat and/or Festival candles.
- Lead the candle blessing.
- Recite the Kiddush (blessing over the wine).
- Hold the Torah during the Torah Service (including lifting and dressing the Torah).
- Recite the blessings over the Torah.

## **Study**

Our congregation’s adult study opportunities are open to all.

If you are interested in a comprehensive introduction to Judaism, or one particularly helpful for those who are parents of school age children, our J-Life programs are for you. These programs, which run parallel to your children’s Religious School classes are designed to augment your understanding of Jewish practice, teachings, values and holidays. This enables you to serve as a role model of Jewish living and learning for your child. Childcare for younger siblings is always available on Saturday mornings.

## **LIFE CYCLE EVENTS:**

### **Your Jewish Baby**

The child of a Jewish parent and a non-Jewish parent, (regardless of the gender of the Jewish parent) by birth or by adoption, who is raised exclusively as a Jew, is considered to be Jewish at Community Synagogue and throughout Reform Judaism. The fact that the child has a non-Jewish parent does not diminish the child's Jewishness, in any way, in our eyes. Please ask any of our clergy if you have questions about standards for raising one's child "exclusively" as a Jew, or if you wonder about how your child's Jewish status is perceived among Conservative or Orthodox Jews, or in Israel.

Non-Jewish parents and grandparents may enjoy significant roles in raising a Jewish child, beginning with the Baby Naming (*Simchat Bat*) or *Brit Milah* (Covenant of Circumcision). While the latter ritual may sound frightening to some, your clergy are eager to help make the occasion joyous for you and all members of the family.

When a private Baby Naming ritual is held, non-Jewish parents, grandparents, and other relatives who are comfortable participating fully will be assigned "speaking parts" that are a bit different from, but entirely equivalent to, those of Jewish family members.

Please contact our clergy to discuss these rituals, as soon as you know that you are expecting. We can be your guides, specifically should you need the name of a *mohel*.

The gravesites owned and sold by Community Synagogue are located in hallowed Jewish ground. Therefore, it is not appropriate for non-Jewish religious symbols to be displayed on stones or markers. Burial in the CSR section of the cemetery is subject to any agreement or covenants made with the cemetery (and/or the synagogue).

### **Military/Non-Sectarian Burial**

Synagogue families with military connections occasionally choose a military cemetery, where our clergy will officiate. In addition, some interfaith families choose non-sectarian cemeteries, where our clergy may also officiate.

Please consult the clergy or our Executive Director with specific questions or to purchase a plot.

## **CONVERSION TO JUDAISM:**

### **So You're Considering Conversion?**

Occasionally, a person who has participated as a member of our congregation for many years will decide to become a Jew. While non-Jews are more than welcome to continue their synagogue affiliation and involvement for a lifetime, though never becoming Jewish, we encourage and support conversion for those for whom that personal choice is appropriate. Please speak with a member of our clergy team. We can always put you in touch with others in similar situations.

## **FUNERALS & MOURNING:**

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

Community Synagogue, your congregation and clergy, are here for you in your hour of loss. Whether your loved one is a CSR member or a non-Jewish relative, we will seek to provide comfort at your time of need. Our Hesed (Caring) Committee would be happy to provide you with any of the services we extend to members i.e. Shiva Minyan Leadership (worship service during the week of mourning taking place in the home). We also offer a guide called Rituals of Remembrance. This comprehensive guide has been prepared to help the members of our congregational family and their loved ones understand Jewish practices with respect to death, funerals and mourning.

We call the names of non-Jewish relatives of members at all occasions when we read the names of deceased loved ones: at our worship services, including *yahrzeit* (the anniversary of a death) and *yizkor* (memorial services that take place on Yom Kippur, Simchat Torah, 7<sup>th</sup> Day of Passover and Shavuot).

### **What Happens When I Die?**

All synagogue members, whether Jewish or not, may be buried in Community Synagogue's cemetery plot at Sharon Gardens, Valhalla, NY. Our clergy will officiate at all funeral services for non-Jewish members, if that is the wish of the deceased and/or the family, as long as the religious rites of another faith are not observed. Non-Jewish clergy may not conduct any ritual or liturgy at a Community Synagogue funeral.

## **Religious School**

Because Community Synagogue welcomes Interfaith families and believes that children should be given clear guidance in the development of their religious identities, we expect that parents who enroll their children in the CSR religious school program have made a decision to raise their children exclusively as Jews. In the spirit of a resolution passed by the Union for Reform Judaism, parents are strongly encouraged to formally educate their children in only one faith.

### **You and the Community Synagogue 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 and his/her Jewish parent in our J-Life (Family Education) programs and other opportunities for parental involvement in our Religious School. You are welcome to be involved in anything you wish.

Our faculty is sensitized to the fact that many of our Religious School students have a non-Jewish parent. A significant portion of our student body has at least one non-Jewish grandparent. If we need to be more sensitive on any occasion, please contact the CJL Education Director.

## **Camp Programs**

We encourage all families connected to Community Synagogue to explore our Reform Movement's Sleep Away Camps (Eisner & Crane Lake, located in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts) as viable options for your child (ren). These camps, which help to develop a child's Jewish identity are sensitive to children who come from families where one parent is Jewish and one is not.

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

Upon completion of Community Synagogue's religious school requirements, Jewish boys and girls at about age 13 read from the Torah for the first time publicly and participate as prayer leaders as a *Bar Mitzvah* (for a boy) or a *Bat Mitzvah* (for a girl) meaning "responsible for the commandments". The plural for boys is *B'nei Mitzvah* and the plural for girls is *B'not Mitzvah*.

We want your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah to be a joyous occasion for the entire family. Therefore, we encourage you to fully participate in preparatory sessions like our Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Education Program. Non-Jewish parents and grandparents typically do have significant roles on the *bimah* (stage) during the service. In many cases, the non-Jewish parent is the primary adult involved in Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. We honor your commitment and support.

For the Friday evening candle lighting, the immediate family is invited to participate. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah lights the candles. The entire family may recite the candle blessings together, but the blessing must be led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

For the ritual of passing the Torah from generation to generation, we invite the non-Jewish parent to pass the Torah as a symbol of their commitment to creating a Jewish home. One must be Jewish to recite the blessings over the Torah. A non-Jewish parent is invited to read the alternative translation of the Torah blessings found in our prayerbook (*Mishkan T'filah*) or to stand with their partner/spouse while the blessing is recited. One must be Jewish to hold the Torah following the Torah readings.

Other non-Jewish participants may have the following roles in a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony:

- Opening the Ark
- Holding the Torah ornaments

## **Your Marriage**

Community Synagogue honors and recognizes every marriage, 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 welcomes interfaith couples. Our clergy officiate at weddings between a Jew and Gentile as long as certain conditions are met. We ask that you speak directly to a member of the clergy to discuss your upcoming wedding plans.

Regardless of who is officiating at your wedding, our clergy would be happy to offer you a wedding blessing on the *bimah* (stage) during a worship service. In addition, our clergy would be delighted to bless you on your anniversary.

For more information, please contact the Clergy Assistant.