

Aufruf Guidelines

The Library Minyan is an ongoing participatory community and welcomes the celebrations of upcoming weddings and commitment ceremonies by its members. These celebrations, while having unique meaning for the celebrants and their family, take place within the Library Minyan's ongoing *tefillot*, and thus incorporate the Minyan's traditions and practices. These guidelines are meant to help Library Minyan families in planning an Aufruf (literally, "calling up", in German), so that it is meaningful and enjoyable both for the family and the community.

Scheduling an Aufruf at the Library Minyan

The Library Minyan is always happy to celebrate *s'machot* with its members. Being a member of the Library Minyan involves 3 easy steps: **Pay** (be a dues-paying member of Temple Beth Am, and consider making an additional contribution to the Library Minyan itself); **Come** (daven with us twice a month or more for an extended period); and **Serve** (volunteer to help make the Library Minyan work).

If a member of the Library Minyan gets engaged, and would like to have an Aufruf with the Library Minyan, please contact the Simcha Coordinator (simchacoordinator@libraryminyan.org) as soon as the dates are determined. If a child of Library Minyan members gets engaged, but the child has never been involved in the Library Minyan, please contact the Simcha Coordinator to discuss the Aufruf.

The Library Minyan does not host *s'machot* for those who are not members of the Library Minyan community. If your individual family circumstances may justify an exception to this policy, please contact either the Simcha Coordinator or the Library Minyan chairperson to discuss them.

Celebration of Same-Sex Relationships – a note about terminology

It is the *halakhic* ruling of the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Am that celebrations to mark same-sex relationships (whether called weddings or commitment ceremonies, depending on the changing rules of civil law) may be celebrated with an Aufruf in the same manner as weddings between parties of the opposite sex. The Library Minyan was the first *davening* community at Temple Beth Am to host an Aufruf in celebration of an upcoming commitment ceremony; during the period in 2008 when same-sex weddings were recognized as valid in California, we celebrated an Aufruf for a same-sex couple. Whether the two partners are of the same or different genders, all that matters to us is that both of them are Jewish in accordance with the standards of Conservative Judaism, as interpreted by the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Am, and their upcoming celebration will be a Jewish ceremony.

In these guidelines, we will use "commitment ceremony" to refer to any ceremony marking a civil union, domestic partnership or other demonstration of a couple's intent to form an exclusive, loving relationship that cannot be marriage because the relevant civil laws do not allow marriage between persons of the same gender. We will use the word "engaged" to connote the decision of two people to have a marriage or commitment ceremony. If any reader can suggest better terms for inclusion in a revised edition of these guidelines, the Library Minyan's Simcha Coordinator would like to hear from you!

The Aufruf; Synagogue Honors

Before egalitarianism, an Aufruf was the honor given to a *chatan* (groom) of being called for an *Aliyah* to the Torah on the Shabbat before his wedding. Sources tell of a variety of customs to honor the *chatan*; one Sephardic tradition was to read of Abraham's servant Eliezer and how he chose Rebekah to marry Isaac (from *Bereshit* chapter 24), from a second *Sefer Torah*.

At the Library Minyan, we offer the opportunity for an *Aliyah* to both members of the couple. Following the *Aliyah*, a *Mi She'Berakh* is said, asking God to bless their relationship and their life together. Depending on what other events are taking place at the Minyan on any particular week, it may be possible to provide as many as three *Aliyot* to a couple celebrating an Aufruf: one for the parent(s) of each member of the couple, and one for the couple. Please note that since we try to make honors in the service

available to all members marking *s'machot* and other events, the Library Minyan cannot guarantee that three *Aliyot* – or any honors other than a single *Aliyah* for the couple - will be available on any given week; the Simcha Coordinator, in conjunction with the Library Minyan Chairperson, reserves the right to make final decisions on allocation of synagogue honors.

If three *Aliyot* are not available for an Aufruf, we will try to make one or more of the following synagogue honors available to the family of the couple. **Each person receiving one of these honors must be Jewish** in accordance with the standards of Conservative Judaism, as interpreted by the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Am. Please provide the Simcha Coordinator with the Hebrew names (in Hebrew or English transliteration) for those receiving *Aliyot* to the Torah (including if the individual is the son or daughter of a *Kohen* or *Levi*), by the Wednesday before your Aufruf.

Ark Openings (two people for each): The *Aron Kodesh* is opened to take out the Torah for reading, and to return the Torah after it is read. (Also, certain prayers are customarily said before an open *Aron Kodesh*, including *Anim Z'mirot* (which may be said on any Shabbat or Chag) and certain special holiday prayers.) The honor of *P'tikha* (opening and closing the *Aron Kodesh*) does not require prior skill or physical strength, other than the ability to stand in front of the congregation for 3-5 minutes. If there are people who you wish to honor who have little or no experience in traditional synagogue participation, this honor would be most appropriate.

Hagbah and Gelilah: The person honored with Hagbah must be able to lift the Torah from its position on the reader's table to a position above his or her head, in order to display the open scroll to the congregation. Out of respect to the Torah and the congregation, we cannot allow someone who has no previous experience doing Hagbah to take this honor. The person honored with Gelilah will help roll, tie and dress the Torah, but does not lift the scroll.

General Information about *Tefillot* at the Library Minyan

The Gabbai: Each Library Minyan service is arranged and coordinated by one of the Gabbaim of the Library Minyan. The Gabbai is responsible for selecting those who will be *sh'lichei tzibbur* (representatives of the community) by leading the *tefillot*, and for assigning all the honors during the service. The Gabbai is responsible for addressing any unforeseen situations that arise during the service. The list of Gabbaim, and their assignments during the current year, is online at www.libraryminyan.org/GabbaiSchedule.html.

Greeters: The Library Minyan has a “greeter” at the Chapel door to welcome newcomers who may not be familiar with our minyan, and help guests find *kippot* and *tallitot*, *Siddurim* and *Chumashim*, and seating. If many of your guests may be unfamiliar with the Minyan and its customs, please alert the Simcha Coordinator and suggest a friend of yours from the Minyan community to help the assigned “greeter” that week.

Prayer Leaders and Torah Readers: It can make an Aufruf more meaningful to have members of the couple or their parents participate in leading services or reading Torah. Any guest who is given the honor of leading a part of the service should be proficient in the correct *nusach* (prayer melody), and the Minyan's ritual procedures (*e.g.*, what is said out loud and/or silently, and whether the *Amidah* is a short version or full repetition; at least one *Amidah* should be said with a full repetition). The requested prayer leader should discuss this with the Simcha Coordinator at least 4-6 weeks in advance of the Aufruf.

In the Library Minyan we read the Torah according to the Conservative Movement's triennial schedule. The appropriate readings for your Aufruf are available from the Simcha Coordinator. Anyone reading Torah must know how to read with correct *trope* (melody) and pronunciation, and must be adequately prepared; each Torah reader who has not been reading regularly at the Library Minyan will be required to demonstrate this preparation (either in person or by telephone) at least two (2) weeks before the Aufruf.

Ritual Apparel and Attire

Attire: Although the Library Minyan does not have a formal dress code, we expect that all persons attending our services will dress with awareness of and respect for the congregation, the prayer service and (most importantly) the One to whom our prayers are directed. Please share this with your guests.

Headcovering and Tallit – For those receiving Honors: Anyone who comes before the congregation to lead any part of the service (prayer leaders, Torah readers, and those having aliyot) or receive an honor that includes carrying or holding the Torah must wear a head covering and tallit. This applies to both men and women. Please share this information with those who you would like to honor, since no exceptions will be made on the day of your *simcha*.

Tallit: The Library Minyan welcomes all Jewish adults to wear a *tallit* if it is their personal practice to do so; as noted, we require all those leading the service or taking an honor to do so. A limited number of *tallitot* are provided by Temple Beth Am.

Decorum

Each community has its own customs and standards of appropriate synagogue behavior. We hope that you will share this information on the Library Minyan's customs and expectations with your guests.

Talking: We hope that all who attend services with us will respect the service and the leaders of the service through their attentive participation, and limit conversation to occasional quiet whispers.

Coming and Going: Traditionally, it is not appropriate to enter or leave the room during certain parts of the service: any time when the congregation is standing; any time when the Torah is being carried or read; during the recitation of *Kaddish*; and during the *d'var Torah*. We appreciate your cooperation.

Photography, Videography & Other Electronics: The Library Minyan does not allow the use of any sound or video recording devices, or any electronic devices other than the microphone system, on Shabbat or Chagim – either before or during services, or at a Kiddush/lunch afterwards. Guests who are not on-call medical professionals should silence cell phones, etc., before entering Temple Beth Am.

Throwing Candy: Temple Beth Am does not permit throwing candies and sweets at those celebrating *s'machot* with an *Aliyah*. Please ask your guests to respect this policy.

Flowers: The Minyan does not customarily decorate its davening space with flowers on Shabbat, so that we can allow as much room as possible for the people who join us at our services. Should you wish to provide a small floral piece, please coordinate it with the Simcha Coordinator and the TBA Facility Coordinator (Amy Rabin, ext. 213). In order to accommodate those who have allergies and asthma caused by pollen-bearing and strongly-scented flowers, all floral arrangements should be non-allergenic.

Kiddush

As part of celebrating with the Library Minyan community, it is our expectation that a couple celebrating an *Aufruf* share their *simcha* with the Library Minyan congregation by sharing in the sponsorship of the festive congregational kiddush following the service. Please contact the Simcha Coordinator or Library Minyan Chairperson with questions about this.

Clergy Remarks

If one of the Rabbis of Temple Beth Am will be officiating at the wedding or commitment ceremony of two Library Minyan members, it may be appropriate for the Rabbi to speak to the couple following the *Aufruf Aliyah*. Please let the Simcha Coordinator know if this is the case, so that we can coordinate the timing of Rabbi's remarks with the Rabbi's other obligations at TBA that Shabbat.