

Worship

Explore prayer in The Window and on the Temple website

Many congregants have asked for help feeling more comfortable, confident and competent to participate in Shabbat service. While the best way to do this is simply to come and participate, it can also help to learn about the meanings of the prayers and actually practice reading or singing them outside of the Olan Sanctuary or the Lefkowitz Chapel. We hope these tools (a new one will be available each month) will be helpful, so that when we are together on Shabbat we can let the power of the prayer speak to our souls.

Each month we will explore a different prayer from the Shabbat liturgy with a short explanation or reflection provided by a member of the congregation in The Window.

The website will feature the printed text of the prayer (in Hebrew, transliteration and English translation all from *Mishkan T'fila*) and an MP3 recording for you to read or sing along with Cantor Cohn. Resources to learn more about prayers and the art of worship will also be available.

Log on to www.tedallas.org.

Please share your feedback about these resources with us at thechairoad@tedallas.org.

We begin this new Adult Jewish Learning project with the *Mourners Kaddish* and these words of explanation by theologian Dr. Elliott N. Dorff from “*My People’s Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries Volume 6*.”

The *Mourners Kaddish* is traditionally said by mourners, that is, those who have lost a parent during the previous eleven months or a child, sibling, or spouse during the last thirty days and by those observing the anniversary of the death of those close relatives. (In some contemporary synagogues [like ours!] the prayer leader or the full congregation says it [together in memory of those who died in the holocaust or have no one else to say it for them]). The text says nothing explicit about death or mourning; it simply affirms faith in God. It reminds mourners that life continues despite death, that God still rules over us, and that God deserves praise for our own lives and for the deceased whom we once knew. Especially after a tragic death, this affirmation may be the last thing that we emotionally want to say, but that is precisely its point: saying it reaffirms the value of life even in the face of death. It also helps us emote about the person we lost. It brings us out of our sadness and anger by having us utter appreciation and praise just when we are tempted to deny the importance of both. In praising God we link ourselves and the one we have lost to eternity.

The Mourners Kaddish

Three Little Known Facts about the Mourners Kaddish

The *Mourners Kaddish* is written in Aramaic, an ancient language very close to Hebrew, spoken by Jews over 2000 years ago.

The *Mourners Kaddish* closely parallels the *Lord’s Prayer* in Christian liturgy. Some scholars suggest they share a single original source but most probably they developed independently of each other and both became beloved in their faith communities.

The *Mourners Kaddish* has always been retained in the prayer books of the Reform Movement, even appearing in transliteration so that all could participate, attesting to the power of prayer and ritual, especially around mourning, to sustain us.