Though the major religion in America is Christianity, there is no official religion or established church that is supported by the government. Indeed strong efforts are made to prevent any open governmental support for religious activities of any kind. The doctrine of “separation of church and state” is widely respected, and perceived deviations from it over such matters as prayers in public schools cause vigorous debate. Religion is generally considered a private matter. People have their own beliefs, and they may or may not discuss it with others. Americans are generally taught not to raise the subject of religion with people they do not know well. Visitors from abroad will find a wide range in religious practices of Americans in New Concord.

**Religious Organizations**

There are many Christian churches and a Jewish synagogue in the New Concord area. Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu communities can be found in Columbus, Athens, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. For assistance in contacting these communities, students should talk with the International Student Services Office. There are non-denominational services held in Brown Chapel at 11:00am every Thursday. The Religious Life Office is available for assistance on finding a place to worship. A complete list of the names and address of the religious buildings are also in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book. The listings are classified by denomination.

**International Visitors and Religion**

If you want to see what happens in an American church, you can simply attend a service or go with a friend or acquaintance who attends a church or synagogue. Visitors are usually very welcome and this is a good way to learn more about American culture. You can visit without any intention to join, but do not be surprised if members enthusiastically invite you to come more often or participate in social activities. This is an excellent way to make friends in this area.