



Beth Chai

Greater Washington Jewish Humanist Congregation

Beth Chai Annual Newsletter

BETH CHAI

Observe 5775 with Beth Chai

The Beth Chai congregation welcomes you to join us in celebrating the High Holidays with our reflective, non-traditional, and meaningful services.

Through Beth Chai's longstanding partnership with River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC), our High Holiday services are held at RRUUC's meditative and inviting building located in Bethesda, Maryland.

We celebrate Rosh Hashanah on September 25th with a family service, followed by an adult service,

with kiddush immediately after the adult service.

Kol Nidre services are on October 3rd.



Yom Kippur family and adult services are held on October 4th with a break-the-fast potluck is at 6:00 PM that evening. Beth Chai provides the bagels, cream cheese and lox. We ask attendees to bring a non-meat dish that serves 6-8 people.

High Holiday Logistics

All services are held at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation (RRUUC) at 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD. Adult services are aimed at those age 12 and older; all ages are welcome.

Ⓞ The entrance to RRUUC is through the parking lot accessible from Whittier Blvd, just off of River Road.

High Holiday tickets are available to members as part of the

membership package. Please let us know you are coming by registering at www.bethchai-registration.org. **Login** at the top of the page. Click on **High Holiday Tickets**. Choose the service(s) you plan to attend. If you plan to attend all three services, click the **All Services** button.

👤 High Holiday tickets are distributed at each service. Simply check in at the Will Call desk in the RRUUC lobby be-

ROSH HASHANAH

September 25, 2014

9:30 AM | Family Service

10:30 AM | Adult Service

Kiddush follows the adult service.

RRUUC

KOL NIDRE

October 3, 2014

7:00 PM | Adult Service

RRUUC

YOM KIPPUR

October 4, 2014

9:30 AM | Family Service

10:30 AM | Adult Service

RRUUC

Break-the-Fast Potluck

6:00 PM | Potluck

RRUUC

fore each service. It helps to have a copy of your receipt.

Free childcare for children age 2 and up is available for ticket holders during the Rosh Hashanah, Kol Nidre and Yom Kippur adult services. Childcare is not provided during the family services. Reserve your child's space online when purchasing/reserving your tickets.

For assistance with the online registration, contact squeffrey@gmail.com.

Greetings from the Membership Chair

As we gear up for another exciting year at Beth Chai, I'd like to take a moment to welcome our new members and greet our returning members. We have been fortunate to have nine new families join us in the past two years and this year we will welcome several more. What has always made me proud about Beth Chai is the way our congregation brings these new members into the fold, seeks them out at adult education and High Holidays, helps their children adjust to the school, and simply chats them up during bagels and coffee.

As Beth Chai's membership grows and shifts over the years, it is a good reminder of the diversity of opinions and experiences that give our congregation its uniqueness and feeling of family. This reinforces for me that Beth Chai is truly about community. For some that is defined by our social action, while for others it is the opportunity to share their views at adult education and Shabbat dinners about what it means to be a Jew and a Humanist. For others, it is the ability to help their chil-

dren develop an understanding and appreciation for Jewish culture, history, and traditions and to see each child



define *Jewish* for him or herself. For all, it is the willingness to pitch in, to help organize an event or tidy the supply cart—every member who volunteers puts value into the congregation.

For me, it is a combination of all of the above, to know that I have found a place where I am accepted and where I can reflect on my own Jewish roots and share those experiences and more with my family and friends.

We have an exciting year planned—High Holidays in September and early October, followed by our Sukkot party and the New Member Reception. We have several mitzvah services this fall with a wide array of presentation topics. We will once again have a robust adult education program and we will move to a more formal alternation of Shabbat and Havdalah events each month. A little something for everyone...

As always, we appreciate feedback and input because, as Beth Chai is a community, we can only improve it together. I hope to see you at High Holidays, Sunday school, and other events.

L'Shanah Tovah,
Katie Turnacioglu

Financial Need Policy

Beth Chai welcomes anyone to attend services, become a member, or have their children attend Beth Chai Sunday school, regardless of the ability to pay. Considerations available include extended payment plans, service ex-

change, and fee reduction. Financial aid determination will be made on a case by case basis.

For questions about this, please contact the Beth Chai Treasurer at treasurer@bethchai.org.



The Year 5775 — Take Notice, Pay Attention

Soon, Jewish communities around the world will gather to celebrate the beginning of the new Jewish year 5775. The Hebrew letters that represent the number 5775 also spell out the Hebrew verb *Tishah*, which means “take notice, pay attention.” As the High Holidays approach, our world finds itself in the midst of an intense period of social unrest. Every part of the globe is calling for attention.

The Mideast is exploding with competing demands for justice. It seems to me that every day another religious or militant group bursts into the news stream, competing to be noticed, each one using acts of violence and threats of destruction to make their voices heard above the global clamor.

In America, the battles for equality and civil rights are being fought just as loudly as ever. In courtrooms throughout the land, sexual minorities are crying for equality in the face of an increasingly assertive religious right wing. And on streets around the country, racial minorities are demanding justice in the face of police forces that are overwhelmingly white, militarized and oppressive.

When I see the images of tanks, guns, plumes of gas and smoke, soldiers in armor and

bodies of civilians, it’s hard to tell whether I’m looking at Gaza or Iraq or Ukraine or Missouri.

I find myself torn in half: do I listen to my ancestors’ calls to end oppression and pursue justice, or do I cover my ears for the sake of peace and quiet? Do I dive into the struggles of human society, or do I retreat from into some sanctuary of calm?

Maybe what I need to do is put on my noise-cancelling headphones to tune out the daily fire and thunder of a world in chaos -- just for a moment -- so that I can hear other voices more clearly and connect to them. My memories and personal dreams, my ethnic heritage and religious values – these too call for my attention. The spirits of beauty and wisdom and energy that live inside my mind, my hopes and aspirations – these too demand to be noticed.

This is what the sound of the shofar means to me: to leave the din and the madness for a while. To be still and hear another sound, a voice that is ancient and powerful. To be aware that I am part of all humanity, part of all that lives on this planet, part of all the matter and all the energy in the universe.



Jewish tradition connects the New Year with the creation of the world in order to connect *us* with the world and with the peoples and the things within it. If matter and energy are neither created nor destroyed, then my essence as a creature on this planet always has been and always will be.

With my best wishes to all for a Good New Year 5775,

Rabbi Arthur Blecher

5775
Take notice.
Attend.

Dr. Arthur C. Blecher, the rabbi of Beth Chai since 1987, received his rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Dr. Blecher is a practicing and clinical member of the American Mental Health Counselors Association. He is licensed by the DC Board of Professional Counseling.

Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn



The fall season, with the High Holidays, triggers a return to learning. Beth Chai warmly welcomes its new and returning students and families.

The Beth Chai board and staff have been working diligently to prepare for the 2014-2015 school year. We are excited to see the students and faculty connect, to have students meet new teachers, and reconnect with returning teachers and classmates.

Beth Chai's first day of school is September 7, 2014. Our school day begins at 9:30 AM with our whole school music assembly for students and their families. At this assembly, we sing together and introduce the teachers. At 10:00 AM, students are escorted to their classrooms by their teachers.

At Beth Chai, we believe that as we learn, we also learn to lead. We, at Beth Chai, value experiential learning and believe that knowledge comes from a variety of sources. For this reason, our school has expanded our school library by adding more interactive

games, drama props and music tools. The Beth Chai school values student engagement and discovery. Beth Chai teachers use interactive strategies such as "pair-up" so that our older students teach the younger students. Reciprocally, the younger students visit the classrooms of the older students to see what is ahead of them in their Jewish education.

Each year, the beginning of school is a busy and exciting time, filled with positive



changes and preparation, and this year is no exception. The month of October will be dedicated to learning and celebrating the fall holidays. We celebrate Sukkot on October 12th with arts and crafts activities, games and decorations for our

Sukkah. On October 19th we have our Simchat Torah annual parade.

Wishing you a happy and sweet New Year,

Roni Rosenthal
Education Director

Beth Chai Annual Newsletter

Beth Chai Education Director's Open Door

As the Education Director, I thank Beth Chai families for their commitment to Beth Chai's Sunday School!

My door is open to you! Please call/email with any questions or concerns. Roni Rosenthal | Education Director | education@bethchai.org



Humanistic Jews affirm that...

A Jew is someone who identifies with the history, culture, and future of the Jewish people.

Jewish identity is best preserved in a free, pluralistic society.

Jewish history is a human saga, a testament to the significance of human power and responsibility.

Judaism is the historic culture of the Jewish people.

We possess the power and responsibility to shape our own lives.

Ethics and morality should serve human needs.

Beth Chai Calendar 2014-2015

Beth Chai Event Locations

Beth Chai
Congregation at
RRUUC | River Road
Unitarian
Universalist
Congregation | 6301
River Road |
Bethesda, MD
(Parking lot entrance is
on Whittier Street.)

Burning Tree
Elementary School
(BTES) | 7900 Beech
Tree Road |
Bethesda, MD

Bannockburn
Clubhouse | 6314
Bannockburn Dive |
Bethesda, MD

SEPTEMBER 2014

Saturday, September 6.
Bat Mitzvah | Daniel Harris
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, September 7.
First Day of Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Post-
Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, September 13.
Bat Mitzvah | Jessica Buxbaum
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, September 14.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, September 14.
7:00 PM | Beth Chai Board Meeting
Home of President A. Claybon

Friday, September 19.
7:00 PM | Shabbat Dinner
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, September 21.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Thursday, September 25.
Rosh Hashanah Services
9:30 AM | Family Service
10:30 AM | Adult Service
Kiddush follows service.
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, September 28.
Sunday School | Visitors' Day
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

OCTOBER 2014

Friday, October 3.
Kol Nidre
7:00 PM | Kol Nidre Service
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Saturday, October 4.
Yom Kippur Services
9:30 AM | Family Service
10:30 AM | Adult Service
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Saturday, October 4.
Break-the-Fast Potluck
6:00 PM | Potluck
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, October 5.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade, Post-
Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, October 11.
Bat Mitzvah | Josh Marchand
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, October 12.
Sukkot Party
10:00 AM | No regular classes or
adult education.
Location TBD

Saturday, October 18.
Havdalah | Time TBD
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, October 19.
Sunday School | Simchat Torah
Celebrated
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, October 26.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

NOVEMBER 2014

Saturday, November 1.
Bat Mitzvah | Hilda Gitchell
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Saturday, November 1.
New Member Reception
Time TBD
Location TBD

Sunday, November 2.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Post-
Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, November 9.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, November 9.
7:00 PM | Beth Chai Board Meeting
Home of President A. Claybon

Friday, November 14.
7:00 PM | Shabbat Dinner
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, November 16.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, November 23.
Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, November 30.
Thanksgiving Weekend—No
Sunday School or Adult Education

Interested in Beth Chai?

Join us for
Visitors' Day in
September,
December or
April.

Beth Chai Calendar 2014-2015

Beth Chai Event Locations

Beth Chai
Congregation at
RRUUC | River Road
Unitarian
Universalist
Congregation | 6301
River Road |
Bethesda, MD
(Access parking lot
from Whittier
Street.)

Burning Tree
Elementary School |
7900 Beech Tree
Road | Bethesda, MD

Bannockburn
Clubhouse | 6314
Bannockburn Drive |
Bethesda, MD

DECEMBER 2014

Sunday, December 7.

Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Post-
Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, December 7.

7:00 PM | Beth Chai Board Meeting
Home of President A. Claybon

Sunday, December 14.

Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, December 20.

Havdalah | Time TBD
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, December 21.

Chanukah Party
Visitors' Day
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | No
Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, December 28.

No Sunday School or Adult Ed.

JANUARY 2014

Sunday, January 4.

Winter Break—No Sunday School
or Adult Education

Sunday, January 11.

10:00 AM | Community Work Day
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, January 11.

7:00 PM | Beth Chai Board Meeting
Home of President A. Claybon

Friday, January 16.

7:00 PM | Shabbat Dinner
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, January 18.

Sunday School | MLK Day Program
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade, Post-
Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, January 25.

Sunday School | MLK Day Program
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

FEBRUARY 2014

Sunday, February 1.

Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Post-
Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, February 8.

Sunday School
9:30 | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, February 8.

7:00 PM | Beth Chai Board Meeting
Home of President A. Claybon

Saturday, February 14.

Havdalah | Time TBD
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, February 15.

No Sunday School or Adult Ed.

Sunday, February 22.

Sunday School
9:30 | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

MARCH 2014

Sunday, March 1.

Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Post-
Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, March 8.

Sunday School | Purim Party
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Purim Party
Burning Tree Elementary School

Friday, March 14.

7:00 PM | Shabbat Dinner
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, March 15.

10:00 AM | Beth Chai Auction
10:00 AM Pre-K—7th Grade
No assembly or adult education.
Burning Tree Elementary School

Sunday, March 15.

7:00 PM | Beth Chai Board Meeting
Home of President A. Claybon

Saturday, March 21.

B'nai Mitzvot | Amy and Gwen Ar
betman
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, March 22.

Sunday School | Purim Party
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, March 28.

Bat Mitzvah | Madelyn Shapiro
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, March 29.

Sunday School
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult
Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

April 2014

Sunday, April 5.

Spring Break—No Sunday School
or Adult Education

Saturday, April 11.

Community Passover Seder
Location TBD

Saturday, April 11.

Bat Mitzvah | Abigail Svetlik
Lillian & Albert Small Museum

Sunday, April 12.

Spring Break—No Sunday School
or Adult Education

Saturday, April 18.

Bat Mitzvah | Emma Sodie
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Save the Date

Beth Chai Silent Auction

March 15, 2014

About Jewish Humanism at Beth Chai

Founded in 1978, Beth Chai is an independent Jewish Humanist congregation serving the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Beth Chai is founded on principles of Humanistic Judaism—celebrating Jewish heritage and culture and humanistic principles and values. We celebrate Jewish identity by interpreting history and traditions in a modern spirit. Perhaps the overriding principle shared by our members is the affirmation of each person's ability to decide their own spiritual beliefs within a core set of Jewish teachings and traditions. Beth Chai is a place where personal belief is honored. At Beth Chai, we encourage open and frank dialogue on all aspects of Jewish thought and religion, while letting individuals decide what is best for them.

In accordance with Jewish Humanism, Beth Chai believes that *tikkun olam*, the notion of healing the world, depends on the actions of each of us. Beth Chai teaches that we all have an obligation to practice *tikkun olam* in our daily lives.

Our goal at Beth Chai is to encourage the development of a positive Jewish identity in our children by teaching Jewish history, culture, values, and traditions in a humanistic manner. As humanistic Jews, we want our children to know and understand traditional Judaism without feeling compelled to conform to any prescribed standard of practice or belief. We want our children to relate what they learn about Jewish history, culture, and values to their own lives. Our unique curriculum integrates history, ethics, and celebration.

One of Beth Chai's most appealing aspects for children and their parents is the opportunity to bring the child's unique interests and expression to this important coming-of-age ceremony. Each Beth Chai Mitzvah youth develops her or his own service with the guidance of Rabbi Blecher. These services may be as traditional as the reading of the weekly Torah portion or as unconventional as a research project on Yiddish theatre in the 1920s.

Beth Chai's provocative adult education sessions cover issues of interest to Jewish Humanists including, but not limited to, Jewish art, music, literature and culture, the Jewish life cycle, modernization of Jewish ritual practices, the Jewish diaspora, and Jewish identity.

Beth Chai Calendar 2014-2015 (continued)

Saturday, April 18.
Havdalah | Time TBD
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, April 19.
Sunday School | Yom Ha'Shoah Ceremony
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Saturday, April 25.
Bar Mitzvah | Asher Friedman-Rosen
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Sunday, April 26.
Sunday School | Visitors' Day
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Post-Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

May 2014
Sunday, May 3.
Beth Chai Annual Meeting | School Presentations
9:30 AM | Music Assembly
10:00 AM | Pre-K—7th Grade | Post-Mitzvah | Adult Education
Burning Tree Elementary School

Friday, May 15.
7:00 PM | Shabbat Dinner
Bannockburn Clubhouse

Sunday, May 17.
7:00 PM | Beth Chai Board Meeting
Location TBD

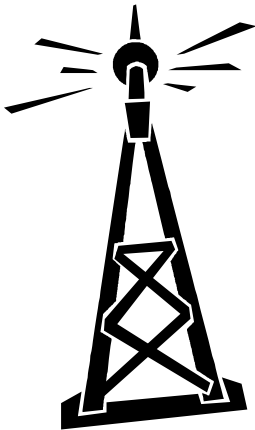
June 2014
Saturday, June 6.
Bar Mitzvah | Griffin O'Neal-Freeman
Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC

Beth Chai

Greater Washington Jewish
Humanist Congregation

Beth Chai Congregation at
River Road Universalist
Unitarian Congregation

Answering Service: 301-229-7400
E-mail: info@bethchai.org
Website: www.BethChai.org



STAY UP TO DATE

on all of the Beth Chai events by subscribing to Chai
Lights, our weekly e-newsletter.

*Contact our Communications Chair for more information.
communications@bethchai.org*



Position	Name	Email
Rabbi	Dr. Arthur Blecher	rabbi@bethchai.org
Education Director	Roni Rosenthal	education@bethchai.org
President	Alexa Claybon*	president@bethchai.org
Vice President	Matt Schneer*	vicepresident@bethchai.org
Past President	Keith Parsky*	info@bethchai.org
Treasurer	Ela Koniuszkow*	treasurer@bethchai.org
Secretary	Stacey Downey*	secretary@bethchai.org
Adult Education Program Chair	Karim Chaibi*	programchair@bethchai.org
Bookkeeper/Accounts Payable	Diane Page	treasurer@bethchai.org
BTES Member Liaison	Chelle Parsky	info@bethchai.org
Communications Chair	Meredith Bowers*	communications@bethchai.org
Development/Volunteer Coord.	Brandon Hemel*	volunteers@bethchai.org
High Holidays Chair	Michele McNally	info@bethchai.org
IT Director and Webmaster	Jeff Gerber*	webmaster@bethchai.org
Liturgy Chair	Matt Schneer*	liturgy@bethchai.org
Membership Chair	Katie Turnacioglu*	membership@bethchai.org
Mitzvah Coordinator	Russell Sturm	info@bethchai.org
Pastoral Care Chair	Beth Sodie	pastoralcare@bethchai.org
RRUUC Event Coordinator	Mark Israel*	info@bethchai.org
School Parents Council Chair	Laura Emmons	info@bethchai.org
Social Action Co-Chairs	Megan Romberg* & Oona Stieglitz	socialaction@bethchai.org
Sunday School Volunteer Coord.	Phyllis Kristal	sundayschoolcoord@bethchai.org
*Beth Chai Board Member		