



BETH CHAI NEWS

The Greater Washington Jewish Humanist Congregation

October Shabbat Service Share Supper in the Sukkah and Discuss Simchat Torah as Celebration and Protest

Join us Friday evening, Oct. 17, for a first-ever opportunity for Beth Chai members to share a Shabbat meal in a sukkah. We will be building our sukkah this year at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation on Sunday, Oct. 12, and leaving it up for the week of Sukkot—which includes this month's Shabbat gathering. So come sit under the sukkah and enjoy a celebratory Shabbat dinner with the Beth Chai community!

We will begin our meal with the blessings over candles, wine, and bread, and then, after dinner, sing a few Shabbat songs in lieu of a formal service. The evening's program—honoring Simchat Torah, which this year begins at sundown on Oct. 21—will focus on the way resistance to the

former Soviet Union's treatment of its Jewish citizens was expressed in the 1960s at Simchat Torah. The program will

feature a dramatic reading from Eli Wiesel's book *The Jews of Silence*.

Schedule (Please note change from typical service)

6:45 p.m.: Tot Shabbat, under the supervision of



Joe Gitchell and Elizabeth Mumford, begins in the Library, just across the hall from the Fireside Room on the mezzanine of RRUUC.

7-9:30 p.m.: A light supper costing \$12 per person (post-mitzvah and older) and \$6 per child (ages 6-12) will be set out buffet style in Beth Chai's sukkah on RRUUC's grounds at 7. Those wishing to join in are asked to sign up by contacting Yevgeniya Nusinovich before noon on Thursday, Oct. 16, by email at ynusi@gwmail.gwu.edu, or call 202-669-7597. Please let us know at that time if you will be attending the Tot Shabbat service, which is likely to end after the 7 p.m. start of the supper. We'd like to make sure we put aside enough food for you. Replacing Beth Chai's customary Shabbat service will be singing with our Shabbat song leader, Andrea Foster, following the supper. The program, as outlined above, will start when we're all sung out.

Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC is located at 6301 River Rd. in Bethesda. (Entrance to the parking lot is from Whittier Blvd.)

—Ken Jacobson

October High Holiday Schedule

Kol Nidre Service

Wednesday, Oct. 8, 7:30 p.m.

Yom Kippur Services

Thursday, Oct. 9

Family service, 9:30 a.m.

Adult service, 10:30 a.m.

Break-the-Fast Potluck

Thursday, Oct. 9, 6:30 p.m.

Beth Chai provides fish platters and beverages. Please bring a meatless dish for approximately six people. Please arrive 20 minutes early or stay 20 minutes afterwards to help with setup or cleanup. Volunteers are also needed to bring specific items. If you can help, please contact Laurie Hulcher at lhulcher@charleshulcher.net.

All of these events will be held at Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Road, Bethesda (parking lot entrance on Whittier)

Beth Chai Leadership Directory

Position	Name (* = board member)	E-mail
Rabbi	Dr. Arthur Blecher	ablecher@starpower.net
Education Director	Rain Zohav	rainzohav@earthlink.net
President	David Elfin*	elfind@verizon.net
Vice President/Immediate Past President	Andrew Strongin*	astrongin@starpower.net
Secretary	Sara Duke*	saraduke1@verizon.net
Treasurer	Joe Gitchell*	jgitchel@pinneyassociates.com
Communications Chair	Julie Vigdor*	julievigdor@yahoo.com
Liturgy Chair	Philip Resnick	resnick@umd.edu
Membership Co-Chair	Shannon Rudisill*	jmg_slr@hotmail.com
Membership Co-Chair	Julie Zalkind	juliehz@erols.com
Music Chair	Marji Ross*	mross@eaglepub.com
Program Co-Chair	Ken Jacobson*	kenjacobson@hotmail.com
Program Co-Chair	Mark Bauman	mbaumana@ngs.org
School Parents Council	Susan Stewart*	ssstew@aol.com
Social Action Chair	Howie Feinstein*	khfeinstein@verizon.net
Volunteers Chair	Daniel Korn*	dkorn@comcast.net
Bookkeeper/Accounts Payable	Diane Page	dianepage@verizon.net
Correspondent	Elizabeth Mumford	eam222@verizon.net
Fundraising Chair	vacant	
Finance Committee	Ela Koniuszkow	ela.mike@verizon.net
Newsletter Editor	Elise Browne Hughes	browne.hughes@gmail.com
Sunday School Volunteer Coordinator	Phyllis Kristal	kristal@fr.com
Tot Shabbat Coordinator	Joe Gitchell	jgitchel@pinneyassociates.com
Website Manager	Daniel Korn	dkorn@comcast.net
Beth Chai E-mail		info@bethchai.org
Beth Chai Web Site		www.bethchai.org

Financial Need Policy: Beth Chai welcomes anyone to attend services, become a member, or have their children attend our Beth Chai Family School, regardless of ability to pay. Considerations available include extended payment plans, service exchange, and fee reduction. Financial aid determination will be made on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Joe Gitchell, treasurer, for assistance.

New Beth Chai Email Lists

Please update your email address books—we are no longer using the YahooGroups lists! We have two different lists administered through our Beth Chai website, that are treated exactly the same as the old lists:

Beth_Chai_Board This list is for board-related matters such as meeting dates and notes, logistics of official Beth Chai events, and any other items for the attention of the board. All members, not just board members, are welcome to read and post to this group.

Beth_Chai_Chat This list is for all other conversation of interest to Beth Chai members, such as social action, news, Beth Chai Events, and items of general interest to the congregation.

You can subscribe or update your subscription at any time by going to the following webpage and following the instructions: <http://lists.bethchai.org/listinfo.cgi>. Please do not email the list or send email to board members to add or remove your address from the list.

Note that the weekly email newsletter is sent to a separate list that contains *all* congregation members, plus those who have requested to be on the list. To be added to the electronic weekly announcements, please send a message to julievigdor@yahoo.com with your request. You can remove yourself from the list by clicking the unsubscribe option at the bottom of any weekly email announcement.

—Julie Vigdor

Notes From the Education Director



Dear Congregants,

This year, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah all fall in the month of October. We will meet Oct.5, the Sunday before Yom Kippur. We will also meet on Oct.12, but at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in order to build our sukkah—and for the first time ever, leave it up for the week of Sukkot. This will allow us to eat dinner in the Sukkah on the following Friday night, our regularly scheduled monthly Shabbat program.

On Sunday, Oct. 12, at 10 a.m., we will meet to build and decorate the sukkah and honoring those people whose spirits we would like to invite into the sukkah. This is a congregation-wide event and is part of our Sunday school and adult education program. We ask that everyone bring five or six cuttings of branches from your yard, fabric for the walls of the sukkah (which will be returned), gourds and other items for decorating, and a story about one person whose spirit you would like to honor. You are also welcome to bring photocopies or pictures of this person, but these cannot be returned.

Anyone who would like to eat lunch in the sukkah is invited to bring their own picnic lunch. We could also use some volunteers to bring harvest related snacks (pumpkin bread, apple cake, and so forth) to share while we are building and making decorations.

As we approach the fall holidays, I approach the Yahrzeit of my father who became ill and passed away last year between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Some of the piles of mail from that time are only getting filed away now. In doing so, I have found again the many condolences that the members of Beth Chai sent. I was once again touched by what a kind and caring community we have. In honor of my father's Yahrzeit, my family will be sponsoring an adult education session on Oct.19 taught by one of my mentors, Avi West, a senior educator at the Partnership of Jewish Life and Learning. Please see the adult ed article on page 5 for the details.

Later in the month, we will have the opportunity to learn some more Israeli folk dances from Mike Fox, who did such a wonderful job last year. And our Simchat Torah procession will be combined again this year with our mini-walk for the homeless. At Beth Chai we approach Simchat Torah from the perspective of celebrating all of Jewish learning. We ask that people bring a favorite Jewish book of any kind to carry in our joyful procession.

Please see the article at right about our walk, which will benefit the Latino Transitional Housing Partnership. Providing for the poor is one of the central teaching of our tradition, which is why combining Simchat Torah and the mini-walk works so well. We will just circumnavigate the outside of the school grounds around 11:45 on Sunday, Oct. 26, while singing and carrying our Jewish books and some symbolic Torahs. Everyone is invited to participate. If you don't want to walk yourself, there will be an opportunity to sponsor our younger teachers.

I wish everyone a wonderful cycle of fall holidays, culminating in a joyous Simchat Torah Beth Chai style.

B'Shalom,

Rain Zohav



Take Part in the Mini-Walk

Beth Chai's annual Help the Homeless Mini-Walk will take place on Sunday, Oct. 26 at the conclusion of Sunday school at Burning Tree Elementary School. As in the past, donations will benefit the Latino Transitional Housing Program, an organization with great need and a very limited budget.

The minimum donation once again is \$25 per adult and \$15 per youth (25 and younger). Fannie Mae matches our contributions dollar-for-dollar, further enabling us to do some real good for the LTHP.

This year, we are aiming for as close as possible to 100-percent member participation. You can pre-register at any Sunday school session in October, and all walkers will receive a colorful t-shirt.

Questions? Contact Howie Feinstein at khfeinstein@verizon.net.

Tzedakah for the New Year Contribute to Our Annual High Holidays Food Collection

Beth Chai's annual High Holidays food collection, distributed through Jewish Social Services Agency, is upon us.

This is an important tradition at Beth Chai, in keeping with our mission to help those less fortunate in our community. The need is especially critical this year, due to the economic downturn.

To help meet this need, we will have tables set up at all High Holiday services to receive your (tax-deductible) donations.

This year, the Jewish Social Services Agency is requesting

the following items:



- Gift cards for Giant, Safeway, CVS, Target, and Walmart
- Canned goods (such as tuna, fruit, vegetables, and beans)
- Low-sodium soups
- Cereal
- Macaroni & cheese
- Packaged desserts
- Other non-perishable foods

If you have any questions about the effort, please contact Howie Feinstein, our congregation's social action chair, at khfeinstein@verizon.net.

Community News

Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah

Lee Rosner and **Stuart Wolpoff** cordially invite the members of Beth Chai to attend the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Zachary** on Saturday, Oct. 4 at 10 a.m. at RRUUC, 6301 River Road, Bethesda. A brief Kiddush will follow the service.

Jill Newberger McCowan and **Frank McCowan** cordially invite the members of Beth Chai to attend the Bar Mitzvah

Spread the Word About Beth Chai Bring Your Friends!

The beginning of the school year and High Holidays celebrations are a great time to encourage your family and friends to visit Beth Chai. We hope that you'll consider bringing a guest with you to an upcoming event. We look forward to learning and celebrating with you throughout the year.

of their son **Alex Istaphanous** on Sat., Oct. 11 at 10 a.m. at RRUUC. A Kiddush will follow the service.

Condolences

We are sad to report that Will Meyer's mother, Miriam, passed away this summer. The congregation sends its deepest sympathies to Will, Miriam, Andy, and Dillon Meyer. Further, we are keeping the Meyers in our thoughts as Will's father recovers from a broken hip and the family supports their 7-year-old nephew who has begun cancer treatment at the University of Virginia.

We are also sad to report that Phyllis Herman's father, who had been living with her and husband Mike, passed away in August. The congregation sends its deepest sympathies to the Hermans.

Mountain Bound

Long-time members **Mike** and **Phyllis Herman** have moved to 2551 Ginny Way, Lafayette, CO 80026.

Adult Education for October

Examine Conceptions and Feelings About God, Judaism and Jewish Law: Mutable or Fixed? and Human Nature According to Classical Texts

Here's a look at Beth Chai's adult education program for Sundays in October:

Oct. 5: What Do Beth Chai Members Mean by God?

Some of our members do not believe in God, while some do believe, and others continue to ask questions. In this open discussion, led by Rabbi Art Blecher, all will be free to share or not share their thoughts and feelings about this ageless and fundamental issue, which has also become a hot-button topic in American life today. What image, notion, or conception does each of us have of God? Do some

see God as a metaphor? an ideal? a force? an actual being? a presence? an absence? Do some of us attribute particular characteristics to God, have feelings about God, grant significance to God? Does the concept of God—as each of us understands it—have meaning or lack meaning for us?



Oct. 19: How Many Lightbulbs Does It Take to Change a Jew?

Even casual observers of Judaism can be overwhelmed by the diversity of practice. The major denominations had their origins in doctrinal differences, but as the set of Jewish ideologies seems constantly to expand, new questions arise: Does Judaism tolerate—or even celebrate—new ideologies and practices? How does the traditional structure of Judaism accommodate the apparent mutability of Jewish law? Can changes in practice be seen as being both radical and traditional? What are the “lightbulbs”—ideas, teachers, outside influences—that have helped change Jews? Where does Humanist Judaism stand in all this diversity? Led by Avi West, the director of the Shulamith Reich Elster Resource Center and master teacher at Rockville's Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning, we will explore such questions in reflecting on the exciting threads that, woven together, form the beautiful fabric called Judaism.

Oct. 26: Jewish Tradition and the Human Psyche Is there a distinctive picture of psychology and human development in classical Jewish literature? Drawing upon examples from the texts, Rabbi Blecher will explore what both biblical and rabbinic sources have to say about such questions as: Are humans born good or bad? What parts are played by nature, and by nurture, in shaping our development as individuals? Are character, morals, and beliefs fixed throughout life? If they change, what makes them change? Are there ideal characteristics? Are people born with these, or can they be acquired?

All of these adult education sessions take place from 10 a.m. to noon at Burning Tree Elementary School, 5900 Beech Tree Road, Bethesda. Bagels and coffee are served.

—Ken Jacobson

Sukkot Celebration



**Help us build our sukkah and honor those
whose spirits we would like to invite inside**

Sunday, Oct. 12 ◆ 10 a.m.
Beth Chai at River Road UUC
6301 River Road, Bethesda
(parking lot entrance on Whittier)

Please bring:

- ◆ 5 or 6 cuttings of branches from your yard
- ◆ Fabric for the walls of the sukkah
- ◆ Gourds and other decorative items
- ◆ A story about the one person whose spirit you would like to honor
- ◆ A photo of this person if desired (but note that these cannot be returned)
- ◆ A picnic if you care to stay and eat lunch in the sukkah

Calendar of Events

Date & Time	Event	Location
Saturday, Oct. 4, 10 a.m.	Bar Mitzvah of Zachary Wolpoff, son of Lee Rosner and Stuart Wolpoff. Beth Chai members are invited to help celebrate.	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD (entrance to parking lot on Whittier)
Sunday, Oct. 5, 9:30 a.m. Assembly 10 a.m.-noon Classes & Adult Ed	Sunday School; Post-Mitzvah Class. Adult Ed: "What Do Beth Chai Members Mean by God?"	Burning Tree Elementary School 7900 Beech Tree Road, Bethesda
Wednesday, Oct. 8, 7:30 p.m.	Kol Nidre Service	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC
Thursday, Oct. 9, 9:30 am Family Service, 10:30 am Adult Service 6:30 p.m.	Yom Kippur Services Break-the-Fast Potluck	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC
Sat., Oct. 11, 10 a.m.	Bar Mitzvah of Alex Istaphanous, son of Jill Newberger McCowan and Frank McCowan. Beth Chai members are invited to help celebrate.	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC
Sunday, Oct. 12, 10 a.m.	Sukkah building and picnic lunch at RRUUC	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC
Fri., Oct. 17, 6:45 p.m. Tot Shabbat, 7 p.m. Light supper & program	Monthly Tot Shabbat and Shabbat service, featuring dinner in the sukkah, singing with Andrea Foster, and a discussion of Simchat Torah	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, Sukkah and Library/Fireside Room on 2nd floor
Sunday, Oct. 19, 9:30 a.m. Assembly, 10 a.m.-noon Classes & Adult Ed	Sunday School; Pre-school. Adult Ed: "How Many Lightbulbs Does It Take to Change a Jew?"	Burning Tree Elementary School
Sunday, Oct. 26, 9:30 a.m. Assembly, 10 a.m.-noon Classes & Adult Ed	Sunday School; Preschool. Simchat Torah celebration and Mini-Walk for the Homeless. Adult Ed: Jewish Tradition and the Human Psyche	Burning Tree Elementary School
Tues., Oct. 28, 7 p.m.	Beth Chai board meeting. All members welcome.	To be announced



BETH CHAI CONGREGATION

River Road U.U.C.
6301 River Road
Bethesda, MD 20817

Answering service: 301-229-7400

Email: info@bethchai.org

Website: www.bethchai.org

Address Correction Requested