



# BETH CHAI NEWS

The Greater Washington Jewish Humanist Congregation

## Observe 5769 With Beth Chai

The Beth Chai Congregation welcomes all to join us in celebrating the High Holy Days with thoughtful, friendly, and fulfilling Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Our Yom Kippur service has been wonderfully revised and updated by our liturgy committee: Rabbi Art Blecher, Education Director Rain Zohav, Rob Weinstein, Sheldon Hoffer, David Zalkind, Philip Resnick, Mike Wexler, Deborah Balaschak, Marji Ross, and Andrew Strongin.

We're thrilled that member Joyce Weinstein has illustrated the service book with her original artwork.

On both Rosh Hashanah (Tues., Sept. 30) and Yom Kippur (Thurs., Oct. 9), we will hold family services at 9:30 a.m. and adult services at 10:30 a.m. In addition, there will be a Kol Nidre service on Wed., Oct. 8, at 7:30 p.m. and a Break-the-Fast party on Thurs., Oct. 9, at 6:30 p.m. Please see page 7 for a detailed listing of services and times. All of our services are held at Beth Chai Congregation at River Road Unitarian Congregation, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda (entrance and parking on Whittier Blvd.).

Services are free for members of Beth Chai. For non-members, tickets may be purchased at a cost of \$60 per service. Tickets may be purchased through our website by clicking Resources, then Support Beth Chai, then Donate to Beth Chai through Paypal (or simply go to [www.bethchai.org/resources/support-bethchai/donate-to-bethchai/index.shtml](http://www.bethchai.org/resources/support-bethchai/donate-to-bethchai/index.shtml)). Advance tickets can also be reserved by telephone by leaving us a message at 301-229-7400. Tickets may also be purchased at the door with cash or check, but we ask walkups to arrive early to allow extra processing time.

Free child care is available for all ticket holders during the adult services for children age 2 and above. Please e-mail Daniel Korn ([dkorn@comcast.net](mailto:dkorn@comcast.net)) to reserve a space for your child.

Beth Chai is a unique, independent Jewish Humanist community welcoming all interested in celebrating the High Holy Days, regardless of their beliefs or religious affiliation. We hope you will join us and we wish you a peaceful, healthy and happy New Year.



—David Elfin

## September Shabbat Service Features Music & Socializing

This month's Shabbat service is set for the evening of **Fri., Sept. 19** at Beth Chai Congregation at River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6301 River Rd. in Bethesda (enter the parking lot from Whittier Blvd.).

Making the fall's first Shabbat service a largely social occasion has been a crowd-pleaser for the past few years, so we've decided to continue the tradition in 2008. But we're also benefiting from the occasion to put some additional emphasis on developing Beth Chai members' ease with, and pleasure in, singing.

Andrea Foster, a trained cantor who debuted exactly a year ago as Beth Chai's regular Friday-night song leader, is—happily for us—returning for another year, thanks to a generous grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. On this evening, she will devote some extra time and effort to guiding members through the musical part of the liturgy. She'll be helping us practice some old favorites and introducing us to some new tunes, all with the goal of

(continued on page 3)

## 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.

## Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah

**Julie Goss** and **Warren Holmes** cordially invite the members of Beth Chai to the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter **Haley** on Sat., Sept. 6 at 10 a.m. The service will take place at the Sixth and I Historic Synagogue located at 600 I St. N.W., Washington. (*Note venue.*)

**Deborah Signer Balaschak** and **Mark Balaschak** cordially invite the members of Beth Chai to attend the Bar Mitzvah of their son **David** on Sat., Sept. 13 at 10:30 a.m. at RRUUC, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda. A kiddush and luncheon will follow the service, and all are welcome.

**Suzanne Greenfield** and **Joe Shapiro** cordially invite the members of Beth Chai to attend the Bat Mitzvah of their

daughter **Lena** on Sat., Sept. 20 at 9:30 a.m. at RRUUC, 6301 River Road, Bethesda. A kiddush will follow the service.

**Scott** and **Cindy Greenberg** cordially invite the members of Beth Chai to the Bar Mitzvah of their son **Brian** on Sat., Sept. 27 at 10:30 a.m. at RRUUC, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda.

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

## Message From the Rabbi

The Jewish liturgical calendar likely has its origins in the agricultural cycles of the ancient Middle East. So the High Holidays must have some connection to the fall harvest of Biblical Israel. Of course, our urban society in Washington today runs along very different schedules. The end of summer marks the transition from vacation time to the resumption of work, and even more prominently, early autumn is the beginning of a new school year for many people.

This holds true for most Jewish congregations in America as well. September is the beginning of the program year, and a new cycle of Sunday school and adult programs. In fact many synagogues suspend some Sabbath services during the summer months. For this reason, Rosh Hashanah really does occur at the beginning of a new year.

This link between the start of the Jewish religious year and the start of the school year seems very natural to us today because it reflects the historical unity of synagogue and school. Many people know that the common Yiddish word for synagogue is *schule*, which means “school.” In fact, the institution of the synagogue goes back 2,500 years to the rabbinic academies of Judea and Babylonia. And some of our central prayers, such as the Kaddish, originated not in the Temple of Jerusalem but in the schools of the Diaspora.

We can take pride in the fact that our congregation is very much a “*schule*.” Since its founding days, Beth Chai has emphasized Jewish knowledge and has allocated its resources first and foremost to Jewish education. Our progressive Sunday school, our innovative Bar and Bat Mitzvah program, and our superb adult education series are the true walls of our synagogue. Quality Jewish education is the building that houses Beth Chai.

With my best wishes for the New Year 5769,

*Art*



### September Shabbat Service *(continued from page 1)*

building the closeness to tradition and to one another that singing has the unique power to awaken.

And, as in past years, a significant part of the evening will be given over to catching up with friends, welcoming newcomers, chatting at long last with somebody one’s never quite managed to get to know—all in the gentle and relaxed ambience of Shabbat. This allows families with young children to stay longer than usual, fostering acquaintanceships at all age levels. It also enables prospective members to meet Rabbi Art Blecher, Education Director Rain Zohav, and others, and to learn about Beth Chai. Look to it as a source of all-around, low-key fun—with after-dinner refreshments provided by the congregation.

### Schedule *(Please note time changes from prior years)*

**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, located on the mezzanine of RRUUC).

**7-8 p.m.:** A light supper costing \$10 per adult (post-mitzvah and older) and \$5 per child (ages 6-12) will be set out buffet style in RRUUC’s Fireside Room (mezzanine level). Reserve your space by contacting Ken Jacobson before noon on Thursday, Sept. 18, either by e-mail at [kenjacobson@hotmail.com](mailto:kenjacobson@hotmail.com) or by leaving a voice mail at 202-462-2472. Please let us know at that time if you expect to arrive late so we can put aside food for you. (Diners who will be attending the Tot Shabbat service should be aware that it is likely to end after the 7 p.m. start of the supper.)

**8-9:30 p.m.:** Beth Chai’s Shabbat service—featuring a humanistic Kiddush, thought-provoking readings, roles for children wishing to participate, and song leader Andrea Foster—begins at around 8, and there will be plenty of time for do-it-yourself entertainment afterward.

—Ken Jacobson

## Notes From the Education Director

Dear Congregants,

Shanah Tovah! A Good and Happy New Year!

The Jewish New Year is always in sync with the school year and hence, as an educator, my life. I love the feeling of the crisp fall days, the cooler nights and early mornings, and the beginning of a new year at Sunday School.

This year, we are lucky that we will have several days of classes before the holidays, so the students have a chance to learn about the holidays before they happen. Our first day of Sunday School is Sept. 7. We will begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at noon. This will be a regular day of Sunday School and Adult Education. Please remember that all children must have a responsible adult on premise during Sunday School hours. As we often have visiting parents and children on the first day of school, we have scheduled our mandatory parent meeting for the second Sunday of classes, Sept. 14. This meeting is essential for us to organize ourselves for the coming year.

On Sept. 21, Rabbi Art will be going around to the classes to demonstrate blowing the shofar and to answer the students' questions about the holidays. This has proved to be a very memorable experience for our students.

Since Sun., Sept 28, is so close to the start of Rosh Hashanah (which begins Sept. 29), and many of our teachers go home for the holidays, we have a wonderful alternative activity scheduled for that day, the Home Run. This event, which was thoroughly detailed in the summer newsletter and briefly explained in the box on this page, offers us an opportunity to both have fun and help out two very worthy organizations, the Hebrew Home and the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes.

Participating in this event as a walker, runner, volunteer, or cheerleader for "Team Beth Chai" accomplishes several goals. We teach about the importance of tzedakah weekly at Sunday school, but this usually involves the donating of money. This activity demonstrates to our students that it is possible to do good and have fun at the same time. Second, this is a great opportunity to build community among ourselves and with the wider Jewish community. I am hoping that many of us will order Beth Chai t-shirts from our website and in that way, we may have conversations with other participants who would be very interested in our approach to Judaism. Last, and very important, it extends the relationship we have been building

with the Jewish Foundation of Group Homes. Raising our level of awareness of respect for all, including those with more visible challenges, is an ongoing goal of mine for our Beth Chai community.

Be sure to check out the schedule for the family services on Tue. Sept. 30 (Rosh Hashanah ) and Thurs., Oct. 9 (Yom Kippur). These services are designed as a participatory services for elementary-age children and their parents. Interested students—especially all sixth graders and above—are encouraged to attend the adult High Holiday services. Babysitting is available for younger children with advance reservations.

B'Shalom,

*Rain Zohav*



### Make a Run for It

Don't miss your chance to be a part of Team Beth Chai in the upcoming Home Run, a run and walk to benefit the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington and the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes.



The event, scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 28, 8:30 a.m.-11 a.m., in Rockville, is a great way to get exercise, do tzedakah, and have fun. You can choose to do a 10K (a little over 6 miles), a 5K (a little over 3 miles), or a short "fun run." Or, help out as a volunteer with the event.

To register, go to [www.hebrew-home.org](http://www.hebrew-home.org). Click on the Home Run, then follow the links to the Team Raiser Registration to sign up with the Beth Chai team.

Questions? Contact the Beth Chai group captain for this event, Rachel Silber, at [rachelsilber@comcast.net](mailto:rachelsilber@comcast.net) or 301-412-8847.

## Explore Jewish Holidays, the West Bank, and Member Backgrounds At September Adult Education Sessions

Beth Chai kicks off its 2008-2009 Adult Education program with diverse topics for the month of September. Here's a sneak preview of the Sunday discussions.

### Sept. 7: Judaism's Major Holidays Through the Ages.

To get Adult Education off on a scholarly yet typically unconventional foot for the new school year, Rabbi Art Blecher will speak to us about the origins, meanings, and evolution of the major Jewish holidays. He will trace the paths that Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot have traveled, from their roots in the cycles of nature, to their historical and Biblical meanings, and then their transformation—even replacement—by meanings imparted to them by the Rabbinic tradition. The session will conclude with a discussion of the essential meanings of these holidays for us in America today.

### Sept. 14: The West Bank Crossing—A Rare Perspective.

Beth Chai member Robert Rosenberg visited crossing points between Israel and the West Bank in late spring as an official of a DC-area software company that works with governments to reduce congestion, facilitate trade, and improve cargo security at national borders. His firm is looking into applying its technological expertise to help mitigate what, along the West Bank, is commonly referred to as the "Movement and Access Problem": the impact of the rules, regulations, and infrastructural barriers put into place by the Israeli government in an attempt to ensure Israel's security.

Robert will speak to us about what he learned—logistically, politically, and emotionally—from his own observation and from meeting with both Israeli and Palestinian officials during his stay, which included specialized tours of the Allenby and Tarqumia crossings. *Because a Parents' Meeting is scheduled for 10-11 a.m. on this date, Adult Ed will take place from 11:15 until noon only.*



**Sept. 21: Getting to Know You, Getting to Know All About You.** Two years ago, we planned to devote the first half of a Sunday Adult Ed session to personal introductions. Beth Chai members would spend 45 minutes, we thought, talking briefly one by one about such things as their education, job, family, and hobbies; their Jewish background and interests; and their path to Beth Chai's door – whatever each wished to impart. But our members' life histories, pursuits, and accomplishments turned out to be so interesting, diverse, and often downright surprising that we barely got around the circle before noon. It's about time to do this again but, having learned from experience, we're setting aside the entire morning for it. Say as much or as little as you like—but be prepared for the variety.

Unless otherwise noted, Adult Education sessions take place from 10 a.m. to noon at Burning Tree Elementary School, 5900 Beech Tree Rd., Bethesda. Bagels and coffee are available.

—Ken Jacobson

## Community News

### Congratulations

Congratulations to **Alan** and **Raluca Feldenkris**, who celebrated their wedding on Aug. 2.

### Condolences

We are sad to report that Ivy Brown's mother, Mildred Brown, passed away on July 10 after a battle with lung cancer. The congregation sends its deepest sympathies to Ivy and her family, Tom, William and Jonathan Kevorkian, as

well as Ivy's sister Margot Peet and her family.

We are also sad to report that Joanna Joiner's grandmother passed away over the summer. The congregation sends its deepest sympathies to Joanna and her family.

### Membership Renewal Time!

Membership renewals are coming in daily. Thanks to those of you who have already renewed and registered your children for school. If you haven't done it yet, please take the time to do it now. Forms can be downloaded at [www.bethchai.org](http://www.bethchai.org). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Membership Chair Shannon Rudisill at 703-752-5809 or [slrudisill@cox.net](mailto:slrudisill@cox.net).

## Beth Chai Sunday School Calendar, 2008-2009

Sept. 7: SCHOOL begins	Sept. 29: Erev Rosh Hashanah	bration combined with mini walk for the homeless
Sept. 14: SCHOOL & mandatory parent meeting	Sept. 30: Rosh Hashanah	Nov. 2: NO SCHOOL—Education Day for teachers sponsored by the PJLL
Sept. 21: SCHOOL	Oct. 5: SCHOOL	Nov. 9: SCHOOL
Sept. 28: NO SCHOOL, but Beth Chai members are participating in the Home Run to benefit Hebrew Home and Jewish Foundation for Group Homes	Oct. 12: SCHOOL will take place off-site for Sukkot in the Park	Nov. 16: SCHOOL
	Oct. 19: SCHOOL	Nov. 23: SCHOOL
	Oct. 26: SCHOOL and short Simchat Torah celebration	Nov. 30: NO SCHOOL—Thanksgiving

<b>Preschool Class Meets</b>	
Sept. 14	Jan. 25
Sept. 21	Feb. 8
Oct. 19	Feb. 22
Oct. 26	March 8
Nov. 16	March 15
Nov. 23	April 19
Dec. 7	April 26
Dec. 21	May 17
Jan. 18	May 31

### Post-Mitzvah Class Meets

Sept. 7	Oct. 5	Nov. 9	Dec. 7	Jan. 11
Feb. 1	March 1	April 19	May 17	May 31

### Service Learning Opportunities for Post-Mitzvah Students

Sept. 28: Help with the Home Run to benefit the Hebrew Home and the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes.

Oct. 12: Help with Sukkot in the Park.

Oct. 26: Participate and help with the mini walk for the homeless.

Dec. 21: Help with Chanukah party.

March 8: Help with Purim party.

May 3: Participate in Community Work Day.

June 7: Help with the retreat.

### Other Recommended Programs for Post-Mitzvah Students

Jan. 18: Martin Luther King Day program

Feb. 8: Intergenerational Tu B'Shevat program (Snow date: Feb. 15)

Post-Mitzvah students are also welcome to attend any Adult Education sessions during the year that do not conflict with their class.

**Beth Chai's Post-Mitzvah class is open to all 8th and 9th graders, regardless of whether they have had a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony.**



Dec. 7: SCHOOL

Dec. 14: SCHOOL

Dec. 21: SCHOOL ( 1/2 day) & Chanukah party for all with Israeli dancing

Dec. 28: NO SCHOOL—winter break

Jan. 4: NO SCHOOL—winter break

Jan. 11: SCHOOL

Jan. 18: SCHOOL & MLK day program

Jan. 25: SCHOOL

Feb. 1: SCHOOL

Feb. 8: SCHOOL, featuring intergenerational Tu B'Shevat program funded by a grant from I.C.E.

Feb. 15: SNOW MAKE-UP for Tu B'Shevat if needed, or NO SCHOOL—President's Day

Feb. 22: SCHOOL

March 1: SCHOOL

March 8: SCHOOL, featuring Purim celebration with

Israeli dancing

March 15: SCHOOL (1/2 day) & Auction

March 22: SCHOOL

March 29: SCHOOL

April 5: NO SCHOOL—spring break

April 8: Passover begins

April 12: NO SCHOOL—spring break

April 19: SCHOOL

April 26: SCHOOL

May 3: SCHOOL, featuring Community Work Day at two sites (one at school)

May 10: NO SCHOOL—Mother's Day

May 17: SCHOOL, with OPEN HOUSE

May 24: NO SCHOOL—Memorial Day

May 31: SCHOOL featuring end-of-year sharing & Israeli dancing

June 7: RETREAT

## Calendar of Events

Date & Time	Event	Location
Sat., Sept. 6, 10 a.m.	Bat Mitzvah of Haley Goss-Holmes, daughter of Julie Goss and Warren Holmes. Beth Chai members are invited to celebrate with Haley and her family.	Sixth and I Historic Synagogue, 600 "Eye" St. N.W., Washington, D.C. <b>(Note Venue)</b>
Sun., Sept. 7, 9:30 a.m. Assembly 10 a.m.–noon Classes & Adult Ed	First Day of Sunday School and Post-Mitzvah Class, Preschool babysitting available First Day of Adult Ed: "Judaism's Major Holidays Through the Ages."	Burning Tree Elementary School, 7900 Beech Tree Rd., Bethesda
Sat., Sept. 13, 10:30 a.m.	Bar Mitzvah of David Balaschak, son of Deborah and Mark Balaschak, Beth Chai members are invited to celebrate with David and his family.	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda (parking lot entrance on Whittier)
Sun., Sept. 14, 9:30 a.m. Assembly 10 a.m.–noon Classes 11:15-noon Adult Ed	Sunday School; Preschool; Mandatory Parent Meeting. Adult Ed: "The West Bank Crossing: A Rare Perspective."	Burning Tree Elementary School, 7900 Beech Tree Rd., Bethesda
Tues., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m.	Program Committee meeting to discuss topics for Adult Ed and monthly Shabbat services.	Home of David Elfin, 8206 Bryant Dr., Bethesda
Fri., Sept. 19, 6:45 p.m. Tot Shabbat, 7 p.m. Light supper, 8 p.m. Shabbat service	Monthly Tot Shabbat and Shabbat service, featuring Andrea Foster as regular song leader, and the opportunity to get acquainted or catch up with other members.	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, Fireside Room on 2nd floor, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda (parking lot entrance on Whittier)
Sat., Sept. 20, 10:30 a.m.	Bat Mitzvah of Lena Shapiro, daughter of Suzanne Greenfield and Joseph Shapiro. Beth Chai members are invited to celebrate with Lena and her family.	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda (parking lot entrance on Whittier)
Sun., Sept. 21, 9:30 Assembly 10 a.m.–noon Classes & Adult Ed	Sunday School; Preschool. Adult Ed: "Getting to Know You, Getting to Know All About You."	Burning Tree Elementary School, 7900 Beech Tree Rd., Bethesda
Tues., Sept. 23, 7 p.m.	Beth Chai board meeting. All interested members are welcome to attend.	Home of Marji Ross, 6213 Nethercombe Ct., McLean
Sat., Sept. 27, 10:30 a.m.	Bar Mitzvah of Brian Greenberg, son of Cindy Welsh and Scott Greenberg, Beth Chai members are invited to celebrate with Brian and his family.	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Road, Bethesda, MD (parking lot entrance on Whittier)
Sun., Sept. 28	No Sunday School or Adult Ed. Beth Chai participation in "The Home Run" to benefit Hebrew Home & Jewish Foundation for Group Homes.	
Tues., Sept. 30, 9:30 a.m. Family Service 10:30 a.m. Adult Service	Rosh Hashanah Services; Kiddush immediately following adult services	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda, MD (parking lot entrance on Whittier)
Sat., Oct. 4, 10 a.m.	Bar Mitzvah of Zachary Wolpoff, son of Lee Rosner and Stuart Wolpoff. Beth Chai members are invited to celebrate with Zachary and his family	Beth Chai Congregation at RRUUC, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda (parking lot entrance on Whittier)

## Program Committee Meets Sept. 16 Help Develop Topics for Adult Ed and Shabbat Services

Beth Chai's Program Committee is scheduled to meet on Tuesday evening, Sep. 16, to talk about topics for our Adult Education series and Shabbat programs for the 2008-2009 year. All those interested are invited to attend and are encouraged to bring their ideas.

The meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. and take place at the home of David Elfin, 8206 Bryant Dr. in Bethesda. Those who won't be able to make it but who have programming suggestions to offer are requested to e-mail them to [ken-jacobson@hotmail.com](mailto:ken-jacobson@hotmail.com) and/or [MBauman@ngs.org](mailto:MBauman@ngs.org) any-time before Sept. 14 so that they can be considered at the meeting.

Among the proposals for Adult Ed series that have come up in the past—and that were discussed at a preparatory meeting last month attended by Rabbi Art Blecher, Education Director Rain Zohav, and Program Co-chairs Mark Bauman and Ken Jacobson—was an exploration of the nature of obligation and the roots of guilt in Jewish religion and culture. Another past suggestion, refined a little this year, is to mine classical Jewish texts for the picture they paint of human psychology, development, and relationships, from the inherent goodness or evil of humankind to relations between parents and children.

Some new ideas that have been batted around are the Jewish connection to the Earth and the role in Judaism of environmental stewardship, as well as the endangered state of Yiddish and Ladino, and the state of attempts to preserve them.

This year, we expect to kick off a special, multi-year effort to provide programs aimed at deepening the congregation's understanding of European Jewish history, possibly starting with an examination of the Enlightenment, or Haskalah. A watershed for Jewish culture, the practice of Judaism, and Jews' self-understanding, the Enlightenment not only transformed Jewish life in Europe but set the stage for what the Jewish community was to become in America.

Obviously, there will be plenty to talk about at the meeting. So please mark the date and time in your calendar, and plan to attend. And if, for whatever reason, you won't be able to make it, please do e-mail in your programming suggestions. Thanks.

—Ken Jacobson

**Looking for the  
Calendar of Events?  
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**BETH CHAI CONGREGATION**

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**Address Correction Requested**