



AN INTRODUCTION...

# BETH ADAM

JUDAISM WITH A HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE

ROBERT B. BARR, RABBI

ESTABLISHED 1980



Congregation Beth Adam was established in 1980 in response to the needs of a contemporary and diverse Jewish community. Dedicated to the celebration of traditional Jewish holidays and life cycle events, Beth Adam approaches Judaism from a humanistic perspective. As a congregation we affirm a moral commitment to human dignity and ethical behavior. We encourage each member to explore their Jewish heritage with an open mind and a willingness to take personal responsibility in determining his or her life course.

Beth Adam provides Jewish experiences through religious services, child and adult education programs, Bar & Bat Mitzvah classes and services, social activities and community social action programs.

## A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE

Translated from Hebrew, Beth Adam means "House of People," and more than anything else, what makes Beth Adam unique is our members themselves. Many newcomers approach Beth Adam searching for a congregation of people who value one another as well as share common attitudes & ethics. Most find themselves feeling "right at home" in our community.

As a congregation we celebrate Jewish holidays together; sharing a Yom Kippur break-the-fast, celebrating Passover in a festive, congregational Seder, building and decorating a sukkah, and turning our costumed kids loose at our Purim Carnival.

We are committed to tzedakah and the liberal Jewish tradition of social action. We are involved in many service projects. Some of our past projects in the greater Cincinnati community include staffing a soup kitchen, collecting toiletries for the homeless, and contributing to neighborhood environmental projects.

Beth Adam is also a community that plays together. Our members genuinely enjoy each other's company. Accordingly, our calendar is packed with a variety of social events for adults, children, and families. We bring together members with common interests or attributes, and we always dedicate ourselves to the pursuit of fun, friendship, and good food.

A remarkable number of our members take active roles in our social action projects and in our committees on education, liturgy, social functions, membership, and fundraising. Perhaps most important, many members participate by teaching in our Religious School.

Although we are more than two decades old, it is the ongoing influx of our members' ideas, involvement, and energy that guide Beth Adam's present and future. Every five years, member committees develop long-range plans that our Board of Trustees use to implement changes that reflect the needs of our membership.



## R A B B I



Rabbi Robert B. Barr, ordained by the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, has been with Beth Adam since its beginning. He serves the pastoral needs of Beth Adam members and officiates at services and life cycle events. Rabbi Barr is an engaging teacher and leads our Adult Education and Bar & Bat Mitzvah classes.

Rabbi Barr is active in the leadership of many community organizations, as well as in Jewish organizations throughout the country. Recognized by his peers as a leader in the evolution of modern, liberal Judaism, his writings have been published in journals, books and Web sites around the world.

Rabbinic Interns from Hebrew Union College assist Rabbi Barr. They bring their own spiritual energy, intellect and perspectives on Jewish tradition to our services, educational and social events, giving us added depth and dimension.



## MEMBERSHIP

Beth Adam's membership is composed of individuals of diverse ages, lifestyles and backgrounds. Among our members are many who bring more than one religious tradition to Beth Adam, both within and outside of Judaism. As a congregation we strive to make all members feel comfortable, included and welcome.

Beth Adam offers membership on an individual, per-adult basis. This ensures that all members are regarded equally, without consideration of marital status or family situation.

Our members provide financial support through an annual commitment, which includes two components:

- A flat, *base membership fee* covers approximately 70% of our operating budget. In order to ensure access to all, we offer a reduced fee to anyone who cannot afford the base fee
- *An annual additional contribution* – determined by each member according to his or her ability to contribute – covers the remaining amount. Following the tradition of other American Jewish congregations, we rely on the generosity of our members to close the gap.
- *Capital expenses* are funded through separate campaigns.

Membership offers a number of benefits, including access to the services of our Rabbi, our educational curriculum and social programs. Children of members are eligible to enroll in our Religious School and Bar & Bat Mitzvah program (fees assessed separately). Members also have voting privileges and are eligible to serve on the Board of Trustees.

Being a member of Beth Adam means becoming part of our community and supporting our institution regardless of one's level of participation or use of our services.

## SERVICES & LITURGY

In addition to Friday night *Shabbat* services, Beth Adam holds services for all major Jewish holidays and life cycle events. The Torah is read on the High Holidays, *Shabbat* and other holidays. Bar and Bat Mitzvah students are required to read the Torah as well.

Most of our Friday night services are directed toward adult interests. We also hold services for people of all ages. Some of these are in conjunction with various Jewish holidays and many are created and led by our Religious School classes. Music is an important part of our services as well.

The liturgy used at Beth Adam services is an expression of who we are and what we believe. It gives voice to Judaism's ever-unfolding religious experience and promotes the humanistic values of intellectual honesty, open inquiry and human responsibility.

While drawing heavily on traditional Jewish sources, our liturgy is written by Beth Adam members, and has been since our inception. In our effort to create an atmosphere that allows for individual expression of deeply held religious beliefs, we have chosen to employ a language that we view as expansive and inclusive. We strive to create liturgy that allows each individual to draw spiritual comfort and meaning, while respecting his or her own understanding of God and the nature of the universe.

## EDUCATION

One of Beth Adam's strengths has always been its approach to Jewish education: it is essential, it is vivid and stimulating, and it is for everyone, children and adults alike. Our educational programming is designed not only to foster learning about Judaism, but also about oneself, and one's role in the world.

### SUNDAY RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The Beth Adam curriculum relates and celebrates Jewish identity, history, and values, and the challenge of being Jewish in a diverse, modern world.

### CHILDREN

We strive to bring the Jewish expression – "from generation to generation" – to life at every opportunity. Members of the congregation teach all classes so that our children see us as part of the learning process. Topics include: Bible, Jewish holidays, Jewish life cycle events, Jewish history, rituals and traditions, ethics and moral values, prejudice, Israeli history and culture, Hebrew, Judaism in America, midrashim (Jewish legends) and comparative religion. As part of the curriculum at every age level, our children are exposed to Jewish music and traditions from around the world.

### TEENS

Older students share ideas and explore ideals, values and ethics in adult-led discussions. They also use Sunday mornings for community projects and social activities.



## ADULTS

While children attend classes, adults gather to explore the Jewish experience and contemporary issues. Recent topics include, a History of God in Judaism, Who is a Jew? and The Value of Jewish Traditions. Led by Rabbi Barr and a wide array of guest speakers, classes take place in a relaxed, "coffee and bagels" environment in which discussion is lively, spirited and often controversial.

## WEEKDAY CLASSES

### BAR & BAT MITZVAH

Students meet once a week for a two-year period to prepare for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah service. In addition to learning the Hebrew necessary to recite the Torah, each student explores the significance of his or her Torah passage in depth. As part of a guided independent study, students prepare and present research papers to the congregation as part of the ceremony.

### ADULT STUDY

Other adult classes and discussion groups meet on mid-week evenings to explore specific topics of mutual interest.



## COMMUNICATIONS

Beth Adam's many member-created print and electronic publications are central to both our evolving identity and our growing influence.

Our Web site, at [www.bethadam.org](http://www.bethadam.org) has increased our exposure, attracted interest, and spurred discussion throughout the international Jewish community. At the same time, Beth Adam's Passover Haggadah, *The Seder*, both spiritually expressive and aesthetically beautiful, has been greeted with acclaim and demand.

Our other original liturgy include our Shabbat and High Holiday Services, collections of readings about grief and mourning, *A Benediction for Life*, and a collection of readings for times of crisis, *Beyond the Silence*. These allow us to give voice to our shared values and Jewish tradition. Through our *Home Shabbat Service*, *Home Hanukkah Service*, *Home Havdallah Service*, and *Home Dedication Ceremony*, we help all members create personal and meaningful Jewish family celebrations.

All Beth Adam members receive our monthly newsletter, which, like the Web site, provides a constant flow of information and a forum for raising and discussing the ideas that help shape our congregational vision and our humanistic perspective on Judaism.



## FACILITIES

From the very inception of Beth Adam, we have worked together to create an institution that accurately reflects our vision of a Judaism for the modern age. Just as we created services and educational materials unique to Beth Adam, so too have we created a space that accurately reflects who we are.

With tremendous support and commitment from our members, we purchased land and built a 12,000 square foot facility on 3.3 acres, centrally located off I-71 and 275 in Loveland.

Our new home embodies our commitment to remain a vital institution within the Cincinnati Jewish community and beyond. More practically, it serves as a hub for all of our religious, social, educational and social action projects.



## BUILDING FEATURES INCLUDE:

- A Sanctuary area which accommodates intimate gatherings of 50, or up to 400 for High Holiday services, weddings and Bar/Bat Mitzvahs
- Six educational classrooms for Religious School and Bar/Bat Mitzvah classes
- A versatile Social Hall to accommodate small and moderate sized gatherings.
- A library and media center
- An administrative wing with offices for the Rabbinic Interns and office staff
- Rabbi's office study
- Seminar room for classes and meetings

Beth Adam's home is where we build upon our commitment to create contemporary liturgy, to convene programs exploring the issues surrounding the modern Jewish experience, and celebrate life cycle events. Our building is a place that we, for the first time, don't just attend, but live.

We invite family and friends  
to rejoice and commemorate.

We laugh, we mourn, we debate.

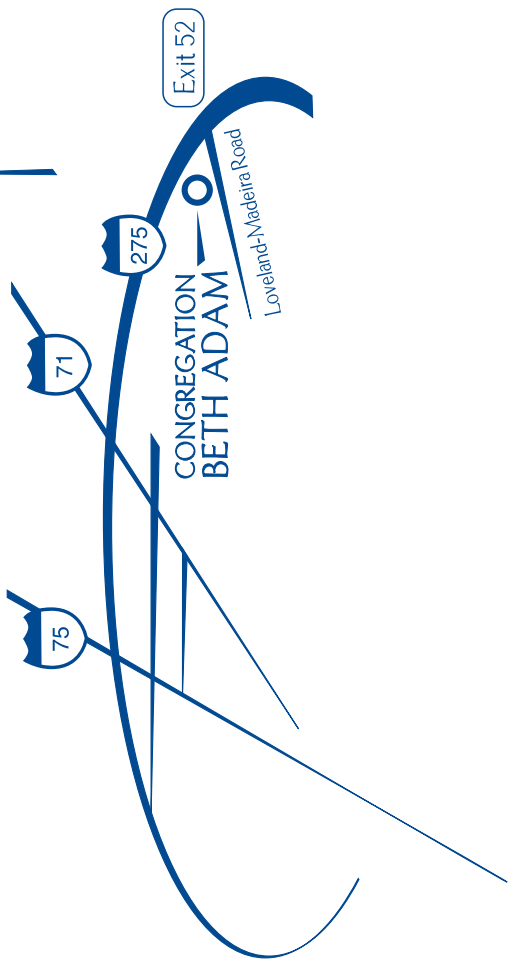
We teach and we learn.

We reflect, we sing.

We celebrate being Jewish,  
and being human.



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