

## **Celebrating Life Cycle Events at Beth David Synagogue Including All Members of Jewish Families**

As part of our goal of strengthening Jewish families, including families where one parent is not Jewish, non-Jewish friends and relatives are welcome to participate in Jewish life-cycle rituals - to be attendants or speakers at weddings and funerals, and to offer blessings and toasts at in-home baby namings, or during the after-service oneg (fellowship meal) in the social hall.

At baby namings in the synagogue, we encourage both parents to ascend the bimah with the baby, as the child is named, and a *misheberach* blessing recited. The Jewish parent may recite the aliya blessings. Both parents, and all of the extended family in synagogue that morning, should join in reciting the *Shehecheyanu* blessing in Hebrew.

At B'nai Mitzvah, both parents may ascend the bimah to present the child with his or her talit. (This presentation may also take place at the foot of the bimah, if desired). Because of the religious nature of the talit presentation, the Jewish parent may address the child at this time. The non-Jewish parent, and other family members are welcome to address the child and guests before the Grace after Meals at the kiddush luncheon.

Both parents of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah child may stand on the bimah beside their child during the child's *maftir aliya* and subsequent *misheberach* blessing. Both parents, and all of the extended family in synagogue that morning, should join in reciting the *Shehecheyanu* blessing in Hebrew.

When children of our congregational family marry, we pray that they will create strong Jewish homes and families. Our synagogue bulletin will carry wedding announcements and good wishes for all members, and children of our members, who have announced engagements.

We welcome friends and spouses of the Jewish People to our synagogue. We welcome participation of non-Jewish family members in celebration of family occasions. While leading parts of the service, including opening the ark, and leading English or Hebrew prayers, is limited to members of the Jewish faith, we hope to create an atmosphere which is welcoming and inclusive of all members of Jewish families.

The Rabbi, the Ritual Committee, and the Board of Trustees of Beth David Synagogue, reach out to embrace and strengthen all Jewish families in our congregation, as well as families not yet part of our congregation. We believe that deepening Jewish life and knowledge and observance among families and individuals is a means to create lives filled with meaning and joy, and fulfills the Jewish People's mission of being God's partners in the world.

Rabbi Eliezer Havivi