

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **1. What are the membership options for interfaith families at Beth Am?**

Beth Am offers many opportunities for interfaith families to be active in Synagogue life, in a manner that promotes inclusive participation and is consistent with Jewish law. For information about our membership unit categories and dues structures, please [click here](#).

## **2. How can a non-Jewish family member participate at Beth Am?**

Beth Am welcomes everyone in a membership household and encourages their active participation to build the community of our Congregation. This includes study, prayer and volunteering for a committee or task force.

As a matter of *halakhab* (Jewish law), a non-Jewish spouse or partner is excused from certain *mitzvyot* (ritual obligations of a Jewish adult). These activities include Torah-related honors and Hebrew blessings reflecting one's adherence to Jewish faith and tradition. Similarly, only a Jewish adult may serve as a Trustee or on committees with ritual responsibilities.

## **3. In what ways can a non-Jewish spouse or partner participate in the life-cycle events of family?**

Honors are often awarded to people celebrating a life-cycle event. These events involve the core family as well as the community at large. We wish to have every member of the core family share in the joy. In these situations, such as a birth or b'nai mitzvah, the non-Jewish family member often accompanies the Jewish family member to the Torah, as someone who enables this moment of joy to take place. While the Jewish family member recites the covenantal blessings, the non-Jewish family member is very much part of the occasion.

Beth Am also creates opportunities in the service that are not strictly Jewish ritual. These may include readings, opening the ark, the presentation of a *tallit* to a child, or saying something meaningful to your child during the ceremony.

**4. If I am planning an interfaith marriage, or if one of my children is planning an interfaith marriage, how will Beth Am support me and my family?** There are many ways that the Rabbi and the Synagogue provide acceptance and support, even though the Rabbi cannot marry an interfaith couple. The Rabbi provides counseling and guidance support for both the couple and also the extended families, and helps them in their consideration of religious and spiritual issues.

Additionally, we will be glad to connect you with other interfaith couples in the congregation.