

Life and Legacy Program
05/20/2016

Congregation Beth Ahabah Vision:

Inspiring Jewish Lives – Building Sacred Community

Mission Statement:

Congregation Beth Ahabah draws on its rich heritage to be a home for spirituality, education, and community in a diverse, joyful, vibrant, and welcoming Reform Jewish environment for today's congregants and for future generations.

Case Statement:

Beth Ahabah is an inclusive community, where everyone's contribution is valued. We don't dictate, we listen. We don't judge, we accept. We don't exclude, we welcome. Founded in 1789 by Sephardic Jews, Beth Ahabah later separated in the 1800s as an Ashkenazic congregation. Just before the turn of the 20th century, we combined heritages. Today, Beth Ahabah is enriched by a multitude of ethnicities, cultures and lifestyles. Our congregation embraces these differences.

At Beth Ahabah we "live Jewish." Jewish identity, once absorbed through family traditions like lighting candles on Shabbat, Mahjong tiles clicking, and the sweet scent of challah baking in the oven, is now largely learned through synagogue. Beth Ahabah provides educational guidance to revitalize family-centered celebrations, rituals, and practices. Adult classes enrich the understanding of all members, especially those of us making a Jewish home without the benefit of a Jewish upbringing. Our religious school is revolutionizing Jewish education, integrating child-based classroom teaching with family-based experiential learning. All our educational programs encourage us to explore, question, and discuss the details of our faith. We don't always agree, but learning together helps us to expand our perspective and understanding of Judaism.

Beth Ahabah, our "House of Love," inspires us to do acts of kindness. From feeding the homeless to speaking out against discrimination, we feel a spiritual connection when we are working to repair the world. This spirit of *Tikkun Olam* also motivates us to take part in the broader Richmond community as representatives of our faith.

We are privileged to gather in this magnificent synagogue, entrusted to us by our forbearers, a sacred space that is both inspirational and historic. From baby namings to funerals, and in our daily lives, Beth Ahabah provides a supportive environment to celebrate milestones, comfort us in our losses, grow as individuals and learn how to live more meaningful Jewish lives.

Our legacy donors are individuals just like you who appreciate that Beth Ahabah members have always been visionaries who understand the importance of building for tomorrow. It is up to us to preserve and strengthen what past generations have built. *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) teaches us that "It is not incumbent upon us to complete the work, but neither are we at liberty to desist from it."