



**Machar**  
**The Washington Congregation for**  
**Secular Humanistic Judaism**

**2004 B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony**

**May 22, 2004**



**Alexander Martin Beede**

**Jacob Nathaniel Lennen**

**Amelia Grace Coffey**

**Zachary Popkin-Hall**





# Special Acknowledgements

*Rabbi Binyamin Biber*

*Marlene Cohen*  
*Director, Jewish Cultural School*

*Joy Markowitz*  
*B'nei Mitzvah Liaison*

*Laurie Kauffman*  
*B'nei Mitzvah Class Instructor*

*Ken Giles, Barbara Gorin and the Machar Band*

*The Machar Board*





# Welcome

## Introduction of Students

(Please sing along)

### **Hinneh, Mah Tov! - Behold, How Good!**

(T'hillah / Psalm 133.1 - egalitarian adaptation, traditional melody)

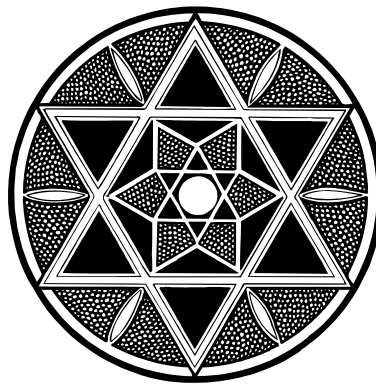
Hinneh, mah tov u-mah naim

הִנֵּה, מַה־טוֹב וּמַה־נָּעִים

shevet ammim gam yahad!

שֵׁבֶת עַמִּים גַּם־יַחַד!

[Behold, how good and how pleasant it is  
when peoples dwell together in unity! ]





# Lighting Sabbath Candles

## Hadlaqat Nerot Shel Shabbat

*Rabbi:*

N'-varekh `et ha-`or  
 ka-`asher ni-qavets b'-tsavta`  
 l'-hadliq nerot shel Shabbat ba-simha-tenu.  
 B'-`or n'-varekh `et ha-haivim.

נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאוֹר  
 כְּאֲשֶׁר נִקְבְּץ בְּצוֹתָא  
 לְהַדְלִיק נְרוֹת שֶׁל שַׁבָּת בְּשִׂמְחָתֵנוּ.  
 בְּאוֹר נְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַחַיִּים.

*Congregation:*

Let us bless the light  
 as we gather together  
 to kindle Sabbath candles at our joyous occasion.  
 With light let us bless life.

(Light the candles.)

*Rabbi:*

We kindle these lights as symbols:  
 their light a sign of human learning, enlightenment, and hope;  
 their radiant warmth a sign of human kindness, concern, and commitment.  
 Let us remember the generations before us who lit candles as we do,  
 and who were uplifted by the beauty and serenity of their light.

*Congregation:*

May the lighting of these candles connect us to our past,  
 to each other, and to ourselves.  
 May these candles shed light on our inner strength and vision.  
 May these flames inspire us to seek each other in peace.





# The B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony:



## Its History and Meaning



*Rabbi Binyamin Biber*



## Secular Humanistic Judaism

*Reading by Donna Bassin,  
President of Machar*

Our movement is secular because its focus is on the pleasures and pains of this world. It is humanistic because it finds the source of power for solving problems in human beings and because it sees the meaning of Jewish history in the Jewish defiance of an unjust world. It is cultural because it views Judaism as the culture of the Jewish people. Our movement is part of the struggle for Jewish continuity and Jewish integrity.

—Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, founder  
of the Humanistic Judaism movement





# Alexander Martin Beede



## Family

*Read by Ilana Maria Kahan*

Family and friendship are like the air we breathe; we cannot live without them. There are many families to which we belong, and which deserve our love and devotion.

There is the family of our mother and father, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Without them we would have no life.

There is the family of the Jewish people in which our ancestors grew up for over five thousand years. Without them we would have no past.

There is also the family of humankind into which every child is born and which makes each of us the sibling of the other. Without them we would have no future.

## "If" by Rudyard Kipling

*Read by Roz Seidenstein, Executive Director of Machar*

### **Zog Nit Keynmol** (please sing the Yiddish words rather than the translation)

Zog nit keyn mol az du gayst dem letzten veg,  
Ven himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg;  
Vayl kumen vet noch undzer oysgebenkte sho,

*Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot - mir zaynen do! (repeat)*

Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysen land fun shney,

Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey;  
Un vu gefaln s' iz a shpritz fun undzer blut,  
Shprotzen vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut. (repeat)

Never say you are walking your last road.

When leaden skies conceal blue days!

Because the hour we have longed for with all our  
longing will yet come

Our step will beat out like a drum: We are here!

From the green land of palms to the white land of  
snow.

We arrive with our anguish, with our pain.

And wherever a spurt of our blood has fallen

Our might and our courage will sprout.





Es vet di morgenzun bagilden undz dem heint,  
 Un der nechten vet farshvinden mitn find;  
*Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem ka-yor,*  
*Vi a parol zol geyn dos leed fun dor tsu dor. (repeat)*

The morning sun will gild our day;  
 And yesterday will vanish with the enemy  
 But if the sun and the dawn are late in coming  
 May this song go from generation to generation  
 like a password.

Dos leed geshribn iz mit blut und nit mit bly,  
 S'iz nit keyn leedl fun a foygel oyf der fry;  
*Dos hut a folk tzvishen falndi-ke vent,*  
*Dos leed gezungen mit naganes in di hent. (repeat)*

This song was written with blood, and not with  
 pencil-lead;  
 It's no song of a free-flying bird;  
 A people amongst collapsing walls  
 Sang this song with pistols in their hands

Zog nit keyn mol az du gayst dem letzten veg,  
 Ven himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg;  
*Vayl kumen vet noch undzer oysgebenkte sho,*

Never say you are walking your last road.  
 When leaden skies conceal blue days!  
 Because the hour we have longed for with all our  
 longing will yet come  
 Our step will beat out like a drum: We are here!

*Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot -- mir zaynen do! (repeat)*

Original Yiddish lyrics by Hirsh Glik, 1943  
 Music by Dmitiri & Daniel Pokras

English lyrics by Aaron Kramer  
 (modified by Barbara Gorin & Ben Biber)

## Music of the Holocaust

Alexander Beede ☆ B'nei Mitsvah Presentation



### *Family Candle Lighting*





# Jacob Nathaniel Lennen



## **Meditation on Peace**

*read by Sol Prensky*

We can perhaps remember—even if only for a time—that those who live with us are our brothers [and sisters]; that they share with us the same short moment of life; that they seek—as we do—nothing but the chance to live out their lives in purpose and happiness, winning what satisfaction and fulfillment they can.

Surely this bond of common faith, this bond of common goal, can begin to teach us something. Surely, we can learn, at least, to look at those around us as fellow men. And surely we can begin to work a little harder to bind up the wounds among us and to become in our own hearts brothers, [sisters], and countrymen once again.

—Robert F. Kennedy, Day of Affirmation, South Africa, 1966

## **On Compassion to Animals**

*Read by Jennifer Rebecca Lennen*





# Imagine

Imagine there's no heaven,  
 It's easy if you try,  
 No hell below us,  
 Above us only sky,  
 Imagine all the people  
 living for today...

Imagine no possessions,  
 I wonder if you can,  
 No need for greed or hunger,  
 A brotherhood of man,  
 Imagine all the people  
 Sharing all the world...

Imagine there's no countries,  
 It isn't hard to do,  
 Nothing to kill or die for,  
 No religion too,  
 Imagine all the people  
 living life in peace...

You may say I'm a dreamer,  
 but I'm not the only one,  
 I hope some day you'll join us,  
 And the world will live as one.

-- John Lennon

## Robert Capa, Photographer of War, Man of Peace

Jacob Lennen ☆ B'nei Mitsvah Presentation

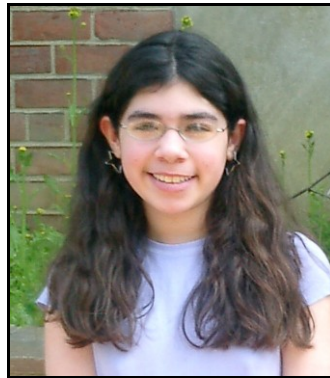


*Family Candle Lighting*





# Amelia Grace Coffey



## Our Commitment to Social Justice

*Read by Adiel Kaplan*

We believe that it is human beings who have the responsibility for solving human problems. We are committed, in the enduring Jewish tradition of support for social action and social progress, to community service and actions for social justice. We each take responsibility for our own behavior, and all of us take collective responsibility for the state of our world.

—From The Society for Humanistic Judaism Mission Statement

## "Just What is a Jew?" by Albert Einstein

*Read by Jacob Pecarsky and Nicholas Coffey*

## Union Maid

There once was a union maid, who never was afraid  
Of goons and ginks and company finks or deputy sheriffs who made the raid.  
She went to the union hall, when a meeting it was called,  
And when the company boys came round, she always stood her ground.

*Chorus:*

Oh you can't scare me, I'm stickin' to the union,  
I'm stickin to the union, I'm stickin to the union  
Oh you can't scare me, I'm stickin' to the union,  
I'm stickin to the union, til the day I die.





This union maid was wise, to the tricks of the company spies.  
She'd never be fooled by the company stools,  
She'd always organize ...  
She'd always get her way, when she struck for higher pay  
She'd show her card to the National Guard and this is what she'd say:

*Repeat Chorus*

"You women who want to be free, take a little tip from me,  
Break out of that mold we've all been sold...you've got a fighting history!  
The fight for women's rights with workers must unite.  
Like Mother Jones, move those bones, to the front of every fight.

*Repeat Chorus*

—Woody Guthrie with a little help from Ken Giles

## Clara Lemlich and the Women's Labor Movement

Amelia Coffey ☆ B'nei Mitzvah Presentation



*Family Candle Lighting*





# Zachary Popkin-Hall



## Tiqqun Olam

read by Alexandra Schatz

*Tiqqun Olam* means repairing the world. It involves working actively and positively to try to bring about healing and transformation of the world through social action. Drawing on the wisdom and efforts of generations past, *Tiqqun Olam* involves us in helping alleviate hunger, homelessness, disease, ignorance, abuse, and political oppression among all people, and in preserving the health of the environment upon which all life depends.

## Why We Should Help by Celia Greenstone Arnow

*Read by Julie Popkin*

## *Ba-Shanah ha-Ba`ah - The Coming Year*

(Lyrics by Ehud Manor, music by Nurit Hirsch.  
Written during the Six Day War in 1967.)

Ba-shanah ha-ba`ah  
neshev al ha-mirpeset,  
V'-nispor tsiporim nod'dot.  
Y'ladim b'-huph'shah y'sahaqu topheset  
Bein ha-bayit l'-vein ha-sadot.

בְּשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה  
נִשֵּׁב עַל הַמִּרְפֶּסֶת  
וְנִסְפּוֹר צִפּוֹרִים נוֹדְדוֹת.  
יְלָדִים בְּחוֹפֵשֶׁה יִשְׁחָקוּ תוֹפֶסֶת  
בֵּין הַבַּיִת לְבֵין הַשְּׂדוֹת.





(Chorus - sing 2 times)

Od tir`eh, od tir`eh,

ka-mah tov yih'yeh

Ba-shanah, ba-shanah ha-ba`ah!

עוֹד תִּרְאֶה, עוֹד תִּרְאֶה,

כָּמָּה טוֹב יִהְיֶה

בַּשָּׁנָה, בַּשָּׁנָה הַבָּאָה.

Soon the day will arrive when we will be together,  
and no longer will we live in fear.  
And the children will smile without wondering whether  
On that day dark new clouds will appear.

Wait and see, wait and see, what a world there can be,  
if we share, if we care, you and me. (Chorus - repeat last two lines)

# Zelda Popkin: An American Original

Zachary Popkin-Hall ☆ B'nei Mitsvah Presentation



*Family Candle Lighting*





## Reflections on Coming of Age

Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of  
Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.  
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,  
For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit,  
not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.  
For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.

—Kahlil Gibran



## Presentations to the B'nei Mitzvah Students

*Marlene Cohen, Director of the Jewish Cultural School*





## Blessing the B'nei Mitsvah

*Rabbi:*

*B'nei mitsvah*, in the past several years, each of you has learned and grown so much. We have tried to help you to start your life journeys with progressive values, a healthy sense of self-worth, and a positive Jewish identity. We now gather together to acknowledge your achievements, to celebrate your transition into young adulthood, and to encourage you to increasingly guide yourselves toward your highest ideals. With our continuing support, we hope you will take the initiative to further develop your learning and your good deeds, your Jewishness and your humanity, your active commitment to a better world.

*Congregation:*

Let us bless the youth,  
the hope of tomorrow

*Rabbi:*

N'-varekh `et ha-ts'irim,  
ha-tiqvah shel maḥar.

נְבָרֶךְ אֶת הַצְעִירִים,  
הַתִּקְוָה שֶׁל מָחָר.

### *Shalom Alei-khem – Peace Upon You (traditional)*

Shalom alei-khem,  
mal`akhei ha-shalom,  
shomrei shalom.  
Shalom alei-khem,  
rodphei ha-shalom.  
Shalom alei-khem.

שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם,  
מַלְאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם,  
שׁוֹמְרֵי שְׁלוֹם.  
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם,  
רוֹדְפֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם.  
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם.

Bo`a-khem b'-shalom,  
`ohavei ha-shalom.  
Shevet-khem b'-shalom.  
Tset-khem b'-shalom,  
mal`akhei ha-shalom.  
Shalom alei-khem.

בוֹאֲכֶם בְּשְׁלוֹם,  
אוֹהְבֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם.  
שֵׁבֶתְכֶם בְּשְׁלוֹם.  
צֵאתְכֶם בְּשְׁלוֹם,  
מַלְאֲכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם.  
שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם.

[Peace upon you, messengers of peace,  
guardians of peace, pursuers of peace, lovers of peace.  
May your coming, your sitting down, and your going be in peace.]





# Qiddush

*Congregation:*

Wine -

symbol of pleasure and sorrow,  
symbol of passion and blood,  
symbol of plenty and of excess.

Let us bless our lives with community

by sharing our joy, our spirit, and our bounty, by inviting visitors to join us,  
by welcoming the stranger, by caring for those in need.

Let us create a healthy community.

The fruit of the vine - with it, let us drink "To Life!"

*Rabbi:*

Nivra` qahal bari`.

נְבָרָא קְהָל בְּרִיא.

P'ri ha-gaphen - `itto, nishteh "L'-Haiyim!" פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן - אֶתּוֹ נִשְׁתֶּה "לְחַיִּים!"

*Congregation:*

L'-Haiyim!

"לְחַיִּים!"

## Breaking Bread and Making Peace:

*A Covenant for a Better World*

*Rabbi:*

Breaking bread together, *b'rit lehem*,

was an ancient Jewish custom for making a pact of peace, *b'rit shalom*.

Today, we break bread with all kinds of people to transform this world  
by fostering understanding, peace, and justice.





# A Blessing for Breaking Bread

## Let Us Bring Forth Food

### נוציא לחם - Notsi` Lehem

(inspired by "Ha-Motsi'," meaning "the one who brings forth")

*Congregation:*

Each time we break bread,  
let us appreciate our bounty  
and share it with others.  
Each time we break bread,  
let us nourish ourselves  
to work for peace and justice.  
Each time we break bread,  
let us commit ourselves  
to a covenant for a better world.

*Rabbi:*

Notsi` lehem min ha-`arets  
k'dei she-nistapeq v'-nit-kalkel kula-nu.

נוציא לחם מן הארץ  
כדי שנסתפק ונתכלכל כלנו.

*Congregation:*

Let us bring forth food from the land  
so we all may be satisfied and sustained.

`Amen.

אמן.

(Distribute hallah.)





# Turn-turn-turn

(to Everything There Is a Season)

To everything - turn, turn, turn  
There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time to be born, a time to die  
A time to plant, a time to reap  
A time to kill, a time to heal  
A time to laugh, a time to weep

To everything - turn, turn, turn  
There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time of war, a time of peace  
A time of love, a time of hate  
A time you may embrace  
A time to refrain from embracing

To everything - turn, turn, turn  
There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
And a time for every purpose under heaven

A time to gain, a time to lose  
A time to rend, a time to sew  
A time to love, a time to hate  
A time of peace, I swear it's not too late!

- Pete Seeger





# Announcements



## Candy Toss

*Siman Tov u-Mazzal Tov!*  
*Good Omen and Good Fortune! (Traditional)*

Siman tov u-mazzal tov

סימן טוב ומזל טוב

u-mazzal tov v'-siman tov! (1st 2 lines x3)

ומזל טוב וסימן טוב.

Y'hei la-nu!

יהא לנו.

Y'hei lanu, y'hei la-nu u-l'-khol Yisra`el!

יהא לנו, יהא לנו וילכל ישראל.

Y'hei lanu, y'hei la-nu u-l'-khol ha-olam!

יהא לנו, יהא לנו וילכל העולם.

(x2)

Siman tov u-mazzal tov

סימן טוב ומזל טוב

u-mazzal tov v'-siman tov! (1st 2 lines x3)

ומזל טוב וסימן טוב.

Y'hei la-nu!

יהא לנו.

[Good luck and good fortune!

May these be unto us, the Jewish people, and all the world!]





## *The Jewish Cultural School*

Machar and its Jewish Cultural School embrace the history and culture of Judaism with a non-theistic approach. As Humanistic Jews, we want our children to know and understand the diverse traditions of the Jewish people. We help them to draw on the lessons of the past to create a better future. We teach our children to take responsibility for their own lives and to use their abilities to help improve the larger community. The Jewish Cultural School curriculum focuses on Jewish culture and history as well as Jewish Secular Humanist values.

During the early grades (K to 3) topics covered include the Jewish family and the Jewish calendar and its holidays, Jewish customs and culture around the world, Jewish history, and Jewish Secular Humanist values.

In the later years (grades 4 to 6), the curriculum focuses on Jewish history, with special emphasis on certain key periods, such as shtetl life in Eastern Europe, nineteenth century Jewish life in Western Europe, Jewish immigration to the United States and the Jewish-American experience, the history of Zionism and Israel, and the Holocaust. In addition, students learn about different branches of Judaism and about other major religions.

In the *B'nei Mitzvah* year (seventh grade) the parents plan the curriculum with input from the students. The parents themselves, as well as Rabbi Binyamin Biber and guest speakers from Machar and elsewhere, teach the classes, and the parents attend along with the students. This year's topics were organized around three themes: Jewish identity, Jewish history, and social action. Topics included: the meaning of a humanistic *B'nei Mitzvah*; comparing theological and humanist world views; ethics; Jewish history from the beginning to the present; the Talmud; Jewish art, literature, poetry and music; Jewish involvement in the labor and civil rights movements, and in community organizing; anti-Semitism; Israel and the Palestinians; as well as tolerance and diversity. The students also spent time working on independent research projects, which eventually became their *B'nei Mitzvah* presentations. Members of the class also participated in group community service activities, such as cleaning Rock Creek Park.

