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Tri-State's Only Humanistic Synagogue Celebrates 25 Year Anniversary with Tribute to its Founding Rabbi

Rabbi Robert B. Barr to be Honored for 25 Years of Service at May 7, 2006 Tribute Dinner

(Cincinnati, OH – April 25, 2006) Congregation Beth Adam, the Tri-State's only congregation practicing Judaism with a Humanistic Perspective will honor its 25th anniversary with a Tribute Dinner for its current and founding Rabbi, Robert B. Barr. The dinner will be held at the Kingsgate Marriott Hotel at University of Cincinnati at 6 PM on Sunday, May 7, 2006. Tickets are \$75 per person and can be purchased by calling 513-985-0400. The May 7 Tribute Dinner caps off a year of 25th anniversary celebrations that included a congregational picnic, Art25 - an art show fundraiser - and an upcoming trip to Israel this summer.

"We're thrilled to mark this important milestone in the evolution of our congregation," noted Sheryl Cohen, president of Congregation Beth Adam's Board of Trustees. "Our year-long celebrations have been elegant and entertaining and are testimony to the creativity of many of our talented members."

Robert Barr founded Congregation Beth Adam in 1980 while he was still a student at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. A few Jewish families that were interested in practicing Judaism in a more contemporary and accessible way approached the soon-to-be Rabbi and persuaded him to stay in Cincinnati and found Congregation Beth Adam, rather than taking a more lucrative position with an established synagogue. Following graduation, Rabbi Barr began conducting services and religious school in members' homes, eventually moving to offices/meeting space in various locations until 2001 when Beth Adam dedicated its permanent home on Loveland-Madeira Road. Rabbi Barr quipped, "In the old days, I used to carry our Torah around in the back of my Volkswagen Jetta. Now we have a beautiful building full of active and involved families who are practicing Judaism in a way that is consistent with their ethics, beliefs and lifestyles."

Twenty-five years later, membership has grown to 340 with a thriving Religious School comprised of over 100 students from preschool through teen groups, as well as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah program and educational and religious programming for children and adults. Because Beth Adam is the only synagogue in the area practicing Judaism with a Humanistic Perspective, it attracts members from as far away as Northern KY, Oxford, OH, Chicago, IL, and New York, NY. Membership is on an individual basis and interfaith and gay/lesbian couples are welcome. Beth Adam's members come from diverse backgrounds including Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism as well as former Buddhists, Catholics, agnostics, etc.

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The liturgy used at Beth Adam services 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, the liturgy is written entirely by Beth Adam members. "In an 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," states Rabbi Barr. Beth Adam's liturgy including its Passover Seder, a boxed set of four home services and two recently-published booklets that feature readings for funerals and times of crisis have met with critical acclaim and are for sale nationally.

About Beth Adam

Now celebrating its 25th year, Congregation Beth Adam approaches Judaism from a humanistic perspective and is dedicated to the celebration of traditional Jewish holidays and life cycle events, Rabbi Robert B. Barr, ordained in 1981 at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion has been with Beth Adam since its inception. Beth Adam provides Jewish experiences through religious services, child and adult education programs, Bar and Bat Mitzvah classes and services, social activities and community social action programs. More information about Congregation Beth Adam is available at www.bethadam.org or by calling 513-985-0400.

Photo of Rabbi Robert B. Barr available.

Rabbi Robert B. Barr and Sheryl Cohen, president of Congregation Beth Adam's Board of Trustees available for interviews.