

Shalom Friends,

As many of you are aware, July 10th marks the 7th Bellingham Pride parade. As a spectator the past few years, I have rooted on all of the participants, including many of you. This year, Congregation Beth Israel, for the first time as a community, is going to march in the parade.

I remember thinking to myself at past parades why we didn't have a group when so many other local faith groups were marching in support of the LGBTQ community. For Judaism too, especially the Reform and Conservative branches, unequivocally supports LGBTQ rights and marriage equality.

If we are to truly be *anshei chesed*, doers of goodness and righteousness, then we must not only be welcoming of this community within our own walls, but we must also work to help them achieve full equality in the society at large and let those who are unsure of our inclusive views know that we are indeed supportive of them.

The decision to march in this year's parade was presented to the Board of Directors several times this past year and at the May 2016 meeting, the Board voted unanimously to support this effort. I hope you will join me in thanking our leaders.

Here are the details of the parade:

- We will be marching behind a large banner.
- If you would like to march with us, please join us at 10:30am to line up. We will be located in the Habitat for Humanity parking lot.
- The parade will start promptly at noon this year and leave from the corner of Cornwall and Ohio. The parade ends at the Market Depot.
- For details on the parade route, please check out bhampride.org.

For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Isaiah 56:7)

I hope you will join me.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Joshua Samuels

&

CBI Social Action Committee