

The Reform Advocate

Volume XIII, Number I: Fall 2021

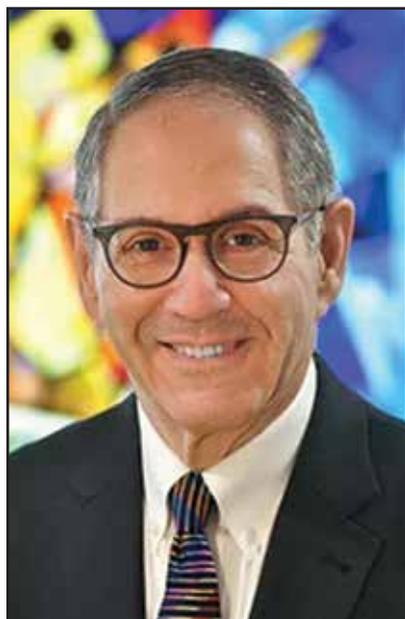
Jill S. Silverstein, Ed.D., Editor



ROOTS OF REFORM JUDAISM

Inspired by the past, embracing today, shaping tomorrow.

A message from Rabbinic Director Rabbi Ken Kanter



Dear Friends of Roots of Reform Judaism,

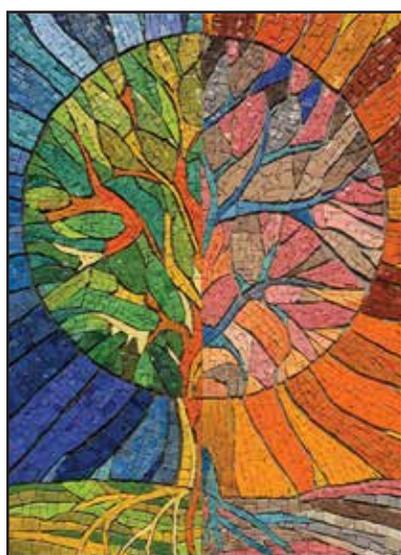
Each edition of the *Reform Advocate* gives us a meaningful opportunity to highlight facets of our Reform Jewish history, beliefs, personalities, leaders, and practices. If you have been loyal readers during these pandemic times, you have seen that we have honored the great historical events and individuals of Reform Judaism, the music and liturgy that lift our spirits, and the challenges that face us as we look toward the future. Our Fall 2021/5782 issue recognizes several of the congregations and organizations around the United States that provide regular or special Shabbat/High Holy Day services using the *Union Prayer Book* or similar style Reform services.

We no longer have one prayerbook used by every synagogue in our movement, as was hoped by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise when he created *Minhag America* in 1857, to “bring unity among all the American Synagogues” or Rabbi David Einhorn’s *Olat Tamid*, published a year later, which became a model for the *Union Prayer Book*. Along with the *siddurim* (prayer books) published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism with which we are familiar and deeply value, many congregations recognize liturgical diversity and have created their own prayer books, unique to that congregation’s philosophy and practice. In this issue, we recognize some of the great congregations of our country, from Savannah to El Paso, Cincinnati to Atlanta, from the largest to those with just a few families that honor the prayer traditions, music, ease-of-use, and style of our historical Reform worship and practice.

Reform Judaism is belief, practice, leaders, philosophy, theology, liturgy, history, clergy, educators, scholars. It is also communities—from the largest and oldest to the newest and smallest. This issue of our *Reform Advocate* contains stories and pictures highlighting many of these, from nineteenth-century ornate synagogues and simplest small-town temples to contemporary architectural masterpieces. Like our traditions, these congregations illustrate the diversity of our Judaism’s faith, beliefs, practices, and history. Much like our tagline, these congregations are inspired by the past, embrace today, and are shaping tomorrow.

Devotedly,

Ken



“Of the Highest Rank:” Redeeming ‘Classical’ Reform Judaism

Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, Ph.D.



Without question, the most upsetting moment in my rabbinic career occurred during an evening session of the Central Conference of American Rabbis' convention just prior to the adoption of the 1999 “Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism”

in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. At the podium was the curmudgeon rabbi, Arnold Jacob Wolf (1924-2008) who declared that Classical Reform Judaism was “the original sin” of the Jewish tradition and that no Reform rabbi of the classical persuasion had ever uttered a single quote worthy of repetition.

I was incensed and furiously paced back and forth at the rear of the auditorium trying to collect myself. A handful of colleagues were equally infuriated while clinging to the edges of the room in which some of us felt totally marginalized. Meanwhile, other rabbis supportive of Wolf stood on their chairs and cheered having finally heard the call to drop a theological guillotine on the *Union Prayer Book*, the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform, and American Classical Reform Judaism.

It is interesting, if not disturbing, that the term ‘classical’ is uniquely applied to a form of Judaism as a pejorative by other Jews, especially non-Classical Reform Jews. A 1590 literary source once declared that the word classical is derived from “of the highest rank.” We speak of classical languages, classical music, classic movies, and classic cars as the best, the most worthy, the exemplary, and the laudable. But when it comes to Reform Judaism, classical has, for many, exactly the opposite intent and instead connotes archaic, irrelevant and, in the language of historian Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975), “fossilized.”

Ironically, there is no set definition of Classical Reform nor what its main theological and liturgical elements are and when it even existed. Is Classical Reform the same as Radical German Reform Judaism, Prophetic Judaism or is it coterminous with the *Union Prayer Book (UPB)*? If Classical Reform is basically the *UPB*, exactly which edition and which “service” is the offender?

In his 1988 masterpiece, Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion professor Michael A. Meyer includes a chapter on “Classical’ Reform Judaism” and concentrates on the modernist thought of Kaufmann Kohler (1843-1926) and Emil G. Hirsch (1851-1923), both sons-in-law of Rabbi David Einhorn (1809-1879). Both were scholars, multilingual, and prolific. Perhaps the basic difference between the two was in their approach and not the substance of their thought. In 1918, Kohler published *Jewish Theology: Systematically and Historically Considered*. Seven years later, a collection of Hirsch’s sermons and essays was published posthumously as *My Religion*. Together, Meyer argues that they constitute the head and heart of Classical Reform Judaism.

In discussing American Classical Reform, other historians of modern Judaism emphasize the 1885 Pittsburgh Platform, social justice, anti-Zionism, and prayer books, especially the original *Union Prayer Book* of the 1890s and, to a lesser extent, the *Union Hymnal* (1897). To this group, I would add the Jewish Publication Society Bible and the United States Military Jewish Prayer Book, both published in 1917, to the mix. The *Prayer Book for Jews in the Armed Forces of the United States* is arguably the most published prayer book in the history of the Jewish people and played a major role in introducing Reform-style Judaism to hundreds of thousands of American Jews who otherwise may not have had cultural contact with Reform Judaism. Together, these books constitute a kind of gestalt

or cultural structure representative of American Reform Jews, largely of German origin, for approximately 50 years, 1890-1940. Thereafter, Reform 'reformed from within' and other expressions of Judaism of all denominations and American Jewishness became more dominant in organized American Jewish religious life than pre-World War II American Reform.

... in my opinion it is the language and literary style of the Union Prayer Book which is its most appealing and enduring feature.

By 1940, the various prior editions of the *Union Prayer Book* were broadly viewed by American Reform Jews as inadequate for Reform worship. Thus, a new edition of the *UPB* edited by Solomon Freehof (1892-1990) was promulgated which included five different Sabbath services including both Zionist and humanist themes. At first, old guard Classical reformers were mortified by the new *UPB* but, ironically, as other more radical, more traditional, and less Classical liturgies appeared, they seized on the 1940 *UPB* as the expression of their own brand of Reform Judaism. Meanwhile, a "classical" service was retained in the 1975 *Gates of Prayer* and select "classical" prayers appear in the 2007 *Mishkan T'filah* for the purpose of providing a single Reform prayer book for the entire American Reform movement.

Significantly, a number of Reform congregations, mostly in the South and Midwest, continue to use the *UPB* or *UPB*-style services and prayer books to this day. In the last decade, more than two dozen congregations, from New York to California, and Pennsylvania to Louisiana purchased sets of the most recent *UPB* edition for worship. Many more

congregations that do not necessarily identify as "Classical Reform" also continue to provide the grand choral music of Classical Reform with professional or volunteer choirs, organ, and piano in addition to liturgical music written in the past few decades.

What is the continued attraction of the *UPB* to these congregations? There are a number of possibilities. First, the book as artifact is appealing. It is small and easily held by worshippers sitting in pews. By contrast, a number of recent prayer books across the denominational spectrum are quite large and better suited to be used as study guides to be placed on tables. The *UPB* font is also appealing, traditional and unadorned, and the page design exclusively supports the primary purpose of the book which is, of course, congregational worship. But most of all in my opinion, it is the language and literary style of the *Union Prayer Book* which is its most appealing and enduring feature.

In the field of Religious Studies, scholars speak about "Liturgical Language" not just as non-vernacular sacred tongues but also as a linguistic means of expressing holiness itself. For sure, the language of the *UPB* is lofty. It is different than the daily language of those who pray from it. Its use essentially constitutes a kind of diglossia and makes its language "classic" in tone and content. It is unapologetically theistic and has echoes of both the 1611 *King James Bible* and American Transcendentalism. In a word, it is a "classic" book with a dignified feel about it. It does not pay homage to contemporary religious populism nor Hallmark-inspired verse but instead seeks to address a personal but majestic God in poetic terms in language "of the highest rank." If that is the original sin of Judaism, I plead guilty.

In the next section of the Advocate, we feature several of the scores of congregations that provide Shabbat and High Holy Day worship opportunities using the *Union Prayer Book* or similar worship styles. Some are among our country's largest synagogues in our biggest cities. Others are temples in much smaller communities. All have this in common — the appreciation of the liturgical traditions and music of our Reform heritage.



MICKVE ISRAEL – Savannah GA



Forty-one pioneering Jews arrived in Savannah on July 11, 1733, just five months after the colony of Georgia had been established. The new colony provided hope for poor Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews from London who had been living in difficult circumstances. In 1732, there were 6,000 Jews living in London. The more affluent, established members of that Jewish community provided financial support, subscribing to the new colony of Georgia in addition to helping their fellow Jews set sail on the second boat to Georgia. Among the Jews who helped subscribe were members of the Spanish and Portuguese Bevis Marks Synagogue, the mother congregation to Mickve Israel in Savannah. All but eight of the original forty-two Jewish colonists were Spanish/Portuguese Jews who had arrived in London just ten years earlier from Portugal, having lived there as Crypto-Jews. The primary act of the Savannah settlers was the founding of a congregation, then the establishment of a cemetery, followed by a “*mickvah*,” rather than establishing a cemetery first.

In July 1735, the Savannah Jews met and agreed to open a synagogue immediately, naming it Kahal Kodesh Mickva Israel — translated as Holy Congregation Hope of Israel. The congregation identified almost immediately with the Sephardic group. Many Ashkenazic Jews arrived in Savannah and did not become a part of the Sephardic religious group. A sharp schism developed. The early difficulties were encountered in constructing a synagogue building as the Spanish and Portuguese

and German Jews differed in their religious services and in other matters such as to dietary laws and other Jewish ceremonies. The German Jews believed themselves entitled to build a Synagogue and were willing to allow the Spanish Jews to use it with them in common. The latter rejected any such arrangement and demanded the preference for themselves. In 1742, many Sephardic Jews fled the city as the war between Spain and England had reached this continent, with Spanish soldiers landing on St. Simons Island with plans to capture Georgia. In the eyes of the Spanish Church, the Sephardic Jews were guilty of apostasy. By 1774 enough Jews had moved back to Savannah and on the eve of Yom Kippur they resolved to form a congregation.

From outbreak of the Revolutionary War until the Treaty of Paris, there was a cessation of all formal organized religious activity in Savannah. It was 1786 before conditions were sufficiently normal to permit the reorganization of the “K. K. Mickvah [sic] Israel.” On November 20, 1790, Governor Edward Telfair granted the congregation a perpetual charter as “a body incorporate by the name and style of the ‘*Parnas and Adjuntas of Mickve Israel at Savannah*,’” the same charter under which the congregation operates today. Although the congregation functioned for many years without its own synagogue, the loyal few zealously guarded the corporate identity and existence by having regular meetings and electing officers while conducting services in the homes of members.

It was 1868 before the congregation took its first hesitant steps toward Reform Judaism...

By 1818, the growth of the Jewish population in Savannah encouraged the congregation to seek its own synagogue building. Dr. Jacob De La Motta decided that he would build a synagogue such as was needed, on the lot given by the city, provided a lease of the small buildings was granted to him by the

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congregation free of charge for a term of eight years. A building on Liberty and Whitaker streets was the first synagogue to be erected in the State of Georgia and was consecrated in 1820. The small wooden structure was destroyed by fire in 1829. Efforts to rebuild began in 1834, and a new brick building on the same site was consecrated in 1841. It was 1853 before the congregation could afford a permanent spiritual leader. Reverend Jacob Rosenfeld was the first permanent spiritual leader.

The Reform movement was well under way in America by the middle of the nineteenth century, but the congregants of Mickve Israel strongly favored the Portuguese *Minhag*. It was February 1868 before the congregation took its first hesitant steps toward Reform Judaism by omitting the celebration of the second day of festivals and by introducing a choir with musical accompaniment. It was not until February 1880 that the use of a canopy in the marriage ceremony was made optional, and 1894 before members were permitted to go hatless during services. The Portuguese *Minhag* remained in use until 1895, though gradually modified, when Mickve Israel printed its own prayer books. In 1902 the *Union Prayer Book* was adopted, and in January 1904, membership in the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was attained and Mickve Israel's transition to Reform Judaism was complete. The last vestige of its Spanish-Portuguese heritage is maintained in the Sephardic melody "El Norah Ah Lee Lah" sung by the congregation during the closing hour of each Yom Kippur service.

Throughout nearly three centuries, Mickve Israel's members have contributed significantly to the larger community. Today in its Archival Museum, ten presidential letters are on display, including the Washington letter. Grateful to its founders for having built it well, Congregation Mickve Israel asks only that it be permitted to continue to serve equally well "One God and One Humanity."

(adapted from "The Story of Mickve Israel" mickveisrael.org/history/)

From the Desk of Rabbi Robert Haas

We are proud to have continually used *UPB Sinai Revised* during our worship services, for the past seven or eight years, after switching over from the previous *UPB* edition. I believe we actually remain one of the few, if not the only, congregations that uses the *UPB Sinai Revised* on Saturday mornings.

From the moment we began praying with it in our hands, our congregation loved it. It was as smooth of a transition as possible.

As for our service, we combine Hebrew and English alongside more traditional classical Reform music, with other types of Jewish music as well. Any music not originally geared for the organ is rearranged by our soloist in a way that fits the tenor of the service. For the most part whenever we sing or read a prayer in Hebrew, we also read the translation in English to ensure everyone revels in the full meaning of the prayer.

The *UPB Sinai Revised* plays a major role in the success of our Saturday morning service. In pre-Covid days, we hosted 65-100 people on most Saturdays. Our congregation loves the music and the prayers themselves, and because they tend to be very knowledgeable about the liturgy and *Nusach*, almost everyone sings alongside our soloist. We truly feel proud to serve as a congregation in the Reform Movement that uses this wonderful prayerbook.



Rabbi Robert Haas



ISAAC M. WISE TEMPLE (PLUM STREET TEMPLE) - Cincinnati OH



In 1840, a group of German Jewish immigrants in Cincinnati organized as a separate Jewish congregation, K.K. B'nai Yeshurun, breaking away from the existing congregation, K.K. Bene Israel, unhappy

with Bene Israel's mode of worship, which was not in accordance with their German custom. The congregation's course (and that of Reform Judaism's history) was permanently altered when the community voted to engage Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise as its spiritual leader in 1853. Rabbi Wise began instituting reforms in the synagogue, such as the successful introduction of a choir (which initially he conducted with his violin). He argued for the use of an organ, and during the next few years, ended the second-day observance

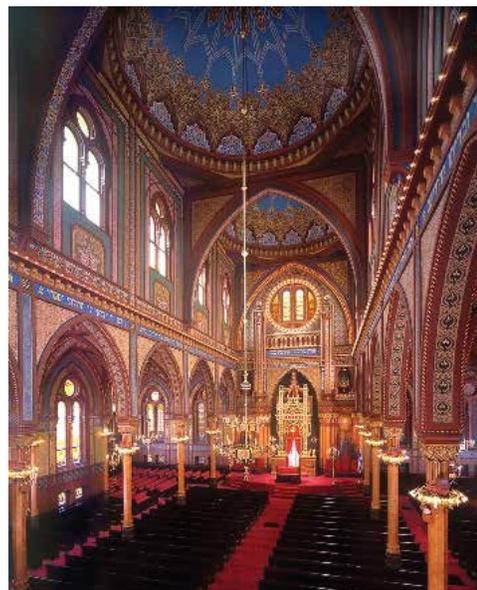
The congregation's course was permanently altered when the community voted to engage Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise.

of holidays (with the exception of Rosh Hashanah) (1859), and the permission to pray without a head covering (1873). The cornerstone of Plum Street Temple was laid in May of 1865 and the Temple was dedicated on August 24, 1866. Hebrew Union College's ordination ceremonies have been held at Plum Street every year (with only a few exceptions when the building was being restored) since 1882.

During his tenure as Rabbi, Rabbi Wise was also active in creating structure for the Reform Movement overall. He founded the umbrella body of the Reform Movement in North America (1873), Hebrew Union College (1875), and the Central Conference of Reform Rabbis (CCAR), the professional union of the Reform rabbinate in America (1889). Rabbi Wise remained in the Plum Street Temple pulpit until his death in 1900.

Into the 21st century, Wise Temple continues to be a trailblazer in innovation and leadership in the spirit of its visionary first rabbi, and to this day offers events and opportunities that engage congregants in new and exciting ways as it moves forward into the future.

(adapted from "History of Plum Street Temple"
www.wisetemple.org/about/our-history/history-of-plum-street-temple/)



(photo by J. Miles Wolf)

A 19th Century Service for the 21st Century

Rabbi Karen R. Thomashow



One of the privileges of serving Isaac M. Wise Temple as one of its rabbis is to come into contact on a regular basis with Rabbi Wise's writings, his vision, and his legacy. I am told that it was important to Rabbi Wise that

the lectern on the *bima* at Plum Street have at least a partial view of every worshipper in the congregation. One hundred and fifty-four years later and the lectern's vantage point has barely changed.

In 2018, Rabbi Yael Splansky gave the Ordination address at Plum Street Temple and in her remarks, she imagined that if the floorboards could describe their own history, they'd reminisce about the wars people who'd stood on them had lived through, the *simchas* (joyous occasions) they'd enjoyed, and the periods of both decline and progress they'd endured.

Indeed, the lectern and the floorboards are two of the least evolved features of the Plum Street Temple building. Personally, I like to imagine all of the shoes—from little ones and big ones to high heels and flat boots—that have stood at attention on those floorboards during the various worship services that have been conducted over more than fifteen decades.

On June 9, 2017, my imagination and others went especially wild, as our congregation recreated an evening worship service in the style of the 19th-century Reform tradition. Our clergy created a prayer book for the evening that wove together the two historic prayer books: Rabbi Wise's *Minhag America* and Rabbi Einhorn's *Olat Tamid*.

Two members of the congregation chaired the 19th-century evening, planning numerous festivities to accompany the worship service. Of particular

note was their vision for our clergy and soloist to borrow costumes from the Cincinnati Opera, and for the entire congregation to have the invitation to rent costumes from a local costume shop, all reflecting the time period and adding to the spirit of the celebration.

A third significant element of the evening was of course the music. Our congregation's choir, *Kol Rinah*, prepared many special pieces of liturgy to sing, accompanying our soloist. We chose the oldest pieces of liturgical music that we could access. They may or may not have been from the 19th century, but they were indeed well-known in the early 20th century. The Rockwern Organ at Plum Street Temple was built by Koehnken and Company Organ and restored by the Noack Organ Company in 2005.

In the tours that our docents, archivist, and rabbis lead, we often reflect on the significance of the Plum Street Temple being a synagogue that was built with seating for around 1,000 people at a time when the congregation comprised of only 200+ members. Rabbi Wise was a visionary. A significant part of his vision was a vibrant Cincinnati Jewish community that went well into the 21st century. On June 9, 2017, it was not lost on me that this piece of his vision was clear. I can't also help but think that the clergy from the lectern, the organ in its original form, and the prayerbook that he himself edited being photocopied in this era would have moved him greatly. Most importantly, however, are the 21st century feet on the 19th century floorboards!



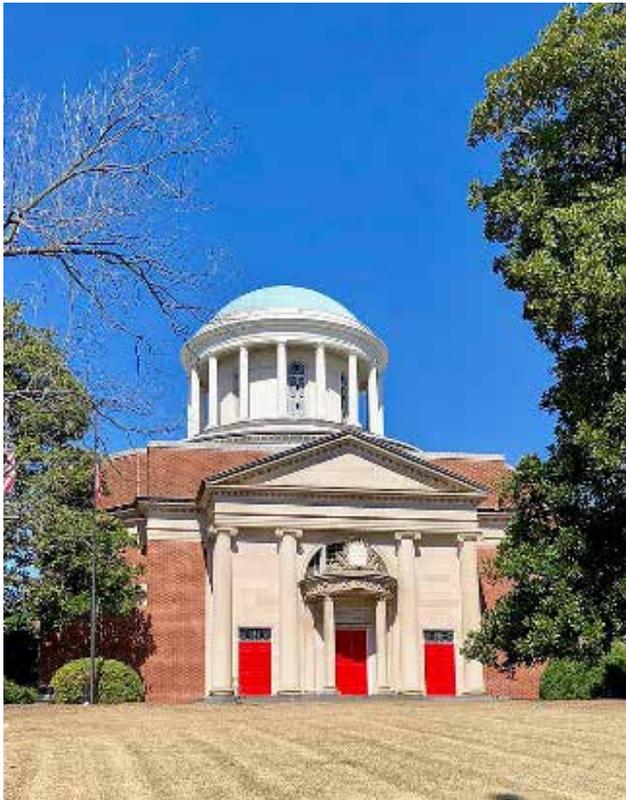
Rabbi Lewis Kamrass
Rabbi Karen Thomashow
Rabbi Michael Danziger



ROOTS OF
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THE TEMPLE - Atlanta GA



(openstreetmap.org)

The Temple, originally founded as the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation in 1867, was Atlanta's first official Jewish institution. It grew out of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, which had been organized in 1860 to obtain a burial ground and provide relief for the Jewish poor. Jews have lived in Atlanta since the very beginnings of the city, and while they were an integral part of the city's commercial life, they represented a small minority of the population. In 1850, twenty-six Jews lived in Atlanta, representing just one percent of the population. Their numbers would double by the outbreak of the Civil War, prompting the fledgling community to create a loosely organized Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1860.

It was not until two years after the Civil War that the community was able to establish The Temple. In January 1867, when the Reverend Isaac Leeser of Philadelphia presided over Atlanta's first Jewish wedding, he encouraged those in attendance to create a formal congregation. The Hebrew Benevolent

Congregation received a charter four months later and in 1875, built its first permanent worship hall in downtown Atlanta. During its first twenty years, The Temple shifted between Reform Judaism and more traditional observance.

The arrival in 1895 of Rabbi David Marx marked the end to this period and the beginning of many decades of stability. During his 51-year tenure, Rabbi Marx pushed The Temple further into classical Reform Judaism, solidifying its place as a leading member of the Union for Reform Judaism (then called the Union of American Hebrew Congregations). His efforts helped to quell earlier controversy between traditionalists and reformers, and also helped strike a delicate balance between Atlanta's Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

... Rabbi Marx pushed The Temple further into classical Reform Judaism ...

His successor, Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, arrived in 1946. Although he rolled back some of the reforms of Rabbi Marx, he continued his predecessor's outreach to Atlanta's Christian community. He was more willing to speak out in support of social justice, even when it angered some in the wider community. Having grown up in the North, Rabbi Rothschild was immediately disturbed by the racism and segregation of the South. In 1947, he took the opportunity of his High Holy Day sermon to denounce segregation. This was a marked shift from the tenure of Rabbi Marx. During the prior half century, The Temple had faced a community rife with anti-Semitism and danger, and in response, went out of its way to strike a tentative balance with its non-Jewish neighbors, avoiding confrontational rhetoric and conflicts whenever possible. Rabbi Rothschild felt passionate that the moral compass of Judaism demanded an active response to

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the injustice of the times. From the beginning of his tenure, he had criticized segregation and advocated for racial equality, and his efforts supported justice for every citizen, regardless of their skin color. On October 12, 1958, a group of white supremacists, angered by The Temple's ongoing and vocal support of civil rights, place fifty sticks of dynamite at the north entrance of the building. Leaders and ordinary citizens rallied around The Temple in response to the bombing. Ralph McGill, the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* newspaper wrote: "You cannot preach and encourage hate for the Negro and hope to restrict it to that field. When the wounds of hate are loosed on one people, then no one is safe".

Rabbi Rothschild died suddenly on December 31, 1973. His successor, Rabbi Alvin Sugarman, continued the tradition of stability, serving as senior rabbi for more than three decades. Between 1980 and 2006, the Jewish community of metro Atlanta grew significantly, and The Temple grew during those years as well. The Temple has continued its deep commitment to social justice and its mission to support education of all ages. As an example, the Zaban Couple Center began operation in 1985, providing a place for homeless couples to stay.

Under the leadership of its current senior rabbi, Peter S. Berg, The Temple continues both its growth as well as its long history of social justice and Jewish leadership in Atlanta.

(adapted from www.the-temple.org/history)

From the Desk of Rabbi Peter Berg

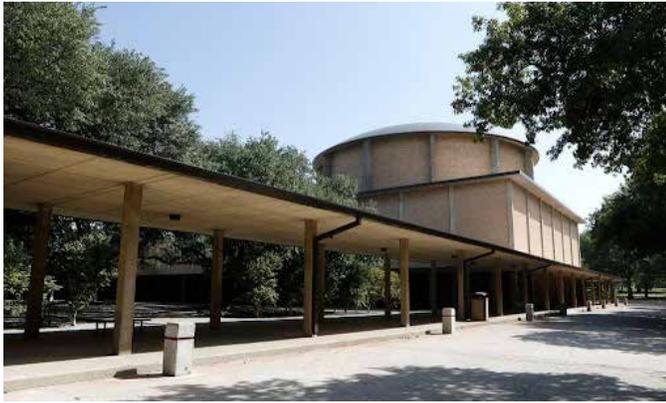


Rabbi Peter Berg

The Temple continues to recognize its classical Reform roots today. We were delighted with the publication of the 2012 *Revised Union Prayer Book*. This gives us the opportunity to offer services each year in the style of classical Reform, including the celebration of a Reform Heritage Shabbat service. Many of our members deeply appreciate the opportunity to pray using these familiar and majestic prayers. Sometimes we use the organ and other times we deliberately use our grand piano, knowing that the *UPB* can also be used in a contemporary context.



TEMPLE EMANU-EL - Dallas TX



Temple Emanu-El, the first Jewish congregation in North Texas, was chartered in 1875. The temple evolved from the Hebrew Benevolent Association, founded in 1872 to help the sick, bury the dead, and hold religious services for people of the Jewish faith. Temple Emanu-El dates its beginning from the efforts of these pioneers, as the Benevolent Association became part of Temple Emanu-El.

As more newcomers settled in Dallas, the small but growing Jewish community felt the need for a permanent religious structure as well as for a rabbi to conduct services and offer religious education for children. At Rosh Hashanah services in September 1875, fifty-one men pledged their support to Congregation Emanu-El, 'God is with us'. (It was renamed Temple Emanu-El Congregation in 1974 and is referred to as Temple Emanu-El.)

*"It is a duty we owe our merciful God,
our children and ourselves."*

In 1876, Temple Emanu-El erected its first house of worship, a small red-brick temple in the Byzantine style in the heart of downtown Dallas. Since Congregation Emanu-El was founded in the Reform tradition, it adopted a modern prayer book with English translations of the Hebrew prayers. The members asked Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise, the leader of the American Jewish Reform movement, to recommend its first rabbi. The congregation engaged its first rabbi in 1875 and joined the Union of

American Hebrew Congregations in 1906. As the membership grew and the city expanded, first south and then north, and the first temple proved too small for the congregation, Temple Emanu-El erected a slightly larger red-brick and stone temple on St. Louis Street in 1899. When the congregation expanded and the residential population of the city left the downtown area, the congregation moved in 1917 to South Boulevard and Harwood Street. A new temple structure was built in a classic style. In 1957, the temple moved to its present location in North Dallas on Hillcrest Road.

From 1874 to 1878 Temple Emanu-El sponsored a nonsectarian day-school that enrolled sixty to seventy children. This school, which employed non-Jewish teachers and principals before the Dallas public schools were established, may have been the first interfaith endeavor in Dallas. The temple continues to offer cultural programs and lec-



Rabbi David Stern Chapel

tures that are open to the public. In its concern for social action, the congregation founded and sponsored Rhoads Terrace Pre-School for Disadvantaged Children, and a peace and world relations project was begun by the Sisterhood. The congregation is a member of North Dallas Shared Ministries Food Bank, East Dallas Health Coalition, and the Dallas Jewish Coalition. Since 1972 the Jacobus Archives of Temple Emanu-El has housed all material per-

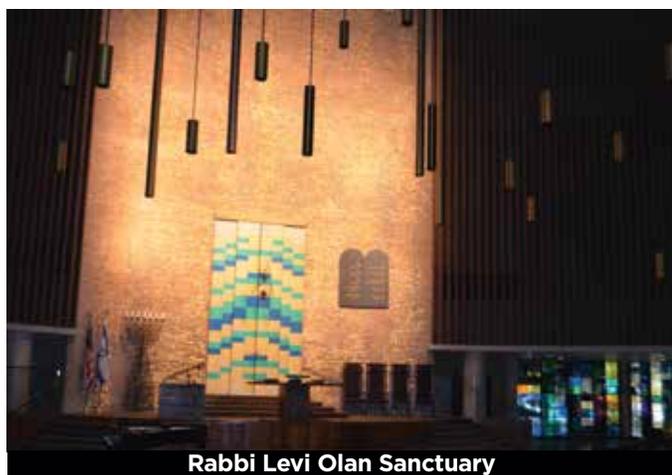
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taining to the congregation and its members. Rabbis who have led the congregation had included Rabbi William Greenburg, Rabbi David Lefkowitz, Rabbi Levi Olan, and Rabbi Gerald J. Klein. Today the congregation is led by senior rabbi Rabbi David E. Stern.

Through the years, its members have kept faith with the pioneers who stated their religious obligation so simply and forcefully when they formed the Hebrew Benevolent Association in 1872, “It is a duty we owe our merciful God, our children and ourselves.”

(adapted from “Our History” www.emanu-el.org/our-history)



Rabbi Levi Olan Sanctuary

From the Desk of Rabbi Debra J. Robbins



Rabbi Debra J. Robbins

Temple Emanu-El in Dallas is a diverse congregation in many ways, including the many modalities in which we worship and encounter spirituality. We have a long tradition of embracing what is new and innovative, cherishing what is meaningful

from the past, and often combining it all together in order to create a sense of wholeness and shared commitment to each other in our prayer experiences. We make use of many prayer books during the year, including the *Union Prayer Book Sinai Edition*.

These regularly scheduled classical Reform services are meaningful to our members who have prayed these words all their lives and to others as well who find the poetic English of the prayer book along with the magnificent music led by our rabbis and cantors, together with our volunteer choir accompanied on organ, to be soul-opening experiences.

Before Covid, we celebrated Shabbat six times a year with our version of a Classical Reform Service featuring majestic music, formal liturgy, in the warmth and grandeur of the Olan Sanctuary. During Covid, without our choir being able to sing together, without technology to stream from the Sanctuary, without safe ways to gather in person for prayer, we sought out new ways to include choral representation at services (especially on the High Holy Days), and we are now exploring how we will continue to embrace the traditions and connections to Classical Reform liturgy in this new phase of Jewish life. We are confident that just as Jewish ritual evolved in enduring ways during other historically challenging periods of history, human creativity and hopefully a little divine inspiration will once again prevail, and we will develop a new approach to bringing our community together in prayer to appreciate the richness of the roots of Reform Judaism.



ROOTS OF REFORM JUDAISM

Please visit our website www.rootsofreform.org often and follow us on social media.



ROOTS OF REFORM JUDAISM

Inspired by the past, embracing today, shaping tomorrow.

TEMPLE MOUNT SINAI - El Paso TX



The Jewish settlement of what is now El Paso dates to a period preceding the Civil War. The majority of the earlier settlers were of German descent. The story of Temple Mount Sinai began in October 1887, with the first official roster of 32 contributors to the original organization, called the Mt. Sinai Association. The call to organize was a death in the Jewish community and the need for a Jewish cemetery. Motions were passed “to remove paupers’ bodies from our cemetery and to layout the cemetery in lots and plats.”

Rabbi Zielonka urged affiliation with the UAHC so that El Paso was not isolated ...

By 1898, the community met to organize a congregation at the County Court House. At the same meeting Dr. Oscar J. Cohen was elected rabbi. They began raising money needed to build a synagogue. They initially raised \$3350 - \$1760 from the congregation and \$1590 from the Christian community. This example of the spirit of fellowship still prevails in El Paso today. The corner stone was laid in June of 1899, and the dedication services took place in September 1899.

In August of 1900, Rabbi Martin Zielonka, a graduate of the Hebrew Union College and the

University of Cincinnati was elected rabbi for two years. He remained there until his death in 1938. Rabbi Zielonka urged affiliation with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) so that El Paso was not an isolated Jewish community, and in 1906, the congregation became affiliated with the National Conference of Jewish Charities and joined the UAHC.

Adjacent to the city of El Paso is Ft. Bliss, where many soldiers are stationed, including a significant number of Jews. Soldiers have always been the special care of the El Paso Jewish Community. They are invited to religious services and are accorded home hospitality on the Holy Days. During the summer of 1916, with construction of the new temple underway, Temple Mt. Sinai was without



The Reform Advocate

Volume XIII, Number I: Fall 2021

a home, and at no time in its history was a home more needed than at that moment. American troops had been concentrated on the border for any possible emergency with Mexico. In order to meet the demands that the large soldier-congregation imposed upon the local community, work on the temple was rushed and the main auditorium was completed in time for the Holy Day services in 1916. Dedication of the temple took place in December 1916.

El Paso, as a border city, has faced many problems. Not only has Temple Mt. Sinai worked with soldiers, but it had also been engaged in an effort to control the flow of Jewish immigrants from Europe, through Mexico into the United States. When the United States Government adopted a new immigration policy, some Jews tried to evade the law by coming through Mexico. Temple Mt. Sinai sent its rabbi to New York to interest national Jewish organizations in this problem. His argument was that the American Jew is law-abiding, and he would not be a party to fellow Jews evading the law. Because of this stand, he induced Jews who came to Mexico to stay in Mexico. The result has been a flourishing Jewish community-in-the-making along the border in Mexico. Additionally, the El Paso Jewish community has assumed the care of the immigrants who have come to the border city of Juarez.

The mid-1970s, as was the case throughout the Reform movement, was a period of change at Temple Mt. Sinai. The Classical Reform-style of worship embraced during the prior several decades made way for youth groupers and guitars, and a greater emphasis on Hebrew in prayer. During the 1980s and 1990s, the building was refreshed and renovated, and Temple Mt. Sinai celebrated its ninetieth (*cinco de chai!*) and one-hundredth anniversaries. The centennial was marked by a year of festivities, including the commissioning of a *sefer torah*.

From its earliest years as a frontier outpost, through the middle years of the twentieth century, and up

to the present day, Temple Mt. Sinai has grown and thrived in accordance with changing times.

(adapted from the history texts on the TMS site www.templemountsinai.com/Who-We-Are)

From the Desk of Rabbi Ben Zeidman

How we use *UPB* over the course of the year:



Rabbi Ben Zeidman

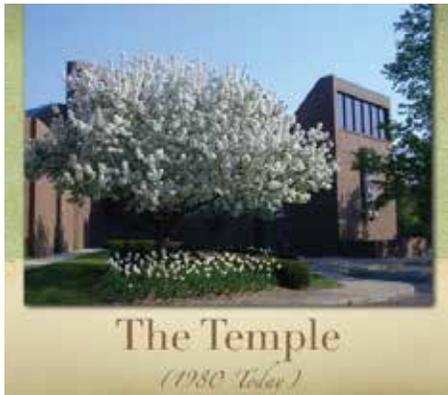
At Temple Mount Sinai, our history anchors us as we look to the future of Jewish life in our city and our world. With great joy, we look for ways to honor the past as we push off into the future. For some, the comfort of nostalgia is spiritually elevating and satisfying. But for all of us, those who grew up in the Reform movement and those new to it, recognizing the past gives us a sense of purpose.

As Jews, we are driven by our Torah and its values and ideals which stand the test of time. They are ancient and each generation takes responsibility for ensuring they remain relevant. By engaging in prayer with the *Union Prayer Book* once a month, we all take the time to meditate on the wisdom of those prayerful reflections of the ancient liturgy of our tradition - words which remind us that spirituality touches the head and the heart, that our obligations to the Divine direct us to focus on the ethical *mitzvot*, commandments.

Jewish prayer is liturgical, but how we have understood what that liturgy means has changed as we have changed. Reflecting on a variety of interpretations ensures that we have the fullest access to all that Jewish prayer has to offer us in this unending quest for a meaningful life.



THE TEMPLE - Louisville KY



The Temple in Louisville is Kentucky's oldest and largest Jewish congregation. Established in 1843 as K.K. Adas Israel, The

Temple was a founding member of Reform Judaism's Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now Union for Reform Judaism) and an early proponent of Reform Judaism in American Jewish life. When Reform Judaism began in 1873, The Temple in Louisville was the second largest congregation in the movement.

By the 1880's Congregation Brith Sholom was formed for the next generation of Jews to settle in Louisville who separated from Adath Israel, where services were held in English instead of their native German. Brith Sholom joined the Reform movement in 1920. The two congregations enjoyed cordial relations for nearly a century before reuniting in 1977 to become The Temple of today.

... in 1873, The Temple in Louisville was the second largest congregation in the movement.

Throughout its long history, The Temple has stood as an active and vocal proponent for the causes of Reform Judaism. From its earliest beginnings in Louisville, The Temple has taken pride in its commitment to instill in each generation of its congregation, the essential values of the Jewish faith, the deeper understanding of its heritage and future, and the involvement of its people toward the betterment of the community as a whole. For over 175 years, the rabbi and lay leaders of The Temple have brought strength, vision, and insight into the lives

of its members, the broader Jewish community, and to the city of Louisville at large.

(adapted from "Our History" www.thetemplelouky.org/about-the-temple/)

From the Desk of Rabbi Joe Rooks Rapport



Rabbi Joe Rooks Rapport

I wrote an article for the *Journal of Reform Judaism* a number of years ago entitled: "The Roots of Reform in Louisville" establishing our congregation as the sixth Reform congregation in America. The Temple holds a Classical Reform High Holy Day service each year along

with special Sabbath services from the Sinai edition of the *Union Prayer Book* and music from the classical age on; Founder's Day each January, Isaac Mayer Wise's Birthday in March, and Isaac W. Bernheim* Shabbat in May.

*Isaac Wolfe Bernheim, was a philanthropist and founder of I.W. Harper bourbon whiskey distillery and early leader of the Kentucky Bourbon industry. Bernheim established the 14,000 acre Bernheim Arboretum and Forest. He also funded the first free standing Jewish library in America, on the campus of Hebrew Union College, now housing the American Jewish Archives.



INSTITUTE FOR SOUTHERN JEWISH LIFE (ISJL) - Jackson MS

The earliest and most broadly diverse Jewish communities in the United States are found in the Southern states. In 1986, the Museum of Southern Jewish Experience was founded to collect and display historic *Judaica* from these scores of small Jewish communities, many having gone out of existence. In 2000, the museum changed its focus. It became the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, providing educational and support resources to congregations large and small from Alabama to Virginia to Texas. Many of these began as Reform congregations, using the *Union Prayer Book*. Today, the *UPB* joins later Reform prayer books (*Gates of Prayer*, *Mishkan Tefillah*) as the liturgy of these Southern Reform communities.

“A Southern Connection”

By Rabbi Caroline Sim



For more than twenty years, the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) has been committed to supporting, connecting, and celebrating Jewish life in the South. Throughout thirteen southern states, the ISJL offers

resources and services to meet the needs of communities of all sizes. The ISJL works with individuals, congregations, and organizations to safeguard Jewish traditions and culture, while simultaneously encouraging the growth and further enrichment of Jews in southern communities. In order to best serve southern congregations, the ISJL is focusing on three key areas: Culture, Education, and Spirituality.

Culture: This focus area celebrates Jewish culture and preserves the unique stories of Jewish life in the South. The ISJL offers a roster of musicians, scholars, authors, and other presenters. The online *Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities* documents every Jewish community that has existed in the South. We offer Southern Jewish Heritage Tours to share southern Jewish hospitality, engage with Civil Rights history, and learn about the diversity of the American Jewish experience.

Education: This area of focus connects communities, no matter their size, through comprehensive curriculum, collective enrichment, and community support, including visits from ISJL Program Associates. The accessible, trans-denominational education program supports the ISJL's partner communities and helps ensure that Judaism can be an intrinsic part of children's lives.

Spirituality: This focus area provides rabbinical services to sustain the spiritual needs of 100+ congregations in the region that are too small to support their own full-time rabbi. The ISJL rabbis travel to teach, lead worship services, and officiate at life-cycle events, as well as providing remote *b'nei mitzvah* tutoring, conversion instruction, and support to individual Jews, connecting them to the larger Jewish community. The ability to provide pastoral care to Jewish individuals and communities remotely has been central to the ISJL's mission this past year. In an effort to reach the more than 100 congregations during the year, the ISJL brings rabbis to the region through its Rabbis-on-the-Road program. This program connects southern Jewish communities with clergy who are on sabbatical, retired, or have time and interest to volunteer. Clergy serve for one weekend or several.



ROOTS OF
REFORM
JUDAISM

Inspired by the past, embracing today, shaping tomorrow.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Rabbi Ben Azriel: is the Assistant Rabbi and Educator at Temple Beth Or in Dayton, Ohio and the Executive Director of Northern Hills Synagogue in Cincinnati, Ohio. Originally from the northwest suburbs of Chicago, Rabbi Azriel lives in Cincinnati, with his wife, Rachel who is a physician working in Pediatric and Internal medicine.



Scott O'Neal: is the Chief Operating Officer for The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee in Nashville. He is a Past President and current executive board member of Congregation Micah in Brentwood, Tennessee and a former member of the Cincinnati Board of Overseers for HUC-JIR. Outside of work, you can find Scott spending time with his wife Anna-Gene, friends, and following his daughter's and son's career exploits.



Rabbi Joel Simonds: has served at the Executive Director of the Jewish Center for Justice since 2017. He is also the Rabbi for the Synagogue on the HUC-JIR Campus and for Wilshire Boulevard Synagogue, both in Los Angeles. From 2015-2017, he served as West Coast Legislative Director for the RAC. He is deeply involved in issues of justice, *tikkun olam*, and public policy.



Mark Wallfisch: is a retired attorney, living with his partner Jeffery and their dogs in New Orleans; Pass Christian, Mississippi; and Fort Lauderdale. Read his flash fiction at supershortstories.com/

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Roots of Reform Judaism receives numerous communications from our readers, viewers, friends, and supporters. We are grateful that so many of these express support for our RRJ mission, show appreciation for our services or publications, and often, provide personal stories of how our Reform heritage has influenced the author's life. In each issue of the *Reform Advocate*, we include some of these in the hope that they will inspire you to write us as well!

NOTES TO ROOTS

I joined the RRJ services on Monday night. It was just what the doctor ordered. Beautiful music. Beautiful thoughts and no "rabbi needs to hear the sound of his own voice". I really had the opportunity to listen to the "roots of my Judaism" and it was a breath of fresh air. I was fine until "All the World" and then my kitchen flooded worse than (hurricane) Ida. I was overwhelmed with - who knows what- but it was so joyful.

(Dr. Madelyn Katz, Van Nuys CA)

We just finished watching your amazing service. Again, it was spectacular, and the choir was just fantastic...Congratulations on a moving and beautiful service, and thanks for including us in your emails. Happy and beautiful New Year...

(Bud & Hazel Herzog, Deerfield IL)

Thank you and ALL the participants in the virtual High Holy Day services. They were beautiful — meaningful words and comforting music.

(David & Hanna Gradwohl, Ames IA)

L'shana Tova! Thank you for the beautiful services that you have provided for the High Holidays, as well as for Shabbat. While I like the style of services which is more popular today in the Reform movement, I also feel uplifted by the grand music

and the emphasis on the universality of our religion which is characteristic of Classical Reform. How wonderful to experience the richness of all parts of our tradition.

(Yvette Pomeranz, Brooklyn NY)

Thank you so much for the wonderful YK service... for what you consistently have been achieving. You distill the best essence of Judaism in sensitive and accessible, intelligent, and beautiful work. The texts of the booklets are especially rich... This is the kind of Judaism we need to offer to a wider public, and one capable of speaking to a broad contemporary audience.

(Dr. Fred Roden, New York NY)

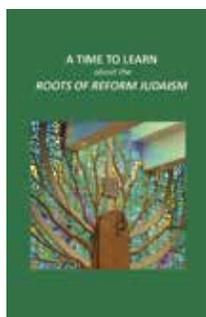
I received your email and applaud you for wanting to recognize congregations that are supportive of Classical Reform... I was attracted to the Society for Classical Reform (now Roots of Reform Judaism) because I personally believe strongly in maintaining classical synagogue music and in the importance of the sermon... I encourage you to recognize congregations that are truly Classical Reform and compliment you for the work you are doing.

(Rabbi Hillel Cohn, Rabbi Emeritus Congregation Emanu-El San Bernadino CA)



“A Time to Learn” For Us All

During the past two years, Roots of Reform Judaism’s team has created nine all-color prayer booklets for home and family use, providing affordable, easily accessible resources for the Sabbath, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Chanukah, and Sukkot. We also recognized the need in these challenging times for resources that support people in hospitals and nursing homes, those at home or in quarantine, for families facing the loss of loved ones and needing a Jewish service, and even age-appropriate material for our youngest family members.



We are especially delighted to announce the new addition to the series; **A TIME TO LEARN about the Roots of Reform Judaism**. This richly-illustrated booklet contains an historic timeline of Reform Judaism from its earliest days in Europe and the foundations of

Reform Judaism in America, to the critical events of the present. With photographs, biographies, key issues, and significant Reform accomplishments, this booklet is an edifying and user-friendly way

to learn about our Reform heritage. Along with the timeline, *A Time to Learn* includes a study of six basic beliefs of Reform Judaism - God, the People Israel, Torah, Religious Practice, the State of Israel, and Social Justice. As illustrated through a comparison of four significant platforms of our heritage, it compares the changes Reform Judaism has undergone over the last two centuries.



Rabbi Devon Lerner

It is written by Rabbi Devon Lerner, Program Director of Roots of Reform Judaism. She is an author, educator, scholar, social worker, community activist, and former rabbi in Atlanta, GA, Richmond, VA, and Boston, MA.

This booklet is funded by a generous gift from the Scott Lerner Memorial Fund and Leslie Lerner.

In these challenging and uncertain times, you can still celebrate the Sabbath and festivals at home or virtually with the **Roots of Reform Booklet Project**. In contemporary language, primarily in English, with Hebrew and transliteration for key prayers. These booklet offer a path for many to find a way into the beauty of our heritage.

8 booklets are available now:

- A Time to Rest – Sabbath Prayers and Rituals for the Home
- A Time to Mourn – Prayers and Home Service for Mourners
- A Time to Reflect – A Shabbat Evening Service for Today
- A Time to Share – Home Observances, Festivals, Blessings and Readings
- A Time to Rejoice – an abbreviated Rosh Hashanah Service
- A Time to Forgive – an abbreviated Yom Kippur Service
- A Time to Comfort – Prayers and Meditations for Moments of Need
- A Time to Learn about the Roots of Reform Judaism

The booklets are being used for individual reflection; lay-led, in-home, and congregational services; congregational member resources; *chavurot* (self-led communities); hospitals and hospice communities; and senior living communities.



THE “FOUNDATIONS” OF OUR WORK

We are very pleased to welcome a number of new foundations and grantors into the Roots of Reform family. These new funders, who have become so important to us especially during these challenging times, have enabled us to greatly extend our outreach to individuals, organizations, and congregations in need of Jewish resources. Each organization has been instrumental in assisting with a specific initiative, made possible by their generosity.

The *Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts* has provided funding enabling us to offer large print versions of our Roots of Reform Prayer booklets. This is helpful to people in hospitals, synagogues, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes, as well as individuals at home with visual challenges. The *Scott Lerner Memorial Fund* and Leslie Lerner have focused on Jewish education by funding the creation and publishing of *A Time to Learn*. This booklet is designed to broaden the knowledge of Reform Judaism making the knowledge accessible to individuals, congregations, and educational institutes.

The *Wendy Kanter Memorial Fund* enabled us to create materials for interfaith and community learning about Jewish holidays and rituals in cooperation the HUC Skirball Museum of Art in Cincinnati. This Fund is provided in conjunction with HUC.

The *Rockwern Charitable Foundation* generously provided a grant that is ongoing for the coming five years, supporting our efforts for Jewish education and outreach.

Finally, the *Jerome A. and Estelle R. Newman Assistance Fund* will allow us to provide our Roots of Reform Judaism resources to Reform rabbis around the country.

We are truly grateful to have the support and partnership of these generous funding organizations.

Upcoming Education Highlights

1. Creating vision for future RRJ education projects through discussions with Reform Jewish educators around the country
2. Creation of Reform Judaism curricula by HUC rabbinical and education internships for synagogues, schools, interested individuals
3. TEDtalk-style presentations by scholars, liturgists, rabbis, educators, musicians
 - a. Special videos highlighting holdings of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati
 - b. Videos highlighting Judaica and ritual items from the Bernard Museum of Temple Emanu-El of the City of New York
 - c. Introductions to Jewish liturgical music included in our RRJ on-line collection
4. Presentations for Hebrew Union College students in Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati



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