

The Reform Advocate

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THE SOCIETY FOR
CLASSICAL
REFORM
JUDAISM

Renewing the Heritage
of American Liberal Judaism
for the 21st Century



Special Issue

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: TODAY'S CLASSICAL REFORM SUPPORTERS

from all ages and walks of life



In previous issues of The Reform Advocate we have featured articles and academic papers on wide ranging topics, including the history of the Reform movement, the development of Classical Reform music, the creation of new publications by the Society, and reports on our outreach projects, such as the Society Institutes at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and Jerusalem, and more.

In this issue we are highlighting the voices of Classical Reform supporters. We asked our contributors to share what attracts them to Classical Reform Judaism. Their stories are as diverse as the people who are sharing their experiences. In this issue, we hear from an aspiring rabbinic student, a Christian minister,

a young committed Jew in an interfaith family, a university professor, a Reform rabbi, and a Jew by choice. Through their words, we see how Classical Reform is responding to the needs of 21st century spiritual seekers.

We would like to include more personal stories in future issues of the Advocate. If you are interested in sharing your story, please contact us at scrjprograms@gmail.com.

We hope you enjoy meeting these six fascinating people whose very different spiritual journeys have led them to our Classical Reform tradition!

OF FALLING BOOKS AND FACEBOOK: A Young Reform Jew's Journey from Neo-Traditionalism, to Secularism, to Classical Reform

by Jordan Friedman

The year was 2010. I was a first-year student at Beloit College, a small, private, liberal arts college near the Illinois-Wisconsin border. I was a wide-eyed freshman still experiencing the “honeymoon” phase of college, when everything seemed like a carefree adventure and everyone seemed to be exploring their identity and challenging their assumptions. I was no exception.

Having been brought up by Conservative-raised parents in a typical, traditional-leaning Reform Temple in the suburbs of Chicago, I thought that being Jewish was all about lox, bagels, and klezmer music. Yiddish expressions and a schema of identity-preservation revolving around the Holocaust and Israel were the mainstay of American Jewish identity. Growing up, I certainly believed in the importance of God and faith as an inseparable part of this identity, but that aspect was inculcated more by my older relatives (many of whom were raised Orthodox) than by anything in my institutional Jewish upbringing.

I took my initial religious education very seriously. Nevertheless, soon after my Bar Mitzvah, a difficult few years of Junior High took their toll and I became an angry atheist and ardent secularist. Judaism represented irrational folk superstitions and an annoying, even embarrassing set of cultural attitudes and behaviors on the part of members of my community.



Toward the end of High School, I softened somewhat in my angry rebellion and was no longer an atheist, but did not care much for organized religion. By the time I started college, I was ready to explore my religious identity anew. I attended various “spiritual life” events held by the college’s interfaith Chaplaincy office. I began to identify as a “culturally Jewish Deist” and assented to the existence of God, but did little to reach out or interact with that reality.

One February afternoon, everything changed. I had been taking harpsichord and organ lessons, and one day my professor instructed me to go to the music library and pick new music to learn. I sorted through the dusty volumes of organ music, and tried desperately to pry a book from one of the tightly packed shelves. My hands slipped, and I fell back against the opposite row of shelves. As I hit the shelves, a book fell from one of them, and hit me on the head before falling to the ground in front of me. It was a book of organ preludes for the Synagogue by Louis Lewandowski. I had never heard of an organ in a synagogue, and was intrigued. A Google search of the composer’s name revealed an entire tradition of organ and choral music for the Synagogue spanning nearly two



centuries. I researched this tradition feverishly over the next few weeks, and was deeply moved by it.

In the course of my new research obsession, I befriended (on Facebook) a young organist at Temple Emanu-El in New York City, and occasionally played for services. On his online profile, he listed his religious views as “Classical Reform Judaism.” I had never encountered that term before, and immediately Googled it. The more I read, the more I realized that this philosophy matched what I believed. I found the website of the Society, and within minutes, emailed Rabbi Berman. We opened regular correspondence, and within a few weeks I had decided to pursue the Reform rabbinate after graduation. Over the next four years, I developed my knowledge and commitment, and with the help of Rabbi Berman and God, developed a deep and organic Classical Reform faith commitment.

For me, Classical Reform is unique because it combines a liberal, scholarly attitude toward much of Jewish text and tradition with the more or less traditional belief in God and a spiritual afterlife, as expressed in our historic Platforms and Prayer Book. Our Judaism is post-ethnic and universalistic, but does not lack a focused sense of cosmic mission. It is open-minded and embracing, but

not without a sense of religious obligation or obedience to a Higher Power. Classical Reform is, for me, the perfect synthesis of faith and reason, tradition and modernity, head and heart, obligation and autonomy.

“Classical Reform is, for me, the perfect synthesis of faith and reason, tradition and modernity, head and heart, obligation and autonomy.”

As I prepare to embark on the long journey to joining the rabbinate, I hope and pray that I might be worthy to bring my unusual journey and experience to the table, sharing what I’ve learned with the broader Reform Jewish community, making a

meaningful contribution and honoring our legacy. Our radical—yet moderate—religious outlook invites upon us complex challenges and resistance from many directions and along many axes.

I hope therefore that all who read this will join me in imploring our God of infinite possibilities for help and strength on the way, that our quiet confidence and bearing on our respective journeys might prove the integrity and veracity of the religious vision we all love so dearly, and in so doing touch and change the whole world.

Jordan Friedman is an accomplished musician and avid student of Classical Reform history and music. He is currently working as an intern for the Society and for a Reform congregation in Chicago.

WHAT IS A NICE CHRISTIAN MINISTER DOING IN A CLASSICAL REFORM CONGREGATION?

by The Rev. Dr. B.K. Hipsher

When I attended my first Classical Reform service I could not imagine the journey that was in store for me. I have been Christian identified all my life spending my formative years as the oldest daughter of a Baptist minister. Questions about the nature of God and our relationship to the Divine have been part of my consciousness from my earliest childhood memories. The first Roman Catholic Mass I attended as an undergraduate in the mid 1970s started me on what has become a lifelong journey of understanding my own personal theology. The liturgy



made sense to me in a way the Baptist service never did. The sharing of food and drink was a powerful image of community that spoke to me.

I took instruction to convert to Roman Catholicism from a progressive minded priest who would become my lifelong friend. But when I announced to my parents that I planned to convert, the conversation did not go well. And shortly thereafter I moved to south Louisiana where Catholic masses were still being said in Latin, defying the directives of Vatican II that allowed and encouraged Mass to be conducted in the local language of the congregation. Because I could not understand the liturgy the ritual was meaningless to me.

After 15 years of estrangement from organized religion I embraced the Episcopal Church and later the Anglican Church of Canada. I entered seminary at Episcopal Divinity School in 2003 and received my Masters of Theological Studies there in 2006. In October 2007 I was ordained in Metropolitan Community Church. I completed my Doctor of Ministry Degree at Episcopal Divinity School in 2012.

So what's a nice Christian minister doing in a Classical Reform congregation? The answer is simple... I am welcomed, loved, accepted, and celebrated as a full member. My partner is a Reform rabbi. We are an interfaith family. And Central Reform Temple of Boston is our spiritual home. Because Classical Reform congregations welcome interfaith members unconditionally, I am able to participate fully in the life of the community.



“...what’s a nice Christian minister doing in a Classical Reform congregation? The answer is simple... I am welcomed, loved, accepted, and celebrated as a full member.”

An important issue for me is the fact that the *Union Prayer Book* includes transliteration and English translations for the Hebrew texts. This makes me feel comfortable and included. I can understand the prayers. Even when I pray in Hebrew I know what the intention is behind the words. This little blue book has been my entryway into a group of people who have become the faith community with whom I share my spiritual journey.

When I finished my Doctor of Ministry degree, my congregation celebrated with me. I sing in the choir. My partner and I light Shabbat candles. And my Hebrew is improving over the years as I sing and pray. I feel included. I feel valued. I feel loved. I can't imagine my life without this Temple family.

They make me stronger. I'm more sensitive to covert anti-Semitism in my own tradition. And I'm able to share this with other colleagues leading Christian congregations in multiple denominations.

My ministry is a unique one. It happens online in the virtual world of Second Life. Each week I prepare my sermon, create the liturgy, choose the music, and lead the service for my congregation. This ministry feeds me. I feel genuinely called to serving this congregation as a pastor. And like many ministers, the opportunity to enjoy a service as a participant, to sing and pray as a member of the congregation, is also an important part of my own spiritual journey. I have this opportunity at Central Reform Temple of Boston. There I am not required to fit into a mold. I am encouraged to ask questions, contribute, and participate fully.

Classical Reform Judaism has given me an opportunity to see God's extravagant love in action. I only hope that I can share the same kind of loving inclusion in my own life and ministry.

The Rev. Dr. B.K. Hipsher is a minister in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) and received a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Episcopal Divinity School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her spiritual path continues to evolve as a member of Central Reform Temple in Boston.

A WALK DOWN THE AISLE TO CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

by Dan Lissner



My wife had always envisioned walking down a long center aisle in her white dress while the Clark Trumpet Voluntary resounded. A classic church wedding, amidst the New England autumn foliage. Those were really the only requirements she had established for the wedding ceremony we were planning. Autumn, center aisle, trumpets. And church.

I ran through the list in my mind again and again as I walked in my new home city, Boston, on an afternoon in fall 2004, hoping that my unease would settle the more I repeated the plan - a bit disappointed each time that it didn't. Church. I, a Conservative Jew, and she, a Catholic, would marry, and we intended to celebrate our union among family and friends with a ceremony that would reflect us and our vision for our shared life. Only I didn't yet see a path to a shared approach to faith. And I certainly couldn't picture *Church*.

Then, I saw a sign. Literally, a sign. Outside a church overlooking Boston's Public Garden, under a rainbow flag and a message of welcome, it said "Join us for Yom

Kippur Services, tomorrow night, Rabbi-in-Residence Howard Berman." Fresh off a merely adequate Rosh Hashanah experience at the local college Hillel a week before, where I had chanted the prayers and melodies I knew by heart but had felt like a visitor, in a new city, disconnected from the student community, just going through the motions of worship, I was open to something new. I was without a spiritual home, and I had no idea how my Jewish identity was going to persevere in my soon-to-be interfaith family when my own spiritual journey felt stalled and directionless. But here, had I really just stumbled upon a Rabbi-in-Residence at a progressive, pretty-as-a-picture New England church? How bizarre! I stopped and peeked inside. A long, center aisle. Could this be it? I'd give it a try.

The following night, Kol Nidre, I attended my first Classical Reform service. Of course, I didn't know at the time that what I was experiencing was "Classical Reform." I just knew that I was paying attention to

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the worship in a new way. The music was rich, but the melodies were different, so I found myself actually listening to the prayers that for so long I'd just chanted mindlessly. The service was partly Hebrew, but with much more English translation and readings than I was used to, and for the first time in a long time, perhaps ever, I heard the meaning in the prayers I was reciting. The sermon was engaging and challenging, much more powerful than the traditional annual-fund appeal I expected to hear. I met the rabbi afterwards, told him I was getting married, that my partner was non-Jewish, and asked if he was the sort of rabbi who would officiate that sort of thing. He welcomed me and told me I had come to the right place.

Boy, was he right! I didn't know then, but I think the place he was referring to was not the building, the

splendid Arlington Street Church, where in fact we were married a year later in a service jointly officiated by Rabbi Berman and the late Father James Field, whom we remember for his own rich legacy of supporting interfaith families. And he wasn't referring to the community itself, though what began those High Holy Days soon evolved into what is today Central Reform Temple of Boston, a thriving Classical Reform congregation now celebrating its 10th anniversary and which I had the privilege of serving as president for several of those years, alongside my wife as a dedicated Board member. I understand now that the place – where we would find an unconditional welcome as an interfaith family, where we would both find an authentic and accessible practice of Judaism that we could share, and where both of our religious traditions would be respected and our shared ethical values would be promoted – is Classical Reform.

The wedding was grand and everything we hoped it would be. And the experience since has been even richer, as our Classical Reform worship has strengthened our ability

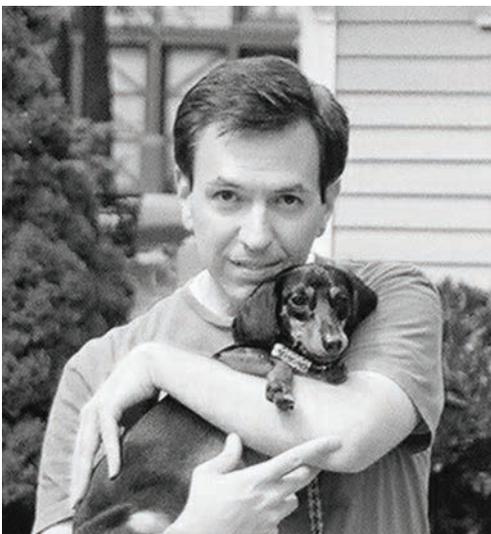
to engage meaningfully in both of our faith traditions through the continuous exercise of identifying common ground and shared values. That process has deepened our relationship with each other and has provided us with a spiritual identity that we are proud to pass on to our young children.

As a proud Board Member, I support the Society for Classical Reform Judaism so that it can continue to welcome interfaith families like ours and help us find the long, center aisle for which many of us are searching – not only for the short walk to exchange rings and vows, but for the longer journey of a meaningful, shared Jewish life.

In addition to his leadership positions in Central Reform Temple and the SCRJ, Dan Lissner is involved in many community and civic activities. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts with his wife Adrienne and their two children.

I FOUND THE GIFT OF CHOOSING (CLASSICAL REFORM) JUDAISM

by Dr. Fred Roden



The Classical Reform tradition is meaningful to me for the invitation that it offers. The festival of Shavuot (or Shavuot) celebrates the challenge we receive to be in relationship with God. There we celebrate the giving of the Torah. We also read the Book of Ruth. At the Passover seder, each one of us is meant to feel as if we are personally liberated from our bondage. Likewise, each one of us has the opportunity, following Ruth's example, to choose the Eternal Oneness of our God. In our modern world, the story of the covenant at Sinai represents for everyone the individual decision to say yes to that call to closeness. Historically youth were confirmed on Shavuot. We too can confirm our commitment to the unity of God and all humanity.

Twenty-first century society is preoccupied with being "spiritual but not religious." Our contemporary religious movements suggest that we need to engage people in new ways; that we have somehow failed to be relevant. Yet the truths of Classical Reform Judaism are the timeless, universal teachings of the prophets. They speak to "head" but also to "heart." Anyone who mistakes this

tradition as “cold” or “dry” misses the piety and devotion of our liberal Jewish ancestors. The depth of connection to God comes through both intellectual engagement as well as heartfelt intimacy. We cease to imagine ourselves as alone in the modern world. We remember our connection to the Source that infuses all that we do. The Divine empowers us as vehicles for healing a broken world and our own fragmented selves.

This invitation to intimacy is extended to all. The message of Classical Reform Judaism is offered to everyone and is for all people. The tradition we carry is not for ourselves alone, but for “all the world,” in the words of our banner hymn, that seeks deeper meaning, deeper connection, and indeed deeper healing. This is the radical welcome of our tradition. The universalism of Classical Reform affirms Judaism’s meaning in our pluralistic age. The “particular” wisdom reaches for a larger community.

These truths drew me to Classical Reform Judaism. As a literary historian specializing in the 19th century, I understand the broad ethical vision, the idealism and hope for all humanity of that time. I came to admire how the Classical Reformers wove a faith at once old and new. Their love for Judaism met modern philosophy in the vision of a better future.

My acculturating Jewish ancestors had married “out” and knew other faiths. I found the gift of choosing Judaism. My study and experience have shown me the meaning of liberal Jewish thought as it developed over the past two centuries and the significance of progressive Judaism for the 21st century. Our tradition – cloistered so long in looking inward – must “come out” to a world awaiting its

message. The universalist teachings of Classical Reform invite the “born” Jew and the “Jew-by-choice” to examine our relationships with others. Emphasizing what we share with our neighbors heals our separateness. It may sound like a paradox, but moving more deeply into liberal Judaism allows us to realize most fully the oneness of our God and all humanity.

I value the contemplative service style of Classical Reform, an opportunity for retreat and recollection, to be with our selves and our God. I appreciate the classical music and liturgy that beautifully perform Jewish prayer.

In every generation, time, and place, Jewish composers boldly reinvented Judaism according to the changing customs of the societies in which they lived. The *Union Prayer Book* unfolds its hope for the common destiny of all humanity and our world: the promise of oneness in the Oneness that is our God.

To return to Shavuot (or Shavuot) and indeed to Sinai: the Classical Reform tradition has enabled me to stand in relationship with my God, to say yes to the intimacy that serves to connect me not only with the people of my own community, but with all humanity. Classical Reform Judaism in the 21st-century can offer that invitation to anyone and everyone.

Dr. Fred Roden is Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut and a Board Member of the SCRJ. His specialties include Nineteenth-Century British Literature (Victorian, Religion); religion, literature, and culture (Christianity, Jewish studies) and Holocaust studies; LGBT Literature/Queer Theory (Religious Studies); Medieval (Medievalism, Religion).

“The universalist teachings of Classical Reform invite the “born” Jew and the “Jew-by-choice” to examine our relationships with others. Emphasizing what we share with our neighbors heals our separateness.”

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WHY I AM A CLASSICAL REFORM JEW

by Rabbi Dr. Nadia Siritsky, LCSW, BCC



To try to explain why I am a Classical Reform Jew is to try to explain why I am a rabbi, is to try to explain why I am who I am, is to try to explain what I believe G!d is... which leads me back to a place that has no words. I write G!d's name with an exclamation point in the middle of the word to try to convey this idea that G!d is infinite and beyond words.

I believe that all religions are like different languages that seek to express that which is beyond words. All religions contain an infinite sacred Spark but they rely on the finite tools of this world to be understood by our limited human brains. Our rituals should not be end goals, but rather, potentially transformative vehicles that can sometimes help us to transcend our finite experiences of this world. There are countless parables, metaphors and stories, which Judaism calls midrash. These are all inadequate attempts to try to create a language that we can use to communicate with each other and to create a sense of community, so that we can remember our way back Home.

The danger is when we believe that one Spark is brighter than the others or that only one language is legitimate. The danger is when we believe that the finite is real and that the half truth is the only truth. The danger is when we allow the ego's fear of disappearing to deafen the Soul's knowledge of our eternal Essence. History is filled with tragic examples of these limited/limiting beliefs.

I became a rabbi to serve G!d and to try to do the work of tikkun olam, namely to bring healing and wholeness to this world where violence, greed, fear and the quest for power have all too often eclipsed the Light, Love and Beauty that is G!d's Indwelling Presence, and that Kabbalah has taught me to call Shechinah.

I believe that religion is not a truth unto itself, but rather a means of helping us to transcend this world, so that we

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can (to borrow a Jewish metaphor) partner with G!d in completing the work of creation and bring healing and wholeness to a planet that is still far too broken.

My path to Classical Reform Judaism does not conform to the stereotypes of Classical Reform Judaism. It includes several years of study in Orthodox Yeshivahs and living a traditionally observant life. It is deeply steeped in Kabbalistic and mystical practice which informs my belief that separation, inequality and difference are illusions of this world which eclipse the Truth that we are all part of the One who is beyond words.

As a result of this belief, I am unable to recite prayers that proclaim our chosenness as a Jewish people and I am unable to sit idly by while I watch religion be used as a way to erect walls between people, rather than a bridge over the chasms that seem to separate us. When I learn about loving interfaith couples who are told that they are destroying the Jewish people because they want to be married, my zeal for advocacy becomes ignited. When I hear about interfaith families who come to a synagogue to pray and connect with G!d, but leave feeling alienated

or inadequate because they can't follow and sing along with the congregation, I become further committed to creating and preserving safe, welcoming and accessible spiritual harbors for all of G!d's children.

I know that I have found my spiritual home in Classical Reform Judaism, because of its commitment to an unconditional welcome of interfaith families, which includes celebrating interfaith weddings, and creating worship experiences that are accessible to all. I am heartened by Classical Reform Judaism's shift of emphasis away from ritual and onto the spiritual and prophetic mandates of our faith.

I believe that, more important than the kippah on one's head, is using our head to inform religion with critical thought. More important than reciting Hebrew words is

understanding the words of our prayers, and translating them into action. More important than what we put into our mouths is what comes out of our mouths, and our ability to break bread with everyone, so that we can all partner together in bringing Unity to this world.

For all these reasons, and so many more, I am incredibly proud to be a founding board member of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism as it has worked to reclaim its rightful place at the chevruta table (peer-guided study) of Judaism, that we may begin to put together our different puzzle pieces and recognize that we are really all One.

Rabbi Dr. Nadia Siritsky is also a social worker and board certified chaplain who received her doctorate in ministry from HUC-JIR in 2013. She serves as a Board Member of the SCRJ and currently lives and works in Louisville, Kentucky.

***MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER
FOR ALL PEOPLE... Isaiah 56:7***

**MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY FROM
CATHOLICISM TO CLASSICAL
REFORM JUDAISM**

by Jamison Painter

I was raised as a Roman Catholic in Southern California, and attended a small Catholic university in that area. Yet I never felt at home in the Catholic Church. At 19, I became an Anglican. I felt more comfortable there, but I still felt that I didn't belong.

Some time later, when I was living abroad, I read the Book of Exodus. I was moved by the story of the Israelites' deliverance from slavery to freedom. I felt a deep pull, a longing that I had never experienced, to belong to this people whose story I felt such a part of already. When I moved back to the United States, to Tennessee, I continued to learn more about Judaism. I felt driven to ask Jews questions about what I had been reading in the Bible and online.

My exploration of modern day Judaism led me to Congregation Sherith Israel, Nashville's Orthodox shul. There I realized that my first inklings of togetherness with other Jews weren't just a passing thought. Prayers were entirely in Hebrew. This gave Shabbat an otherworldly feel that was different from the rest of the week. There was a clarity of purpose among the Orthodox that appealed to me. Nevertheless, something was missing.

Part of it was the difficulty of praying by myself in a language I couldn't understand. Although I could follow along (more or less) in shul, I was at a loss regarding how to pray at home. This was finally solved when I was able to find an old copy of the *Union Prayer Book*. The English language liturgy was beautiful, and spoke to me the way no other liturgy ever had, Anglican or otherwise.

I eventually decided that a Reform conversion would be a better choice for me. Of the two Reform temples in Nashville, I selected the newer Congregation Micah, a dynamic facility led by a rabbi with whom I felt a kinship, even when I disagreed with some of his ideas. It was here that I found the challenge and the joys of

Reform Judaism. Reform's clarity of purpose, while very present, is different than that of Orthodoxy. If Orthodoxy seeks to retain the past, Reform seeks to learn from the past and constantly apply it to ever changing situations.

After my conversion, events in my personal life took me away from active participation in my faith. It wasn't until I moved to the Midwest, that I could return to practicing my Judaism. I started attending a shul that is a blend of Conservative and Reform Jews. I wanted to use the *Union Prayer Book*, but the congregation didn't have one, and it seemed impossible to find another copy. Then I found the Society for Classical Reform Judaism website. I contacted them and they sent me a copy of the Advocate, CDs of Classical Reform worship, and happily, a copy of the *Union Prayer Book*, only updated from its 1940 edition!

Classical Reform Judaism presents the beauty and power of worship in an aesthetic way that ennobles the mind and spirit. This includes combining the best European musical traditions, and the formal style of worship common to the great liturgical Protestant traditions of Anglicanism and Lutheranism, with the hallowed prayers of our ancient Jewish faith experience. Naturally, this includes worship being predominantly in the language of the people, but with Hebrew still used to accent and beautify the Divine Service. Classical Reform advocates Judaism as a universalist faith for all those who seek enlightenment before God.

“Classical Reform Judaism presents the beauty and power of worship in an aesthetic way that ennobles the mind and spirit.”

While most modern Reform congregations are using prayer books that re-traditionalize the liturgy, with more Hebrew, and retention of more Orthodox prayers, Classical Reform seeks to keep alive the flame of the progressive, universalistic message of the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885. This message is beautifully embodied in the *Union Prayer Book*, which has been lovingly used and prayed with for 109 years in various editions.

I appreciate the shul I attend, with its Mishkan T'filah Fridays and Siddur Sim Shalom Saturdays. I am in many ways quite Orthodox in my practice, insofar as I try to keep kosher to the best of my ability, wear a beard, a prayer shawl under my clothes, and a yarmulke at all times. I pray three times daily, like many

an Orthodox or Conservative Jew. But I pray from the *Union Prayer Book*, and the “feeling” of my Judaism is the universalist message of Classical Reform. This is the Judaism I believe and for which I advocate.

My journey to Judaism has been both an intensely personal one, and yet, at the same time, has been played out against the backdrop of the experience of generations of Jews and non-Jews past, present and future. It is to them that Classical Reform has the most to offer, and to whom it has the greatest responsibility. I am proud to be a part of that.

Jamison Painter writes from Souix City, Iowa, in the heartland of the United States. He belongs to Congregation Beth Shalom, where he continues to pray and practice as a Classical Reform Jew.

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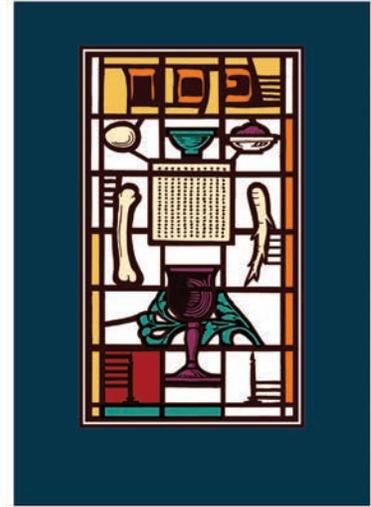


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The Union Prayer Book: Sinai Edition, Revised, published by the Society for Classical Reform Judaism in collaboration with Chicago Sinai Congregation, is a contemporary language, gender-neutral liturgy for Reform congregations wishing to maintain the historic worship traditions of our Movement's heritage. Preserving the beloved texts and cadences of the 1940 *Union Prayer Book*, the Sinai Edition also embraces the newest developments in Jewish liturgical responses to the realities of our time - a heightened awareness of inclusive language and a recognition of the spiritual challenges of the transforming events of Jewish history in this generation.

The contemporary language version of *The Union Prayer Book: Sinai Edition, Vol. II, for the High Holy Days*, is also available.

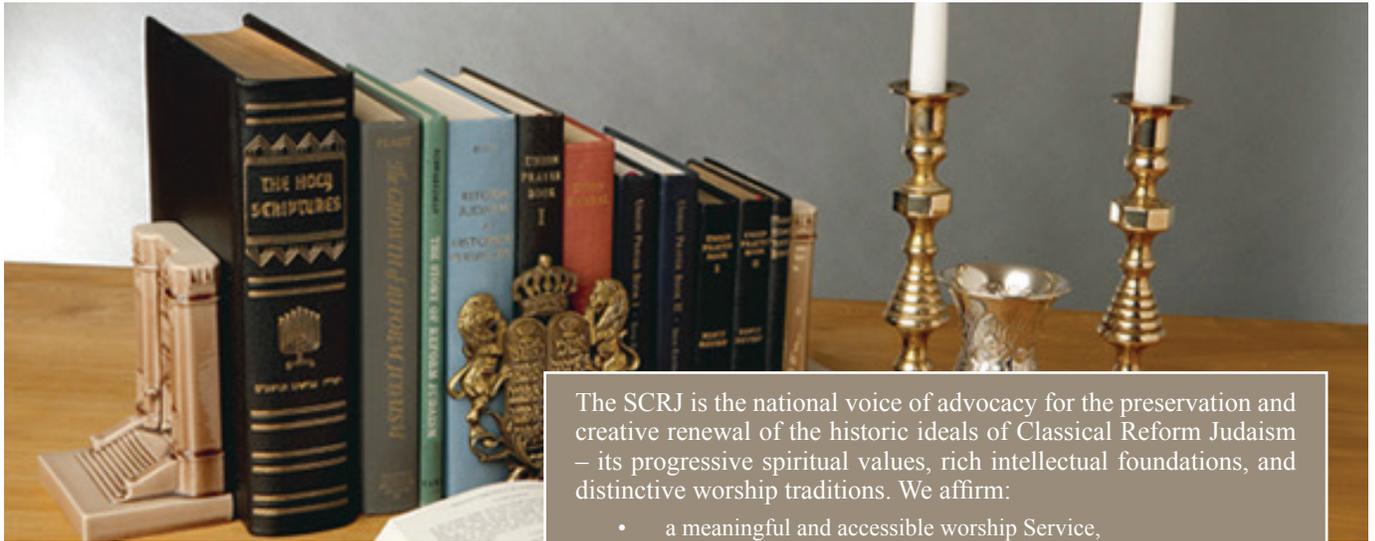
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The SCRJ is the national voice of advocacy for the preservation and creative renewal of the historic ideals of Classical Reform Judaism – its progressive spiritual values, rich intellectual foundations, and distinctive worship traditions. We affirm:

- a meaningful and accessible worship Service, primarily in English
- the ethical values, grounded in the timeless, universal vision of our Hebrew Prophets, that inspire our personal decision making and communal responsibility as primary expressions of our religious commitment as Jews
- the centrality of the American experience in our Jewish identity
- a warm, unconditional welcome and support for interfaith families

The integrity and inspiration of our Classical Reform heritage have continuing vitality and relevance for a new generation of Jews today.

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