

The Reform Advocate

Volume X, Number II: Spring/Summer 2018

Rabbi Devon A. Lerner, Editor

THE SOCIETY FOR
CLASSICAL
REFORM
JUDAISM

Reclaiming & Renewing
Our Heritage for the 21st Century



Celebrating 10 Years of Accomplishments & Progress

A Personal Reflection

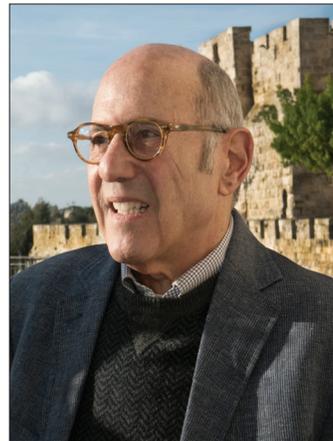
by Rabbi Howard A. Berman
Founder and Rabbinic Director of
The Society for Classical Reform Judaism



This special 10th Anniversary Issue of the *Reform Advocate* celebrates a significant milestone in the history of American Reform Judaism. The Society's founding

in January 2008 represented the coalescing of an important voice in our Movement - one which had long been marginalized.

We understand the role of traditional Jewish expressions of liturgy and observance that have dominated the Reform Movement for the past five decades. They reflect a richness of diversity and creativity that have brought new energy to our congregations. However, there remain many life-long and deeply faithful Jews who love the distinctive worship and music traditions of historic American Reform, and who have been disenfranchised and spiritually neglected by the changes in the Temples they devotedly built and served throughout their lives.



There are also many others, of all ages and from many backgrounds, who are current and potential members of our Temples, who resonate with the broad, inclusive, progressive understanding of liberal Jewish identity and practice embodied in our Classical Reform heritage.

It was advocacy for this voice, long absent at the table of our Movement, that the SCRJ has sought to articulate in a constructive and positive way. Our message has been that the Classical Reform legacy of beautiful worship, Prophetic commitment to ethical witness and action in our society, and open hearts and doors

"We offer a heartfelt and fervent prayer that as we continue this sacred work, ...our loving God will continue to bless these efforts."

that provide an accessible and embracing welcome for all in a changing Jewish community, represent a shared heritage that can offer meaning and inspiration to all Reform Jews - wherever they may stand on the spectrum of observance. The courageous spiritual vision of our Founders and pioneers over the past two hundred years offer all of us a vital, challenging context for living as proud committed Reform Jews in the 21st century.

From the beginning, we did not seek to become an external voice of protest and dissent, but rather an integral collegial presence within the institutions of our Movement. We have developed strong partnerships with each of the representative bodies of liberal Judaism, as well as with various congregations throughout the country and around the world.

“...we have developed strong partnerships with each of the representative bodies of liberal Judaism.”

The Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC - JIR), our seminary for the training



of rabbis, cantors, and educators, has been the major focus of the Society's work. We have sought to reach a new generation of our future

leaders with a positive, broadly embracing encounter with their heritage as Reform Jews. Through our lectures and forums, fellowships and scholarships, and special events at the Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and Jerusalem campuses of the College, the SCRJ has been able to help “reset” the vocabulary and perceptions of Classical Reform by our students. We have challenged them to see our history as a vital, creative resource for their own leadership - including the pastoral imperative of serving the diverse needs and styles of their congregants.

The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) has recognized the Society as an integral presence and resource for all congregations, and has invited us to participate in its past four national



As we mark this special milestone, there is much for which to be grateful, having been blessed to be able to achieve these major goals. Through these diverse connections with the broader Movement, and through our continuing publications program, all highlighted in the Anniversary issue, we have been able to build a foundation and an infrastructure of resources for the fulfillment of our Mission; “the reclaiming and renewing of our heritage for the 21st century.”

We offer a heartfelt and fervent prayer that as we continue this sacred work, even in different ways and strategies, that our loving God will continue to bless these efforts - undertaken in a spirit of the teaching of Torah, service to our Jewish people, and an embrace of all God's people with the message of a vital, living faith, dedicated to the pursuit of justice, and peace for all humanity.

Biennial conventions. During these gatherings, we have presented major learning sessions on Reform thought and practice and set up an exhibit booth to distribute informational materials. Most significantly, we have been able to offer Classical Reform worship services with Union Prayer Book liturgies that have attracted hundreds of participants.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) invited the SCRJ in 2014 to prepare a new contemporary language



revision of the 1923 Union Haggadah - the version of the Passover Seder beloved by generations of American families.

This “New Union Haggadah”, beautifully produced, has become one of the Conference's core authorized liturgical publications. In 2016, the Conference also published the Society's ebook digital version of our Union Prayer Book - Sinai Edition Revised, our contemporary, inclusive language renewal of the historic liturgy of American Reform Judaism.

CREATING NEW EDUCATIONAL AND LITURGICAL RESOURCES

We are grateful and blessed that during these past ten years we have achieved some of our major goals in building a foundation and infrastructure to fulfill our mission of “renewing our heritage for the 21st century.” One of these goals

has been to generate new educational and liturgical resources. The following pages highlight the publications that have been released since our founding in 2008.

A GROUND-BREAKING PUBLICATION!

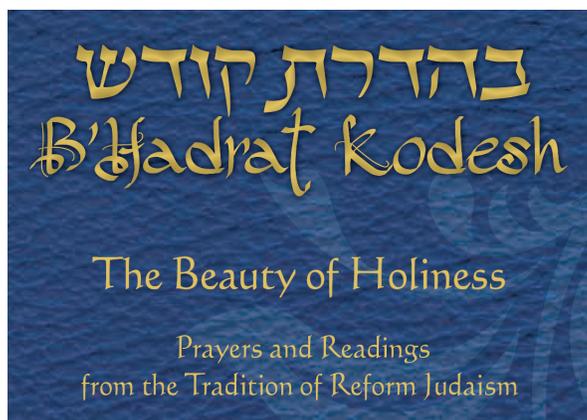
B'HADRAT KODESH - THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

For the first time - beautiful readings from our Reform Jewish Heritage have been translated from the English into modern Hebrew.

B'hadrat Kodesh - The Beauty of Holiness is an anthology of Prayers and Readings from the Tradition of Reform Judaism, and was created in collaboration with Kehilat Har-El in Jerusalem and the Society for Classical Reform Judaism.

Har-El was the first Reform Congregation established in Israel, and continues to be a leader in teaching and providing a vibrant living example of Progressive Jewish life in Israel.

Rabbi Ada Zavidov chose to use this new text at one of the first Reform services conducted at the Wall in Jerusalem. It has been well received, and is being used by a number of congregations in Israel.



TO ORDER:

Contact The Society for Classical Reform Judaism
15 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116
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UNION PRAYER BOOK, SINAI EDITION, REVISED In New Durable Paperback Format

Suitable For Both Personal And Congregational Use



The Union Prayer Book: Sinai Edition, Revised is a contemporary language, gender-neutral liturgy for Reform congregations. While preserving the poetic phrases beloved by generations of Jews, the Sinai Edition 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.

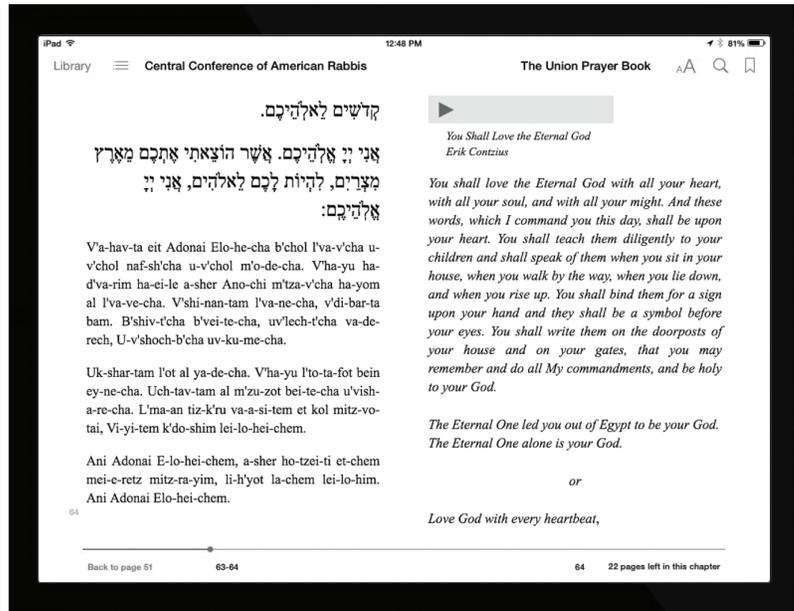
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Union Prayer Book, Sinai Edition, Revised eBook Edition

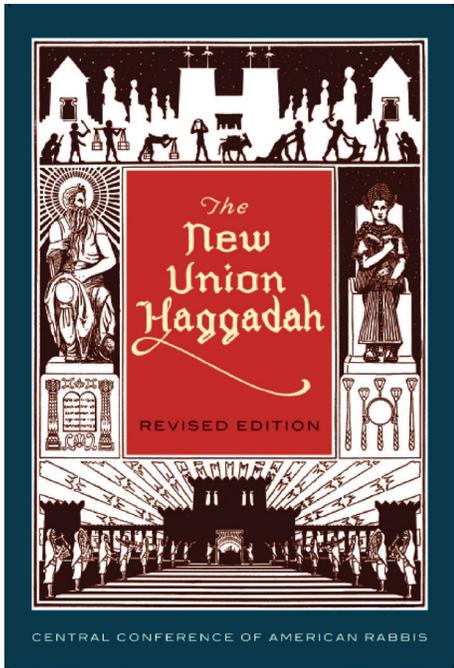
- Two Sabbath Services
- Embedded Music
- Gender-Inclusive Language
- Prayers & Meditations for Special Occasions
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THE NEW UNION HAGGADAH

Revised Edition

Blends the best of the old and new. This update of the beloved Haggadah preserves the elegance and beauty of the original while making it relevant to 21st Century families.



Updates include:

- Gender-sensitive language
- Full transliteration
- Inclusive language
- Miriam's cup ritual
- New essays by leading scholars

This revision has been created in cooperation with the Society for Classical Reform Judaism.

© 1923 by the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR)
Revised edition © 2014 by the CCAR

TO ORDER: Go to CCAR Press at ccarpres.org
A large print version is also available.

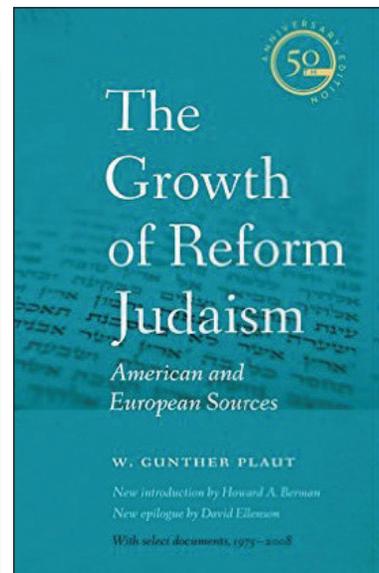
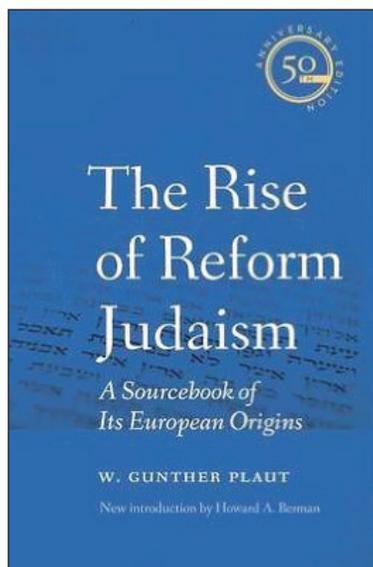
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THE RISE AND GROWTH OF REFORM JUDAISM

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION, New Introduction by Rabbi Howard A Berman

“The work of Rabbi Plaut is not only crucial for an understanding of Reform Judaism; it is also indispensable for grasping the development and history of Judaism in the modern world,” *from the epilogue to Volume II*, by Rabbi David Ellenson, Chancellor and past president of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion.

TO ORDER: Go to jps.org



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ESTABLISHING CONNECTIONS WITH PROGRESSIVE JEWISH COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD

Even though Reform Judaism began in Germany in the mid 19th century, it is here, in America, where Reform Judaism took hold and thrived. There are more Reform Jews in the U.S. than in any other place in the world, yet Jews around the world are renewing their own Jewish worship services and practices. They strive, as do we, to honor our past while making changes to meet the needs and challenges of our modern societies.

The Society's work focuses primarily on American Reform Judaism, yet, during the past ten years we have made some amazing connections with Jewish communities and institutions around the world. In each case, we have learned from each other and enjoyed each other's company - so alike in heart and spirit.

On this 10th Anniversary celebration, we feel blessed and inspired by the wonderful people, communities, and connections we have made. Here are a few examples.

CONGREGATION HAR-EL OF JERUSALEM, ISRAEL



Rabbi Ada Zavidov (far left), Cantor Evan Cohen (far right) and distinguished members of their Har-El board, presenting a gift to Rabbi Howard Berman and the Society for our on-going support of their important work as a beacon of Progressive Judaism in Israel.

Har-El is the oldest and one of the most visible and active Reform congregations in Israel. The Society and Har-El continue to deepen their seven-year relationship, highlighted by the synagogue's monthly Classical Reform Shabbat Service.

Funds for this effort are provided by a generous gift from The Ackerman Family Foundation. With the support of the Foundation, the Society and Har-El published B'Hadrat Kodesh, a ground-breaking liturgical anthology that translates some of the most beautiful passages in the Union Prayer Book into modern Hebrew.

Rabbi Zavidov chose to use this new text at one of the first Reform services conducted at the Wall in Jerusalem. This has been well-received, and is being used by a number of congregations in Israel.

EC CHAIM OF WARSAW, POLAND

“Ec Chaim addresses itself to the needs of those members of the Jewish Religious Community and those of the wider Jewish community who seek to strike a balance in their lives between tradition and modernity.

This mission reaches beyond the religious life, as some of those who support the Reform community in its development are not religious. They all share the conviction that participation in the development of an open, pluralistic community is a worthwhile pursuit.”

In October 2010, this Warsaw Community welcomed Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz as their first Reform Rabbi. The number of members is small, but their warmth, spirit, and commitment to their Judaism is strong. The SCRJ, in cooperation with Abraham Geiger College in Berlin, sponsors special periodic Classical Reform services at Ec Chaim, with choir and organ.



Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz reading from the Torah

SPAIN



BET SHALOM OF BARCELONA

According to one estimate, only 30,000 Jews live among the 46,000,000 people of Spain. The Jewish population has remained very small since the expulsion of Jews (and Muslims) by the Monarchs Queen Isabella I and King Ferdinand II in 1492. Most citizens of Spain today have never met, or do not realize they have met, a Jew. Many Jewish men and women conceal their Jewish identity because they are afraid that they will be discriminated against at work or within their communities. A 2014 survey of European anti-Semitism by the Anti-Defamation League determined that Spain is the third most anti-Semitic country in Europe, behind Greece and France.

Yet in this seemingly inhospitable climate, the number of organized Jewish communities is growing. During the past year, in Barcelona alone, two to four new Jewish communities are reportedly trying to organize. Members of Bet Shalom of Barcelona wonder if their city has the capacity to support more congregations, yet this is a sign of an emerging progressive Jewish presence.

In November 2017, members of Central Reform Temple (CRT) of Boston visited both Bet Shalom of Barcelona and the Reform Community of Madrid. Both congregations warmly welcomed the CRT group to their Shabbat services and Shabbat meals. Everyone enjoyed socializing and sharing personal stories. As part of the visit, Central Reform Temple presented each congregation with copies of the *Union Prayer Book, Sinai Edition*, as a resource for their development of a Spanish Reform liturgy.



REFORM COMMUNITY OF MADRID

MUSIC

RECLAIMING INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC FROM OUR HERITAGE - INTRODUCING NEW COMPOSITIONS BY MODERN COMPOSERS

Music has been a central part of our Reform Jewish worship experience since the beginnings of the Reform Movement in Germany in the mid 19th century. It was during this time that organ music and choirs were introduced into synagogue services. Composers from this era wrote many classic pieces that were beloved by generations of Reform Jews. Yet few of these classics are heard today in our Reform congregations. The Society has worked to reintroduce the most inspiring of these classic pieces. At the same time we also support the inclusion of modern compositions that stir and touch our hearts and souls in new ways.

Since the inception of our SCRJ - HUC student Institutes, we have collaborated with HUC and Congregation Har-El in Jerusalem to offer live concerts to showcase this music. This effort is an intensive focus of the cantorial and rabbinic students for a good part of the year. Under her inspired leadership, our ally and friend Cantor Tamar Havilio, leads a program of choral and cantorial classics of the Reform Synagogue, from the 19th - 21st centuries.



“Hayashan Ytichadesh - The Old Becomes New”

A Concert Celebrating the Music of the Reform Jewish Tradition, March 20, 2018, presented by the SCRJ and Hebrew Union College at the National Jewish Library, Hebrew University in Jerusalem

Each year the concert has grown in popularity. Last year it was performed for the first time at the largest Reform congregation in the country, Beit Daniel of Tel Aviv. This year, in a major breakthrough, we were invited to present the program at the Jewish National Library at Hebrew University. The symbolism of this public endorsement is immense.

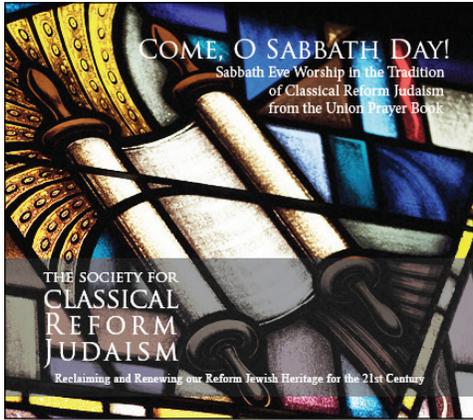


Rabbi Aaron Panken, Ph.D., z”l - Of Blessed Memory

The Society for Classical Reform Judaism joins Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in mourning the tragic and untimely death (on May 5, 2018) of Rabbi Aaron Panken, Ph.D., President of the College. He was an inspiring teacher and exemplary leader of Reform Judaism.

He was also a warm and supportive advocate of the partnership between the Society and the College. May the vision that Rabbi Panken brought to HUC-JIR and the entire Reform Movement, remain a source of hope and comfort to all those who mourn.

MUSIC



© 2009 Society for Classical Reform Judaism

COME O SABBATH DAY!

A recording of a Sabbath Eve service, in the tradition of Classical Reform Judaism, from the *Union Prayer Book*. It is complete with all of the liturgical music.

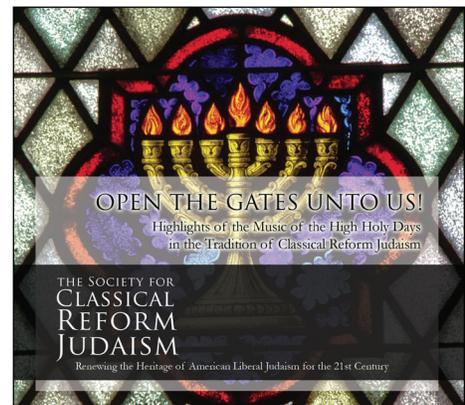
It is now available as an MP3 file at cdbaby.com.

For a complementary booklet of the text of this service, please contact the SCRJ at info.renewreform.org, or call at 617.247.4700.

OPEN THE GATES UNTO US!

Highlights the music of the High Holy Days, in the tradition of Classical Reform Judaism. This CD includes a booklet with the lyrics and the names of the composers..

TO ORDER: Contact the SCRJ at info.renewreform.org, or call at 617.247.4700.



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For Classical Reform Music Enthusiasts...

Explore This List of Classical Reform Music Albums & Sound Tracks

with live links to websites

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GO TO OUR WEBSITE at <http://renewreform.org/media/music-audio/>
to download this Excel discography

AN UNCONDITIONAL WELCOME AND ACCESSIBLE WORSHIP MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MANY LIVES

*In their own words:
Classical Reform Supporters
Share their Joys and Insights*



"The Union Prayer Book has made Judaism accessible in a way it had never been. I can lead prayers with confidence and be accepted as a leader. My deepest spiritual sense had finally been introduced to the possibility that this Jew by choice was really a Jew in the eyes of this Classical Reform community." J.S.



"...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." D.L.

"When Arthur and I decided to marry, we met with my Rabbi to ask him to perform the ceremony. So much of what I believed as a Jew seemed shattered when we were told he would not officiate at our interfaith wedding. Shaking and in tears, we left in disbelief. We later found a new spiritual home in Classical Reform Judaism at Central Reform Temple of Boston. There, in 2011, during a Yom Kippur service, we experienced a pivotal moment. Our Rabbi said in his sermon that one of his personal missions and priorities as a Rabbi was to lovingly welcome and support interfaith couples in the celebration of their love and the beginnings of their spiritual journeys together. Our emotions rushed forward, finally releasing that deep ache within our hearts. This was the moment of unconditional welcome we had so longed for." M.M. & A. M.



"...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." F.R.

A WARM & UNCONDITIONAL WELCOME



"From the moment I walked into Chicago Sinai Congregation, where my husband's family were members for many years, I felt welcomed, included, and supported by the community. I also enjoy the Classical Reform worship services, that are conducted primarily in English, with a choir that sings stirring music. Our growing interfaith family feels embraced and uplifted." V.W.S.



"...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." B.K.H.



"...we (members of Central Reform Temple, Boston - CRT) are a House of Prayer for All People. Whether you are Christian, Jewish or come from any other religious background, or are simply looking to explore or learn, we welcome you as an equal in all aspects of temple life. For me, Classical Reform has been a way to experience spirituality in ways that I hadn't known I could, with a community of like-minded interesting people. CRT is a welcoming experience for me and my now Jewish husband." T.K.



*Chicago Sinai Congregation, Chicago, Illinois
Publishers of the beautiful **Union Prayer Book**,
Sinai Editions*

"... My House Shall be a House of Prayer for all People." (Isaiah 56:5)

SPONSORING RESEARCH TO HELP GUIDE OUR PROGRAMMING

The Effect of Hebrew on Worship Satisfaction & Congregational Membership

Dr. Cynthia L. Conley
Rabbi Dr. Nadia Siritsky
Rabbi Dr. Devon Lerner

The Society “promotes opportunities for meaningful and accessible worship, primarily in the language of our own time and place.” The *Union Prayer Book*, accomplishes this, yet how Reform services are conducted today varies greatly from place to place. Many congregations now pray more in Hebrew than in English. While this is a choice each congregation makes, we believe that as the amount of Hebrew in a service increases, the number of people who attend and/or feel included in the service decreases. This seems self-evident - if people cannot understand the words that they are singing or reading, they feel alienated, unable to connect to the worship experience and less likely to join a congregation. Yet, until recently, we had no numbers, no research to back up our this conclusion.

The Society felt it was important to gather data that would either prove or challenge our beliefs. Getting hard evidence is critical to inform and guide us in

THE TAKEAWAY...

Congregations will attract more members if they include less Hebrew and more English in their worship services and if they offer full participation in the life of the congregation for all members, including their interfaith families.

Read the complete report on our website under “Resources: Interfaith Family and Jewish Life Survey”

our advocacy and programming. We turned to professional researchers at the School of Social Work, Spalding University, in Louisville, Kentucky, for help. Dr. Cynthia Conley, a professional researcher, and Assistant Professor at Spalding, worked with us to create a survey titled: “Interfaith Family and Jewish Life Survey.” The questions were designed not only to determine how the amount of Hebrew affects worship satisfaction, but also to discover how congregational policies can affect a family’s or individual’s decision to join a congregation.

Survey Results - Supports our Mission

According to Dr. Conley’s analysis, the study on “*The Effects of Hebrew on Worship Satisfaction & Congregational Membership*,” is statistically significant. The data shows that...

1. Hebrew dominated worship services alienate many of those who attend. Participants said that they would attend more often if services were conducted with less Hebrew and more English.
2. Based on responses to questions about congregational membership, respondents said that they were more likely to join a congregation if their interfaith families are invited up to the ark and pulpit to fully and equally participate in their son’s or daughter’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah service.

Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professorship of the American Jewish Experience and Reform Jewish History

This new faculty chair was established in 2014 at Hebrew Union College's Cincinnati campus by the SCRJ's generous benefactor, Edward M. Ackerman. At the inaugural ceremony, Mr. Ackerman said: "HUC-JIR will be capable of shedding new light on a shared heritage that belongs to all Reform Jews, while affirming the pluralism of interpretation and observance within the contemporary Reform Movement..."

The Ackerman Professorship's programmatic fund subsidizes academic seminars, liturgical resources, publications, prize essay contests, and student fellowships – all of which amplify the role that Reform Jewish ideology has played in the shaping of American Judaism.



Dr. Gary P. Zola, Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archive, was named the inaugural recipient of the Ackerman Professorship.



Rabbinic and Cantorial students participating in a cross-campus intensive summer institute.



Rabbi Howard Berman teaching a seminar on the history and core values of our Reform Heritage to first year rabbinic and cantorial students at the HUC - Jerusalem campus.



New Camp Initiative

The Reform Movement's Camp experience has a very powerful impact on the youth who attend. It forges a strong Jewish identity in the hearts and

minds of many campers, and yet these youth usually leave camp having learned little about their Reform heritage. To fill this void, the Society started a new camp program, created by Rabbi Robert Haas, SCRJ Board member. Last year, Rabbi Haas developed a pilot program that told the story of Rabbi David Einhorn, the pioneer of Classical Reform Judaism, who risked his life as an outspoken abolitionist during the Civil War. This fun, interactive, experiential program was a great success. The Society hopes to make this type of camp program an integral part of the camp experience.

SHARING INFORMATION NEWS AND EVENTS

*In our periodic journal - **The Reform Advocate***

The Reform Advocate

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Rabbi Devon A. Lerner, Editor

THE SOCIETY FOR
**CLASSICAL
REFORM
JUDAISM**

Reclaiming & Renewing
Our Heritage for the 21st Century



THE SOCIETY'S PERIODIC JOURNAL

The Reform Advocate provides updates on SCRJ activities, including articles on the history our Reform Heritage, highlights on the evolution and the current practices of Classical Reform congregations, examples of beautiful and accessible Union

Prayer Book liturgy, moving personal stories from interfaith families and long-time Jewish supporters, and much more.

A complete archive of *Advocates* is available on our website at www.renewreform.org/the-reform-advocate-archives.

On our website - renewreform.org and on Facebook at [renewreform](https://www.facebook.com/renewreform)

THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

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Grant us peace,
O Eternal Source
people Israel to
world. Bless our
a pursuer of pea
council of nation



Warm & Unconditional
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and All Spiritual Seekers

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THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM
Reclaiming and Renewing Our Heritage for the 21st Century

Our website provides Classical Reform educational, liturgical, and music resources, as well as information about our publications, programs, Classical Reform congregations, videos of Classical Reform worship

services, archives of *The Reform Advocate*, and blog posts. Learn more about us on our site at renewreform.org and on our Facebook page at [renewreform](https://www.facebook.com/renewreform).

The Reform Advocate

Volume X, Number II: Spring/Summer 2018

*As we celebrate this 10th Anniversary
of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism,
we wish to express our deepest, heartfelt gratitude to
our founder,*

RABBI HOWARD A. BERMAN
for his vision, dedication, and leadership.

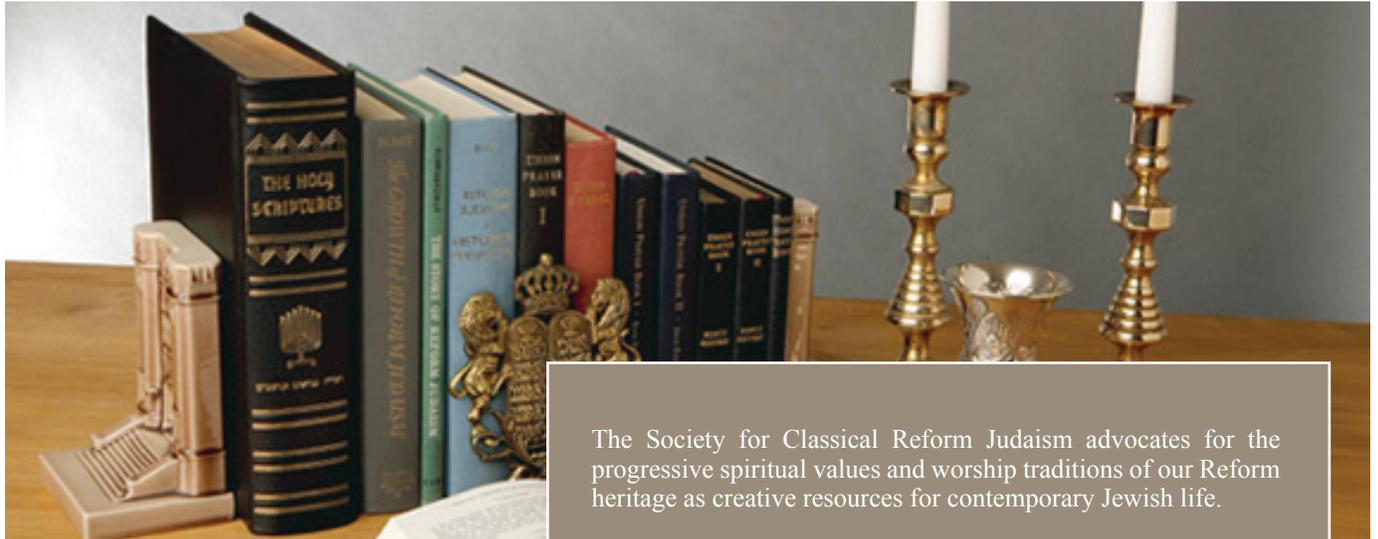
*Without Rabbi Berman's guidance,
we could not have achieved the goals highlighted
in this Advocate.*

We also gratefully pay tribute to the devoted leadership and tireless commitment of our Founding President, B.H. Levy, Jr., our current President, Victoria Woolner Samuels, and those who have served on the Society's Board over the past ten years.

Blessed are you, O God, Creator of the Universe, who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this joyous moment.

May we continue to be blessed in our sacred mission to "reclaim and renew our Reform Heritage for the 21st Century," by inspiring and reconnecting disenfranchised Jews to their roots, and by offering interfaith families and all spiritual seekers a warm and unconditionally welcoming and meaningful spiritual home.





The Society for Classical Reform Judaism advocates for the progressive spiritual values and worship traditions of our Reform heritage as creative resources for contemporary Jewish life.

We understand Judaism to be foremost a religious commitment rather than an ethnic identity.

We promote opportunities for meaningful and accessible worship, primarily in the language of our own time and place.

We demonstrate our religious commitment in ethical action inspired by the Biblical Prophets.

We affirm the American experience and its ideals as central to our Jewish identity.

We extend a warm welcome and unconditional support for interfaith families and all spiritual seekers.

THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

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