

Tree of Life Congregation

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<http://etzhaim.org>

May/June/July 2019

Nissan/Iyar/Sivan/Tammuz 5779



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Calendar

Announcements

MAY-JULY 2019			
5/1/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
5/2/19	Thursday	Rabbi Joe's class on Hebrew Bible Personalities at OLLI	3:00-4:50 pm
5/3/19	Friday	Shabbat & Yom ha-Sho'ah observance & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
5/4/19	Saturday	Torah study & potluck <i>in Fairmont</i> : Acharei Mot	10:00 am – 1:00 pm
5/8/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
5/9/19	Thursday	Rabbi Joe's class on Hebrew Bible Personalities at OLLI	3:00-4:50 pm
5/10/19	Friday	Shabbat & Yom ha-Atzma'ut observance & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
5/11/19	Saturday	Torah study: K'doshim	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
5/15/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
5/16/19	Thursday	Rabbi Joe's class on Hebrew Bible Personalities at OLLI	3:00-4:50 pm
5/17/19	Friday	Mostly English service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
5/18/19	Saturday	Torah study: Emor	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
5/19/19	Sunday	Religious school end-of-term ceremony at TOL & picnic	10:00 am – 1:00 pm
5/21/19	Tuesday	Distinguished Lecturers from FBI on extremist violence	7:00-9:00 pm
5/22/19	Wednesday	Sorry, no rabbi's drop-in office hours	
5/24/19	Friday	Sorry, no service	
5/25/19	Saturday	Sorry, no Torah study	
5/29/19	Wednesday	Sorry, no rabbi's drop-in office hours	
5/31/19	Friday	Lay-led service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
6/1/19	Saturday	Lay-led Torah study: B'chukkotai	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
6/5/19	Wednesday	Sorry, no rabbi's drop-in office hours	
6/7/19	Friday	Art Jackowitz memorial at Health Sciences Center	1:00-2:00 pm
6/7/19	Friday	Shavu'ot observance & Tikkun Leil (night celebration)	7:30 pm – 12:01 am
6/8/19	Saturday	Sorry, no Torah study	
6/9/19	Sunday	Hadassah Book Brunch at home of Gwen Rosenbluth	11:00 am – 1:00 pm
6/12/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
6/14/19	Friday	Coopers Rock potluck & service	6:00-8:00 pm
6/15/19	Saturday	Torah study: Naso	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
6/19/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
6/21/19	Friday	Healing service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
6/22/19	Saturday	Torah study: B'ha'alot'cha	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
6/25/19	Tuesday	Distinguished Lecturer John Temple on the militia movement	7:00-9:00 pm
6/26/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
6/28/19	Friday	Debbie Friedman themed service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
6/29/19	Saturday	Torah study: Sh'lach L'cha	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
7/3/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
7/5/19	Friday	Micro service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
7/6/19	Saturday	Torah study: Korach	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
7/10/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
7/12/19	Friday	Chocolate service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
7/13/19	Saturday	Torah study & potluck <i>in Fairmont</i> : Chukat	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
7/17/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
7/19/19	Friday	Kabbalat Shabbat in honor of Hayden Wright & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
7/20/19	Saturday	Hayden Wright bar mitzvah & kiddush luncheon	10:00 am – 1:00 pm
7/24/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
7/26/19	Friday	Regular Shabbat evening service & oneg	7:30-9:00 pm
7/27/19	Saturday	Torah study: Pinchas	10:00 am – 12:00 noon
7/31/19	Wednesday	Rabbi's drop-in office hours	1:00-5:00 pm
8/2/19	Friday	Wine & cheese & short service	6:30-7:30 pm
8/3/19	Saturday	Torah study: Mattot / Mas'ei	10:00 am – 12:00 noon



Dial In
To attend Tree of Life's Friday evening service from home, at **7:25pm** dial **304-391-5940**



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We note with sorrow the passing of

Mark Lees
onetime member of the Clarksburg Jewish community

Renée Kossak
aunt of Monique Gingold

David Rosenthal
cousin of Lee Kass

Melvin Fechter
grandfather of Ethan Fechter-Leggett

Arthur Maurice Bree
member of the Uniontown Jewish community

Irving Brager
member of TOL

Albert S. ("Pat") Murdoch
brother of Susan Newfield

Art Jackowitz
member of TOL

Donna Ayers
friend of Eleanor Simmons

Gary Gafter
father of Lisa Stern

Were your ancestors Jewish Soldiers Who Served in the American Civil War?

A microcosm of the American story, the Civil War was a crucible for the Jewish community. In 1895, Simon Wolf compiled and published and published *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* in an effort to repudiate the claims against the patriotism of Jewish citizens. The book is approximately 400 pages and lists 8,115 soldiers in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, military and civic service, in addition to other relevant topics.

What is the Shapell Roster?

Methodologies and access to resources to determine Jewish identity have evolved significantly since the 19th century. To date, the Shapell Roster researchers have added more than a battalion's worth of new names; 1,213 Jewish soldiers who served in the Civil War, but who were not on Simon Wolf's list. This number will continue to grow as our research and your contributions continue.

Adult Education

By Rabbi Joe Hample

At Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) I've been teaching Hebrew Bible Personalities on Thursday afternoons, 3:00-4:50. The program is offered at Mountaineer Mall, 5000 Green Bag Road, classroom B, and continues through May 16. Remaining classes cover personalities like the following.

- **May 2, Early Prophets:** Joshua and Rahab, Deborah, Gideon, David and Abigail,
- Solomon and the queen of Sheba, Elijah
- **May 9, Later Prophets:** Hosea and Gomer, the Shulammitte (heroine of Song of Songs),
- Hezekiah, Isaiah, Josiah, Huldah, Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Ezra
- **May 16, Writings:** Job, Koheleth (Ecclesiastes), Ruth and Boaz, Mordecai and Esther, Daniel

Separately, in our Distinguished Lecturers series, Al Berrebi addressed us March 26 on "Foundations of Hearing." The next speaker is John Temple on the militia movement, Tuesday, June 25, in the synagogue social hall, 7:00-9:00 pm. We're also trying to schedule Donna Bolyard-Gerson's tasting event honoring four generations of cooks. Please join us for any or all of the above as your schedule permits.

Children's Education

By Rabbi Joe Hample

The talented Emma Daffner celebrated her *bat mitzvah* in our sanctuary on March 29-30. Upcoming *b'nei mitzvah* are Hayden Wright on July 19-20 and Lucy Cohen-Frankel on August 16-17. Come see and hear what these young leaders are capable of!

There are only a few more sessions of the religious school this spring. We will wrap up on Sunday, May 19, with a concluding ceremony at the synagogue and then a picnic, probably at Jack Roberts Park in First Ward. Then we're off till late August.

The 2019-20 religious school will teach *Mitzvot / Jewish Values*, both ethical and ritual, with a mix of skits, games, kid-written sermons, songs, and art projects. Are your children aged 3-13 enrolled? We'd love to include them.

Hebrew school follows religious school every Sunday. Are your children aged 7-13 enrolled? Hebrew is great for a sense of connection to Jews in other times and places.



Photo Credit - Kailee at McMillan Studio

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RABBI
Joseph Hample

OFFICERS

- President.....Adam Rosefsky
- Imm. Past Pres.....Ed Gerson
- 1st VP.....Jaimie Russel
- 2nd VP.....Robert Klein
- Treasurer.....Linda Herbst
- Secretary.....Laura Cohen

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- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
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- House.....Marty Sippin
- Education.....Jaimie Russel
- Social Action.....Susan Brown
- Israel Committee.....Art Jackowitz
- CARE.....Merle Stolzenberg
- Ritual Committee.....Rich Cohen
- Newsletter.....Chase Kennedy
- Kitchen.....TBD

ASSOCIATES

- Sisterhood.....Martha Lass
- Hillel.....Rich Gutmann
- Hadassah.....Merle Stolzenberg
- WV Holocaust Ed. Center.....Edith Levy



Rabbi Hample

Reform Means Change By Rabbi Joe Hample

Reform Judaism is 200 years old this year. A daring new prayerbook at Germany's Hamburg Temple in 1819 is considered the beginning of the Reform movement. A liberal-leaning series of rabbinical conferences across Germany in the 1840s consolidated the new denomination, and sparked opposing tendencies eventually formalized as Conservative and Orthodox Judaism. Reform Judaism spread quickly to other European countries, but perhaps America is its natural home. Tradition was fluid, adaptation inevitable, in this land of immigrants.

The meaning of Reform has evolved over the last two centuries and especially in the last

50 years. An early priority was relinquishment of the ethnic or national element in Judaism, and abandonment of the return to Zion, in favor of a purely religious concept of Judaism and a patriotic engagement with the countries we were actually living in. Nowadays the shoe is on the other foot: assimilation is so far advanced, and the State of Israel so well-established, that there's a new hankering for our tribal roots. Reform today must be about something besides Westernization.

At the beginning of April I attended the 130th annual convention of the Central Conference of American (Reform) Rabbis (CCAR). All the workshops were about change: what must we do differently to remain relevant? Some of the ideas were pretty arcane, like reclaiming lost Jewish prayers from the Cairo *g'nizah*, an archaeological treasure trove opened in the 1890s. I won't worry about the Cairo *g'nizah*

till we've exhausted all the less-noticed material in our standard prayerbook!

More compelling were workshops about civic participation, about the distinctive problems of small congregations, about pushing back against antisemitism. Then there's the challenge of engagement with Israel in spite of our differences. Ironically, Israelis seldom think about Zionism: to them it's a term from history, a movement that was fulfilled in the birth of the state. It's Diaspora Jews who continue to ponder Zionism, what it does and doesn't mean, how it should or shouldn't be realized. Reform Jews especially.

Gender issues are a big topic for Reform Judaism. American Reform was the first modern Judaism to seat men and women together at worship. This innovation, introduced in 1851 under the rubric "family pew," arose when Jews bought disused churches and repurposed

them to check in at the wrong hotel! There's a new streetcar line, with electronic tickets on a downloadable app, but your Luddite rabbi found it very confusing. Still, the city is a pleasure to explore.

Like Morgantown, Cincinnati stands above a mighty river. Unlike Morgantown, across the river is a different state. One mild evening we threw caution to the winds and walked over to Covington and Newport on the Kentucky side. We passed a couple of pleasant hours in this more languid and decorous enclave, catching a bus back to the jangling metropolis before bedtime.

Cincinnati is a great place to eat, offering heartier (more fattening) versions of American and ethnic cuisines. Graeter's ice cream is legendary, especially a wide variety of flavors with chocolate chips. We dined with my classmates at Nada restaurant, a taco place with plenty of

fish and vegetarian options. Another night we went to MidiCi Italian Kitchen with friends ordained the year before me.

Our last day in Cincinnati we took a double tour of Over-the-Rhine, with two guides offering opposite points of view. One guide worked for a family foundation and celebrated "urban renewal"; the other guide worked for a homeless advocacy group and lamented "gentrification." Of course you want to attract as many affluent people as possible while driving out as few poor people as possible. The devil is in the details.

We tend to think of holy cities as located in distant, ancient lands, mostly in Asia, though Europe too has its pilgrimage sites. Perhaps Native American religions, or distinctively American Christianities like Mormonism, have holy cities in this continent. It requires a shift of perspective to see that Reform Judaism may

have a Divine citadel close at hand, that a town as unexotic as Cincinnati may be a station on the road to deliverance. But if we are proud of our religious heritage – and why wouldn't we be? – there is every reason to laud Cincinnati's role in our dispensation. It's also a fun place to visit.



Photo Credit - Ed Gerson

for the Society of the Cincinnati, Revolutionary War veterans. In ancient Rome, Cincinnatus was a war leader who voluntarily gave up power and went back to his farm.

Located at the confluence of the Licking and Ohio rivers, Cincinnati helped to open up the American interior, a gateway to the west in the age before railroads. In the 19th century it drew immigrants particularly from German-speaking lands, mainly Christians, but Jews as well. Prejudice forced many of these newcomers to settle north of the city center, beyond the Miami-Erie Canal: "over the Rhine," as the joke had it. Though the canal has long since been filled in, this colorful neighborhood – the Greenwich Village of Cincinnati – is still called Over-the-Rhine.

Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, a bold modernizer, immigrated from Bohemia in 1846 and settled in Ohio in 1854. In

Cincinnati Wise and his colleagues launched the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the Union for Reform Judaism) in 1873, Hebrew Union College in 1875, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1889. These are still the core institutions of American Reform Judaism, though they now housed partly in New York and elsewhere.

Earlier this spring I attended the 130th anniversary convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Cincinnati, staying downtown at the Hilton Netherland Plaza. On April 1 we enjoyed a morning service at the historic, Moorish-inspired Plum Street Temple, where we were greeted with the words, "Welcome home." Cincinnati is a beacon for American Reform Jews. The virtues and flaws of our movement first came to light in that great Midwestern center.

On April 2 we toured the flagship

campus of Hebrew Union College, which I'd only seen once before: I studied at the Jerusalem and Los Angeles campuses. On this recent visit, in a signature HUC ritual, we stood up by ordination year, counting backwards from 2018 to the 1950s, and were politely applauded by our colleagues. I rose with the class of 2009: it was our 10th anniversary year. The class of 1972 received a raucous ovation: it was the first to include a woman, Rabbi Sally Priesand. We then had a choice of classroom workshops, on good Reform topics such as the theology of political activism.

Companies like Procter & Gamble, Kroger, and Macy's are based in Cincinnati: Kroger is the city's largest employer. We stayed near the handsome Fountain Square, the center of town. The Skywalk is convenient for pedestrians, though I got lost in the Skywalk on arrival and

them as synagogues, a thing that never happened in the old country. The churches did not have a women's section or gallery. Full equality for women in Jewish leadership and observance is a more recent phenomenon, but now it feels essential.

At present there is heightened interest in traditional women's activities – *challah* baking, Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) practices, the women's prayers called *t'chines* – along with novelties like rituals for miscarriage or menopause. We've changed the liturgy to mention our foremothers along with our forefathers. We now avoid calling God "he," at least in English, and focus more on the *nurturing* aspect of God, as opposed to the lawgiving aspect. The newest frontier is the insight that gender may not be binary, that two categories may not exhaust the possibilities of self-definition. The

implications have yet to unfold.

Another growing area of concern for Reform Judaism is the theme of healing. We all know someone who's sick, and we want to pray for them. Many older prayerbooks don't contain *Mi she-Berach*, a once-marginal healing prayer, at least not the singable version that everyone seems to know today. Even the children's prayerbook we use in the TOL religious school lacks *Mi she-Berach*: we have to switch to the grownup prayerbook for that segment. Some synagogues have pasted *Mi she-Berach* in the back cover of their prayerbook.

A newish zeal for the Hebrew language is also a token of Reform evolution. In our grandparents' day, Reform Jews were not so enthusiastic about Hebrew. And if they did use the holy tongue, it was generally in the old-fashioned European dialect that now sounds strange to younger ears:

Shabbos for Shabbat, etc. I've often heard kids make fun of their parents' Hebrew pronunciation, perhaps unaware of the reason for it. In April I took the opportunity to chat in modern Hebrew with every friend and colleague who's comfortable with the conversational idiom.

At the convention I was delighted to hear unfamiliar melodies and musicians. I'm a rabbi who likes to sing, but it's hard to learn new tunes when I mostly attend my own services. Cantors and instrumentalists from the east and west coasts, and from Israel, were on hand to teach the latest compositions, and to play old classics I'd half forgotten. I should go to Jewish conclaves more often, if only for the harmonic stimulus.

Reform is not the only progressive faction in Judaism. Conservative Judaism is a little more traditional. Reconstructionist Judaism

is a little more traditional. Reconstructionist Judaism is a little more radical, at least in theology, and more explicitly ethnic. Jewish Renewal is not a denomination *per se*, but an emphasis on rediscovering Judaism's neglected spirituality, compatible with any denomination. All these movements have influenced each other and will perhaps gradually coalesce as a forward-looking, ever-flowing Jewish stream. A toast to the Judaism of tomorrow: *L'chayyim!*

Dorsey Day

By Rabbi Joe Hample

Dorsey's Knob is a hilltop park at the southern tip of Morgantown. Sometimes I wonder, what if the mayor climbed up Dorsey's Knob for a bird's-eye view of his domain? What insights might flow from this pilgrimage? What transformations might be enabled by this adventure?

I submit it would take a lot of time for our aging mayor to scale Dorsey. This feat would be scheduled when the days are long, probably in June. If we celebrate this Dorsey ascent around the summer solstice, it might be fun to stay up late, even to await the early sunrise. Coffee will make it easier. Perhaps breakfast-type foods, dairy products like milk and cheese, butter and yogurt and sour cream, will be on the menu.

If the Dorsey's stunt becomes a famous Morgantown occasion, say an annual observance, what will we call it? Possibly the mayor will harvest some wild ramps on his trek up the mountain and name the event Reaping (*Katzir*). Or better yet, wild raspberries: then he could term the experience First Fruits (*Bikkurim*). Since it will occur some weeks after the start of spring, it might plausibly be labeled Weeks (*Shavu'ot*). If it's framed as the consummation of a

longer springtime program or journey, we could brand it Sequel (*Atzeret*). Catchy titles all.

If the mayor does find ramps or raspberries on Dorsey's Knob, he might devour them on the spot. But I can also imagine him bringing them down and enjoying them with other dignitaries or citizens in general. Perhaps he will testify to the reasons for his pastoral tribute. He could say: God has given us this fine land, my ancestors came here with heaven's blessing, and I continue to benefit from their legacy, which I now share with the whole community.

On the other hand, this ceremony need not be only for folks long settled in Morgantown. It might well be a chance to appreciate newcomers: those prepared to consider Morgantowners their own people, to live and die and be buried in Morgantown. It is fair to ask why they wish to join us, but preferable not to grill them too strictly.

Consider it a festival of converts to Morgantownism.

In the best-case scenario, the mayor atop Dorsey might be lucky enough to receive a special message from God. What would the directive be? How could we be certain of its Divine origin? In this contentious age, the notice would likely be a summons to dialogue, an appeal for civility and fair play, an instruction to relinquish grudges and grievances. Don't kill, don't steal, don't break commitments to family and friends. When hurt or humiliated, don't seek to get even, don't retaliate. Model the respect you want from others. Above all, listen.

If the mayor descends Dorsey with that teaching, will we doubt its celestial provenance? Will its origin matter? Even if you can't prove it, it sounds like just the kind of word that might emerge from a meeting with God: a simple bulletin, one we'll accept without hesitation. And it seems natural that the lesson is given in a public space, in a place

belonging to no one individual, so that any interested party may come and embrace it.

As you know, weddings are often in June, a season of sunshine and new beginnings. Perhaps the communiqué from God will feel like a love letter, a proposal to tie the knot, a marriage license. One of my seminary professors laughed about people who think they're "going steady with God." But the spiritual quest, the encounter with God, should contain an element of passion. We seek a covenant with the Almighty. A covenant is a bond, a promise, an indestructible relationship.

I suppose every generation will parse this revelation differently, will find new meaning in it. No one person will ever grasp all its ramifications. The mayor can't know what people will make of it in the far future. The highfalutin experts won't anticipate what power it may have for the plain folks. The old-timers have no right to monopolize its interpretation. The children are sure to process it in their own way.

As you have guessed, I am describing a real Jewish holiday, one we've cherished for thousands of years. Substitute Sinai for Dorsey, Moses for mayor, and you have the whole story. What could be more delightful, to a West Virginian, than a holiday about a mountain! What could be more validating, to congregants born elsewhere, than a holiday when we read about an outsider (Ruth) who joined the tribe! What could be more charming, to anyone tired of winter, than a holiday that launches the "lazy crazy hazy days of summer"! However you understand it, wherever you enact it, enjoy your Dorsey Day. Eat, smile, relax. It's a *mitzvah*.

The Holy City of Cincinnati

By Rabbi Joe Hample

Founded in 1788, Cincinnati was the first major town built after the Revolutionary War, the quintessential American city. It is named