

Dear Friend,

We have exciting news.

Following a yearlong process, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College & Jewish Reconstructionist Communities has adopted a new name: **Reconstructing Judaism**.

Moving forward, Reconstructing Judaism will be the central organization of the Reconstructionist movement that encompasses our rabbinical seminary, serves our congregations and fosters a Reconstructionist approach to Judaism in the wider world. The rabbinical seminary will become the **College for Reconstructing Judaism** at the close of the academic year. Stay tuned for more about that at a later date.

Our new name reflects our active commitment to “doing” Jewish—with it, we are defining ourselves by what we do, not just by what we believe or how we feel. “Reconstructing” reflects the way in which our affiliated Reconstructionist communities, and our dedicated students and rabbis, embrace the challenge of building Jewish lives and repairing the world. For decades, Reconstructionist Judaism has embodied action and stood for purposeful Judaism. We continue to originate many of non-Orthodox Judaism’s core innovations and cultivate a vision of Judaism that is active and that holds Jews responsible for bringing to life the Judaism of today and tomorrow. We invite everyone positively committed to a Jewish future to join us in building something meaningful. We are committed to work that is ever-evolving. We are Reconstructing Judaism.

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant. This phrase that accompanies our new name symbolizes our deep grounding in Jewish tradition. At the same time, we cultivate Jewish living that is relevant to today’s Jews, our family members and our allies. We understand clearly that we live at the intersection of past and future. It is our task to create a thriving Judaism by continually reconstructing Judaism in a way that is relevant to today’s Jewish communities, which will enable us to meet the needs of tomorrow. “Relevant” is not a descriptor; it is an imperative.

We are also inspired by the image that accompanies our new name—leaves sprouting from the ground, growing into the world. The Reconstructionist communities, teachers, learners and rabbis we serve embody both roots and new growth. At once grounded and flourishing, the image suggests a connection to tradition in its groundedness, and to continuous growth and reinvention. The sprouting leaves exemplify the spreading of joy, innovation and resilience. The hand-drawn style of the image and typography of the words reflect the warm, welcoming, and unique personality of each of our communities, our rabbinical students and our rabbis. The grouping of leaves of varying shades conveys our participatory nature and the diversity of the Reconstructionist community. The green color reinforces the process of growth and our movement’s historical connection to the environment. *Midrash* teaches us that the eighth day of creation, following the first Shabbat, marked the birth of human creativity and the beginning of the human contribution to building our world—the day on which people began to co-create the world with God.

Some may wonder: Are we renaming the Reconstructionist movement? The answer is no. We are renaming the entity that is the central organization of the Reconstructionist movement that encompasses our rabbinical seminary, serves our congregations and fosters a Reconstructionist approach to Judaism in the wider world.

Let us explain a little about that yearlong process through which we developed the new name. One of the hallmarks of a Reconstructionist approach to decision-making is a focus on discussion, broad participation and the sharing of ideas. In exploring a new expression of our identity, we listened to rabbis, students and lay members of Reconstructionist communities discuss who we are, what we believe and how we act. Over the past year, we invited everyone in Reconstructionist communities across North America to share their insights in a series of in-person and online town halls, as well as in a number of substantive online surveys to refine the concepts that shaped this new expression of our identity. All told, more than 1,000 Reconstructionist rabbis, lay leaders and other community members, educators, staff members, and students participated from Los Angeles

to New York, from Portland to Chicago to Montreal, and many locations in between. They gave us a deeper sense of what our organization and its mission mean to the communities we serve, and how to share our vision and values with the world. Everyone's input was invaluable and shaped the final outcome.

This is going to be a busy year for Reconstructing Judaism. As we introduce our new identity, we mark the 50th anniversary of the seminary's founding. We will gather from Nov. 15-18 in Philadelphia for the first Reconstructionist Convention in eight years. This summer will mark the opening of [Havaya Arts](#), the second Reconstructionist summer camp and first on the West Coast. And we can't wait for our campers to return for another joyous summer at [Camp Havaya](#) in Pennsylvania.

There are countless ways in which our 100 affiliated Reconstructionist communities—and more than 400 rabbis—are building a meaningful Jewish future and more perfect world. As we move forward, we will be inviting you and your community to join these efforts and to participate in the ongoing conversation about what it means to be reconstructing Judaism, and how we can all be part of this endeavor. We look forward to this discussion, and we hope you do as well. In the meantime, check in at [ReconstructingJudaism.org](#) for the latest news and events from Reconstructing Judaism.

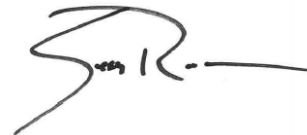
For some of the exciting ways we are reconstructing Judaism outside the walls of our [seminary](#), please visit [Camp Havaya](#) and [Havaya Arts](#), [Campus Chaplaincy for a Multifaith World](#), [Hashivenu](#), [Reconstructionist Learning Networks](#) and [Ritualwell](#).

May we live up to the ideals and ideas embodied in this new expression of our identity. May we be worthy of our inheritance and effective builders of our future. May we go from strength to strength. חזק חזק ונתחזק

L'shalom,



Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Ph.D.
President
Reconstructing Judaism



Seth Rosen
Chair, Board of Governors
Reconstructing Judaism



1299 Church Road Wyncote, PA 19095
www.ReconstructingJudaism.org
Shalom@ReconstructingJudaism.org