



OR HADASH

A Reconstructionist Congregation
Fort Washington, PA

...shedding new light on Jewish Traditions



thrilled to be joining the Or Hadash family!

I want to take the opportunity to say how excited and humbled I am to begin my journey with all of you as the rabbi of Or Hadash. I want to express my deep gratitude to [Rabbi Josh](#), Phil Rosenberg, Nadine Canter, Jon Rubin and all of the members of the rabbinic search committee, Jeff Jarvis, Barbara Weisman, Marianne Adler, Jeff Chebot and all of the others (both out front and behind the scenes!) who have worked so hard during the spring and summer to ensure a smooth transition. I want to appreciate also so many of you who have taken on the role of leading services and Torah study during the month of July so that both Rabbi Josh and I were able to take time this summer with our families during this rabbinic leadership transition.



My family and I are eager to become a part of this warm and wonderful community and look forward to getting to know all of you over the coming weeks and months. Rebecca, Bina and I are excited for our first **official** Shabbat at Or Hadash this Friday night, August 9th, and Bina in particular can't wait for [Popsicles on the Playground](#) (her first Or Hadash playdate!) on Tuesday, August 13th (5:30-7pm) at Mondauk Common Park playground. We hope that, if you are in town, that you will come to one or both of these upcoming events and introduce yourself.

As I learn the rhythms and routines of life here at Or Hadash, I will be crafting a regular schedule of office hours. For the next two weeks, at least, I plan to be in the office on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and taking Monday as my day off. If you want to make an appointment, the easiest way is to use my [online scheduling link](#) and select the date and time that work best.

One of the blessings of congregational life is the opportunity to celebrate *simchas* (joyful times) together - but equally powerful, and sometimes even more important, is the chance that being in community affords us to come together in strength and solidarity as we seek to make meaning and heal in times of personal and communal sorrow. This weekend's mass shootings in both El Paso, TX and Dayton, OH mark the steady increase in domestic terror that shakes the fiber of our nation. While we mourn the tragic loss of life, and send our prayers and deepest, most heartfelt sympathies to the families and communities of the victims we also acknowledge that hopes and prayers are not enough. Outrage and sadness are not enough. We must, as individuals and as communities take action to break this cycle of violence.

This weekend, as Jews, we will mark [Tisha b'Av](#) - the 9th day of the Hebrew month of Av which commemorates the destruction of the Holy Temples in Jerusalem. In our texts, the Rabbis teach us, the Second Temple was destroyed because of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred) that fractured communities and turned segments of society against one another. As Americans, we live in a society rampant with *sinat chinam* in so many forms including islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-immigrant sentiment and other forms of racially and culturally motivated bias, sexism, and trans* and homophobia. We know that the shooter in El Paso was motivated by white supremacist beliefs and specifically targeted the latinx and immigrant communities in his attack. Tisha b'Av does not only commemorate the destruction of the first and second Temples, however; it also traces a line through space and time from these destructions through to the present day marking crusades, expulsions, pogroms, bombings, and attacks - moments in our Jewish and human history in which hatred was given sanction, and festered. On Saturday evening, August 10th at 8:30pm, through song, poetry, testimony and liturgy we will gather for our own *Erev Tisha b'Av* observance. The following day, Sunday, August 11th, please join me and members of the entire Philadelphia Jewish community at 12:00pm on Independence Mall at [For These We Cry Out: A Tisha B'Av Vigil for Refugees](#)" as we move beyond giving voice to this violence and destruction, and commit ourselves to ending this cycle with political and social action.

L'Shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alanna Sklover', written in a cursive style.

[Rabbi Alanna Sklover](#)

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