

Kol HaLev Happenings

Newsletter of Cleveland's Reconstructionist Community

December 2010

Lunch and Learn

The monthly series exploring the Delights of Shabbat will continue with a session on December 18, led by Rabbi Steve, focusing on prayer and the liturgy. Liturgy is one of the many ways in which we commune with the Divine. What is the Shabbat liturgy, and how has it developed? What is particular to Shabbat, and how do the particular prayers enhance our experience of Shabbat?

We will meet immediately after Kiddush, about 12:45 p.m. and babysitting will be available. To reserve a babysitting slot and a share of the main dish, you need to RSVP to Judy Herdering (judy@kolhalev.net) by December 12. Please bring a side dish or drink to share. If you don't RSVP by December 12, come anyway but bring a brown bag lunch.

New Members

b'ruchim haba'im

Please welcome new members

Lee and Karen Lazar

Jessica Schreiber

And returning members

Glenn and Jill Bieler and their children,
Shoshana, 16, Danielle, 12, and Eliana, 8

We look forward to seeing you at future
Kol HaLev events

Bar Mitzvah

Please join us to share our joy
as our son

Harry Chaim Wolf Weinstock

is called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah
Saturday, December 4, at 9:45 a.m.
at Kol HaLev

Celebrate with our family at a festive Kiddush
following the service
All are welcome

Brent and Kate Weinstock

Bat Mitzvah

Please join us as our daughter

Elaine Ruth Millas

is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah
Saturday, January 8, 2011 at 9:45 a.m.

The whole Kol HaLev community
is invited to join us
for a festive Kiddush following the service.
The theme is responsibility
to the eldest among us.

Please **RSVP by December 15** for catering
purposes.

4milfam@gmail.com or 216-382-5029

Greg and Pam Millas

DIRECTORY

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Office | | | Office Manager | | |
| 2245 Warrensville Center Road, #215 University Heights, OH 44118, www.kolhalev.net | | | Judy Herdering 216-320-1498 | | |
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| Deadline for the January newsletter is Wednesday, December 15, 2010 | | | | | |

From Our President – Greg Selker

In a plenum session at the recent JRF convention, the resolution to create a “new unified institution of the Reconstructionist movement” was overwhelmingly approved. This is not a merger of the JRF and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, but a new institution; thus the details of the new organizational structure, including bylaws, Board make-up, executive committee, governance, and election of Board officers still need to be negotiated and agreed upon between the two parties. The resolution passed at the plenum calls for discussions between JRF and RRC to be completed by January 31, 2011, with a vote on final status by a second plenum to be held no later than April 11, 2011.

What does the proposed unification mean for the Reconstructionist movement and what does this mean specifically for Kol HaLev?

(continued on page 4)

Rabbinic Corner – Rabbi Steve Segar

It strikes me as a happy coincidence that the approach of the holiday of Chanukah this year comes right on the heels of our movement's recent biennial convention in southern California. I see a couple of connections between our movement's celebration and the themes that grow out of this holiday.

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word *chanukah* is dedication. So the holiday's name refers to the re-dedication of the holy temple in Jerusalem after the victory of the Maccabees over the army of the Syrian Greeks. But the part of the Chanukah story that is often skipped over too quickly is that it took some time for the Jews living under Hellenistic influence to organize into a fighting force that could challenge the military might of their Greek overlords. First they had to decide that they were not willing to be cut off from the wellsprings of their tradition. Thus long before they could reach the moment of dedication, they had to gain clarity that something was worthy of the struggle towards that moment.

For me, attending the JRF convention presents an opportunity to gain, renew, or deepen the clarity regarding the value that the Reconstructionist movement brings to the Jewish community and to the contemporary religious conversation in general.

Another connection I see between the holiday of Chanukah and the JRF biennial is the image of the nine-branched candelabrum whose daily lighting is the main ritual of this holiday. The lighting of the chanukiah is traditionally understood both as a proclamation of the Chanukah miracle and as an assertion of the ongoing presence and power of light at a time of year when the natural world seems to indicate otherwise. In parallel fashion, I think we can view the biennial convention, where we come together with other people from a wide range of Reconstructionist communities, as an opportunity not only to proclaim our presence to the rest of the Jewish world, but also to draw inspiration from the many sources of light that exist within our movement.

To cite just a few examples of how I experienced this at the recent convention: Our movement is filled with people who use their musical creativity to bring new life and new meaning to the language of our traditional prayers. Our movement is a place where people with a range of perspectives on the best way to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict can sit and listen respectfully to one another, rather than trying to shout one another down. Our movement is filled with people who recognize that each person and every community is a work in progress, and that the best way for all of us to grow is in the sharing of our own struggles and achievements with one another.

Even, and perhaps especially, at this time of significant change in the structure of the Reconstructionist world (see Greg Selker's message for more about this), it is important for us to remember to kindle our collective chanukiah and to stand back and gaze with appreciation on the light which it sheds.

Rabbi Steve

Chesed Revitalization

As part of the KHL Chesed revitalization, we now have a website to coordinate tasks. All KHL members are invited to try the site out. It will give you an opportunity to choose a particular task (e.g. making a meal or offering a ride) and also to indicate if you want to help on a one-time or ongoing basis.

To sign up, please go to www.lotsahelpinghands.com/c/630370/ and click "request to join the community." Please note that once you are "accepted" as a member, you have to sign in one time before you can choose or get assigned tasks. If you have any questions about accessing the site, please contact Chesed chair, Jane Arnoff Logsdon (janealogsdon@gmail.com or 216-373-7066.) Thanks in advance for supporting KHL's renewed commitment to Chesed.

From Our President – Greg Selker

(continued from page 2)

First, it is helpful to understand the demographics that have motivated this resolution. By looking at Reconstructionism in comparison to the other religious and congregational organizations comprising North American Judaism, one can notice that the numbers are declining for both individuals and congregations who identify themselves as being Reform or Conservative Jews. On the other hand, we have seen numbers in the Reconstructionist movement range from relatively flat to slowly growing. While we can all celebrate the fact that we are not diminishing, we also need to acknowledge that we are not growing as dynamically as we want to be, or potentially, can. So this resolution represents the vision of our movement's leaders looking proactively at our future.

We believe that by creating a unified structure representing Reconstructionism, as opposed to the current tri-part organization with different arms focused on congregational support, the education and ordination of rabbis, and a professional rabbinical association, we will better be able to address the shifting demographics within North American Judaism and use them to leverage real growth. While the facts are clear that there is a declining number of North American Jews who are affiliated with any of the branches of Judaism, we believe that Reconstructionist Judaism offers a pathway to transform one's experience of Judaism so that it can become fresh and relevant. A unified organization representing the Reconstructionist movement will allow us to bring clearer focus to this message.

In terms of what this means to Kol HaLev, I believe the proposed unification represents a tremendous opportunity. Until now the discussions have been confined to the leadership of JRF and RRC. As the intra-movement discussions continue, the JRF leadership is reaching out to the grass roots to get our ideas. Now the discussions will intentionally include input from the congregations. In fact, a new advisory committee of 7-10 presidents has formed specifically to share the perspective of their respective congregations; and I will represent Kol HaLev on this committee. It is envisioned that this committee will continue, even after the unification is in effect, to provide advice to the leadership on a broad range of topics.

In this way, the unification of the Reconstructionist movement will allow the congregational voice to be heard in ways that have not occurred before. Whatever the outcome of the discussions pertaining to the creation of a unified institution, I believe that the voice of individual congregations will be heard, and that this will herald a much closer relationship among the leadership, professional staff and the congregations.

Also at the plenum, a new slate of officers for the JRF Board of Directors was approved. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Halle Barnett for being voted onto the JRF Board of Directors as the Midwest Regional Vice-President, and also to thank Leah Kamionkowski for her many years of service on the JRF Board. In her new role, Halle will play a vital role in bringing the voice of Kol HaLev to the broader and newly defined Reconstructionist movement, particularly as it moves forward on a significant branding/marketing campaign, to which Halle has already contributed.

In future President's Messages, I will provide updates to the Kol HaLev community on the unification discussions and my thoughts on their impact to Reconstructionism and Kol HaLev. As our new Regional Vice-President, Halle Barnett will also be a source of information and insight on this topic for the Kol HaLev community. If any Kol HaLev members have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you!

Greg

Lunch and Learn: The Role of Music in Shabbat

Editor's Note: The first Lunch and Learn program was held November 6. Below are reflections from Rabbi Shawn Zevit, who led the session and from Barb Truitt, one of the participants.

Living in multiple civilizations, I am open to and inspired by a global range of musical styles, instruments and sound patterns. I remember asking my Zaida Aaron z"l, "Why do we have such an idiosyncratic *Chad Gadya* melody?" He said, "Your Uncle Dave was in a pub and heard a melody being sung by Russians, and we decided it would fit." And this was with my great-grandfather (rabbi and *shochet*) Ben Zion's support!

As I go along my own musical life journey and reflect on my family's stories, I find I speak less of Jewish music and more of music that is an expression of the Jewish people and their individual and collective soul. Among the varied musical expressions coming through our Jewish communities today we find synagogue worship ranging from traditional to experimental; Camp JRF's emerging musical culture; drumming, chanting, and kirtan (call and response) services and concerts; electric and jazz klezmer; Kabbalat Shabbat services done to the score of *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*, the Beatles, and even Jewish hip-hop.

A musical environment can be created not only from innovative options, but also from ones deeply rooted in our musical and textual heritage. A *niggun* can begin a text study session or a tikkun olam action. An instrument can underscore a reading or meditation. A choral or multi-part piece can serve as a group building exercise at a board meeting or leadership retreat.

At the same time, I must be honest and share that in the Davenning Leaders Training Institute that I have co-led with R. Marcia Prager since 2000, we insist on learning the basics of *nusach*, *trop*, and traditional text, before adding a patchwork of popular melodies or doing surgery on the liturgy. As in any spiritual practice, music that is un-rooted or unrelated to the meaning of a service, ritual, or event can be self-serving or potentially distracting for anyone trying to connect deeply to the meaning of a moment.

To honor the rich musical traditions of Jewish life, we will need to remain flexible in our musical expressions and engage new generations in the process, just as my "traditional" Russian, Polish and Austrian ancestors did.

Rabbi Shawn Zevit

The first Lunch and Learn was a lively session on Jewish *zemirot*, with everyone having the opportunity to add their favorite melodies to the mix. Rabbi Shawn described how the melodies we think of as traditional or established are really only a few generations old. The average "lifespan" of a melody is much less than we think. When one participant could only remember the start of a melody, he filled in the rest to demonstrate how and why melodies evolve..

Many of our beloved tunes were derived from folk songs and songs sung in the local taverns, so it is a continuation of tradition to include our favorite contemporary tunes, fitting them to old lyrics, jarring though they may be to more traditionalists. When the contemporary tune matches the intent of the original psalm or poem, they work well together, creating fresh *ruach* (spirit).

The hour flew by and soon we were all humming and singing our way into the snowy afternoon.

Barb Truitt

Camp Scholarships for Summer 2011

Kol HaLev and the JECC will again provide grants of up to \$1,000 to help families defray the cost for children currently in grade 3 or above attending qualifying Jewish summer camps for a minimum of 19 days. Please note that first priority will be given to children enrolled in the Kol HaLev education program who plan to attend Camp JRF. Camperships are available to enrolled children in their **first or second** year at Camp JRF and children in their **first year only** at a non-denominational camp.

If you are interested in applying for one of these camperships, you first need to enroll your child in Camp JRF or another qualifying camp (see list below). Then go to the One Happy Camper website (www.onehappycamper.org) and register your child for the campership incentive. If your child is in a Jewish day school, you will be instructed to click on the link to the JECC's website (www.jecc.org/youthopportunities/campfunding.1htm) to enter your data.

When you have completed the above registration process, please be sure to contact Alan Weinstein (216-687-3758 or alan.weinstein@law.csuohio.edu) to confirm that you have registered your child. This is an important step that will allow Kol HaLev to track our financial obligation of \$250 for each registered camper.

In addition to Camp JRF, the following non-denominational camps qualify for camperships: B'nai Brith Beber Camp, B'nai Brith Perlman Camp, Camp Wise, Emma Kaufmann Camp, Habonim Dror Camps, and Young Judea Camps.

Camp JRF: Quick Facts

Started in 2002, Camp JRF has grown from 39 campers from 12 JRF communities in Summer 2002 to an expected 400 campers from almost 50 communities in Summer 2011. This growth in enrollment has also included a broadening of ages: Camp JRF now has programs for youngsters between 8 and 17 years of age. Energetic and creative staff members come from the United States, Canada, and Israel; and Camp JRF senior staff includes students from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

In 2006, Camp JRF moved to its new permanent facility located on 130 acres of beautifully wooded land in the Pocono Mountains. Cabins for campers are equipped with toilets and showers, and each cabin has a porch. Campers take their meals in a newly renovated dining hall (capacity of 400 people) with a fully equipped kosher kitchen. In the event that a camper requires medical assistance, there is a 24-hour health clinic within 5 minutes of the camp and the Scranton Community Medical Center is within 20 minutes of the camp.

The campsite's features and amenities include:

- heated six-lane pool with attached changing area and hot tub
- private four-acre lake with sandy beach, water trampoline, and small boats
- arts center with individual rooms for pottery, crafts, cooking, cloth screening, industrial arts, and more
- indoor/outdoor theater with seating for 360, dual-level stage, and adjoining classrooms
- large outdoor pavilions for gymnastics, dance, sports, and education
- sports fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, and group games
- basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, tennis courts, and roller hockey rink
- indoor facility with theater, gymnastics, and skating equipment
- high and low ropes course elements
- multiple streams and hiking trails
- fully equipped health center

For more information about Camp JRF visit their web site at www.campjrf.org

Hagiga Happenings

In my position as Youth and Family Education Director, I have the wonderful opportunity to work on programs that touch all members at Kol HaLev. As one who enjoys working with a variety of people, a highlight of the programming for me is the intergenerational Shabbaton. This year, the Shabbaton committee is being headed by Barb Truitt. If you are interested in being a part of the planning process, she would welcome your help. It takes many people with diverse strengths to develop and implement such an endeavor.

This year the Shabbaton will take place April 8-10 at the Manor House (and perhaps a few cottages) at Punderson State Park in Newbury, OH. It will follow this year's theme of "Choosing Life, *Chai*" in honor of Kol HaLev's eighteenth year. There will be interesting workshops, a magnificent Shabbat experience, an opportunity to showcase the amazing talent of our community members, and of course, a celebration of Kol HaLev reaching the milestone of eighteen years.

Punderson is a breathtaking park with hiking trails and recreational activities for all kinds of weather. All of our programming will take place in the historic Manor House. Since the last time KHL hosted a Shabbaton at this state park, the Manor House has been made more accessible with the addition of an external ramp to the building, as well as a portable ramp into the dining room. All meeting rooms that we will utilize, as well as the swimming pool, are accessible via the elevator.

As in past years, we are the recipients of generous support from the Retreat Institute of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland. These funds allow for discounted rates and also provide financial aid to those in need. Registration materials will be sent out in the coming month. There is different pricing for singles in a single room, singles sharing a room, single-parent families, two-parent families and families with multiple children. Pricing for each category will be included in the information.

Thanks to the many who share their thoughts and ideas about educational opportunities at Kol HaLev. If you have some to share, please contact me at robyn@kolhalev.net or 216-320-1498.

Robyn

Chesed

Refuah sh'leimah, a complete and speedy recovery to Jean Miller

Refuah sh'leimah, a complete and speedy recovery to Frank Maris

Condolences to Louis and Julie Handler on the loss of Louis' mother, Isabelle Sternberg

Kol HaLev Kvells

Mazel tov to Jessie Vigorito and Aaron Tetelman and their children, Gabe, Azi and Seraph on the birth of their son and brother, Malachi

The Kol HaLev Men's Group is Under Way

The Kol HaLev men's group met for the first time on November 17 at the home of Rabbi Shawn Zevit with eleven men in attendance. Another five expressed interest in attending, but could not be present due to a previous commitment. There was much enthusiasm for the unique opportunity that gathering as a group of men presented, and there was a clear sense that meeting in some kind of an ongoing way would be a good thing for the men of our community. Please watch the Weekly Update for the specifics of time, date and location of our next gathering.

Chug HaSefer – Book Discussion Circle

The next book group meeting will be Thursday, December 2, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Ruth Ness. Anne Adamson will lead a discussion of Amos Oz's book, *To Know a Woman*. The novel is an account of eighteen months in the life of a retired Israeli Secret Service agent who is trying to sort out his life after the accidental death of his wife. Note: Due to Thanksgiving, this meeting is actually the November meeting of the group.

The December meeting will be Thursday, December 30, 7:30 p.m., at the home of Anita Cohn. Ami Kopstein will lead a discussion of *Rashi's Daughters, Book I: Joheved* (A Novel of Love and the Talmud in Medieval France) by Maggie Anton. Joheved, the eldest of Rashi's three daughters, having developed a passion for religious learning and prayer, is forced to choose between marital happiness and being true to her love of the Talmud. The novel has been described as rich in period detail and drama.

All KHL members are welcome to attend. For more information about the group or to be added to the group's e-mail list contact Kevin Weidenbaum (KJW@oberlin.net).

KHL Women to Celebrate Chanukah and Rosh Chodesh

There is a tradition of women gathering on the eighth night of Chanukah to tell the story of Judith whose faith and courage changed the course of history. Modern-day Judiths carry on her legacy as they dare to act, to speak, to teach, and to write themselves into the record of Jewish history.

All Kol HaLev women are invited to join us in celebrating the last night of Chanukah on Wednesday, December 8, when we will honor courageous Jewish women, past or present, in any walk of life. Please bring names and brief descriptions of a few women to add to the honor list.

Since Rosh Chodesh Tevet always falls at the end of Chanukah, we will celebrate the new month as well, with a potluck, candle lighting, singing and storytelling. Be sure to bring your chanukiah (menorah) and candles to bring light to the darkest night of the darkest month of the Jewish year.

The gathering will be at 6:30 p.m. at the home of new KHL member Jessica Schreiber near the border of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights. Her phone number is 216-371-1662.

To RSVP, offer potluck items, and get address and directions, **contact Judy Vida**, 440-646-1390 or judyvida@sbcglobal.net.

Who were the Hebrews? Who was their God?

At an adult education program on Sunday, December 19, Leah Kamionkowski will examine the subject: *Who were the Hebrews and who was their God?* This topic will ensure a stimulating discussion of our historical roots.

When: Sunday, December 19, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Leah's home, 9 Chelsea Ct., Beachwood, OH 44122



KOI HALEV Intergenerational Chanukah Party

**Sunday,
December 5, 2010
5:00 - 7:00 pm
The Ratner School**

**There will be activities for all ages including:
cooking, singing, music, dreidel, crafts,
lively conversation & being with friends.**

**Bring your favorite instrument to play, your
family's chanukiah for our communal lighting
and a parve/dairy dish to serve 10-12 people.**

A-E Salad/Side Dish

F-L Latkes

M-Q Dessert

R-Z Main Dish

**Questions? Contact Robyn
robyn@kolhalev.net or 216-320-1498**

Contributions

Kol HaLev gratefully acknowledges the following contributions from:

- William Foust and Mimi Plevin-Foust in commemoration of the yahrzeit of Leon Plevin

Kol HaLev thanks the following members for their contributions to the High Holy Days Appeal:

- Jeffrey Sunshine and Helen Salz

Yahrzeits

They are now a part of us, as we remember them

Members of Kol HaLev will mark the following yahrzeits during December:

Marguerite Dresden – aunt of Phyllis Maris

Jo Hana Goldberg – daughter of Judy Vida

Julius Kelman - father of Sam Kelman

Adolph Kohn – father of Ron Kohn

Mary R. Manny – mother of Meg Manny

Eli Samplin Marks – father of Phyllis Maris

Sadie Ritz (Sussel) – mother of Muriel Chasin

DECEMBER 2010 KOL HALEV CALENDAR

- Thursday 2 7:30 p.m. – **Book Group** at the home of Ruth Ness, 2328 Miramar, University Heights, 216-932-5579
- Saturday 4 9:45 a.m. - **Shabbat Service and Bar Mitzvah of Harry Weinstock** at Ratner Chapel; *Mikeitz*; Service leaders: Rabbi Steve and Harry; Kiddush hosted by Brent and Kate Weinstock in honor of their son Harry's Bar Mitzvah
- Saturday 4 10:15 a.m. – **Hagiga**
10:45 – Tot-Parent Shabbat Program for families with children in preschool and under in the We Care Room. The program is about a half an hour, led by Rachel Williams. Babysitting is available before and after Tot Shabbat, also in the We Care Room
- Sunday 5 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. – **Intergenerational Chanukah Party and Potluck** at The Ratner School
Potluck assignments;
A-E – Salad/Side Dish
F-L – Latkes
M-Q – Dessert
R-Z – Main Dish
The dishes should be vegetarian/dairy or pareve and **SHOULD NOT CONTAIN NUTS**. Please bring enough for 8-10. In keeping with our goal of becoming a more sustainable community, we encourage members to bring their own reuseable plates, cups, utensils and napkins to our potluck.
- Wednesday 8 6:30 p.m. - **KHL Women's Chanukah and Rosh Chodesh** celebration at the home of new member Jessica Schreiber, 216-371-1662. To RSVP and get address and potluck info contact Judy Vida 440-646-1390 or judyvida@sbcglobal.net

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DECEMBER 2010 KOL HALEV CALENDAR

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- Saturday 11 10:00 a.m. – **Creative Shabbat; Vayigash**
- Tuesday 14 8:00 a.m. – **Schmooze With the Rabbi** at the Stone Oven on Lee Rd
- Saturday 18 10:15 a.m. - **Shabbat Service** preceded by Torah Discussion at 9:30 a.m. at Ratner Chapel; *Vayechi*; Service leader: Rabbi Steve; kiddush co-hosted by Adina and Mark Davidson in honor of Adina finishing her teaching semester; by Deena and Dick Epstein; and by Muriel and Abe Chasin
- Saturday 18 10:15 a.m. – **Hagiga**
10:45 –Tot-Parent Shabbat Program for families with children in preschool and under in the We Care Room. The program is about a half an hour, led by Rachel Williams. Babysitting is available before and after Tot Shabbat, also in the We Care Room
- Saturday 18 12:45 p.m. – **Lunch and Learn Series: The Delights of Shabbat – Prayer and the Liturgy** at Ratner School; led by Rabbi Steve
- Sunday 19 7:30 p.m. – **Discussion of: Who were the Hebrews? Who was Their God?**; at the home of Leah Kamionkowski, 9 Chelsea Ct, Beachwood, OH 44122; Leah will examine the subject. This topic will ensure a stimulating discussion of our historical roots. More programs to come in 2011
- Wednesday 22 7:30 p.m. – **Mindful Jewish Practice** at the home of Molly Berger, 19744 Chagrin Boulevard, Shaker Heights, 216-752-5434; Both novice and experienced meditators are welcome to attend
- Friday 24 6:00 p.m. – **Kabbalat Shabbat Musical Collaboration with Congregation Bethaynu** at Bethaynu
- Saturday 25 10:00 a.m. – **Congregant Home Gathering; Sh'mot**; Service Leader: Rabbi Steve
- Thursday 30 7:30 p.m. – **Book Group** at the home of Anita Cohn, 2112 Acacia Park Drive, Apt. 106, Lyndhurst, 440-446-9336

SUPPORT KOL HALEV

Thanks to the 11 individuals who have signed up so far to use the KHL Capital One Affinity card, over \$1800 has been contributed to Kol HaLev within the past eleven months. Please consider signing up for a card. It is very easy. Just go to the Kol Halev website (www.kolhalev.net) and click on the "Supporting Kol HaLev" tab on the far right. Then scroll down to "Support KHL - Affinity Credit Card" and click for more information.

See our website calendar and weekly email for additions and changes

Kol HaLev Happenings

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216-320-1498

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Kol HaLev

Cleveland's Reconstructionist Community

An egalitarian, participatory spiritual community

Library hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday- 9-5

Visit our website at www.kolhalev.net