



# Meet Israeli Reform Rabbis



Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism  
התנועה הרפורמית והתנועה הקדימה בישראל



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התנועה הרפורמית מחלקת ישראל הפועלת

## Rabbi Stacey Blank



**Community Position:** Rabbi of Kehilat Tzur Hadassah since 2013  
**Born:** Cleveland, Ohio, USA, made Aliyah in 2005  
**Ordination:** HUC Jerusalem, 2007  
**Contact:** Rabbi.stacey@yahoo.com



**City/region:** Tzur Hadassah is a bedroom community to Jerusalem, 25 minutes from downtown, with around 2000 families and growing. It is nestled in the beautiful Judean Hills.

**Special activities in my community:** In this little out-of-the-way town, the Reform community has been an integral part of Tzur Hadassah, which prides itself on a pluralistic cultural life. We have remarkable support from the Government, which provided our building and supports the rabbi's salary, and we have wonderful cooperation with the Orthodox congregation and local authorities. We are now working to expand our involvement in formal education and "rebrand" the congregation as Tzur Hadassah expands exponentially in the coming years.

**Formative event in my history:** I served the Jewish community in Poland through the JDC from 2000 to 2002. I met young and old people who shared stories of discovering their Jewish ancestry, helped establish the first post-war Reform community in Warsaw, marched in Auschwitz/Birkenau, and discovered my ancestor's tombstone in a Ukrainian village. I learned that life is not black and white but rather a big gray area. Afterwards, I founded the HUC

Pesach Project, with Rabbi Ari Moffic, so that others could have a similar experience of Jewish peoplehood.

**Dreams for personal and professional future:** My professional dream is that the liberal Jewish movements will get full recognition and equal rights in Israel and that Israelis view women Rabbis as normal. My personal dream is to write literature.

**A place in the world which is special to me:** I have lived and traveled in many places around the world, each place special with important lessons. However, I am most connected to Jerusalem, my chosen home. We are part of the city's complexity living in the most Jewishly diverse and tolerant neighborhood in the world. My husband, Tamir, a human rights lawyer, helps people from Palestinians to Ultra-Orthodox. I talk about religious freedom, social justice,

and tolerance with anyone who will listen. We are living history.

**Unusual experience in the Diaspora:** When I traveled to Ukraine, I was told that I had to meet one of the young Jewish leaders. In the end, we only met for half an hour. After our short conversation, he said to me, "Don't worry. We're Jews. We're sure to meet again." There is something beautiful in the feeling of familiarity and fraternity with people who are, on the surface, strangers in faraway lands.

**A gift I would you like to give to my peers around the world:** I want to give my colleagues and friends in the Diaspora the courage to keep the discussion about Israel going in their communities, to foster a love of Israel, to teach nuanced understanding of the issues here, and to find the way to share their own opinions while creating a safe space for respectful disagreement.