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## High-Tech High Holidays ...

### Online Synagogue Breaks Tradition By Video Streaming High Holiday Services Featuring An Unconventional Torah Reading

*OurJewishCommunity.org Rabbis No Longer Read "Binding Of Isaac" at High Holidays*

CINCINNATI (September 8, 2009) – Jews around the world can participate in High Holiday services right from the comfort of their homes via [www.OurJewishCommunity.org](http://www.OurJewishCommunity.org), the world's first progressive online synagogue. OurJewishCommunity.org will be video-streaming two Rosh Hashanah and two Yom Kippur services live. There will also be a pre-recorded Memorial Service featuring photos that the web site's participants submitted of deceased family members that they are remembering. All of the services will also be archived for future viewing.

Unlike traditional synagogues that always read The Binding of Isaac on the Jewish High Holiday Rosh Hashanah, OurJewishCommunity.org will opt to read the story of Balaam, from the Torah section Balak. With less than 50 percent of Jews affiliated with a congregation, OurJewishCommunity.org, the world's first progressive online synagogue, strives to bring relevant teachings to its participants and feels that The Binding of Isaac is no longer an applicable reading for modern lives.

"A few years ago, Rabbi Robert B. Barr gave a sermon in which he said that reading the Binding of Isaac – a story in which a father is commanded to kill his son and is willing to act on that commandment – is no longer acceptable in a world in which terrorists declare that they are acting on God's command," says OurJewishCommunity.org Rabbi Laura Baum. "Rabbi Barr spoke passionately about no longer teaching a story about blind obedience."

Rabbis Barr and Baum also believe that reading different sections of the Torah on the High Holidays is a great teaching opportunity. Rather than being tied to the readings their ancestors determined, they wish to expose congregants from around the globe to a wider selection of Torah stories.

"We picked the story of Balaam because it allows us to explore issues that are raised in the text. Like all good myths, this one raises interesting topics - obedience vs. personal responsibility, seeing what is before your eyes and the power of words."



“Despite the break in tradition, reactions to the change in reading have been very positive,” says Rabbi Baum.

OurJewishCommunity.org will be video-streaming two Rosh Hashanah and two Yom Kippur services live. The services will be archived for future viewing. All of the services will be led by Rabbi Robert B. Barr and Rabbi Laura Baum at Congregation Beth Adam in Cincinnati. Beth Adam is an independent congregation that has written all of its own liturgy.

**To join the free community and view any of the services, visit [www.OurJewishCommunity.org](http://www.OurJewishCommunity.org).**

**Dates/Times:**

Friday, September 18, 2009 at 8:15 PM EST (Rosh Hashanah Evening)  
Saturday, September 19, 2009 at 10:30 AM EST (Rosh Hashanah Morning)  
Sunday, September 27, 2009 at 8:15 PM EST (Yom Kippur Evening)  
Monday, September 28, 2009 at 10:30 AM EST (Yom Kippur Morning)  
Monday, September 28, 2009 at 4:00 PM EST (Yom Kippur Memorial)

**About OurJewishCommunity.org**

OurJewishCommunity.org is the world’s first progressive online synagogue. Launched on September 1, 2008, OurJewishCommunity.org has reached more than 10,000 individuals in all 50 states in the U.S. and in 70 countries. The online community features blogs, audio podcasts through iTunes, video podcasts through YouTube, streaming holiday services, discussion boards, holiday eCards, recipes, educational materials for all ages, and more. Rabbi Baum has more than 1,400 followers on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/rabbibaum](http://www.twitter.com/rabbibaum)) and OurJewishCommunity.org has hundreds of Facebook fans ([www.facebook.com/ourjewishcommunity](http://www.facebook.com/ourjewishcommunity)).

**Laura Baum, Rabbi  
OurJewishCommunity.org**



As the Founding Rabbi of OurJewishCommunity.org, Rabbi Laura Baum works to engage Jews through social media and other technology. “Baum’s Blog” is a central feature of OurJewishCommunity.org as are Rabbi Baum’s YouTube podcasts. An expert on social media and the changing needs of the Jewish community, Rabbi Baum has created a new model for engaging those seeking a new way to connect to Judaism.

Rabbi Baum was ordained by Hebrew Union College in 2008. She graduated from Yale University in 2001 Summa Cum Laude,



Phi Beta Kappa, and with distinction in the Psychology major. She is currently pursuing an M.B.A. at Xavier University.

**Robert B. Barr, Rabbi**

**OurJewishCommunity.org**



Rabbi Robert B. Barr, ordained by Hebrew Union College in 1981, is the Founding Rabbi of Congregation Beth Adam in Cincinnati, Ohio. Under his leadership for the last 29 years, Beth Adam has grown from 6 members to over 300. The congregation has a significant voice and is a resource for liberal Jews worldwide. Rabbi Barr first imagined the online congregation and has played a continuing role in its development, including his weekly podcasts (“Barr’s Banter”) which are available on iTunes.

Rabbi Barr is active in the leadership of many Jewish organizations and has twice served as president of the Greater Cincinnati Board of Rabbis. Recognized by his peers as a leader in the evolution of modern, liberal Judaism, his writings have been published in journals, books, and websites around the world.