Reconstructing Judaism
Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.
Background

- **Practical necessity:** Merger of Reconstructionist Rabbinical College with Jewish Reconstructionist Federation

- **Strategic opportunity:**
  - Capture the energy inherent in – and growing from – the movement
  - Revisit the essence of Reconstructionist Judaism
  - Raise profile in the public sphere
  - Increase participation in programs & communities
  - Broaden & deepen our base of support
Our process

• “The most participatory process we have ever seen.” – Farra Trompeter, Vice President of Big Duck

• Arrived at identity in truly Reconstructionist way

• Participatory, inclusive, lay-clergy input

• 1 year, 1,000+ Reconstructionists across North America

• Webinars, online surveys, in-person town halls

• Final review by congregational leaders and rabbis

• Approved unanimously by Board of Governors in Oct. 2017
Reconstructing Judaism

- Emphasizes it’s an active process – “doing” Jewish
- Clarifies what we do
- Our name is now our mission
Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

- Clarifies that we live at the intersection of past and future
- “Relevant” is an imperative, a promise, not a descriptor
• Sprouting leaves – symbolize spreading joy, innovation & resilience
• Hand-drawn style – speaks to our *heimish* & eclectic personality
• Green colors – reinforce growth concept & environmental focus
• Varying shades – convey participatory nature
• *Midrash* – on the eighth day humans begin to co-create
How we are reconstructing Judaism
• Auerbach entrepreneurial grants
• Building and seeding affiliated communities
• Camp Havaya & Havaya Arts
• Evolve
• Faculty research & scholarship
• Hashivenu podcast
• Learning networks
• Multifaith chaplaincy project
• Plenum
• Presidents’ forums
• Rabbinic changemakers
• Regional shabbatonim
• Resilience project
• Ritualwell
• …& more, including Convention 2018!
Reaction
“Nice evolution.”
- Ruth W. Messinger, Global Ambassador, American Jewish World Service

“Spot on … green was a great symbolic color choice … the tagline describes our community succinctly and well.”
- Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb, Adat Shalom, Bethesda

“The new brand and message looks amazing.”
- Amanda Lang, Director of Marketing and Communications, National Council of Jewish Women

“It captures Kaplan’s larger vision as I understand it as well as 21st century society, youth, and zeitgeist as I understand it.”
- Barry Chazan, Professor Emeritus of Education, Hebrew University, Professor at Spertus College, Advisor to I Center For Israel Education

“It fits in perfectly with Kaplan's exhortation that we begin by Reconstructing ourselves. This formulation which I found in the diary is much more compelling than Reconstructionism and fits in well with the new emphasis on action.”
- Mel Scult, Professor Emeritus of Judaic Studies at Brooklyn College, Professor Emeritus of History, City University of New York, Graduate Center

“It looks and sounds great. I know how much work goes into these kinds of processes, and how complicated it can be.”
- Judith Rosenbaum, Executive Director, Jewish Women’s Archives

“Really a powerful statement and beautiful, clean, strong visually.”
- Rabbi Myriam Klotz, Director of the Spirituality Initiative, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR)