

The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting and the Soul of a Pittsburgh Neighborhood

Mark Oppenheimer (Yale University)



On October 27, 2018, a gunman killed eleven Jews who were worshipping at the Tree of Life synagogue in Squirrel Hill—the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in American history. Many neighborhoods would be understandably subsumed by despair and recrimination after such an event, but not this one.

In this talk, Mark Oppenheimer offers a piercing portrait of the struggles and triumphs of one of America’s renowned Jewish neighborhoods in the wake of unspeakable tragedy. Shifting the focus away from the criminal and his crime, Mark instead presents the historic, spirited community at the center of this heartbreak. He speaks with residents and nonresidents, Jews and gentiles, survivors and witnesses, teenagers and seniors, activists and historians. Together, these stories provide a kaleidoscopic and nuanced account of collective grief, love, support, and revival.

MARK OPPENHEIMER directs the Yale Journalism Initiative and has been a lecturer in Yale’s English department, political science department, and divinity school. He received his B.A. in history and his Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale. He was the religion columnist for *The New York Times* from 2010 to 2016 and has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *GQ*, *The Washington Post*, *Slate*, *Mother Jones*, *The Nation*, and *The Believer*, among others. He has been a commentator on NPR and is also the host of *Tablet* magazine’s podcast, *Unorthodox*. He is the author of five books, including *The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia*.

MONDAY

October 11, 2021
4:00pm PST

ONLINE

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This event is open and free to the public.

This program is part of the Berkeley Antisemitism Education Initiative, a collaboration between the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, the Berkeley Center for Jewish Studies, the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion, and the Helen Diller Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies.