

Home

Home page content

Should be clean, light on copy, heavy on imagery that gives a quick look at TMF work. If someone doesn't take the time to click through all the info on the site, they should grasp a general understanding of who TMF is by the home page content.

Rotating picture section that grabs attention and interest

Include 3 minute video that Matt is working on.

Possibly include key Scripture in imagery... i.e. Micah 6:8, etc.

About Matzevah / TMF

(Insert pictures throughout content)

The Matzevah Foundation (TMF) was established in 2010 as a tax-exempt, 501(C) (3), non-profit corporation recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a public charity. TMF grew out of the work of a group of Christians who walk according to the two greatest commandments given to us in the Torah – “to love God” and “to love neighbor.”

Our Purpose

We seek to broaden and deepen the dialogue with the Jewish community by:

1. Caring for and restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland: There are 1,200 Jewish cemeteries across the country, which serve as a visible reminder of the presence of G-d's people, the Jews in Poland, who lived among Gentiles for nearly a thousand years.
2. Educating the public about the Shoah (the Holocaust): Poland was once home to a vibrant Jewish nation. During World War II, Poland lost 3.5 million Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis. Today there is an estimated 10,000-20,000 Jews living in Poland. TMF seeks to remember and honor the heritage of the Jews who once called Poland home.

We seek to cooperate with others who will:

1. Join us in this cooperative mitzvah (applying the Torah to life today)
2. Be willing to act justly and demonstrate mercy, as the Prophet Micah proclaimed and thereby become the voice for those silenced by the Shoah.
3. Seek opportunities for Jew and Christian to engage in dialogue based on *Dabru Emet (Speak the Truth)*.

In 2000 a group of “Jewish rabbinic and academic leaders issued a statement called *Dabru Emet*,” meaning “Speak the Truth” (para. 8). In *Dabru Emet* the group recognized the work of

the Christian “to improve interfaith relations and called on Jews to learn about and likewise affirm the positive changes” (para. 8). Dabru Emet is a vital statement in Jewish-Christian relations; it makes eight statements upon which “Jews and Christians could base dialogue” (para. 8).

A consideration for Jewish and Christian dialogue:

“Christians know and serve G-d through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know and serve G-d through Torah and the Jewish tradition. That difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other; nor by exercising political power over the other. Jews can respect Christians' faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation. Neither Jew nor Christian should be pressed into affirming the teaching of the other community ("Dabru Emet: A Jewish statement on Christians and Christianity," 2000, par. 6).”

Below, please find the list of statements from the declaration of Dabru Emet ("Dabru Emet: A Jewish statement on Christians and Christianity," 2000):

- Jews and Christians worship the same G-d.
- Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book — the Bible (what Jews call "Tanakh" and Christians call the "Old Testament").
- Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel.
- Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah.
- Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon.
- The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until G-d redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture.
- A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice.
- Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace.

Our Code of Ethics

Link to a condensed version of C of E (would be a cleaner look) ... Can that be done?

Why care for Jewish cemeteries in Poland?

We are not Jewish so for us, caring for Jewish cemeteries is not obligatory. Nevertheless, we realize the importance of this mitzvah, or good deed, and we are driven by *gemilut chasadim*, “the giving of loving-kindness” as our motivation to care for abandoned and desolate Jewish cemeteries in Poland.

We also realize that caring for the Jewish cemeteries in Poland is important to the Jew due to the *Halakah*, as the Torah teaches and as the rabbis teach us in the Talmud. We know that caring for the dead is one of the highest expressions of *chesed*, loving-kindness, as the dead cannot repay us or anyone for the loving-kindness shown to them.

Caring for numerous cemeteries is a daunting task for the Polish Jewish community. TMF desires to come alongside them to restore what has been lost to the years of neglect. Performing this mitzvah, or good deed, allows us to break the cycle of evil and forgetfulness which will lead to a path of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Our hope is that our actions, words, and deeds will speak for those who no longer have a voice, for those who suffered and died at the hand of their oppressors during the Shoah. We celebrate their memory and act to honor it.

Include video testimonials

Our projects

(Insert pictures for each project as they are available)

Zambrów Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project (August 2011 to Present)

The Matzevah Foundation is partnering with the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (FODZ) and with the Rabbinical Council for Matters of Jewish Cemeteries in Poland to care for and restore the Jewish cemetery in Zambrów, Poland. Over a two-year period, volunteers from Poland and the US have cleaned and cleared the cemetery of debris, shrubs and small trees, as well as, inventoried the genealogical data preserving it for descendants. The Matzevah Foundation placed a memorial matzevah in 2012 and plans to build a wall in order to restore and preserve sanctity.

Oświęcim Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project (September 2011 to Present)

The Matzevah Foundation is partnering with the Auschwitz Jewish Center (AJC) to restore the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim, Poland. Oświęcim is the location of the infamous Nazi death camp, Auschwitz. The Auschwitz Jewish Center is affiliated with the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City. In the summer of 2013, volunteers from the US, Poland, Germany, and Israel cleared and cleaned the cemetery by removing small shrubs and trees along with painting ohels. During the summer of 2014, volunteers continued clearing the cemetery as well as began work on repairing the wall.

Krzepice Jewish Cemetery Restoration Project (July 2013 to Present)

The Matzevah Foundation is partnering with the Jewish community of Katowice, Poland, Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis and Piotr Jakowenko of the Brama Cukerman Foundation to restore the Jewish cemetery in Krzepice, Poland. During the summer of 2014, a team of volunteers from the US and Poland (local high school students) cleared and cleaned the perimeter of cemetery of debris, small shrubs and trees. The priority was to clear a line of sight around the perimeter in order for surveyors to establish property lines for the building of a wall. Future plans call for the complete clearing of the large cemetery of brush and undergrowth along with building a wall.

Wolbrom Jewish Cemetery Memorial (June 2012 to Present)

The Matzevah Foundation assisted Albert Narcys and his family of West Lakes, Australia to place a memorial matzevah in honor of members of his family who lost their lives during the Shoah. The Matzevah Foundation raised funds and secured all permissions for the placement of the matzevah in the summer of 2014. Without the assistance of the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage, we would have not been able to secure permissions and arrange for the memorial to be placed. Albert and his family traveled from Australia and participated in the unveiling ceremony on 21 July 2014.

Dates of future trips: Idea here is to list upcoming trips so people can see where there are opportunities for joining TMF. There would be a link under “Get Involved” that could route them back here.

July 10-19, 2015 (Krzepice or Blonie)

July 24 – August 2, 2015 (Krzepice or Blonie)

August 7-16, 2015 Oswiecim

The Shoah in Poland/Jewish Life in Poland

(Insert pictures throughout content)

For a thousand years, Poland was home to a vibrant Jewish population. Generations of families lived, worked, and worshiped in towns all over the country. In fact, it had about 10-13% of the total Jewish population in the world prior to World War II. However, just as the history of Poland itself is filled with turmoil, the Jews who called this nation home also have a long story of...

Adolf Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany in January 1933 and began the radical transformation of Europe. His plan? To have a perfect Aryan race by removing all Jews from society as well as other undesirables such as the mentally ill, handicapped, Gypsies, and other “inferior” races.

World War II in Europe was a political and economic trauma for the Jews. But more so than that, it was a spiritual devastation – a destruction to which Jews refer today as the Shoah. Of the 11 million European civilians who died during the Second World War, 6 million people died simply because they were Jewish.

The context of Poland is important as is the relationship that Jews and Poles have shared over their long history, which at times has been strained and embittered. The Nazi Final Solution only worked to exacerbate the difficulty in their relations even further. Common belief is that the Nazi regime chose Poland for the setting of the Final Solution because of Polish anti-Semitism; however, that is not the case. The Nazis chose Poland strategically “as their gigantic laboratory for mass murder” simply for the reason that Poland was home to the largest Jewish population in Europe (Zimmerman, 2003, p. 3).

Through ghettos, labor camps, mass killings, concentration and death camps, 3 million Jews were killed in Poland by the end of World War II. The Polish nation recovered from the war and has reintegrated into Europe; however, it has not been the same for Jews in Poland. For all intents and purposes, Jewish culture was lost, destroyed, and nearly eliminated from the country completely, leaving behind only dim shadows of the past in the memories of the Polish people.

Despite the tragic loss, a remnant remains.

There is a small number of Jews remaining in Poland today – according to estimates, between 10-20,000 people. Nonetheless and possibly even more significantly, there are silent witnesses that testify to the influence of the once vital Jewish culture lying scattered in 1,200 Jewish cemeteries throughout the country. These cemeteries are a visible reminder of the presence of G-d's People in Poland.

Poland is currently experiencing a rebirth of Judaism as many people are discovering their Jewish roots. Where their parents and grandparents hid their Jewish heritage, younger Poles are eagerly seeking to understand their culture and some are even converting to Judaism. This rebirth is a reflection of G-d's desire to heal and renew the land and its people.

[The Christian's Response to the Shoah](#)

[Get Involved](#)

How can you be involved in the work of The Matzevah Foundation?

1. Pray – Join us as we pray for the work that is being done in Poland.
2. Join a trip – Interested in traveling to Poland to work alongside TMF? Check out our Current Projects for upcoming trips (link to tab) and how you might be able to be involved.
3. Volunteer application
4. Donate – Paypal, address info (get from current website)
5. Buy a Brick Campaign – include the info from current website about the campaign
6. Receive our newsletters – include link where people can sign up to receive newsletters via email

Contact Us

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References Cited

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