



A Day of Jewish Discovery:  
Explore the Joy of Learning

# **A Day of Jewish Discovery 2020**

## **Presenters**

## **Session Topics**

## **Biographies**



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## Session 1

9:30 – 10:30 am

### **Gavriela Geller, Executive Director, JCRB|AJC**

#### **Antisemitism in 2020: Old Tropes, New Challenges**

This session will explore the COVID-19 pandemic's implications on fighting antisemitism in the United States.

#### **Biography:**

Gavriela Geller, a native of Kansas City, is the Executive Director of JCRB|AJC. She previously worked for AJC's Belfer Institute for Latino and Latin American Affairs (BILLA), managing a grant from the Ford Foundation. In that capacity, she implemented programs across the country to advance immigration reform and strengthen Latino-Jewish relations. She served as AJC's immigration policy analyst, identifying advocacy opportunities and representing the organization on national immigration coalitions. Most recently, Gavi directed the policy and advocacy efforts of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of St. Louis. She has also worked at the National Immigrant Justice Center helping detained and LGBTQ immigrants as part of Avodah: The Jewish Service Corps. Gavi holds an M.A. in Jewish cultural arts from the George Washington University and is fluent in Spanish. She serves on the Avodah Kansas City Advisory Council.

### **Henry Bial, Professor of Theatre and Dance, University of Kansas**

#### **Jewish on Demand: Representation and Difference in the Streaming Era**

How have services like Netflix and Amazon opened the door for a new wave of complex and contested representations of Jewish identity? Contemporary examples (*The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *Transparent*, *Unorthodox*) will be considered in relation to the longer arc of film and TV history.

#### **Biography:**

Henry Bial is Professor of Theatre and Dance at the University of Kansas, where he has also served as Director of Jewish Studies. He is the author of *Acting Jewish: Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage and Screen* and *Playing God: The Bible on the Broadway Stage*.



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## **Alana Muller. Speaker, Workshop Facilitator, Coach and Author**

### **Networking In Place: Maintaining Meaningful Relationships While Social Distancing**

As a result of coronavirus, we are all facing new realities. You may be wondering: How do I stay connected? How do I continue to build relationships? How do I remain relevant in this time of uncertainty? Now is the perfect time to sharpen your networking skills, utilize the power of relationships and connect with others – even while sheltering in place.

#### **Biography:**

Alana Muller is a Networking speaker, workshop facilitator, coach and author of the book, *Coffee Lunch Coffee: A Practical Field Guide for Master Networking*, and a companion blog, [CoffeeLunchCoffee.com](http://CoffeeLunchCoffee.com). She has helped thousands of people formulate a strategic mindset around Networking while creating a game plan to get out there and Connect.

## **Mark D. Nanos, Ph.D. (University of St. Andrews, Scotland) Lund University, Sweden**

### **What was Paul Contesting about the Role of Torah in His Letter to the Galatians?**

Galatians is often cited to contend that Paul was opposed to Jewish identity and behavior guided by Torah as being antithetical to grace and faith. This session will show why those readings do not capture the probable meaning of Paul's arguments, and offer alternatives that make more sense of an early controversial Jewish sect. (Bonus: this will involve discussion of "evil eye" culture in the first-century.)

#### **Biography:**

Dr. Nanos is a Jewish historian with a research focus on the Apostle Paul. He is a leading figure in the emerging international school of thought that Paul should be studied as a figure within Second Temple Judaism. He won the National Jewish Book Award in 1996 for his first book, *The Mystery of Romans*. He has followed up his 2015 co-edited volume, *Paul within Judaism*, with four volumes of his collected essays. In 2019 he received an Honorary Doctorate at Lund University, Sweden, for his Jewish contributions to New Testament studies. Dr. Nanos earned his Ph.D. from University of St. Andrews, Scotland.



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## **Lara Steinel, Music Director, Congregation Kol Ami**

### **Jump-Start Your Jewish Meditation Practice**

Want to meditate but just can't get started? This session will offer basic meditation techniques, the latest on meditation's health and spiritual benefits, and several Jewish meditation experiences, all done in a safe, warm environment. This session is appropriate for those new to and those familiar with meditation.

#### **Biography:**

Lara Steinel has been meditating for 7,623 days. She is the music director for Congregation Kol Ami in Kansas City, MO, where she leads monthly Jewish meditation sessions, most recently by Zoom.

## **Orit Kamara, Owner of "IvritByOrit"**

### **The Aleph Bet of Learning to Read Hebrew**

In this session you will be introduced to the shape, names and sounds of all 22 Hebrew letters and learn the vowel sounds that can be added to any letter. You will be introduced to the vowel symbols and have the opportunity to start practicing the combinations of letters and vowels. The handouts you will get will help you remember and practice what you learned.

#### **Biography:**

Orit Kamara grew up in Israel and earned her economics degree from Tel-Aviv University. Orit currently lives in the Overland Park and teaches Hebrew to all levels of students. Orit has been teaching Hebrew for 15 years to students ranging from 7 years old to 90. In 2017, Orit published her easy-to-follow, step-by-step eBook for learning to read in Hebrew. The eBook is sold all over the world.



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## **John Pryor, LPC, Jewish Family Services, and Susie Hurst, M.A., Director of Family Life Education, Jewish Family Services**

### **Taking Care of You!: The Importance of Emotional Wellness during these Challenging Times**

Explore the impact this new reality has had on our social, emotional and mental well-being. When considering wellness, people tend to think first of physical activity or nutrition-. However, our emotional well-being is a crucial part of our overall health. Join in an interactive discussion to learn tools, strategies, and resources that will help you navigate these unprecedented times.

#### **Biography:**

**Susie Hurst** is the Director of Family Life Education at Jewish Family Services, offering a variety of education and support programs across all age groups. In addition, she serves at the Adolescent Specialist for the C.H.A.I. program providing preventive education workshops and individual consultations for adolescents, parents, educators and youth workers.

**John Pryor** is a Licensed Professional Counselor at JFS with over five years of experience working with adults, children, and families. John is also certified in Mindfulness-based interventions and utilizes these tools to support clients in achieving their wellness goals.

## **Rabbi Yitzchak Mizrahi, Director, Vaad HaKashruth**

### **Fantastical stories of Midrash: credible or incredible?**

Many tales in the Midrash seem mythical or fantastical. Could it be that some creative license was used by its authors, or at least some embellishment? We'll examine a few samples and test our faith in their truth.

#### **Biography:**

Rabbi Mizrahi arrived in Kansas in 2018 to direct the Vaad HaKashruth of KC after serving in New Zealand as the rabbi of the Jewish community in Wellington. More recently, Rabbi Mizrahi served Congregation BIAV as their interim rabbi.



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## **Jessica Rockhold, Executive Director, Midwest Center for Holocaust Education**

### **Holocaust Education in 2020**

Where is the field of Holocaust Education after over 25 years of institutional development? How do teachers address issues of current antisemitism and relevance in 2020? This session explores the evolution of this field and the state of Holocaust Education today.

#### **Biography:**

Jessica Rockhold is the Executive Director of the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education (MCHE). Jessica earned her B.A. in Modern European History and her M.A. in Museum Studies with an emphasis in Holocaust History from the University of Kansas. She served as the research assistant to the Senior Historian of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum before joining the staff of MCHE in June 2003. At MCHE she served as the Director of Education and the Associate Director before being named Executive Director in 2020.

## **Rabbi Beryl Padorr, Congregation Ohev Sholom**

### **Wise Aging and Mindfulness in Today's World**

This session will explore how we can look at ourselves with mindfulness as we age and stay safe. We will end with a guided meditation.

#### **Biography:**

Rabbi Beryl Padorr has been spiritual leader of Congregation Ohev Sholom since August 2019. Rabbi Padorr received Ordination and a Master of Arts in Rabbinics and Education from American Jewish University in L.A. and was a graduate from UMKC with distinction. Padorr was trained through the Institute of Jewish Spirituality to teach Wise Aging. She is a mother of three married children and has six grandchildren.



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## Session 2

**11:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**Barbara C. Unell, Co-author, Discipline with Love and Limits and co-founder, Raised with Love and Limits Foundation;**

**Sondra Wallace, Mental Health Coalition and You Be You Coordinator;**

**Molly McGurk, LCSW, LSCSW, Director of Mental Health Jewish Family Services**

**Be a Safe Place for Them to Come Home to. Be a Safe Place for Them to Fall Apart.**

When we turn “What’s wrong with you?” into “What are you telling me?” then we are getting somewhere! Let’s move to what we can do for our kids by understanding what their behavior—good, bad, and ugly—is teaching us. Get the latest scientific research about how our kids of all ages are wired and how to help them thrive, right now ... and for a lifetime.

### **Biography:**

**Barbara Unell** is the author of 17 books, including the international bestseller, co-authored with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D, *Discipline with Love and Limits*, translated into 27 languages with over 1 million copies sold. Journalist, adjunct professor, parent educator and social entrepreneur for the past 40 years, Barbara is also a frequent contributor to local and international media, including Oprah, NPR and TODAY.

**Sondra Wallace** is the Mental Health Coordinator for Jewish Family Services of Greater Kansas City and is committed to support, collaborate and engage our community to provide equal access to mental health education and prevention to increase health and wellness for all. She has over 20 years of experience in the educational community throughout Kansas City.

**Molly McGurk** joined Jewish Family Services in 2019 to lead the agency's mental health services. McGurk has a master's degree in social work from California State University Sacramento and is a licensed clinical social worker in KS and MO. She has an extensive background in community mental health with over 13 years in behavioral health services as a mental health counselor and a program coordinator with the division of behavioral health services in Sacramento.



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**Dr. Rami Zeedan**, Assistant Professor of Israel Studies, Jewish Studies Program, University of Kansas

### **Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People- Wondering what the problem is**

In July 2018, the approval of Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People caused several protests organized by Arab citizens of Israel. However, the opposition to the new legislation was derived from two main competing narratives. We will discuss the challenges of this law through the eyes of the Israeli Arabs.

#### **Biography:**

Rami Zeedan is an Assistant Professor of Israel Studies in the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Kansas. He has published two books: *Arab-Palestinian Society in the Israeli Political System: Integration versus Segregation in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, 2019); and *Battalion of Arab- the History of the Minorities' Unit in the IDF from 1948 to 1956* (Ben-Shemen, 2015) [Hebrew].

## **Rabbi Herbert J. Mandl, Ph.D., Rabbi Emeritus, Kehilath Israel Synagogue**

### **Pope Pius XII - Friend or Enemy of the Jews?**

There has been much controversy about Pope Pius the 12th. He rescued many Jewish children during the Holocaust, but never publicly condemned the Nazis, even as the head of the Catholic Church. This lecture will delve into the details of these relationships

#### **Biography:**

Rabbi Mandl was senior rabbi of Kehilath Israel Synagogue for 36 years. He holds a Ph.D. in Jewish law from the University of Montreal in medieval philosophy, a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University and a master's degree and Rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological seminary of America, as well as orthodox ordination





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## **Rabbi Javier E. Cattapan, Congregation Beth Torah**

### **The Cairo Genizah: Sacred Trash and Treasures**

The Cairo Genizah (a depository of texts in Hebrew script) was "discovered" in the Ben Ezra synagogue at the end of the 19th century. Thanks to the work of scholars like Schechter and Goitein, the immense collection of documents pertaining to the life of the Jewish communities of the Eastern Mediterranean was preserved. We will learn about the discovery and its significance for Jewish history, then take a close look at some of the most "famous" texts. Some knowledge of Hebrew is recommended.

#### **Biography:**

Rabbi Cattapan is a native of Argentina. In Argentina, his education included the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano (Conservative) and the University of Buenos Aires, where he studied Ancient and Medieval Philosophy and was a teaching assistant in General Linguistics. He came to the U.S in 1994 to attend Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, Ohio. Rabbi Cattapan received his M. A. in Hebrew Letters in 1997, and was ordained as rabbi at the HUC-JIR in Cincinnati in 1998. In 2004, Rabbi Cattapan earned his M. Phil. in Hebraic and Cognate Studies. After ordination, he taught Modern Hebrew at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Before coming to Beth Torah, Rabbi Cattapan served synagogues in Indiana and Ohio. He became the spiritual leader as Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Torah in Overland Park, Kansas. He is member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and incoming president of the Rabbinical Association of Greater Kansas City.

## **Bill Greenberg, Retired Army Officer and Teacher, Ft. Leavenworth, KS**

### **Hezbollah-Israeli War 2006: Setting the Stage for Today's Middle East**

This session will begin by setting the strategic context in the Middle East prior to the conflict, then discuss the lead-up to the Hezbollah-Israeli War. The War will be analyzed on three levels: Strategic, Operational, and Tactical. The presenter will conclude by presenting how the outcome of the war had multiple effects on the current situation in the Middle East, concentrating on Israeli-Iranian tension.

#### **Biography:**

Bill Greenberg teaches at the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS. Bill is a retired Army officer who served for 28 years in numerous locations around the world, with the majority of time spent in the Middle East.



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## **Sarah Aptilon, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Johnson County Community College**

### **The Cosmic Joke: Judaism, Mysticism and Comedy**

Jews are somewhat unique in identifying humor as a core element of our religious and/or cultural heritage. This talk will explore humor as it is--sometimes surprisingly--expressed in Judaism and other world religious traditions, and attempt to say something about the connection between the transgressive and the transcendent.

#### **Biography:**

Sarah Aptilon is an assistant professor of religious studies at Johnson County Community College, where she teaches courses on world religions, Asian religions, and Japanese culture. She earned a B.A. in East Asian Studies from Yale University and a Ph.D. in religious studies from Stanford University.

## **Rabbi Zalman Tiechtel, Director, The Rohr Chabad Center For Jewish Life, University of Kansas**

### **Positivity Bias - Tools to Reframe Our Experiences during these Turbulent Times**

Discover practical wisdom and tools for positive living. Together we will reframe our experience during these turbulent times. This class will uplift the spirit and reshape our perspective as we weather these challenging times.

#### **Biography:**

Rabbi Zalman Tiechtel studied at Talmudic Institutions in Israel, France and the US. In 2006 he became co-director of Chabad at KU, where he currently serves as a mentor and guide to hundreds of his beloved Jewhawks.



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## **Rabbi Neal Schuster, Senior Jewish Educator, University of Kansas Hillel**

### **Technology, Ethics, and the Essence of Humanity**

If you could, would you upload your mind to a computer and live forever? If you were alone, could you fall in love with a computer program? Movies and TV today are obsessed with such possibilities, and they may be much closer than we think. But what are the ethics of blurring the line between technology and "real life"? This session will explore some of the most challenging and unexpected questions we will face in the near future. Does Judaism have anything to say about androids and uploads?

#### **Biography:**

Neal Schuster is the Rabbi and Senior Jewish Educator at the University of Kansas Hillel, and a lecturer in KU's Jewish Studies program.

## **Prof. Vitaly Chernetsky, Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Kansas**

### **Jewish life as reflected in Russian and East European film**

Enjoy a retrospective overview of representations of Jewish life in Russian and East European cinemas, from the silent film era onward.

#### **Biography:**

Vitaly Chernetsky is an Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures and member of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Kansas. He was born in Odessa, Ukraine, and received his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Pennsylvania.



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## **Rebbetzin Esther Friedman, Co-Director of Chabad TLC and Director of KC Kosher Meals on Wheels**

### **An Insider's View of Netflix's "Unorthodox"**

Examine and discuss the hit Netflix miniseries, "Unorthodox." Based on Deborah Feldman's memoir, the TV show follows the story of a young woman who leaves her ultra-Orthodox life in the Satmar Jewish community in Brooklyn for a new life in Berlin, Germany. We'll unpack some of the stereotypes in the movie's depiction of Chassidic life and learn more about Jewish religious practices and rituals discussed in the show.

### **Biography:**

Rebbetzin Esther Friedman is a noted speaker, traveling throughout the US, Canada, Israel and Australia. She is co-Director of Chabad TLC and Director of KC Kosher Meals on Wheels. As a Temperament Certified Professional, Esther specializes in self-improvement, parenting and relationship issues.

## **Debby Winkel, Community Volunteer and Passionate Cook**

### **A Bissel this, and a Bissel that. Preserving our Jewish Heritage through Food**

Learn how to make three Jewish recipes: an Ashkenazi recipe with a "healthish" contemporary twist; a Persian Passover recipe that traveled from Tehran through Rhode Island and New York City to a new home in Mexico City; and an old family recipe beloved by many. Ingredients will be prepared ahead of the session. During the session, we will assemble each dish and reveal the "how to's" of each recipe.

### **Biography:**

Debby Winkel was born and raised in Kansas City to a family of Russian, German and Bohemian heritage. The women on both sides of her family were wonderful cooks who always made family gatherings beautiful and delicious. Over the years, sharing recipes and teaching others became a fun way for Debby to keep recipes and family heritage alive.

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## Lunch and Learn

12:30 pm – 1:30pm

### **Title of Program: Local State and National Issues of Concern in the 2020 Elections**

**Panelists: Rabbi Doug Alpert, Dr. David Slusky, Dr. John Lantos**

Topic Description: We will look at the role that racial justice, the economy, and community health will play in the 2020 election, then discuss how the outcome of the election may impact these issues.

#### **Biography:**

**Rabbi Doug Alpert** is the spiritual leader of Congregation Kol Ami. His work includes leadership positions in many organizations fighting injustice including: the NAACP-Missouri branch; Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity; Missouri Healthcare for All and the Poor Peoples Campaign. He is the 2017 recipient of the Harold Holliday, Civil Rights Award from the NAACP.

**David Slusky, Ph.D.**, De-Min and Chin-Sha Wu Associate Professor of Economics, Associate Professor of Population Health (by courtesy), and Associate Chair & Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Department of Economics, at University of Kansas; Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research in Cambridge, MA, Research Fellow, IZA - Institute of Labor Economics in Bonn, Germany, Special Sworn Status at the United States Census Bureau

David Slusky is an applied microeconomist, researching healthcare, environmental exposure, reproductive health, Medicaid, divorce, Uber, and children. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton, studying with the late Alan Krueger (former chairman of President Obama's Council of Economic Advisors). He was also a Health Policy Advisor for Pete Buttigieg's presidential campaign.

**John Lantos, M.D.**, is a pediatrician and bioethicist at Children's Mercy in Kansas City. Previously he was Professor of Pediatrics and Chief of General Pediatrics at University of Chicago. He is passionately concerned about the ethical dilemmas that arise in the care of critically ill children and in attempts to discover new and better therapies.

#### **Panel Moderator:**

**Stephen Steigman**, Director, 91.9 Classical KC and ClassicalKC.org and Chief of Broadcast Operations, KCUR 89.3, NPR, Kansas City.

#### **The Lunch and Learn Session Coordinator:**

**Brandi Fisher**, former Executive Director, MainStream Coalition.

## **Session 3**



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**2:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

**Shelly M. Cline, Ph. D., Historian and Director of Education for the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education**

**Propaganda and the People: Lessons from Nazi Germany**

This session will look at the evolution of Nazi propaganda beginning with the election of 1932 through the war years. Major topics of the discussion will include creating a “racial” community, indoctrinating youth, and defining the “other.”

**Biography:**

Dr. Shelly Cline is the Historian and Director of Education for the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Kansas in 2014. Her research focuses on the gendered perpetration of the Holocaust, which she has presented at national and international conferences.

**Abby Magariel, Educator/Curator Michael Klein Collection, The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah**

**Treasures of the Klein Collection at The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah**

Explore highlights of the Klein Collection of Judaica, now housed at The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah, in a guided virtual tour.

**Biography:**

Abby Magariel is Educator/Curator of the Michael Klein Collection at B'nai Jehudah. Passionate about informal, object-based learning, she taught in Kansas state and local history museums prior to joining B'nai Jehudah.



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## **Dr. Samuel Hayim Brody, Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at KU**

### **Jewish Temporalities**

How have Jews experienced and thought about time? In what way do Jewish conceptions of time differ, and (perhaps just as interesting) in what ways have Jews \*not\* felt it important to have a unique approach to time? The session will address everything from minutes and hours to the scope of history itself.

### **Biography:**

Dr. Brody is an Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at University of Kansas. Samuel Hayim Brody studied Political and Social Thought and Middle-Eastern Studies at the University of Virginia before turning his attention to the study of traditional Jewish sources at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where he received his M.A. His Ph.D. in the History of Judaism is from the University of Chicago Divinity School, where he focused on the modern German-Jewish intellectual tradition, while also studying philosophical hermeneutics, Christian exegesis, and varying conceptions of the relationship between religion and politics. He has previously taught at the University of Chicago and the University of Cincinnati.

## **Rabbi Moshe Grussgott, Kehilath Israel Synagogue**

### **Religious Zionism 101**

Zionism began as a largely secular national movement, but one that was still deeply rooted in Jewish religious texts and ideas. We will analyze the thought of religious adherents to Zionism, who were once a minority within that movement, but are now perhaps its most ardent supporters.

### **Biography:**

Moshe Grussgott is the senior rabbi of Kehilath Israel Synagogue in Overland Park. He has also served as a chaplain and a captain in the US Army Reserve, and was previously the senior rabbi of Congregation Ramath Orah in New York City.



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## **Alan Edelman, Ahmed Awad, Ameneh Paziresh, Sheila Sonnenschein, Dr. Ken Sonnenschein, and Dr. Majdi Hamarshi**

### **Conversation with Your Palestinian Neighbor**

Black Lives Matters teaches the importance of getting to know our Black neighbors. In this session, we will discuss how and why we, as American Jews, can and should get to know our Palestinian neighbors.

### **Biography:**

**Dr. Ahmed Awad** was born in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to Palestinian immigrants. Even though he was born in Saudi Arabia, he was not granted Saudi citizenship and was considered a Palestinian refugee. His first recorded citizenship is from the United States. Dr. Awad graduated with his Medical degree in 1994 from Kansas City University, and went on to complete an internal medicine residency & nephrology fellowship at University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. Today, Dr. Awad is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Missouri, Kansas City and has been practicing medicine for over 20 years. Currently, he practices at Kansas City Kidney Consultants and is a Private Consulting Nephrologist at St. Luke's Health Systems in Kansas City. Dr. Awad has been happily married to Ameneh Paziresh for 27 years and they have three children together- Neda, Ameen, and Hana.

**Ameneh Paizresh** was born and raised in Shiraz, Iran and was the 7th of 9 siblings. She moved to the United States at 18, to pursue her dream of continuing an advanced education. Ameneh attended the University of Missouri Kansas City where she met her husband, Ahmed Awad. She graduated in 1992, with top honors, from their School of Pharmacy. Ameneh has been working as a pharmacist for 27 years. Today, Ameneh co-owns Clinical Research Consultants (CRC) alongside her husband, Dr. Awad, since its opening in 2009. Ameneh is the Vice President and Operations Manager of CRC, where she conducts phase I, II, III, and IV clinical trials. Ameneh is a mother of three wonderful children, and one family cat, Nala.

**Sheila Sonnenschein** has been working to build relationships between people of different faiths and cultures since 2002. She is a past chair and vice-chair of the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council and has planned a variety of multi-faith programs for the Council and community. She served as an advisor and board member to the KC Interfaith Youth Alliance, which included mentoring teens to plan multiple peace walks. Sheila is a board member of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, an organization that brings Jewish and Muslim women together to build trust and friendship. She has chaired three Sisterhood Building Bridges trips: a Civil Rights trip to the American South; to Berlin and Poland; and, to the border with Tucson to learn about issues affecting people seeking asylum. Sheila, along with her husband, Ken, enjoys gardening, traveling, and hosting people from around the world at their dinner table (when there isn't a pandemic!). Both are the proud parents of four grown children.

**Ken Sonnenschein** is board certified in both General Psychiatry and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. He is the founder and chair of Bike for the Brain, a bicycle ride and walk held each Labor Day to raise awareness and funds for mental health. Ken also founded and chairs Mitzvah Garden KC, which grows and provides fresh organic produce to area food pantries. He has worked with a group to





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promote the use electric vehicles in the KC metro area, and co-founded All In for Skin, an event to raise college scholarship funds for children whose lives were affected by melanoma. He believes it's important to learn about people different from us and to have honest dialogue. Ken, along with his wife, Sheila, did the Israel Ride on a tandem to raise funds for Hazon, a Jewish environmental organization and the Arava Institute, which brings Israelis, Palestinians, North Americans and people from around the world to study, research, and learn that "the environment knows no border."

**Dr. Majdi Hamarshi** completed his medical education In 2003 at AL-Quds medical school in East Jerusalem, after that he worked at Al-Quds medical school as teaching and research assistant. Then, in 2006, he moved to the US to complete his internal medicine residency at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Then he completed his fellowships in geriatrics medicine at Northwestern University and critical care medicine at University of Missouri Kansas City "UMKC", respectively. Currently he is an associate clinical professor at UMKC, and practices critical care in Kansas City area. In 2015 Dr. Hamarshi has founded the Palestinian American Medical Association (PAMA) which started in Kansas City and now is a national organization. PAMA aims to promote healthcare in Palestine.

**Alan Edelman** is a native of Kansas City. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Child Development and Education from the University of Kansas, spending his junior year at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Alan attended the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York City, where he received his Master's Degree in Jewish Education. He also holds a Master's Degree in Education Policy and Leadership from the University of Kansas. Alan's research focused on restructuring the congregational religious school by integrating informal and family activities into the educational program. From 1977-1980 he served as Educational Director, Congregation Beth Shalom in Kansas City. Alan then spent two years as Regional Director of Central States/Provinces Region of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, consulting with congregations as well as coordinating regional youth activities. On July 1, 1982 he began serving as Executive Director of the Central Agency for Jewish Education of Greater Kansas City (CAJE), a committee of the Jewish Federation. On October 1, 1994, Alan's responsibilities with the Jewish Federation were expanded to include community planning, human resource development, identity and engagement, and Israel/Overseas, assuming the role of Associate Executive Director until his retirement in June 2017. Alan has served on a number of local, regional and continental advisory committees. His volunteer efforts are focused on inter-faith and multi-cultural programming. Alan has served as guest theologian in many churches, universities and seminaries. He has also served on the board of directors for the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education and Notre Dame de Sion School of Kansas City and currently serves as the Jewish Director of the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council. He is also active in the pursuit of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. He currently serves as the Jewish Director on the Greater Kansas City Interfaith Council as well a member of the board of directors of the Center for Practical Bioethics, Avodah, EmberHope, Schechter Institute and The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning. Alan and his wife, Debbie Sosland-Edelman, have three children, Alex, Katja and Jonathan and on June 14, 2014 another child came into his life when his daughter married Ari Fine. Katja and Ari made Alan a proud grandfather when Noa Dorit joined the family in August of 2017 and Kobi Zev joined the family in December of 2019.



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## **Hazzan Tahl Ben-Yehuda, Director of Congregational Learning, Congregation Beth Shalom**

### **Holiday treats for the body and soul; honey cake and holiday music**

Hazzan Ben-Yehuda will lead participants through the steps of making her mother's honey cake, which she considers the best in the whole wide world. Listen to Israeli/Hebrew holiday music playing in the background and be immersed in a contemplative space for the upcoming holiday season.

### **Biography:**

Hazzan Tahl Ben-Yehuda is the Director of Congregational Learning at Congregation Beth Shalom in Overland Park, KS. She earned degrees from JTS' Cantorial school and Davidson School of Education. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University and completed five years of post- baccalaureate study in biochemistry and epidemiology, serving as a biochemistry lecturer for two semesters. She has served Beth Shalom with gratitude for the past seven years.

## **Rabbi Mark Glass, Congregation BIAV**

### **The Tragic Irony of Halakhic Development: How the Agunah Crisis Was Born From the Best of Intentions**

An agunah is a married woman who is no longer living with husband but is not free to remarry. The modern-day agunah crisis is one of Orthodoxy's great tragedies. What happened? Laws were developed to grant women greater freedoms in divorce. This session will trace divorce law through halakhic history, and how, despite solving many issues of the past, it created many more for our present.

### **Biography:**

Rabbi Mark Glass is the rabbi at BIAV. Originally from England, he received his B.A., M.A., and Semikhah at Yeshiva University. He was the rabbi of the Adams Street Shul in Newton, MA, for the past three years, before which he worked at the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot.



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Explore the Joy of Learning

## **Ira Kirschner, Assistant Director at KU Hillel.**

### **IsraeLGBTQ+: Queer Issues in Israeli Society**

They say Israel is a great place to be LGBTQ+, but what does that mean for LGBTQ+ Israelis? This session will cover the growth of the LGBTQ+ community in Israel, challenges they have faced, successes they have had, and what still needs to happen to reach equality in Israel.

#### **Biography:**

Ira Kirschner is the Assistant Director at KU Hillel. In 2019 he moved from Jerusalem to Lawrence, KS, where he lives with his partner. In Israel, Ira volunteered for an organization that promoted tolerance of LGBTQ+ in Orthodox communities. He is a reserve lieutenant in the IDF, and is rarely seen without a colorful bowler hat!

## **Jacob Stoil and Dr. Rebecca Shimoni-Stoil**

### **In Dire Straits: The Second Lebanon War and its Echoes**

The Second Lebanon War was a watershed moment in modern Israeli and Middle Eastern History. Viewed by Israel as both a victory and a defeat, the war left a complicated legacy. This session will provide an introduction to the politics, diplomacy, and military history of the war, as well as its legacies.

#### **Biography:**

**Dr. Jacob Stoil** is a military historian and Assistant Professor of Military History at the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS). He received his doctorate in history from University of Oxford. He holds a B.A. in War Studies, as well as an M.A. in History of Warfare from the Department of War Studies at King's College London. He has published on indigenous force cooperation, the Second World War, and the Israeli military. He is one of the founders of the International Working Group on Subterranean Warfare. Dr. Stoil is an Assistant Director of the Second World Research Group North America.

**Dr. Rebecca Shimoni-Stoil** is an Assistant Professor of History at Clemson University. Dr. Stoil is a former NCO in the Israel Defense Forces, where she served as a combat medic and medical platoon deputy commander in the 9th Battalion of the Armored Corps. As a reservist, Shimoni-Stoil was a heavy search and rescue medic with the Home Front Command, mobilizing in the Northern Sector during the Second Lebanon War. After leaving her regular service, Dr. Shimoni-Stoil was hired by the Jerusalem Post and served as the newspaper's Internal Security correspondent. She later held the position of Knesset [Parliamentary] Correspondent before becoming the Washington Correspondent for Times of Israel.