



JLEARN

**Nurture Your Soul
and Build Community**

Discover new interests. Make new friends and find your people. Exercise your mind and challenge yourself. Create your village at the JCC.

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programs and
events!

★ LOUIS S. WOLK
JCC
ROCHESTER

MONDAY



A Taste of Israel with the ShinShinim

Mondays, 12–1pm; Conference Room

Learn about Israeli history and culture with monthly sessions with our ShinShinim. ShinShinim—a Hebrew acronym for shnat sherut or “year of service”—are the best and brightest of Israel’s recent high school graduates who defer army service for one year to become emissaries in Jewish communities around the world. The ShinShinim serve as a living bridge between the Rochester community and Israel.

Dates for 2024–2025

Bring your lunch and spend an hour learning with these mature and gifted young adults.

NOVEMBER 4

DECEMBER 2

JANUARY 6

FEBRUARY 3

MARCH 10

APRIL 7

MAY 12



TUESDAY

Weekly Torah Wanderings with Rabbi Michael Silbert

Tuesdays, beginning November 19, 10–11am; Yiddish Room

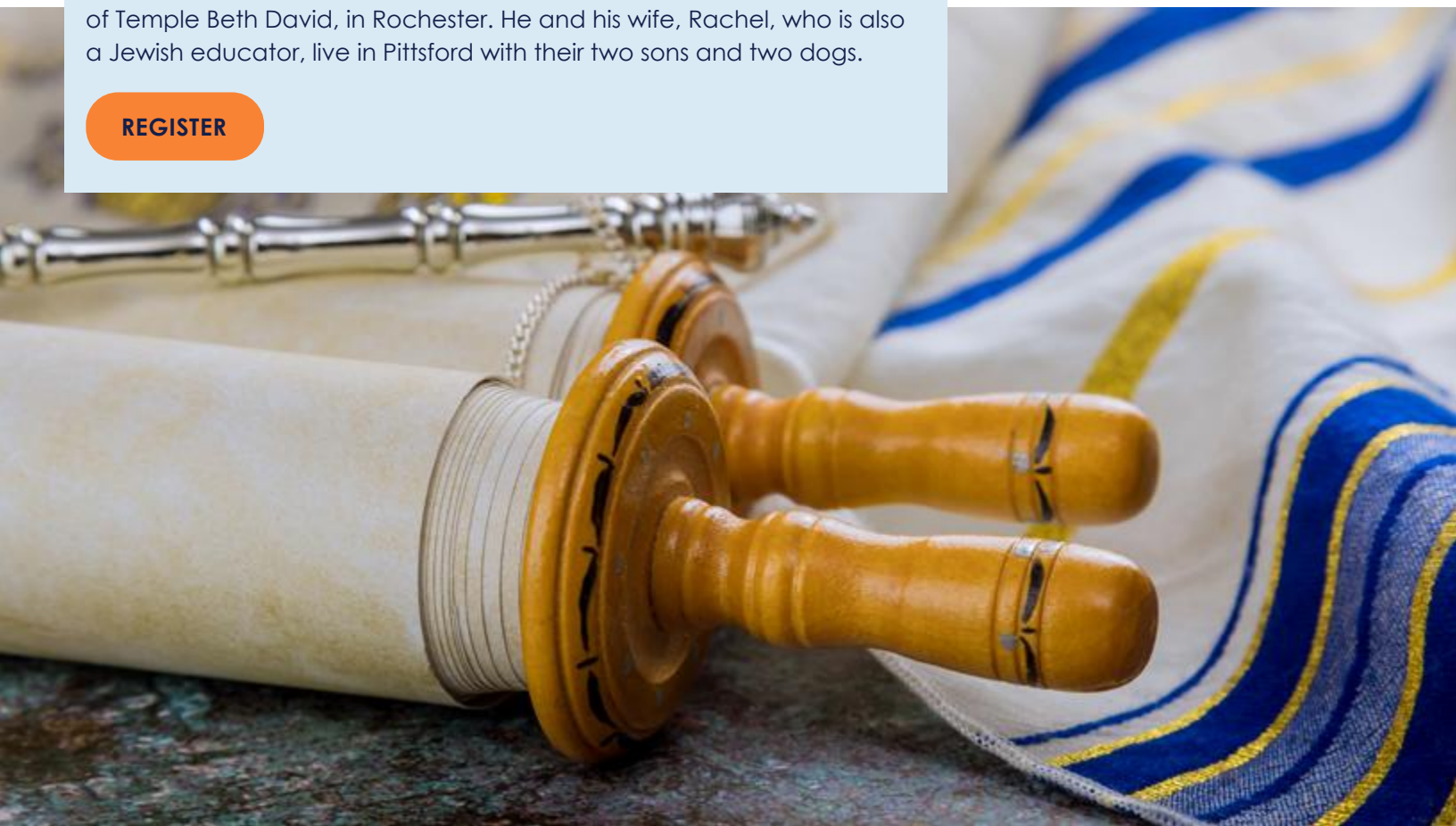
Join us for an exploration into the week's Torah reading as we examine this ancient text together, connecting with its enduring meaning and drawing on its contemporary relevance. In addition to understanding Torah in its historic context, we shall discover how it continues to speak to us in our current day by bringing the insights of a range of interpreters—both classic and modern—and finding ways to contribute our own voices.



Rabbi Michael Silbert was born and grew up in Cape Town, South Africa, where it never occurred to him that he might one day become a rabbi! More than ten years after beginning Graduate School at Brandeis University, he found himself—much to his own surprise—beginning his rabbinical studies at The Rabbinical School of Hebrew College, in Newton, Massachusetts. He acknowledges that “At age 35, married, with a newborn and a mortgage, I realized that becoming a rabbi actually made sense to me, even if the timing didn't!”

Rabbi Silbert has served as the rabbi/director at Hillel foundations on two different campuses, and for the past (almost) seven years, as the rabbi of Temple Beth David, in Rochester. He and his wife, Rachel, who is also a Jewish educator, live in Pittsford with their two sons and two dogs.

[REGISTER](#)



Lunch & Learn Series with our Local Rabbis

Tuesdays, 12–1pm; Auditorium C/Conference Room

Each month spend an hour learning with our local Rabbis.

Rabbis will pick their own topics which will be announced a month in advance.

Bring your own lunch.



Rabbi Peter W. Stein

December 10

A Senior Rabbi of Temple B'rith Kodesh. He previously served as Rabbi of Temple Sinai in Cranston, RI and as Associate Rabbi of Rodef Shalom Congregation in Pittsburgh, PA. Rabbi Stein was ordained and earned an MA in Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, studying in Jerusalem and New York City. Rabbi Stein received a Doctor of Divinity degree, honoris causa, in May 2024 in recognition of 25 years of distinguished rabbinic leadership.

REGISTER



Rabbi Dov Winston

January 7

Rabbi Dov Winston became the Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom in the Summer of 2022. He received his rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. He has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Jewish Studies from Yeshiva University and an MSW from the Wurzweiler School of Social Work. Rabbi Winston has previously served as the Rabbi of the Young Israel of Merrick on Long Island and Congregation Baron Hirsch in Memphis, TN.

REGISTER



Rabbi Or Zohar

February 4

Or Zohar came to serve as Temple Sinai's Senior Rabbi in the Summer of 2024. Rabbi Zohar moved to Rochester with his family from the Galilee, Israel, where he served for eight years as the Reform Rabbi of the Misgav Regional Council. Previously, Rabbi Zohar served as the rabbi of Congregation Ma'a lot Tivon in Kiryat Tivon, and as the founding rabbi of Kehilat Halev. Parallel to his work at the pulpit, Rabbi Zohar served as the founding director of the Spirit of the Galilee, an organization that promotes inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue between Jews, Christians, Muslims and Druze in northern Israel.

REGISTER



Rabbi Nechemia Vogel

March 4

Nechemia Vogel grew up in London, England, and was educated in Lubavitcher Yeshivot in Paris, Israel and New York where he received Semicha (Rabbinical Ordination) and Dayanut (Rabbinical Judge Certification).

In 1981, heeding the call of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson o.b.m., to care for the spiritual welfare of our fellow Jews – the Vogels came to Rochester as emissaries of the Rebbe to establish Chabad Lubavitch of Rochester. With G-d's help, Chabad has since grown to five Chabad Centers in the Rochester Jewish community and area college campuses.

REGISTER

Rabbi Jan Katz

April 8

Rabbi Jan Katz received her ordination from Hebrew Union College in New York City in May 2021. Her previous careers included 27 years as Director of Jewish Education Services of the Jewish Federation of Rochester, NY; Administration and Program Director of the Hickey Center for Interfaith Study and Dialogue at Nazareth University; and Director of Judaic Faculty at Hillel Community Day School also in Rochester, NY.

Jan's volunteer involvement in the last 20 years has centered on relationship-building, advocacy and support for the local Muslim community, for Sudanese refugees, for homeless families, and for the local food distribution network. Presently, Jan commutes and serves as part time pulpit rabbi at Temple B'nai Israel in Laconia, New Hampshire.

REGISTER



Rabbi Avi Mammon

May 6

Rabbi Avi Mammon studied at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington and at the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem. He has Semicha from Rav Zalman Nechemiah Goldberg and from the Yeshiva of Greater Washington. Rabbi Mammon serves as the Rochester Rabbinical Advisor for the BVK Kosher certification. He supervises the local Mikva as well as the local Eruv. Rabbi Mammon is a certified mohel, having received his certification from the board of Mohalim of New York. Rabbi Mammon travels throughout the Western New York region performing Bris Milah. Rabbi Avi Mammon is the Director of Ohr Torah Outreach Kollel which is a branch of Congregation Light of Israel.

[REGISTER](#)



Rabbi Leonardo Bitran

June 10

Rabbi Leonardo Bitran is one of the few leaders of the Conservative Movement whose experience includes serving synagogues across the continent, inspiring nearly a dozen of his former students to become rabbis, and mentoring rabbinical students serving Latin American congregations. Rabbi Bitran earned a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Economics from the University of Chile. He was ordained at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York with a Master's degree in Hebrew Letters with a major in Talmud and Rabbinics. Rabbi Bitran served at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, Michigan, where he led its vibrant satellite congregation, B'nai Israel, for eleven years. Most recently and for ten years he served Congregation Agudas Achim in San Antonio, Texas, enabling it to achieve excellence in Jewish education.

[REGISTER](#)



WEDNESDAY

Torah & Tea: A Weekly Meetup for Women

Wednesdays, 11am–12pm, September 18, 25
October 9, 30; November 6, 13, 20, 27; December 4, 11, 18
Conference Room

Looking for inspiration? Camaraderie? Spiritual insights into life? Stimulating conversations? This weekly informal get together, facilitated by Rishi Hein, is designed to do this. Come to one or all classes! No registration required.



Rishi Hein is a wife, mom of 8 fabulous kids, and the Co-director of Chabad of Pittsford. She is passionate about learning and teaching Torah through the lens of Jewish mysticism and Chassidism as way to connect with our deepest selves, and with one another.

Hebrew Language Classes

If you are interested in joining either class, please contact Rachel Kest at rkest@jccrochester.org.

Modern Hebrew Level 2

Wednesdays, 11am–12pm; Yiddish Room

Join gifted community educator Tzippy Kleinberg for weekly Hebrew reading and conversation. This class has been meeting regularly for more than a year.

Beginner Hebrew

Wednesdays, 12–1pm; Yiddish Room

This class is designed as a series with each session building on the previous one.



Master teacher, Tzippy Kleinberg, has been sharing her wisdom with students for decades. Tzippy was born in Israel and came to Rochester as a child. Teaching is her absolute love and passion.

Take a Deeper Dive with JLEARN on Thursdays

Local scholars share their wisdom
with the JCC community
over the course of four sessions.



THURSDAY

Session #1 **Is this Torah and its Reward? Finding a Way Forward in the Face of Suffering without Triumph with Lauren Deutsch, Esq.**

Thursdays, December 5, 12, 19 and January 9, 11am–12:30pm

Yiddish Room

What does it mean to be Jewish in an antisemitic world? As Jews feel increasingly vulnerable, we turn to history and tradition to help find resilience. These four classes will examine suffering, faith, identity, and reckoning across the Jewish cannon.

Week 1: **The 10 Martyrs; Why do we read this on Yom Kippur?**

Week 2: **The book of Jonah, through the lens of Assyrian imperialism and the psychology of trauma**

Week 3: **The Righteous Suffer: Elisha ben Abuye becomes Aher, Job rejects God's goodness**

Week 4: **The Esh Kodesh M'Piaseczna; the Torah of the Warsaw Ghetto, and the roots of the Torah of October 7**

REGISTER



Lauren Deutsch, Esq. is an attorney, activist, and Torah scholar, living in Rochester, New York with her husband and three children. Lauren worked in migrant women's health services prior to law school, and began her legal career representing survivors of domestic violence at The Legal Aid Society of Rochester in 2010. She has worked in reproductive justice, labor justice, and currently works in disability justice as the Executive Director of Disability Law United, a national legal services organization.

Lauren's research interests include bruising injuries in victims of color, effective care and services for clients living with trauma, and the impact of poverty on health equity. Lauren lectures on Jewish topics in family law, biblical literature, and Jewish philosophy, and is currently a scholar at Ohr Torah Stone's International Halakhic Scholars program.

Session #2

The History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Four-part Overview with Joy Getnick, PhD.

Thursdays, February 6, 13, 27 and March 6, 11am–12:30pm; Yiddish Room

The horrors of October 7, 2023, and subsequent war, highlighted the ways in which the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict is far from over. But how did we get here? Join Joy Getnick, PhD, a historian of the Conflict, for a four-part series about the historical path to October 7 and beyond.

Week 1: **Modern Nationalism and the Zionist Dream**

Week 2: **The Path to a State**

Week 3: **Israel and its Neighbors**

Week 4: **Looking to the Future**

REGISTER



Joy Getnick, PhD, (she) is the Executive Director of Hillel at the University of Rochester. Her prior role was as the Senior Director of Programming and Jewish Life at the Louis S. Wolk JCC of Greater Rochester, including as the founding director of the Camp Seneca Lake (CSL) summer program in Israel for teens. A historian by training, she is the author of the Melton “Beyond Borders” course on the history of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, and spent many years teaching part-time in the SUNY Geneseo Department of History. She lives in Pittsford with her husband and two sons, and loves to bake and celebrate her way through the four seasons and Jewish year.



Session #3

Beyond Just the Bagel and the Bible: Jewish Food in America with Dr. Nora Rubel

Thursdays, May 8, 15, 22 and 29, 11am–12:30pm; Yiddish Room

This course explores the distinctive nature of Jewish food and eating in the United States. Going beyond biblical prohibitions and rabbinic laws, this mini course will examine the religious, cultural, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of Jewish food, focusing on practices in the U.S. in order to explore how food informs, challenges, and constructs Judaism (and, to some extent, Jews).

Week 1: **New World, New Foods, Old Traditions**

Week 2: **“Eating Out”: The Deli & The Chinese Restaurant**

Week 3: **Are You What You Eat? The Business, Ethics, & Politics of Jewish Food**

Week 4: **Jewish Food in the 21st Century: Gastronomic Aspirations & Innovations**

REGISTER



Nora Rubel is the Jane and Alan Batkin Professor in Jewish Studies and Chair of the Department of Religion and Classics at the University of Rochester. Rubel teaches and writes on a wide variety of topics related to gender, race and ethnicity in American religion, particularly in relation to food and Judaism. She is the author of *Doubting the Devout: The Ultra-Orthodox in the Jewish American Imagination* (Columbia University Press 2009), co-editor of *Religion, Food and Eating in North America* (CUP 2014) and *Blessings Beyond the Binary: Transparent and the Queer Jewish Family* (Rutgers University Press 2024). She is currently completing a monograph entitled *Recipes for the Melting Pot: The Lives of The Settlement Cook Book*. She is, however, most proud of her investigative piece entitled “The Case of the Missing Matzo” that asked the hard questions, diving into the Manischewitz Tam Tam shortage prior to Pesach in 2008. Rubel resides in Brighton with her two children, Zoe and Ashe, her two dogs, Don Cheagle and Cosmo Castorini, and her husband Rob Nipe, the Vegan Butcher of Rochester. If pressed, the Rubel/Nipes are all solidly #TeamLatke.



**Build new friendships
and explore some of
Jewish wisdom for
life's big questions with
JLEARN.**

FRIDAY

IYUN

JCC Learning Circle: A Cohort-based Program for Curious Adults

Fridays, 12–1:30pm; Yiddish Room

Are you interested in Jewish learning with like-minded peers? Do you have questions about Judaism and are you eager to learn more in a safe and welcoming environment? Join the inaugural cohort of the JCC's Learning Circle to learn, ask questions and create community.

The JCC's Learning Circle is a program that aims to build community among curious adults who are eager to enhance their Jewish knowledge and are willing to explore some of life's big questions through the lens of Jewish wisdom. This program encourages critical thinking and helps learners apply Jewish teachings to real-life situations.

Utilizing the **IYUN** curriculum, *Jewish Wisdom for Life's Great Questions*, as the program's anchor, the JCC Learning Circle will meet ten times over the course of ten months. Each session includes eating, learning, socializing and fun. Consistent attendance is expected.

Facilitator: Rachel Kest, Senior Director of Jewish Life

Free

REGISTER

DATES

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| November 8 | April 11 |
| December 13 | May 9 |
| January 10 | June 13 |
| February 14 | July 11 |
| March 14 | August 8 |
| | September 12 |

SPECIAL EVENTS

INSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST: Navigating through the Storm to the Horizon's Edge with Avi Melamed Founder and CEO of Inside the Middle East Intelligence Perspectives

Monday, October 28, 7:30pm, Auds

As the Middle East navigates a storm of unprecedented challenges, we stand at a pivotal juncture that will define the future of Israel, the Palestinians, and the entire region. As the world grapples with escalating conflict, understanding the core issues becomes vital. In this critical briefing, we will delve deep into the forces driving these turbulent times, unravel the intricate complexities beneath the surface, look at "the day after," and assess the far-reaching implications for both the region, and the world.

By connecting the dots between past and present and all figures and forces, we'll guide you from the eye of the storm to the horizon's edge, offering clarity and context to help you navigate the rapidly unfolding events. **Deadline to register is October 25.**

[REGISTER](#)



Avi Melamed is a distinguished Geopolitical Middle East Expert, Intelligence Analyst, Author, Educator, and Founder and CEO of Inside the Middle East Intelligence Perspectives [ITME]. With a rich history as a former Israeli Intelligence Official and Senior Advisor on Arab Affairs, Avi has been uniquely positioned at the intersection of diplomacy, education, and intelligence. Fluent in Arabic, English, and Hebrew, Avi is recognized for his profound understanding of current affairs in the Arab and Muslim world and their implications on Israel and the broader Middle East. His deep familiarity with the Arab and Muslim world has enabled him to predict key regional events.

JREADS: A Community Reading Program

Lunch and Learn: Tuesday, November 19, 12pm

JREADS is a joint venture between the Jewish Life department and the Authors + Innovators Festival that is designed to bring books and people together and spur discussion around important topics and ideas.

Our first JREADS book is *Streams of Shattered Consciousness: A Chronicle of the First 50 Days of the Israel-Hamas War* by Rabbi David-Seth Kirshner. Read the book in advance and join the lunch and learn. Registration information coming soon.

Member: \$25 Non-member: \$30



About the Author

Rabbi David-Seth Kirshner is the senior Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El in Closter, New Jersey. In addition to Temple Emanu-El, Rabbi Kirshner is involved in the community at-large and holds many positions of leadership. Rabbi Kirshner has written articles for many media sources and is regularly published in *The Jewish Standard*, *The Bergen Record*, *Haaretz*, *The Times of Israel*, *The Huffington Post* and *The New York Times*. He has been featured on national radio and

television programs including *Good Morning America*, CBS, CNBC, WABC, WNBC, NPR, *The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell*, *Nightline*, MSNBC, *Al Jazeera* and *Faith to Faith*. Rabbi Kirshner holds a BA degree from York University in Toronto, Canada, and earned an MA in Hebrew Letters and rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary. Rabbi Kirshner is married to Dori Frumin Kirshner. They have two children. This is Rabbi Kirshner's first book.

About the Book

Streams of Shattered Consciousness: A Chronicle of the First 50 Days of the Israel-Hamas War

On October 7th, 2023, David-Seth Kirshner woke up excited to celebrate his 50th birthday. Instead of eating cake, Rabbi Kirshner was glued to the news as the horrible attack by Hamas upon innocent Israelis began to unfold. Emotions flooded him from all directions. Anger, rage, surprise, fear, hope, frustration, anxiety, confidence and grief were just some of what inhabited his mind and body. *Streams of Shattered Consciousness* is a daily chronicle of Rabbi Kirshner's channeled emotions and opinions with a healthy dose of history lessons. Kirshner's detailed accounts accompanied by his personal reflections will keep a record of what will surely be a watershed moment in the history of the Jewish people.



Antisemitism: Understanding it in History and Today with Dr. Keren Fraiman and Dr. Dean Bell

Antisemitism is “the longest hatred.” While it has common themes that have endured throughout history, it is also highly contextual and adaptive. In order to address the troubling growth in antisemitism across the US and around the globe, we need to understand it historically and as it is manifesting today.



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Dr. Keren E. Fraiman is Spertus Institute's Dean and Chief Academic Officer. She also holds a faculty appointment as Professor of Israel Studies. She previously served as Director of Research and Evaluation at The iCenter for Israel Education, where she continues to serve on the faculty of the iFellows Masters

Concentration in Israel Education program. In January 2020, Dr. Fraiman was selected for the prestigious Wexner Field Fellowship, presented by the Wexner Foundation in partnership with the Jim Joseph Foundation. A former Schusterman Israel Scholar, Dr. Fraiman has worked at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis, served as an officer in the IDF, and led trips to Israel as a Facilitator both for Encounter and Birthright Israel. Her work has been supported by the US Institute of Peace, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism, and the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism. Fraiman is co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Judaism in the 21st Century* and author of the article “Barriers to Entry: Exploring Educator Reticence for Engaging with the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.”

Education: PhD, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; BA, The University of Chicago.



Dr. Dean P. Bell is Spertus Institute's ninth President and CEO. He also holds a faculty appointment as Professor of History. Dr. Bell has taught at DePaul University, Northwestern University, Hebrew Theological College, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of

California, Berkeley. He has served as President of the Midwest Jewish Studies Association and has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Association for Jewish Studies. Dr. Bell is a widely published author in the areas of Medieval and Early Modern Jewish history. His current research focuses on interreligious dialogue and leadership and environmental history. Bell is author or editor of 13 books and monographs and dozens of articles, including co-author of *Interreligious Resilience: Interreligious Leadership for a Pluralistic World*; and co-editor of *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*. He is Associate Editor of *Antisemitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution*.

Education: PhD, University of California, Berkeley; MA, University of California, Berkeley; BA, The University of Chicago

The Louis S. Wolk JCC is thrilled to provide quality educational programs free of charge. While there is no cost to attend any JLEARN class, please consider making a [donation](#). Your contributions allow us to offer free, meaningful learning opportunities for all.

The JCC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

JCC POLICIES

Member Services

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Learn about upcoming programs
and events.

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