

## KOL AMI Members & Visitors Team (MAV-T)

July 1 2021 - June 30 2022 Annual Report

### MEMBERS

**Current year team:** Debbie Linick (chaired), Cameron Tarry (young professionals liaison), Maria Worth (tot shabbat families liaison), Emily Schwartz Greco (families liaison), Jasmin DeCoursey, Judy Greenblum & Willa Siegel (active seniors liaison)

**Upcoming year:** Emily Schwartz Greco (chair), Cameron Tarry with help from Anna Weber (young professionals liaison), Judy Greenblum (active seniors liaison), Cookie Perlmutter (outreach to Kol Amites of the Diaspora)

### MISSION

As written on our website:

- “Provide a **personalized welcome to new and potential members** in order to help them find a fulfilling home in our congregation.
- The team also **reaches out to departing members** to better understand why Kol Ami was no longer meeting their needs.
- The team **expands in the springtime to oversee the Nominations process**, inviting congregants to consider new or continuing leadership roles within the congregation.

In addition MAV-T oversees a **buddies program**, connecting new members with a friendly guide for their first year and hopefully beyond. MAV-T also hosts an **annual open house** and **assists cohorts in the congregation** (young professionals, families with young children, Kol Amites of the Diaspora and others) to make meaningful connections with the congregations and with one another.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. **MAV-T welcomed 11 new member families and individuals who span across all Kol Ami demographics with a heavy emphasis on active seniors:**
    - a. young professionals (Adam Chaikof & Ally Shely; David Finder & Stuart Prutch);
    - b. families with school age children (Ramirez, Fleisher / Sepulveda)
    - c. active seniors (Sanford Levy, Steve Berke, Sammie Moshenberg, Massey / Kleiman, and Sandy Passero),
    - d. Kol Amites of the Diaspora (Paula Smith)
- We credit this** large influx of new members to:
- a. **strong online marketing**
  - b. **coupled with the one-on-one outreach** MAV-T does
  - c. **great programs** Rabbi Gilah and our lay leaders offer
  - d. **a strong system for collecting names of visitors** and maintaining them on a “prospects spreadsheet” - 400 names strong and growing!
  - e. **Kol Ami members inviting their friends** is also an important way our congregation continues to grow.
  - f. Kol Ami is particularly attractive to interfaith families and others exploring deeper learning about Judaism. **Our policy on Radical Welcome and Interfaith Inclusion creates this unique niche for Kol Ami in the DMV**

2. **Kol Ami lost 1 member:** Todd Birkenruth and will have **at least 3 additional memberships end in 2022:** the Siegels and Levys have moved away and long time member Diane Ivone passed away during 2022.
3. MAV-T's **October 2021 Outdoor OPEN HOUSE** welcomed 9 prospective members & couples and 3 recently joined members. One membership followed shortly after the program, 3-4 others continued to stay engaged from time to time. We developed a **popular new welcome kit** with home baked challah, caring stones, laminated schedules & other marketing material. Baking was courtesy of Maria Worthen, Lucy Greco & Emily Schwartz Greco. Toni Popkin, Judy Greenblum and Debbie Linick pulled together the other material.
4. In the spring, MAV-T turned our attention from OUTREACH to INREACH and **Nominating a robust Steering slate, Committee Chairs and volunteers.** MAV-T endeavors to **reach every member** during our nominations check in. Several members have provided feedback that they value this check in very much. This is also an opportunity to share upcoming programs and initiatives as well as answer any questions.
5. **Dues form review:** Congregations frequently consider adding new dues rates for young members or old members, etc. At Kol Ami, **MAV-T reaffirms our current dues structure** (long distance friends, individuals, families and sustainer programs) **combined with our flexible payment and dues forgiveness policies provides the flexibility we need** to attract members of all financial means and interests. Adding new cost categories based on age adds an unnecessary level of complexity. Instead, the team recommended changes to the online dues form in order to convey membership options more clearly.

### UPCOMING PLANS

Kol Ami services continue to **shift back into a regular in-person mode with new hybrid options.** Onegs have traditionally offered a great chance for visitors to meet our members, we will seek to ensure that visitors on Shabbat and during Holiday events and services are warmly welcomed. Likewise, we will **step up our outreach to the Kol Ami visitors who engage with us only online, and to connect better with our former members** who have left the area, with a new liaison for active members with "Friends" status. In addition, we will try to help people who have belonged to our community for many years get to know our newer members, finding ways to restore the everybody-knows-everybody intimacy that has to a degree faded during the pandemic. We also have **an opportunity to reach out to several prospective members who participated in the Encountering Judaism program in 2021-2022.** MAV-T looks for ways to partner with other Jewish organizations that serve cohorts we attract. **The Young Professionals liaison is planning summer social events** and may reconnect with Moishe House, GatherDC or other Jewish programs that serve this cohort. The Tot Shabbat Coordinator, similarly, may partner again with the JCCNV's Growing Jewish Families.

However they reach us, MAV-T looks forward to helping Kol Ami's membership grow and thrive in the upcoming year!

## Adult Education Committee, 2021-2022

Committee members are: Mike Jawer (chair), Steve Berke, Ruth Anne Faust, Susan Freiband, Judy Greenblum, JonRobert Johnson, and Rabbi Gilah.

As the year program year began, several study programs were already in place and thriving: weekly Torah study with Rabbi Bruce Aft, Encountering Judaism classes every other Sunday with Rabbi Richard Ruth and Rabbi Gilah, and Daf Yomi (Talmud study) with Rabbi Richard.

A wonderful series of sessions was held to lead into the High Holidays, brought forward by Toni Popkin and focused on Rabbi Simon Jacobson's workbook *60 Days: A Spiritual Guide*. Facilitators were Toni, Ruth Anne Faust, Mike Jawer, Joan Goldfarb, and Jason Weiss.

Hazzan Sabrina Sojourner was our featured guest clergy, and Richard Ruth served as Kol Ami's first Rabbinical Intern.

The "Kitchen Sink" series continued into 5782, encompassing these diverse (virtual) programs:

**January:** a well-attended talk by Nathan Brown on intra-Palestinian politics

**January and February:** Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Kiener led a series of 3 discussions on the work of Hassidic Rabbi Kalonymous Kalman Shapira. (We are indebted to Ruth Anne for bringing us this program.)

**February:** Jewish Disabilities Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) featured Kol Ami's annual Inclusion Shabbat service; a screening and discussion of the film *Crip Camp*; and a collaboration with Adas Israel to feature the poet Kenny Fries.

**March:** Zach Schrag spoke about the subject of his book, the 1844 riots over new immigrants in Philadelphia

**April:** Mike and Jon-Robert highlighted noteworthy but overlooked Jews

**May:** Kol Ami was one of 4 Arlington houses of worship combining for sessions on the themes of Justice, Sabbatical, and Forgiveness.

**Also during May:** Judy Greenblum organized a group to see a film, "Dead Sea Guardians," at the DCJCC's annual JxJ Film Series (preceded by dinner).

**June:** Steve Berke gave a Shavuot talk on the origins of the Torah and its historical context.

Numerous programs are being considered for this coming program year (5782-5783):

- **A pair of history sessions**, focusing on Jewish resilience in the face of oppression as well as the ferment in Jewish religious and political life during the nineteenth century;
- A program based on a forthcoming book by 2 new Kol Ami members, Kathy Kleiman and Mark Massey, **profiling the pioneering women who programmed the ENIAC computer** during World War 2;
- **A series of sessions on Jewish women** philosophers, artists, and scholars, which would be held monthly close to Rosh Chodesh;
- **A program focused on Jews of Color** presented by Cantor Sabrina Sojourner;
- A talk around **funeral planning** and options to be considered, and a companion program on **end of life directives**;
- **A poetry workshop** featuring the poems and creative processes of several Kol Ami poets;
- A spring **'field trip' to see a Jewish-themed movie**, but involving JCEP families and the Pizza and Talmud class.

The Committee looks forward to planning these and other events with the input of the community.

## Report of the Ritual Committee

Kol Ami Annual Meeting June 12, 2022

Many thanks to this year's Ritual Committee: Ruth Anne Faust, Joan Goldfarb, Mark Graboyes, Mike Jawer, Margie Jervis, Louise Lerner, Anne Salzberg, and Jason Weiss, along with *ex officio* members Rabbi Gilah Langner and President, Jane Schulman. After many years on the Committee, including several as Chair, we will be bidding a fond farewell to Mike, who will be offering his considerable talents to the chairmanship of the Adult Education Committee. Rabbi Richard Ruth, as Rabbinical Fellow, will be joining the committee *ex officio*.

Throughout the year the Committee has consulted with the Rabbi, as needed, on various ritual questions that have come up. A major focus this year was on transitioning the community back to in-person services after a year-plus of Zoom-only gatherings. As COVID numbers ebbed and flowed and variants came and went, we kept up a continuous dialogue with the Rabbi and President on how to proceed. Though we started the year with high hopes of in-person High Holiday services we pivoted to Zoom services when a new mutation appeared on the horizon. The services were nonetheless successfully realized by Rabbi Gilah with a different cast of co-leaders (along with participants too numerous to name) at each service, including Rayna Aylward, Ed Bomsey, Maralyn Farber, Herb Levy, Collette Major, Jim North, Richard Ruth, Jane Schulman, Cameron Tarry, Anna Weber, and JCEP Families and myself, joined by the Kol Amites and other musicians in the community.

The most important task of the Committee continued to be scheduling Shabbat services, in consultation with the Rabbi and the President. Via Zoom only, and then in-person with a zoom option, we scheduled services every Shabbat (mostly!)—either Shabbat morning or a Kabbalat Shabbat (KabShab) service on Friday evening. Our services included “special services” that have been created over the years, including Diversity & Inclusion, Healing, Pride, and for the first time ever, a service led Joan Goldfarb and members of the Ritual Committee and focused on the beauty of ritual. Jason Weiss stepped up to assist in scheduling Shabbat services and recruiting lay leaders. In addition to services led by Rabbi Gilah and our special guest clergy for the year, Hazzan Sabrina Sojourner, our wonderful cadre of lay leaders included Rabbi Bruce Aft, Rayna Aylward, Susan Freiband, Michael Jawer, Margie Jervis, Leslie Lesner, Herb Levy, Jim North, Toni Popkin, Rabbi Richard Ruth, Cameron Tarry, and guest musicians Hazzan Caron Dale, John Flynn, Tom Prasada Rao, David Roth, and Sonia Rutstein.

We've continued offering morning minyan (preceded by meditation) via Zoom four times a week, with Jason Weiss taking over the scheduling minyan leaders from Mike Jawer. Our roster of minyan leaders included Rayna Aylward, Steve Berke, Jasmine DeCoursey, Rabbi Gilah Langner, Louise Lerner, Jim North, Rabbi Richard Ruth, Jane Schulman, Paula Smith, Cameron Tarry, Jason Weiss, and myself. We have had a full minyan in attendance at almost every service, and when we have been lacking a minyan have succeeded in getting there through texting some of our “regulars.”

Going forward, we are planning to continue offering Shabbat services every week—generally two Shabbat morning and one KabShab. To enhance the experience for all we will be trying some new things and returning to some old. We are planning to:

1. Combine some KabShab services with dinner; in the works are a screen-porch potluck KabShab gathering at the home of Ruth Anne Faust in July and two JCEP Family-centered KabShab services with dinner led by Rabbi Gilah.
2. Offer one Zoom-only service per month to allow a more inclusive experience for individuals who cannot for one reason or another attend in person; though all in-person services are also Zoomed, the experience for the Zoom participants at those services is often more like watching a live-stream.
3. Continue to provide opportunities for individuals to enhance their service-leading skills. Rabbi Gilah will continue to offer workshops on various ritual topics, including a refresher on the structure of KabShab and Shabbat morning services, and will coach lay leaders in their service preparation; both Rabbi Gilah and Rabbi Richard will welcome lay leaders to partner with them at Shabbat services, and we will encourage experienced lay leaders to partner with individuals who would like to begin leading services.
4. Create a “service leader” guide—a living document that will live on our website so it can be updated—that combines information from Rabbi Gilah’s past workshops and emails and knowledge we’ve gained over the recent years of Zooming, about service structure, customs and traditions, and tips for making services enjoyable and inclusive. Louise Lerner has generously volunteered to coordinate this effort.
5. Explore engaging students from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College to lead services, in addition to the services that will be led by Rabbi Gilah, those that will be led by our new Rabbinical Fellow, Rabbi Richard, and our lay-led services.
6. Continue to invite other guest clergy to lead services, as needed, and to invite musicians to join lay-leaders.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Petkofsky  
Chair

**KOL AMI ANNUAL MEETING, June 12, 2022**  
**Report from Care & Concern/Inclusion Committee on**  
**2021-22 Activities**

***\*\*\*Members: Toni Popkin & Rayna Aylward, Co-Chairs; Ruth Anne Faust, Joan Goldfarb, Judy Greenblum, Louise Lerner, Emily Toll***

In our continuing support for individuals and the community as a whole, we organized Shabbat services focused on Inclusion and Healing, helped with food delivery and transportation for members in need, and offered holiday gathering opportunities for those looking for a place at the table. Because Care & Concern is a community-wide effort, we also facilitated opportunities for Kol Amites to help other members.

Inclusion and Healing Services

Toni led the Inclusion Service on Feb. 5, and Joan led the Healing Service on May 7. Both services incorporated prayers, poems and songs contributed by community members, and many Kol Amites actively participated.

Care Activities

In the past year, we have assisted with one in-person Shiva and one virtual one, sent cards to mourners and others facing illness or loss, and helped a number of members who have long-term health challenges and shorter-term needs. We also provided or arranged transportation to medical appointments. At Rosh Hashana, we coordinated and distributed gift bags. At Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, New Year's and Passover, we helped recruit hosts for members looking for a safe space to gather in person/virtually.

In collaboration with the Ritual Committee, we organized a five-week Elul workshop, which was well attended.

Our committee continues to maintain Kol Ami's Healing List as well as the Yahrzeit List. Both are kept updated on the KA website.

## Security Committee Report: June 12th, 2022

### Team Members:

Jonathan Baumgarten, Gordon Achtermann

Supported by Jane Schulman, Rabi Gilah Langer, Amy Medrick

### Overview:

2021-'22 has been a busy year for the security committee. I believe this committee was formed in 2019 in response to the terrible attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. But when COVID-19 forced us to abandon in-person services, our focus turned away from physical security and toward cybersecurity. This year, we have worked to safely return to in-person events with hybrid services, in-person JCEP, and virtual weekday morning minions.

### Actions/Accomplishments:

Throughout our journey toward greater security, we have benefited from partnering with The Safe Communities Network (SCN) and their Washington Area coordinator Robert Graves. SCN offers training and consulting on all aspects of security for Jewish communities.

- On January 27, Jonathan and Gordon participated in SCN's Situational Awareness class via Zoom.
- In April, Robert Graves presented additional training at the UU, which over a dozen Kol Ami members attended. Mr. Graves then took us on a tour of the building and discussed the best escape routes in situations where flight is necessary.
- Many concepts were discussed in that training, including the idea that your options are almost always 1. Run 2. Hide 3. Fight. Run if you can, hide if you can't run, fight if you are found.
- The Security Committee has completed work on a draft version of an Emergency Plan document.
  - It provides a playbook for what to do in every emergency situation that is foreseeable by the team.
  - It contains maps of escape routes from all the locations we use in the building.
  - Copies of the plan will be kept at strategic locations so they can be referenced in case of an actual emergency.
  - JCEP rooms have been equipped with emergency preparedness equipment, including doorstops and curtains to block the windows in the classroom doors. However, access to those supplies is inconsistent due to variations between the classrooms.
- SimpliSafe® System:
  - We have purchased a base unit and panic buttons from SimpliSafe® and a prepaid mobile phone.
  - The base unit can be taken to any location in the UU and will operate on battery power for 24 hours if it can't be plugged in. During events at the UU, the service leader and one other person will each have a small (3" x 2" x 1") "Panic button" device.
  - In case of an emergency, such as an armed intruder, pressing the panic button will trigger the base unit to call the SimpliSafe® 24x7 monitoring

service. The service will then telephone the mobile phone. If the phone is not picked up, OR if the phone is picked up, but the safe word is not given, police will be sent.

- The team has made contact with the Arlington Police Department in order to hire off duty police for the High Holidays. Sergeant Ryan Reese is our point of contact.
- CPR training was given to several community members in the spring, enhancing our ability to respond to a medical emergency.

#### Future Plans:

- The team will meet with the JCEP teachers to review the draft Emergency Plan and refine the procedures.
- The team is working with the UU to determine the location for the SimpliSafe® base unit when we are not there.
- The team will work with SCN to determine the most relevant security education and offer it to the community. Some may be in person, and some may be delivered by Zoom or pre-recorded videos.
- The team is considering applying in the next fiscal year for a Federal Grant for security enhancement (we received one a couple of years ago.) One project under consideration is to have the glass windows in the lower-level activity room frosted to limit visibility into the room from outside.
- The team will continue to work with the UU (who are in the process of hiring a new facilities manager) on all security concerns that touch on our gatherings there.
- Off-duty police officers will be hired for guard duty during High-Holiday services.

*Gordon Achtermann*

*With liberty and justice for all -- no exceptions.*