



For Immediate Release

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Inaugural Governors Appointed to the ALEPH Ordination Program

Philadelphia, PA: In a significant move to strengthen the oversight and operations of the ALEPH Ordination Program (AOP), nine individuals have been appointed to the inaugural ALEPH Ordination Program Governors (AOPG). The inaugural group include: Rabbi SaraLeya Schley, Rabbi Jeff Roth, Rabbi Jeremy Parnes, Neil Markowitz, Reb Cantor Lisa Levine, Rabbi Dan Goldblatt, Rabbi Rachel Dorit Goldberg, Hazzan Devorah Tucker Fick, and Rabbi Laura Duhan-Kaplan. Interim Dean Chuck Silverstein will serve as ex-officio member.

The AOP Governors will be primarily responsible for ensuring the academic quality and rigor of the seminary as well as overseeing policies and procedures and general financial matters. AOP Governors members were selected through an open nomination process and approved by the ALEPH Board of Directors. Members of the BOG are appointed to an initial three-year term ending July 31, 2026, with four of five remaining for another year.

“We are thrilled to begin this new phase for the ALEPH Ordination Program,” says Rabbi Jeremy Parnes, Chair of the ALEPH Board of Directors. “The ALEPH Board is confident that the new members of the AOPG have the skills and knowledge to help our seminary thrive.”

One of the leading Jewish seminaries, the AOP was launched 22 years ago. More than 200 rabbis, cantors, rabbinic pastors and spiritual directors from diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, and representing nearly every denomination have been trained to serve the global Jewish community with the goal of revitalizing Judaism. For more information about the AOP, visit <https://aop.aleph.org/>.

The AOP is part of an international organization, ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal. ALEPH brings spiritual vitality and passion into the daily lives of Jews through programs that empower

leadership, build communities, and generate transformative experiences and practical resources.

Meet the AOP Governors:

Rabbi Laura Duhan-Kaplan, Ph.D. is an award-winning educator with almost four decades of experience as a professor and administrator. Currently she is Professor of Jewish Studies and Director of Inter-Religious Studies at the Vancouver School of Theology. She is also Rabbi Emerita of Or Shalom Synagogue in Vancouver, Professor Emerita of Philosophy at UNC Charlotte, and a member of the Interfaith Amigos. Rabbi Laura has received numerous awards for her teaching of philosophy and religion, including the prestigious Carnegie Foundation U.S. Professor of the Year Award (2001) and the American Academy of Religion Katie Geneva Cannon Award for Excellence in Teaching (2022). She has published academic articles, co-edited anthologies, and spiritual books, including *Mouth of the Donkey: Re-imagining Biblical Animals* (Cascade, 2021), winner of a Readers' Favorite award. Rabbi Laura holds a Ph.D. in philosophy and education (Claremont Graduate University, 1991), along with master's degrees in both fields. She received rabbinic ordination from ALEPH (2005), a graduate diploma in spiritual direction from VST (2010), and a 500-hour/2-year certificate in Ayurvedic yoga from the New Life Center (1984). She has served on the ALEPH Vaad, ALEPH board, and OHALAH program committee. Rabbi Laura lives with her husband Charles in Vancouver Canada on Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territory. Together they enjoy hiking, befriending urban wildlife, caring for companion animals, co-leading musical events and prayer services, participating in Jewish and interfaith communal life, and spending time with their two grown children.

Hazzan Devorah Tucker Fick was ordained as both a Hazzan and Mashpi'ah by the AOP in 2023, and continues to pursue Rabbinic Smicha and an M.A. in Jewish Studies at The Academy for Jewish Religion, New York. She is an active member of both the Michigan Board of Rabbis and Michigan Board of Cantors, as well as a founding member of the Reform Cantors and Cantorial Soloists of Canada. Devorah grew up the daughter of a Baptist minister, an upbringing which has led to deep commitment in interfaith work in her community, where she serves as a member of the Interfaith Group of Windsor and Essex County in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and as a current and active member of the Board of Directors of Iona College, the interfaith college at the University of Windsor. Before answering the call to serve the Jewish People, Devorah was an officer in the United States Air Force for seven years, commanding troops in Texas, Georgia, and Iraq. She was also a Professor of Aerospace Studies for two years at Michigan State University.

Currently Devorah is the Spiritual Leader (*Kol Bo*) of a vibrant, warm, growing community: Congregation Beth El in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, where she serves with wonder and gratitude that God has led her to this holy work in a *kahal* filled with love and joy for Judaism and one another. Devorah is married to Jim, and they are parents to 4 teenagers/young adults: Ethan, Ryan, Ellie, and Sophianna.

Rabbi Rachel Dorit Goldberg was ordained by the AOP in January 2024, and completed the AOP Hashpa'ah program in January 2022. She lives in Jerusalem, Israel where she recently served as the Rabbinic Intern at Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies supporting the administration of the Year Program, serving as a pastoral presence amidst the student community, and pushed the envelope in terms of Jewish pluralism, particularly in the arena of *t'filah*/prayer. She also served as the Ritual Coordinator at the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center, the organization that is home to the Conservative Yeshiva, where she led initiatives to establish intercollegiate community among rabbinical students from the AOP, HUC, JTS, Maharat, Hebrew College, AJRCA, Yashrut, and the CY Omek Program. She is currently serving as a student chaplain at the French Hospital in Jerusalem, and Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, as well as offering *Hashpah'ah* 1:1 through her private practice, serving faculty roles with My Jewish Learning and The Jewish Learning Collaborative, and leading weekly *t'filah* online for Mishkan Chicago, where she held a student pulpit for many years. Rachel also has expertise in pedagogy and curriculum design with licensure and training in Secondary Social Studies Education from the University of Iowa and nearly 20 years of experience in the field of education as a program director, designer, facilitator, producer, and international community builder. Recognizing education as a vehicle for transformation and healing, Rabbi Rachel brings an intentional focus to the latent curriculum throughout the process of program vision and design.

Rabbi Dan Goldblatt is grateful to have received ordination from Reb Zalman, z"tl, through the ALEPH Ordination Program. Rabbi Dan has been the spiritual leader of Beth Chaim Congregation in Danville, CA, for three decades. He served on the Board of ALEPH for many years and he is a Past President of OHALAH: the Association of Rabbis and Cantors for Jewish Renewal. Dan served as Chair of the OHALAH's Ethics Committee for ten years and was the lead author of its Ethics Policy. He is also the co-founder of AriYael Jewish Healing Center focused on a rooted Jewish approach to embodied healing, grief, end-of-life work and other sacred transitions. Dan has been very active in local interfaith work and has created and led organizations including A Just Harvest (in support of California migrant farm workers), I-SRV (the Interfaith of the San Ramon Valley), and San Ramon Valley Cares (an organization in support of a confederation of indigenous tribes in the Ecuadorian Amazon battling Chevron Corporation).

Reb Cantor Lisa Levine is a well-known composer, author, chaplain, poet and recording artist who has spent her professional career writing and sharing her worship music as a Reform Cantor serving congregations from Dallas to Des Moines to Washington D.C. She earned her BA from University of California, Irvine and studied at Hebrew University and the Ruben Academy of Music in Jerusalem. She received her Cantorial Ordination and master's degree in music from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in NYC and Honorary Doctorate from HUC in 2014. Lisa is a 500-hour registered yoga teacher and author of "Yoga Shalom" a groundbreaking prayer embodiment book published by URJ Press. Lisa received Ordination as Rabbinic Pastor through Aleph Alliance for Jewish Renewal in 2018 and serves as a Jewish Service Social Agency Chaplain in Montgomery County MD where she resides. She is currently the part-time Hazzan of Temple Beth Israel; York PA. Reb Lisa serves on the Board of Ezra Uganda Assistance as well as the Rabbinic Pastors Association. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, tennis, hiking and walking her dogs!

Neil Markowitz is a former member of the ALEPH Board where he served for 5 years working on a range of program partnership and development projects as well as participating as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board. Neil has a BS. From Rutgers University in Environmental Science and MS in Environmental Education from the University of Michigan. Neil taught in the College of Education at Deakin University in Australia for 4 years in the mid-1980's before becoming the founding Director of the Environmental Education Exchange a 34-year-old non-profit organization based in Tucson, Arizona. The Exchange, now in its 34th year, has a 40 member staff that creates educational materials on environmental topics for agencies, organizations, and municipalities throughout the Desert Southwest, the US, and internationally. The organization annually delivers over 3,500 classroom presentations on climate change, renewable energy, and water conservation, reaching over 90,000 K-12 students each school year. During his time in Tucson Neil served on the Board of the Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona. He participated on the Executive leadership team for over a decade and was a founding Board Member of the Tucson Jewish Museum & Holocaust History Center. A chance encounter with R. Daniel Siegel in 1993 at a lecture on Eco-Kashrut launched a lifelong interest in Jewish Renewal. Neil currently serves as Treasurer for the Shores Minyan, a Renewal-inspired minyan on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Neil and his partner of 30 years Ilana have two children and live in New York City. Neil can be found birdwatching regularly in Central Park.

Rabbi Jeremy Parnes was born in London England in 1952 and has spent the last 47 years of his life in Canada and the last 39 years as a resident of Regina Saskatchewan. He has enjoyed three

career choices. Originally, he specialized in community development and working primarily for a non-profit housing association in Inner-City London England. Subsequently, he has been involved in sales management and training in ethical sales. Twenty-three years ago he became the spiritual leader of the Beth Jacob Synagogue and in January 2012 received Smicha from ALEPH Ordination Program both as a Renewal Rabbi and *Mashpia Ruchani* and Spiritual Director. He is a member of the Regina Multi-faith Forum and has been active on the boards of Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada and the Inner-City Community Partnership. He currently serves as chair of Regina Prison Chaplains Advisory Committee and has served as chair on several City of Regina committees relating to low cost and social housing and undertook a visioning and future development project on behalf of the residents of North Central Regina, an inner-city community in crisis. He is currently serving as Chair of the Board of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal. He and his life-partner Chris have a blended family of four wonderful children and seven beautiful grandchildren.

Rabbi Jeff Roth, D.Min., M.S.W., is the founder and Director of The Awakened Heart Project for Contemplative Judaism. He has led over 200 meditation retreats over the last 20 years. He was the co-founder of Elat Chayyim, the Jewish Spiritual Retreat Center, where he served as Executive Director and Spiritual Director for 13 years. He is the author of Jewish Meditation Practices for Everyday Life. He is currently on the faculty of the Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training program. He was ordained by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi as well as by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Rabbi Roth served for eight years as the Executive Director of B'nai Or which became P'nai Or before its transformation into ALEPH. He is currently serving as an ALEPH Board member. He lives with his partner Rabbi Joanna Katz in the Hudson River Valley.

Rabbi SaraLeya Schley was ordained in 2005 by the ALEPH Rabbinical Program of the Jewish Renewal Movement. From 2001-2021 she served many communities throughout the West as spiritual leader: Renewal, unaffiliated, and Conservative. Between 2008-2014 she was Rabbi to Chochmat HaLev in Berkeley, CA. In 2019 she was designated a Senior Rabbinic Fellow by the Shalom Hartman Institute. Having moved back to Northern Nevada in 2018 to live closer to family, she leads prayer and leyns Torah regularly. She continues to be involved with various Renewal communities, including Wilderness Torah, Torah of Awakening and Chochmat HaLev, as an adjunct leader, teacher and elder. In 2017, she received a special ordination from the Integral *Halachah* Institute as a placeholder within the Jewish Renewal movement for a dynamic and responsive relationship to the halakhic process. She leads ritual and prayer and teaches across the spectrum of Jewish practice, bringing a spiritual and ethical perspective to her love of

traditional text study. Facilitating vibrant, individualized life-cycle rituals brings great joy to her work as a Rabbi, particularly working with multi-faith and non-traditional families. She is mother to three married adult children and *savta* to her four beloved grandchildren.

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