



# Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community

19520 Darnestown Rd.  
Beallsville, MD 20839

1719 Wilmart St.  
Rockville, MD 20852

Phone: 301-349-2799  
Facsimile: 301-349-2744  
E-Mail: [admin@am-kolel.org](mailto:admin@am-kolel.org)  
Web page: [www.am-aolel.org](http://www.am-aolel.org)

**Founder and Director**  
Rabbi David Shneyer

**Board of Directors**

President  
Anne Schwartz Delibert  
Vice President  
Sandy Hoffman  
Treasurer  
Frank Silberstein  
Secretary  
Bonnie Rich  
Trustees  
Judy Beltz  
Miles Goldstein  
Janeane Marks  
Fran McMahon  
Alan Rich  
Immediate Past President  
Miles Goldstein  
Emeritus  
Paige Jacobson  
Fran McMahon

**Staff**

Administrator  
Cyndi Leitner  
Webmaster  
Judy Stone  
Volunteer Librarian  
Ann Bradbury &  
Susan Freiband

**Judaic Consultants**

Rabbi David Kuperman, PhD  
Rabbi Gilah Langner  
Janeane Marks  
Melavah Rukhanit  
Spiritual Companion  
De Herman  
Rabbinic Pastor

**Past Presidents**

Irvin Losman z"l  
Rabbi Bob Saks  
Sharon Murphy  
George Mazza  
Lew Franke  
Ralph Tryon  
Fran McMahon  
Jeff Sklaver  
Paige Jacobson  
Ira Levine  
Annette Jolles  
Miles Goldstein

December 2020 / Kislev 5781

Dear Members and Friends,

What a year it has been!

Nearly all of our services to you, our members, our friends and the larger community have been virtual. **Our programs and special events have actually increased!**

- Participation in our Zoom Shabbat services each week is healthy! Friends and family often join us from other parts of the country.
- We have had a weekly Erev Shira, Evening of Song -Jewish Music Coffeeshouses.
- We have had special guests, such as new author, Adriane Brown and educator, Danny Siegel.
- Our Tikkun Olam Committee has hosted on line meetings with Black leaders addressing systemic racism and social disparity.

This month, in celebration of Hanukah, we are offering an exclusive showing of Matzah Balls for the Revolution, a short documentary of the Kosher Kitchen Collective, an evening with Dr. Simcha Raphael on the struggle between Light and Darkness and, then, an evening with one our generations most prophetic thinker, Rabbi Arthur Waskow!

S

**Our pastoral services** have also grown over the past number of months, with baby namings, virtual and in person visits at a safe distance with those in need, funerals and on line shiva and memorial services. Most weddings have been postponed. Several members of our community, friends and family members have been afflicted or touched by COVID.

**We have allied ourselves even more strongly with Jewish United for Justice**, the main regional Jewish organization fighting for social equity, immigrant rights and police reform. Am Kolel helped to found JUJF.

**On Tikkun Olam Committee**, chaired by Janeane Marks with a dedicated team of eight members has focused on education, advocacy and engagement in a number of areas: voter registration campaigns, police reform, partnerships

with black organizations and more.

**One of our gems has been our Sanctuary Retreat Center.** Two years ago we decided to move the Am Kolel Center back into the lower part of the County, necessitating the sale of Sanctuary. Our members were using it less and managing it had become more costly. With the advent of the pandemic it became clear that a sale was not possible and we took it off the market. Our lender, the Wagner family, agreed to extend their loan to us at the lowest interest rate possible. We are so grateful.

**While Sanctuary has lost 95% of its retreat income we have discovered new ways of meeting needs in the community.** These include small outdoor weddings, a place for individuals and families to get away for private retreats, a place in nature for small school and youth groups to come and learn. Our members and friends have also enjoyed the grounds and, some, have used our kayaks, agreed to extend their loan to us at the lowest interest rate possible. We are so grateful.

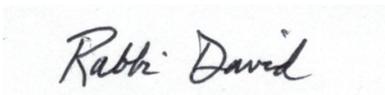
**Our relationships with other faith communities and organizations remains strong.** We recently cosponsored the JUFJ Heschel Event. Once again we will be a sponsor of the upcoming J Street Conference. We are slap cosponsoring and helping to plan the Imams-Rabbis Summit to take place in January on line. We are active members of Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake and new members of the Climate Justice Coalition. We continue to be a strong and respected voice in the Jewish and general community.

**In order to do all this, we need your continued involvement and financial support.** Recently, we convened a Search Committee to bring on a Managing Director to free me up to nurture our programs and provide the spiritual services needed. We need help with affording a Managing Director. This past October we received an anonymous gift of \$25,000 toward this end. Will you help match that?

**There is much to be thankful for.** Together, we have the power to dispel the darkening clouds that surround us. May our inner light and our Hanukah light bring us hope and peace.

May you and your loved ones be safe. May our nation be healed of the divisiveness that has enveloped us.

With love and blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rabbi David". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Reb David