Dear Colleagues,

Upon creating the first human being, God quickly notes (Gen. 2:18), “לَا يُوتِهِيُّنُو اَدَمُ لِبَعْدِهِ—It is not good for this Adam to be alone.” God quickly understands that Divine presence in the world is not enough for this new creation—human beings require human companionship. Our sages take this idea further when it comes to rabbis, elevating the popular phrase quoted by Rava in the Gemara (Taanit 23a), “ואי חרבון ואי בורון—Companionship or death!”

As we have faced a global pandemic, our Rabbinical Assembly’s core mission, which is to connect and support rabbis, has perhaps never been more valued, or more challenging. Our colleagues have worked so hard, in every corner of the world, and in every setting, to share Torah, to create meaningful experiences, and to ensure connections within their communities. Our RA staff and lay leadership have, in turn, worked hard to do the same among our colleagues, providing the assurance that, indeed, we feel connection and companionship.

As you will see in this report, our response to the pandemic has included adaptations of halakhah by the CJLS to this unprecedented environment; new policies, training and support for career transitions; study opportunities and self-care programs; individual counseling and group processing opportunities; and so much more.

All the while, we have also continued our focus on implementing our 10 Bold Statements of our RA Vision Plan. We hired Sheryl Katzman as our Senior Director of Member Engagement and Ilana Garber as our Director of Global Rabbinic Development. Together with our existing staff, they have grown our opportunities to engage one another in a network of affinity groups, professional growth and learning initiatives, new partnerships within and outside our movement (including our deepening collaboration with USCJ), and leadership training programs.

Our membership and lay leaders have played key roles in helping us develop and evaluate responses to the pandemic, set priorities in our strategic plan implementation, develop messaging for Dover Emet advocacy, initiate new publications projects, and refine our budgeting and fundraising efforts towards greater sustainability.

It has been a year of challenge and growth, all sustained by our continued sense of connection and חברה with one another. Thank you for your continued support of Our RA, and we wish you blessings and strength as we continue our joint work.

Warm regards,

Stewart Vogel
President

Jacob Blumenthal
CEO
WHO WE ARE

NEARLY 1,600 MEMBERS

Born across decades 1920s – 1990s

AND RESIDING IN 26 COUNTRIES

Argentina • Aruba • Australia • Brazil • Canada • Chile • Costa Rica • Czech Republic • France • Germany • Hungary • Israel • Italy • Japan • Mexico • Panama • Paraguay • Peru • Poland • Sweden • Switzerland • Uganda • Ukraine • United Kingdom • United States • Uruguay

OUR ALMA MATERS

1085 Jewish Theological Seminary
183 Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies
86 Schechter Rabbinical Seminary
84 Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano
51 Hebrew Union College
22 Reconstructionist Rabbinical College
48 Other
11 Leo Baeck College
8 Academy For Jewish Religion
6 JTS Budapest
6 Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary
3 Frankel College

OUR PROFESSIONS

779 Pulpit
314 Other
117 College Campus
112 Org./Non-Profit
101 Chaplain
57 Outside Rabbinate
48 Day School
41 Synagogue / School
31 Entrepreneur

GENDER IDENTITY

1265 Men
327 Women
1 Nonbinary

NEARLY 1,600 MEMBERS

rabbinicalassembly.org
During an unprecedented time marked by strict limits to in-person social gatherings, our RA programming provided a wide variety of opportunities for colleagues to connect with and support one another virtually.

**SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING RABBIS**

- Our senior consultant, Bill Lebeau, counsels 241 colleagues, ranging from a single outreach to multiple emails, phone calls, meetings and mentorship meetings.

- 23 colleagues regularly reach out to members experiencing illness, loss, or in need of emotional support through our Pastoral Outreach Team. If you feel that you would benefit from occasional check-ins from the Pastoral Outreach Team, please use this form so that we can make a connection for you.

- 72 new colleagues in their 1st-3rd year in the rabbinate are paired with 58 experienced colleagues through our new Haverim program.

- 22 colleagues reach out to 133 colleagues through our COVID-19 phone tree during a time of increased isolation.

- Our Wolfe Kelman Fund assists dozens of colleagues and their families with financial assistance.

- In October, 550 rabbis, cantors, and partners/spouses of clergy join for 5 days of virtual events aimed to renew and refresh as Heshvan begins.

- With 40 virtual classes and over 70 hours of learning, our summer learning programming attracts over 800 participants and 9 partnering institutions.

4 rabbinicalassembly.org
We host quarterly **virtual gatherings** of members of the JTS and Ziegler classes of 2020.

Over the summer, chaplains meet virtually for **peer-facilitated conversations** to discuss topics including death, dying and grief in a time of COVID-19, tele-chaplaincy, and caring for caregivers.

We launch **virtual affinity groups** for women and parents of children with disabilities. We pilot groups for LGBTQ+ rabbis, rabbis who podcast, and clergy partners/spouses. Learn more about how to sign up for an affinity group on our website.

From March to September, CJLS releases COVID-19 **halakhic and movement guidance** related to remote minyanim, lifecycle events, conversion, and the High Holidays.

"As an RA member, I want to express my appreciation for the rabbinic self-care workshops and grants, the Rabbinic (re)Design Lab, and all of the webinars and resources that helped me think about how to make this season meaningful for our members while also taking care of myself. I have heard from many congregants who have expressed appreciation to me and the Cantor for all the work we are putting in to making these days feel special. And it’s true, we have put in a lot of work. But that work has been made so much easier because of the support from our RA.”

—Marc Israel, Tikvat Israel Congregation, Rockville, MD

"I have been very appreciative for the RA’s support with statements, digital resources, webinars, and happy hours for clergy. Prior to this year I had very little interaction with the RA, which was mostly because of my availability and choices. This year, it has been a tremendous resource.”

—Ariel Russo, Congregation Sons of Israel, Nyack, NY
In 2019 and 2020, we post 77 pulpit positions on our job board and 50 jobs on our organization job board.

By July, 60 rabbis begin new jobs or receive promotions. Please see our list of Completed Career Advancements to congratulate your colleagues.

Emily Hendel, Director of Career Services, fields phone calls from more than 300 rabbis and 150 lay leaders and hiring managers on 4 continents.

In February, 20 congregations throughout the U.S. participate in Interview Week. Graduates from Ziegler and JTS attend 85 interviews over a 4-day period.

In the first half of the year, we enlist the help of four of our members as advisors and Placement Coaches to support rabbis throughout their career searches.

By July, 60 rabbis begin new jobs or receive promotions. Please see our list of Completed Career Advancements to congratulate your colleagues.

Emily Hendel, Director of Career Services, fields phone calls from more than 300 rabbis and 150 lay leaders and hiring managers on 4 continents.

In February, 20 congregations throughout the U.S. participate in Interview Week. Graduates from Ziegler and JTS attend 85 interviews over a 4-day period.

In the first half of the year, we enlist the help of four of our members as advisors and Placement Coaches to support rabbis throughout their career searches.

In July we release a brand-new questionnaire for congregations to fill out when they have open pulpit positions. We attempt to neutralize biases in the questions.

From March to June, Our RA participates in multiple webinars on hiring during a pandemic, including a panel discussion with representatives from USCJ, the CA, NAASE, & JEA.

We release a new rabbinic search guide manual, Netivot, written by Elliot Schoenberg and revised by Emily Hendel, Director of Career Services.
I honestly had a much better Shavuot than I thought I was going to. I felt connected to community, plugged in with amazing teachers. It was good, solid learning with a kind of familiarity that was inviting. And most of all, the tech worked beautifully. I felt really proud to be part of our movement. It was indicative of the true power we have to mobilize a spectacular network of rabbis across the continent to do something creative and to offer a quality service to the Jewish world.”

—Rami Schwartzer, Arlington, VA

The virtual experience for Tikkun Leyl Shavuot was incredible. I stayed up for practically all of it, and was amazed at the talent and the deep content of most of the Shiurim.”

—Michael Abadi, Temple Israel, Charlotte, NC

PUBLICATIONS

Sales of the printed Mahzor Lev Shalem up 25% compared to calendar year 2019.

180 synagogues and organizations subscribe to the Digital Mahzor Lev Shalem.

4,580 purchases of the Digital Mahzor Lev Shalem via Issuu.

91,000 views of the Digital Mahzor Lev Shalem on Issuu.

Over 50,000 downloads of free electronic versions of Siddur Sim Shalom and segments of Etz Hayim and Siddur Lev Shalem made available during the pandemic.

UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS FROM OUR RA


An updated clergy manual for the Conservative movement, to be published both in print and in an expanded, customizable digital edition, edited by Joshua Heller and co-edited by Annie Lewis. (2022)

Siddur Lev Shalem for Weekdays, edited by Edward Feld and co-edited by Jan Uhrbach. (2023)
In an increasingly polarized world, our RA fosters a climate of civility, pluralism, and social justice.

**In March, we publish eight resolutions** on various social justice topics, including antisemitism, living sustainably, the hunger crisis, and immunization.

**Create a continuously-updated resource page** on handling issues related to race, racism, and police brutality.

**Host four-part series** on race and implicit bias with Amy Eilberg.

**In the spring, launch a resource section on navigating communities through COVID-19.** Topics include finances, prayers and self-care content, CJLS movement guidance, and reopening information.

**In July, we partner with the Reform Movement on “Every Voice, Every Vote,” a 2020 U.S. civic engagement campaign.** We develop a section on our website for civic engagement, create a list of steps to maximize voter impact, and publish a ninth 2020 fast-tracked resolution on voting rights in the U.S.

**We host virtual meetups around the 2020 U.S. elections,** including a sermon slam, facilitated conversations to process feelings, and a women's election group.

**In July, Jacob Blumenthal welcomes Hartman faculty into a dialogue about critical issues facing the Conservative/Masorti movement, including polarization, partisanship, and Israel.**

**Ruth Messinger presents webinar on “moral courage” in October.**
We are committed to building a culture driven by innovation, transparency, organizational partnerships, and financial sustainability.

CO-CREATING A MODEL 21st CENTURY ORGANIZATION

We were thrilled to add the following members to our organization:

Sheryl Katzman
Senior Director of Member Engagement

Remi Fisher
Executive Assistant to the CEO

Ilana Garber
Director of Global Rabbinic Development
To help our members and the public celebrate the High Holidays during an unprecedented time, we release several innovative programs over YouTube, including a Seder Made to Order, How to Kasher series, pre-recorded Tikkun series, Tikkun Leil Shavuot, and Selihot.

**Our Rosh Hashanah Seder** features text, song, ritual, and explanations to celebrate Rosh Hashanah at home.

**Our Pesah Virtual Seder** features 26 parts with over 26 rabbis from the U.S., Israel, Canada, and Europe.

**Our Selihot services** feature 50 presenters from US, Canada, and Israel.

**Our Shavuot series** features 31 presenters teaching live from coast to coast and 14 pre-recorded teachers.

**In November, our ScholarStream program launches with 135 sponsoring congregations and over 1,500 participants across 8 sessions taught by faculty of both JTS and Ziegler.**

10 rabbis from Australia, Israel, North America, South America, and Europe shared introductions to High Holiday prayers (Divrei Tefilah).
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF OUR RA
VIRTUAL PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Our RA website received over 500,000 pageviews from January to December 2020. Our top 10 countries were: United States, Canada, Israel, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, India, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico.

Our average email open rate was 53% (up roughly 10% from 2019).

We developed a public email list with over 18,000 contacts.

Facebook page reached over 450,000 people in 2020 and gained over 500 new “Likes” during the COVID-19 pandemic alone.

Tweets received over 400,000 impressions in 2020.

Our Instagram channel gained over 600 followers in 2020.

YouTube videos received over 50,000 views from January - December 2020.

Seder Made to Order video viewed over 8,000 times

How to Kasher videos viewed over 1,000 times

Prerecorded Tikkun videos viewed over 3,000 times

Tikkun Leil Shavuot video viewed over 11,000 times

Selihot video viewed over 24,000 times

CONNECT WITH OUR RA ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

These social media channels will help you stay up to date on the latest news. You may also comment on posts, reply to comments from colleagues and the general public, and more!
Our RA staff celebrated Rabbi Elliot Schoenberg’s 30 years of service to the organization as placement director with lunch at Noah’s Ark Restaurant & Deli and a trip to Monster Mini Golf in Paramus, NJ. We wish Elliot all the best on his retirement!

Front row (left to right): Ashira Konigsburg, COO; Lee Paskind, Social Justice Commission Consultant; Diana Denza, Marketing and Communications Specialist; Christine Aucoin, Administrative Assistant; Gina Morales, Business Manager; Bill Lebeau, Senior Consultant for Rabbinic and Institutional Leadership. Back row (left to right): Jacob Blumenthal, CEO; Elliot Schoenberg, Senior Vice President Emeritus and Global Director of Rabbinic Career Development Emeritus; Sasha Mastriano, Office & Project Manager; Max Arad, Assistant Director of Operations; Emily Hendel, Director of Career Services; Katharine Baker, Publications Director.