

RABBI MICHAEL ROSE KNOPF

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

My purpose as a rabbi is to reveal the Jewish tradition's enduring relevance in order to help people thrive, build inclusive communities, and inspire and empower partners in pursuing justice and repairing the world.

CURRENT POSITION

TEMPLE BETH-EL, Richmond, VA (2014-Present)

Rabbi

- **Providing enterprising organizational leadership:** shaping & implementing congregational vision; advising & supporting volunteers; nurturing officers, board, & committee members; identifying & training new leaders; spearheading, promoting, & participating in fundraising (incl. writing & securing grants, cultivating & stewarding relationships with funders, increasing legacy giving, & growing endowment; initiating, developing, & championing \$6MM Temple renovation project; shaping & guiding processes for selecting new Executive Directors, Youth Learning Director, & Cantor; serving as staff team leader & supervising Youth Learning Director, & Cantor; mentoring student rabbis; leading congregation through challenges & opportunities of global pandemic with steadiness & creativity; launching outreach initiatives & generating membership growth.
- **Illuminating Jewish wisdom to spark transformation & inspire activism:** Delivering sermons in formal & conversational styles; utilizing text in classes to explore beliefs & uncover truths; offering empathetic pastoral care; officiating lifecycles with individualized approach, connecting personal narratives with sacred scripts, & motivating deeper Jewish commitments; designing innovative, meaningful worship experiences, including infusing prayer experiences with instrumental music & communal singing; developing *SHALOM Israel RVA*, pro-Israel, pro-peace educational initiative; initiating annual Artist/Scholar-in-Residence programs.
- **Cultivating inclusive, connected, & caring culture:** developing & implementing *The Havurah Project*, bringing diverse groups of congregants together for monthly Shabbat meals in each other's homes; facilitating establishment of lay-led affinity-based small groups; partnering with staff & volunteers to create *Caring Crews*, empowering congregants to support each other in trying times; creating policies, programs, rituals, & atmospheric changes to welcome & support LGBTQIA+ individuals, racial & ethnic minorities, interfaith families, & younger generations; spearheading outreach to interfaith families & potential conversion students; working with national & local organizations to promote pluralistic & respectful culture within congregation.
- **Advancing human rights & social justice:** facilitating synagogue involvement in local multi-faith community organizing network & statewide interfaith policy advocacy, addressing gun violence, environment, & inequities in education, housing, criminal justice, & labor; generating initiatives to support immigrants & refugees, advance racial justice, foster LGBTQ & gender equality, & champion reproductive freedom.
- **Fostering pluralism & pursuing peace in the wider community:** creating *Encounter RVA* series, bringing together diverse leaders & communities for facilitated dialogue; advising Virginia's U.S. Representatives & Senators on matters of importance to Jewish community; officiating Hanukkah candle lightings & interfaith Passover Seder at Governor's Mansion; delivering benedictions at Governor's & Mayor's inaugurations, state delegates' swearing-in ceremonies, & Virginia House of Delegates sessions; providing faith voice at public social justice actions, i.e. for immigration reform, welcoming refugees, religious pluralism, & removing Confederate monuments; organizing collaborative communal programs & multi-faith initiatives.

PAST PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

HAR ZION TEMPLE, Penn Valley, PA (2011-2014)

Assistant Rabbi

Served as clergy for ~900-family congregation: preaching, teaching, counseling, conducting worship and officiating lifecycle observances. Envisioned and developed engagement programs for young adults (both affiliated and unaffiliated). Implemented and administered social media presence. Designed and led engaging worship opportunities. Provided steadfast and compassionate rabbinic leadership during communal transition period. Guided reflections on leadership and purpose to strengthen community and help select new senior rabbi.

BEIT T'SHUVAH, Los Angeles, CA (2010-2011), *Rabbinic Intern*

Provided kindhearted spiritual counseling at unique in-residence addiction treatment program and synagogue, integrating Twelve-Step principles, Jewish values, introspection, and prayer. Empowered clients to use Torah as prism for self-reflection. Formed safe space in classes to discuss God, spirituality, reconciliation, and recovery.

AMERICAN JEWISH UNIVERSITY, Los Angeles, CA (2009-2011), *Rabbinic Intern & Instructor*

Revitalized country's largest conversion program, transforming experience by: emphasizing experiential Jewish living; cultivating abilities to engage Jewish text with "*Beit Midrash*"-style learning and Hebrew; mentoring & facilitating communal/familial inclusion; shaping conversion guidelines, stressing spiritual growth and belonging. Cultivated relationships with rabbis, board members, donors, and alumni. Participated in managing staff.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR INSTITUTE FOR CHILD ADVOCACY MINISTRY (2023)

Participant in national convening to prepare select faith leaders to pursue justice and end poverty for children.

LEAP FELLOWSHIP (2021-2022)

Rabbi Samuel T. Lachs Fellow of Clal's groundbreaking partnership with University of Pennsylvania's Katz Center.

AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE (2018-2019)

Selected for Global Justice Fellowship; trained as leader in causes of global human rights and poverty-eradication.

LEADERSHIP METRO RICHMOND (2017-2018)

First rabbi ever invited to join diverse, exclusive network of regional leaders.

CLERGY LEADERSHIP INCUBATOR (2015-2017)

Participated in program focusing on change management, institutional transformation, vision, & innovation.

RABBIS WITHOUT BORDERS (2012-2013)

Studied with leading thinkers on pressing religious & social issues as part of Clal's prestigious rabbinic fellowship.

PUBLICATIONS & PODCASTS

BOOKS: *No Time for Neutrality* (2021); *Thirty Days of Liberation* (2020); "Following God's Lure Through the Priestly Blessing," *Birkat Kohanim*, eds. Birnbaum Cohen (2016); "On Redemption," *Slavery, Freedom, and Everything Between*, eds. Alexander & Creditor (2013); "A Personal Prayer," *Jewish Men Pray*, ed. Olitzky (2013).

SCHOLARLY ARTICLES: "Continuous Creation and Continuous Revelation," *Conservative Judaism*, 65:1.

POPULAR ARTICLES: *Times of Israel*, *Forward*, *Haaretz*, *EJewish Philanthropy*, & local publications.

RECENT PODCASTS: *PopTorah*; *TBE Richmond Podcast*; *Socially Distant*, *Spiritually Close*.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, BOARDS, COMMITTEES & RECOGNITIONS

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: Rabbinical Assembly (RA), Richmond Council of Congregational Rabbis.

BOARDS: Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, Jewish Family Service Richmond, Richmonders Involved to Strengthen our Communities (RISC), Va. Interfaith Center for Public Policy, Union Seminary Richmond SGA.

COMMITTEES: Standing Together (Va. Center for Inclusive Communities); Richmond Clergy & Citizens Against Racism; Conservative Judaism Social Justice Commission; RA Strategic Planning Committee.

RECOGNITIONS: "40 Under 40," *Style Weekly* (2017); "America's Most Inspiring Rabbis," *The Forward* (2015).

EDUCATION

UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY, Richmond, VA, Candidate for Doctor of Ministry (exp. 2025).

ZIEGLER SCHOOL OF RABBINIC STUDIES, Los Angeles, CA

Rabbinic Ordination, Master of Arts in Rabbinic Studies (2011); Eliezer Slomovic Award in Talmud (2007).

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, New York, NY, Bachelor of Arts in History, *Cum Laude* (2005).

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA, New York, NY

Bachelor of Arts in Talmud and Rabbinics, *Magna Cum Laude* (2005).