



Ideals of Freedom Series returns in May, Upcoming Programs, Shul Tours and More – April 20, 2026

Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day) begins this evening
יום הזיכרון

Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day) begins Tuesday evening
יום העצמאות

IDEALS OF FREEDOM SPEAKER SERIES



Immigrant Voices in Color: Murals and other Art from America's Synagogues
Wednesday, May 13, 7:00 pm ET (online)

Join art and architectural historian **Dr. Samuel D. Gruber** for an illuminating journey through the vibrant art and design of America's historic synagogues. This illustrated lecture explores how Jewish immigrants expressed their faith, identity, and aspirations in a new land through color, pattern, and imagery. Dr. Gruber will highlight the beautifully painted ceiling, pillars, and curtains of the Walnut Street Synagogue in Chelsea, one of the few surviving examples of the richly decorated immigrant-era sanctuaries that once flourished across the country. He will also present murals and artwork from other current and former synagogues, revealing how these sacred spaces became canvases for storytelling and memory. Through his engaging talk and striking visuals, Dr. Gruber will show how these works of art—created by and for immigrant congregations—continue to speak to us today, celebrating a legacy of creativity, resilience, and community that is central to the American Jewish experience.

Dr. Samuel D. Gruber has been a leader in the documentation, protection, and preservation of historic Jewish sites worldwide since 1988. He was founding director of the Jewish Heritage Program of World Monuments Fund (1988-1996) and Research Director of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad (1998 through 2008). He presently directs Gruber Heritage Global, a cultural resource consulting firm and is president of the not-for-profit International Survey of Jewish Monuments. He has taught as part-time faculty in Art History and Jewish Studies at Syracuse University (1994-2022) and at Binghamton, Colgate, Cornell, and Temple universities and Le Moyne College. Sam received his BA in Medieval Studies from Princeton University, his Ph.D. in Art and Architectural History from Columbia University and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Rome, where he won the prestigious Rome Prize in Art History. Sam writes and lectures about Jewish art and architecture. He is author

of *American Synagogues: A Century of Architecture and Jewish Community* (2003), *Synagogues* (1999), and scores of reports, articles, and book chapters. Since 2008, he has written the blog Samuel Gruber's Jewish Art and Monuments. He is a frequent invited speaker and consultant across the United States and in Europe. *Community partners – Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at American Ancestors, Massachusetts Antisemitism Synagogue Task Force (MAST), Orange County Jewish Community Scholar Program (CSP)*
Register here - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/immigrant-voices-in-color-murals-and-other-art-from-america-synagogues-tickets-1977635831007?aff=oddtcreator>
Learn more about the series here - <https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/ideals-of-freedom/>

CSP

We are pleased to be a partner congregation of the Orange County Jewish **Community Scholar Program (CSP)**. Please join us at an upcoming program!



Memory, and Torn Landscapes – Israeli Artists Responding to October 7th

Tuesday, April 21, 1:00 pm ET (online)

To mark Israel's Memorial Day and Independence Day, join a powerful lecture exploring how Israeli artists responded in real time to the trauma and aftermath of October 7, 2023, with special attention to a project that birthed the traveling exhibition and book *Album Darom* and its 2024 presentation in Los Angeles. Beginning with a remarkable series of daily Facebook posts launched by scholar and photographer Prof. Dana Arieli on October 20, 2023, this session will trace a visual record of the Western Negev through historical photographs, contemporary artistic projects, and deeply immediate images of life during and after the attacks. Bringing together the work of renowned photographers and ordinary people alike, these images capture fear, resilience, memory, beauty, interruption, and survival, revealing how photography became a way to witness, process, and preserve a shattered world.

Dr. Rotem Rozenal is the Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Los Angeles Center of Photography, formerly Chief Curator at American Jewish University, and a lecturer at USC Roski. A scholar of photo-based art and visual culture, she authored *Pre-State Photographic Archives and the Zionist Movement* (Routledge, 2023), winner of the AJS Jordan Schnitzer First Book Award, and has written widely for *Artforum*, *Photographies*, *Jewish Currents*, *Tablet* and *Forward*. She mentors artists globally, edits and contributes to artist books and is currently developing a nonfiction memoir.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/vQD7lr6AR3yIW40FY7V2CQ#/registration>

The Holocaust – A History of Decisions, Places, and Moral Collapse

Part 8 - Sunday, April 26, 1:00 pm ET (online)

In this powerful eight-part series, Prof. Stephen Berk guides us through the Holocaust, not as a single, inevitable catastrophe, but as a series of historical choices made by governments, institutions, communities, and individuals across Europe. Moving chronologically and geographically, the series explores how the “oldest hatred” was transformed into state-sponsored genocide, how different countries responded to Nazi pressure, and how moments of action, or inaction, shaped the fate of millions. With clarity, moral seriousness, and historical depth, Prof. Berk helps us understand not only what happened, but *how* it happened, and why those lessons still matter.

Stephen M. Berk, who served as CSP's 10th Annual One Month Scholar in Residence in February 2011, is Professor of History at Union College in Schenectady, New York, former Chair of the Department of History, Director of the Program in Russian and Eastern European Studies and Faculty Advisor to the Jewish Student Organization. He is the author of *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope: Russian Jewry and the*

Pogroms of 1881-1882 (Greenwood Press, 1985). He is currently writing a book titled: *Our People Are Your People: American Jewry and the Struggle for Civil Rights 1954-1965*. The book provides an interesting discussion of an extremely important chapter in the history of the civil rights movement and attempts to dispel the myths and misunderstandings surrounding the Black-Jewish relationship. A recipient of the Citizens Laureate Award of the University of Albany Foundation, Professor Berk has been a consultant to the Wiesenthal Holocaust Center in Los Angeles, has written articles on Russian and Jewish history, anti-Semitism, and the Middle East and has lectured on throughout the United States and Canada including such distinguished colleges and universities as Princeton, Vanderbilt, The University of Texas at Austin and Williams College.

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/gNWiQkm_Txm2WQXi05WPCQ#/registration

From Challah to the Table – Jewish Food as Cultural Memory

Thursday, April 28, 1:00 pm ET (online)

This engaging talk explores challah not simply as bread, but as a powerful symbol of Jewish memory, identity, and connection across time and place. Blending personal childhood stories with ancient texts, global Jewish history, contemporary art, and moving examples from communities around the world, the presentation shows how food, and challah in particular, becomes a living bridge between generations, between diaspora and homeland, and between cherished tradition and creative renewal.

Merav Oren is a multidisciplinary entrepreneur, cultural curator, and a leading voice in Israel's culinary-cultural world. A veteran of the FoodTech and AgriTech sectors, she has spent more than 30 years building ventures at the intersection of food, innovation, design, and community. She is the Founder and CEO of FOODISH, ANU Museum of the Jewish People's culinary initiative, and now leads FOODISH Global, using food as a powerful medium for Jewish memory, identity, and community.

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/sYZRkQJ_Tu-Psotn5EtuUg#/registration

COMMUNITY PARTNER PROGRAMS

Nachum Kaplan Discussing China, Israel and Antisemitism

Sunday, April 26, 8:00 pm ET

(online program presented by the Massachusetts Antisemitism Task Force)

In honor of #EndJew Hatred Day, MAST presents:

Nachum Kaplan

DISCUSSING
CHINA, ISRAEL,
& ANTISEMITISM

APRIL 26, 2026 ZOOM 8 PM EDT

Please
press here
to register

MORAL
CLARITY

Nachum Kaplan is a journalist, commentator and media strategist who has 30 years international media experience and held senior international roles at Reuters and IFR. He writes the Moral Clarity substack on Israel and Jewish matters which is read by 100,000 readers a month in 88 countries. He is also a licensed and practising psychotherapist."

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Am HaYem Cape Cod Havurah	StandWithUs- New England
Ahavat Torah Congregation-Stoughton	Temple Beth Israel-Waltham
CAEP-Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation	Temple Emanuel-Newton
Herut North America	Temple Emeth-Chestnut Hill
ICSA-The Institute for the Critical Study of Antizionism	Temple Emunah-Lexington
KTM-Kadimah-Toras Moshe Synagogue-Brighton	Temple Ner Tamid-Peabody
Mattathias Project	Walnut Street Synagogue-Chelsea
RICI-Rhode Island Coalition for Israel	

Join Nachum Kaplan for a timely conversation on China, Israel and antisemitism. Kaplan has spent 30 years working as a journalist, commentator, speaker, and C-suite media strategist to Fortune 500 companies. He has senior editorial positions and helped set the strategic direction in some of the world's leading newsrooms, including Reuters and International Financing Review and he writes a Substack

column with a readership from 87 countries.

https://allevents.in/massachusetts/zoom-event-mast-presents-nachum-kaplan-discussing-china-israel-and-antisemitism-tickets/80001351496690?aff=u1gjbz&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

In Conversation with Oren Jacobson on Public Discourse and Antisemitism

Thursday, April 30, 12:00 pm ET

(online program presented by Combined Jewish Philanthropies)

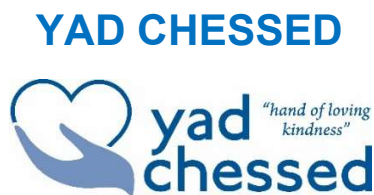
CJP's President and CEO Rabbi Marc Baker will be in conversation with Oren Jacobson, founder and CEO of Project Shema, for a thoughtful, timely conversation exploring how antisemitism operates, why rhetoric matters, and what it will take to hold the complexity a pluralistic society requires.

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/in-conversation-with-oren-jacobson-on-public-discourse-and-antisemitism-tickets-1987626253630?utm_campaign=42553167-fy26-jjl-commengagement-community-inconversation-event-orenjacobson&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-Pck09-RGvMo_WdUXH7RmSHd-rqKKKjwQLEQaQ1qzOmTQKNLEIGTINuN71lwrmWRn4w5iRRBRDdTvaYujm43rBD5DGaUSiIUOnLiho6aZ3ogmjQ&hsmi=414327416&utm_content=414327416&utm_source=hs_email

SHUL TOURS

If you live in the Boston area and have never seen our historic shul, or haven't visited in a while, or if you plan to visit the area, we welcome you to see our shul in person! Tour our historic synagogue that was built in 1909 and was added to the National Register of Historic Place in 1993. Come see our 1,109-seat sanctuary with its painted ceiling and wall frescoes, murals and carved wood Aron Kodesh. Check out our collection of Judaica, artwork, photos, documents, books, posters and plaques that come from our synagogue, synagogues in Chelsea that have closed along with fraternal, social and educational organizations from Chelsea and elsewhere in Greater Boston. Please follow the link below for more information and to request Individual/Family or Group tours.

<https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/visit/>



Yad Chessed helps Jewish individuals and families who struggle with financial hardship pay their bills and buy food. As a social services agency rooted in the Jewish values of kindness (chessed) and charity (tzedakah), they are committed to helping those in need navigate a path toward financial stability while preserving their privacy and dignity. They provide emergency financial assistance, grocery gift cards and compassionate advice for those trying to make ends meet. Hundreds of families and individuals throughout the state rely on Yad Chessed to provide for their essentials, and even at times, a Jewish burial for a loved one. Members of our community, as well as others in the Jewish community, who need assistance may contact Yad Chessed by phone at 781-487-2693 or by Email at intake@yadchessed.org for a confidential conversation. Questions can be directed to info@yadchessed.org.

Support Yad Chessed - <https://givebutter.com/yadchessed>

GIVING

Please visit our Giving page to send tributes, recognize yahrzeits and make other general donations to support the Walnut Street Synagogue and help us preserve, maintain and secure our 116-year-old building. Donations can be made online or through the mail. Tributes and other donations may be recognized on our Giving Page unless otherwise requested.

<https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/giving/>

VISIT US ONLINE

Website

<https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/>

Facebook Page - Walnut Street Synagogue

<https://www.facebook.com/WalnutStreetSynagogue>

Facebook Group - Jews of Chelsea, MA Then and Now

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChelseaJews>

The Walnut Street Synagogue is the center for Jewish history, education and culture serving Chelsea, Greater Boston and beyond and is the historic home of Congregation Agudas Sholom. (added to National Register of Historic Places in 1993)



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