



THE SHALOM CENTER PRESENTS: INTERFAITH FREEDOM SEDER +50

PHILADELPHIA, PA ♦ SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 2019

With Leadership by:

- ◆ **Rev. William Barber & Rev. Liz Theoharis**
Poor People's Campaign
- ◆ **Ana Maria Archila** who confronted Jeff Flake in the elevator
- ◆ **Dr. Debbie Almontaser**
founder, first Arabic-language public school in NYC
- ◆ **Rabbi Arthur Waskow**
creator, original Freedom Seder in 1969 and founder, the Shalom Center

Addressing:

- ◆ **Four Cups of the Seder**
Racism
Militarism
Materialism
Sexism

And Renewing

- ◆ **Martin Luther King's Commitment to Continuing Vigorous Action**
around the Country

MASJIDULLAH, 7433 LIMEKILN PIKE, PHILADELPHIA, PA



Reb Arthur Waskow has been
building a legacy of wisdom
for over 60 years.

He is a potent and effective Jewish leader.

He leads us in learning
He leads us in ideas
He leads us in action
all toward justice for our Earth and all people on it.

May he be blessed to continue to build this legacy
and bring people of good faith together
for many years to come.

Stephen Pepper and Linda Tobin

Welcome



We are grateful for the hospitality of Masjidullah Inc., an organization which promotes faith, community, and family with the guidance provided by Al-Islam in accordance with the dictates of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him).

This Islamically-based Community Center serves the entire community through committees who offer a number of services that can assist not only their membership but the neighboring communities as well. Programmatic areas are to promote & assist in the social & religious welfare of all people; teach & propagate the religion of Al-Islam in accordance with the clear dictates of the Holy Qur'an & the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him); and support the purity of the constitution of the United States of America & the laws of the State of Pennsylvania.

Leaving Egypt: Exodus Times Again



On behalf of The Shalom Center and all those who take part in its work, I welcome you to this great freedom gathering, joining our voices, hearts, and spirits in pursuit of justice, love, and liberation. The Passover Seder is a powerful spiritual practice because it calls each generation to remember how the people were freed from slavery by reenacting the freedom struggle. The tradition tells us the holiday's meaning is fulfilled if we actually feel as if we were there.

In these times, few of us need to be persuaded of the importance of remembering and being inspired by our ancestors' journey to liberation. But we all need the experience of freedom to sustain us as we release the bondage of racism, militarism, materialism, and sexism. As the work of The Shalom Center reflects, we need to have that experience together: Jews, Muslims, Christians, people of all faiths.

"Leaving Egypt" — abandoning the familiar to escape oppression and seek a better life — is a powerful spiritual symbol for all the Abrahamic faiths.

Years ago, I worked with a group in Appalachia. We did not share a faith, but we faced a challenge embedded in both our traditions: the fear of letting go of the familiar and risking the unknown. It was tough to find the ordinary words, but everyone could relate to the idea of leaving Egypt, and to the story of Nachshon ben Amminadav. It is said that despite Moses' assurances, no one had the faith to enter the Red Sea until brave Nachshon stepped up. He walked into the water until it reached his nose, and only then did the sea part, allowing the escaped slaves to cross on dry land, and drowning the oppressors in pursuit.

Not long ago my friend Rabbi Shefa Gold read me a story from her new book recounting a time she felt stuck in a bad situation. An urgent message from an inner voice guided her to a restaurant where she overheard three strangers in an adjacent booth offer the wise counsel she'd been craving: "Sometimes you just have to leave Egypt," they said.

So we know the importance of the leaving the place of oppression. But how about when? One puzzle in the Exodus story is why the escaped slaves from Egypt wandered for forty years in the wilderness before being permitted to enter the promised land of milk and honey. There is a widely accepted moral to the story, which is that the generations born into slavery and cruelly trained to submit to illegitimate authority had to die out before their children could live as free human beings.

The Exodus story also contains a pivot-point where everything could have

gone differently, when wandering in the wilderness could have been cut short. Numbers 13–14 tells of spies being sent to scope out the land. They return terrified, reporting that the land is occupied by giants, "and we looked like grasshoppers to ourselves, and so we must have looked to them."

This is the archetypal example of internalization of the oppressor, the process whereby we inflate others' power, adopting their diminished, disempowered view of ourselves, accepting without a struggle the heavy mantle of powerlessness.

This is a key story in the Quran as well, in which the promised land is forbidden the people for forty years, dooming them to wander in distraction as their fear overwhelmed their faith.

They said: "O Musa (Moses)! In it (this holy land) are a people of great strength, and we shall never enter it, till they leave it; when they leave, then we will enter." (Ch 5:20 Quran)

In a time in which fear and hatred are cultivated in high places, in which oppressors want us to surrender our power, the act of sitting together, breaking bread, and remembering freedom expresses courage and hope. It reminds us that every person can be Nachshon, triggering a sea-change in this country. Whether you are joining us in Philadelphia or are supporting this holy work from another community, thank you for being here with us tonight.

Arlene Goldbard
President, The Shalom Center

T H A N K Y O U

To all those who offered their time and talent to make this FreedomSeder +50 possible:

Rabbi Phyllis Berman – Event Chair

Viv Hawkins – Shalom Center Program Coordinator

Terri Burgin, Pele IrgangLaden – Event Organizers

Lizzie Horne, Alanna Klein – Ira Silverman Interns

Rabbi Phyllis Berman, Bob Brand, Lizzie Horne, Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, Rabbi Margot Stein, Rabbi Arthur Waskow – Program Planners

Jim Gerhard – Program booklet designer

Ron Goldwyn – Media outreach

Eleanor Seif – Photographer

Ilana Trachtman – Filmmaker

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Interfaith Freedom Seder +50

Today we are living in the midst of a national and a planetary crisis that echoes the ancient struggle of the ancient Israelites to free themselves from slavery to Pharaoh. Our crisis echoes also the crisis half a century ago of the struggle against racism and war – for freedom and justice, peace and nonviolence – that came to a bloody climax with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

We gather here for this Interfaith Freedom Seder + 50 not to commemorate what those past struggles did but to do anew what they did – struggle to create a new future.

For 3000 years, ancient Israelites and their Jewish descendants have each year, at the full moon of the month of spring, remembered and renewed that ancient liberation movement through the Passover Seder. It is a sacred ritual meal, framed by the Telling (in Hebrew, Haggadah) of the story of the ancient liberation of the children of Israel from slavery to Pharaoh in *Mitzrayyim*, the Hebrew for the “Tight and Narrow Place” – the Hebrew name for ancient Egypt.

The meal includes several ritual foods – among them a bitter herb in memory of the bitterness of slavery and Matzah, the unleavened bread that the runaway slaves baked and ate on the night of Exodus. Unleavened because there was no time to wait for the dough to rise. The matzah embodies what a half-century ago Dr. King called “the fierce urgency of Now.”

For all those centuries, the Passover Seder celebrated only moments of Jewish liberation. Fifty years ago, on April 4, 1969, for the first time in all those 3,000 years, thousands of people of faith, Jews and Christians, Black and white, celebrated a “Freedom Seder” that wove together the Jewish liberation struggle with other struggles for freedom – especially Black America’s struggle against racism.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow wrote the first Freedom Seder because he was possessed by the gripping memory of the murder of Dr. King just a week before Passover 1968, and by the gripping memory of the military occupation of Washington, D.C., by the U.S. Army the day after Dr. King’s death – sent to put down an uprising of the grief-stricken, outraged Black community. “Pharaoh’s army,” it felt to Waskow at the time.

The next year, on the first anniversary of Dr. King’s death, the Freedom Seder that Rabbi Waskow wrote was held in the basement of a Black church in Washington, with 800 people – about half Jewish, the rest Black and white Christians. It won a broad audience across the country.



Fifty years later, we are in crisis again, facing four aspects of tyranny: the onslaught of racism, hatred of foreigners, and religious bigotry; of militarism at home and overseas; of worsening poverty and overweening materialistic greed that extends even to wrecking all Earth for the sake of hyperprofits; and sexism – official and unofficial efforts to subjugate women and LGBTQ+ communities. Our challenge to these tyrannies carries Dr. King’s clarity, his courage, his commitment into *new* worlds of freedom, bringing to birth the Beloved Community we all call for.

Five nationally known leaders of progressive change in America are among leaders of this Seder: Rev. William Barber and Rev. Liz Theoharis, co-chairs of the Poor People’s Campaign; Ana Maria Archila, who leads the Center for Popular Democracy and who challenged Senator Flake in the famous elevator in the US Capitol over the choice of a Supreme Court Justice who had abused women; Debbie Almontaser, a leader in the struggle against Islamophobia and for the celebration of Arab and Muslim cultures among the multicolored threads of American society; and Rabbi Arthur Waskow, author of the original Freedom Seder and founder/ director of The Shalom Center. ■

Order of Seder

Music by The Children of Adam Band from Masjidullah, our hosts

Welcome – Rabbi Phyllis Berman

Four Questions: *Ma Nishtana Ha Laila Ha-Zeh Mi Kol HaLailot?* Why is this night different from all other nights?

1. On this night we share our joy and love of one another and for the natural world.
2. On this night we share our pain and sorrow for the sufferings of each other and the Earth.
3. On this night we open our eyes to new ways of seeing what's true.
4. On this night we define our commitment to act for justice, peace, and healing.

Joy: *Together we recite*

On this night we share our joy and love of one another and for the natural world.

Listen for instructions to share with a partner.

Charoset – pass around silently and taste this sweet food made of apples, nuts, grape juice, and spices reminding us of the sweetness of life as music plays.

Pain and Sorrow: *Together we recite:*

On this night we share our pain and sorrow for the sufferings of each other and the earth.

∓ RACISM (including systemic oppression of African-American, Latinx, and Native communities in education, employment, the “justice” system from police to courts to prisons, and in voter suppression; religious bigotry, Islamophobia, Antisemitism, anti-immigrant hatred) – Debbie Almontaser

Some Plagues of Racism

- Unequal education funding in public schools and colleges – Jessica Way
- Antisemitism – Rabbi Shawn Zevit

Sharing the Pain of Racism: *listen for instructions*

All together, we recite these words in English over the first cup of grape juice as we commit ourselves to end racism:

**Blessed are You, Breath of Life, Our G!d by whatever Name we call You,
Who brings forth the fruit of the vine.**

Drink from the cup.

Music by Rabbi Shawn Zevit

∓ MILITARISM (including gun violence, ICE, border patrols, militarization of police, vast sums spent on new wave of extremely dangerous nuclear weapons) – Rabbi Arthur Waskow

Some Plagues of Militarism:

- Gun violence – Chantay Love

Bitter Herb – pass around silently and taste the horse radish reminding us of the bitter sharpness of life as music plays and we refill our cups with grape juice.

All together, we recite these words in Hebrew over the second cup of grape juice as we commit ourselves to end militarism:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו רוח העולם
בורא פרי הגפן

Baruch Ata Yah Eloheynu Ru-Ach Ha-Olam Boray P’ri Ha-Gafen.

Drink from the cup.

Music by Hazzan Jack Kessler

∓ MATERIALISM (including asthma caused by environmental racism, opioid epidemic, homelessness, gulf between the hyperwealthy and the rest of us, planetary danger of climate chaos imposed by greed of Corporate Carbon Pharaohs) – Rev. Liz Theoharis

Some Plagues of Materialism:

- Environmental racism – Rev. Greg Holston

Sharing the pain of Militarism and Materialism: *listen for instructions*

All together, we recite these words in Arabic as we commit ourselves to end materialism:

تبارك الرب الهنا الرحيم خالق ثمرة
الكرمة

Tabaarakar Rabb, Ilaahunaar Raheem, Khaaliqul Thamaratul Kerma

Drink from the cup.

⚡ SEXISM (including sexual harassment, molestation, rape, violence against LGBTQ and Trans folks, gender inequality in pay and roles) — Ana Maria Archila

Some Plagues of Sexism:

- Attacking the LGBTQ community — Chris Bolden-Newson

All together, we recite these words in Spanish as we commit ourselves to end sexism:

Bendito Seas, aliento de la vida, nuestro dios, quien es la fuente del fruto de la vina.

Drink from the cup.

Music by Rev. Rhetta Morgan

We recite together:

On this night we open our eyes to new ways of seeing what's true.

On this night we define our commitment to act for justice, peace, and healing.

PROPHETIC CHARGE (including seeing with new eyes the truth of the world around us; "fusion politics" and charge to prophetic action) — Rev. William Barber

All silently write self-addressed postcard saying what one action you commit to taking in the next week in response to all you've heard and felt tonight; leave the card on table for us to mail later to everyone as a reminder of the commitment and covenant among us.

Everyone takes a piece of matzah – the "unleavened bread" baked during the ancient Exodus in great haste, with no time to let the bread rise – symbolizing and embodying what Dr. Martin Luther King called "the fierce urgency of NOW." The inspiration of a community to act urgently and together turned this matzah from the bread of the poor and oppressed into the bread of freedom.

Everyone lifts the matzah and recites:

**Blessed are You, Breath of Life, Our G!d by whatever Name we call You,
Who brings forth bread from the earth.**

Together, we eat this bread of freedom.

Sing along with Rev. Rhetta Morgan "Go Down Moses" [lyrics opposite]

All call out together:

Next year in a world of freedom!

Go Down Moses

When Israel was in Egypt's land, Let My people go;
Oppressed so hard they could not stand, Let My people go;
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharaoh: Let My people go!

As Israel stood by the water-side, Let My people go;
At God's command it did divide, Let My people go.
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharaoh: Let My people go!

When they had reached the other shore, Let My people go;
They sang the song of freedom o'er, Let My people go.
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt's land,
Tell old Pharaoh: Let My people go!

Oh, set all Earth from bondage free, Let all My peoples go;
And let all life be free to be, Let air and water flow.
Rise up, Yes, rise up – No longer down in every land,
Tell ALL Pharaohs: Let My Creation grow!

As we live here in America, Set our people free!
In all our colors we Resist, from Sea to shining Sea!
Rise up, O People, Rise up all across our Land.
Tell new Pharaohs, your oppressions will not stand!

Moving Always Forward – Never Turning Back

Do you remember those primitive machines that fired tennis ball after tennis ball at a gutsy, weary newby who learned to volley back? For two years and more, the White House has been firing this way into our public, our country, our People, even into the Mother Earth that feeds and breathes us.

But it is firing not tennis balls but hand grenades.

Day after day, week after week, these hand grenades are exploding in our children, our forests, our oceans, our women’s medical centers; into desperate families on our borders who are seeking asylum from uncontrollable violence in their home countries; into our streets where Driving While Black turns lethal.

Instead of weakening under this unremitting fire, We the People have grown stronger, more adept, more courageous.

For much of the last six months, The Shalom Center has taken up some intensely urgent and passionate issues resulting from the constant firing of these White House hand grenades. We have demonstrated at a children’s prison near El Paso and then got arrested blocking the offices of ICE; we have challenged and picketed a corrupt EPA chief who turned the Environmental Protection Agency into the Earth Poisoning Atrocity; we worked to prevent confirmation of a right-wing extremist, misogynist nominee to the Supreme Court, including getting arrested at the office of a Senator; we spoke at demonstrations against an anti-Constitutional “emergency decree” and led the chant, “We Have No King!”

We have invoked the memory of Pharaohs and of the Exodus from slavery, as we worked closely in and with the Poor Peoples Campaign to challenge the Corporate Pharaohs of today. We have looked with new eyes at the biblical tradition and shared fresh wisdom that arises from it. We have planned the Interfaith Freedom Seder + 50.

Now we are returning our focus to the most dangerous tyranny of our time, the Corporate Carbon Pharaohs, who are burning our Earth – our Mother and our Home – for the sake of Hyper-Profits for those who are already Hyper-Wealthy. There are four specific paths we intend to walk, to heal Earth into eco-sanity and human communities into eco-social justice;

1. Persuading and assisting religious congregations to Move Our Money/ Protect Our Planet (MOM/POP); moving money out of banks that invest in burning the world into banks and credit unions that will invest in local

neighborhoods and people. Our work has already inspired the MOM/POP decision of the first synagogue to do this; much more needs to happen. See <https://theshalomcenter.org/content/one-synagogue-divests-carbon-pharaoh-bank>

2. Persuading and assisting religious congregations to become seeds of neighborhood or congregational Solar Energy Co-ops. The Shalom Center sparked the creation of the Northwest Philadelphia Solar Co-op; there could and should be thousands of such efforts. See <https://theshalomcenter.org/solar-co-ops-healing-home-neighborhood-planet>
3. Persuading religious communities at levels from local congregations to nation-wide denominations to support the basic approach of the Green New Deal. The House and Senate resolutions that describe it are broad sketches, not yet detailed blueprints. So much remains to be worked out. Yet we see this effort as crucial to the survival of human civilization and perhaps of our species altogether.

We believe the Green New Deal offers by far the best chance of success in our struggle to prevent climate chaos, because it joins the struggle for social justice with the struggle for eco-sanity, and it awakens the passionate energy of the young whose lives are most threatened.

Both these aspects are rooted in our best religious and spiritual traditions. For instance, the biblical Shmita/Sabbatical Year both rhythmically releases the Earth from overwork and rhythmically releases debtors from their debts. And the last of the classical Hebrew Prophets, Malachi, ends: “I [God, the Breath of Life] will send you Elijah the Prophet to turn the hearts of the parents and the children to each other, lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction.”

AND from these roots the Green New Deal flowers with the most effective possible political energy, for it responds to all the pent-up desires in American life for well-paid working-class jobs that will be needed to build – literally build – the green renewable-energy infrastructure. It also addresses the need for a just transition from Carbon to renewable energy by affirming the need for new jobs for those now locked into Carbon industries and for special aid to depressed and isolated communities, rural and urban.

There remain three chief uncertainties about the Green New Deal:

- Does it plan for “carbon draw-down” so that a trillion tons of excess CO₂ are not left sitting in the atmosphere, scorching the Earth even if we achieve Zero new emissions? (We think it should, so long as that is not used as an excuse to ignore ongoing carbon burning.)
- Can it deal with suspicion and fear from some labor unions that any profound shake-up in the American economy will leave their workers high and dry? (The Green New Deal goes far further than any previous climate policy to assuage those fears. We think that as the vision is turned into specific policy, legislators will need to face down the entrenched power of corporate wealth so as to make sure that workers can move well into the new economy. Move we must.)

- Can the Green New Deal and its emphasis on governmental action co-exist with encouraging the market to move swiftly to renewable energy by taxing carbon and remitting the Federal income from those taxes to the public?
4. Training activists of varied religious communities and traditions to draw on their distinctive wisdoms – their prayers, their stories and their sacred texts, their festivals and foods, their ceremonies – to awaken activist commitment to heal the world from climate crisis.

To take on these tasks we will need the ideas, the organizing efforts, and the money of our network of supporters. We ask you to join with us in this sacred work. Let us turn the hearts of the Elders and the Youth toward each other, bringing new life and energy into our varied religious, spiritual, and ethical communities, and renewing a planet, a climate, as life-giving for our grandchildren as it was for our grandparents!

With blessings of shalom, salaam, paz, peace – Arthur
Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director, The Shalom Center

The Shalom Center: Spiritual Roots, Prophetic Action

The Shalom Center (founded 1983) seeks to be a prophetic voice in Jewish, multireligious, and American life.

Our goal is to help create a transformed world of peace, justice, community, healing for the earth, and respect for the interconnectedness of all life. Toward that end, we weave together the wisdom forged in the social, political, and spiritual struggles of the last half-century; the human experience of our own day and the emerging generations of activists; and such Jewish spiritual tools and skills as sacred texts, midrash, and ritual.

We unite vigorous nonviolent social action with creative ritual and celebration. We act as a seedbed, to sow our own values where they can fruitfully grow. We use ourselves as nimble tugboats to move larger, slower institutions in new directions. We look beneath specific issues (like the climate crisis) to the power configurations behind them.

Dear Arthur: I have valued your voice and indomitable spirit through many protracted late night anti-war meetings of the sixties, lengthy discussions about Palestine/Israel, standing in all-night January vigils at City Hall singing, “Free Nelson Mandela” and, in recent days, your unrelenting witness against the Trump agenda.

You have always demonstrated the capacity, as one whose life is measured against the plumb line of holy texts, to carry on a lovers’ quarrel with our government while never allowing this process to slide into a grudge match. Your witness is what gives this celebration of the Freedom Seder a breadth and depth beyond words.

Love,
 Dick Fernandez



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 The Shalom Center, 6711 Lincoln Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19119.
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 PASSOVER II \$18 Wed Apr 10, 2019 7-9pm Eastern time
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Tonight's Participants



The Reverend William J. Barber, II is a pastor and social justice advocate building a broad-based grassroots movement, grounded in the moral tenets of faith-based communities and the constitution, to confront systemic racism, poverty, environmental devastation, the war economy and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism in America today. As pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina (since 1993) and president of the North Carolina conference of the NAACP (2005–2017), Barber approaches social justice through the lens of the ethical and moral treatment of people as laid out in the Christian Bible, the Reconstruction and civil rights movements of the South, and the United States Constitution.

He is effective at building unusually inclusive fusion coalitions that are multiracial and interfaith, reaching across race, gender, age, and class lines, and dedicated to addressing poverty, inequality, and systemic racism. When his work to expand voting rights, health care, living wages, immigrant rights, public education and LGBTQ rights was thwarted by extremist state lawmakers in North Carolina, Barber began a series of “Moral Monday” rallies outside of the statehouse in Raleigh to protest laws that suppressed voter turnout, cut funding for public education and healthcare, and further disenfranchised poor white, black, First Nations, and LGBTQ communities. The Moral Mondays rallies and associated nonviolent acts of civil disobedience grew to involve tens of thousands of participants across North Carolina and spread to states across the South. The movement waged successful legal challenges to voter suppression and racial gerrymandering, winning twice at the Supreme Court.

Barber founded Repairers of the Breach, a leadership development organization, in 2014 to expand and build a national movement rooted in moral analysis, moral articulation, and moral action. In 2016 he led a moral revival tour that covered 26 states and attracted thousands. In 2017, he and colleagues launched a revival of the 1968 Poor People’s Campaign that was spearheaded by Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. and many others. Beginning with an audit of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, and the war economy in the United States since 1968, the campaign has been recast for the twenty-first century, building state and local, non-partisan fusing movements committed to shifting the moral narrative, building power, and challenging laws and policies that hurt the poor and threaten our democracy.

In 2018 the Poor People’s Campaign launched 40 days of moral, nonviolent civil disobedience in 40 states and Washington, DC, resulting in over 5000 acts of simultaneous civil disobedience in 36 state capitols and the US Capitol.

Merging moral and activist traditions, Barber is providing a faith-based framework for action that strengthens civic engagement and inspires the country to imagine a more humane society.

William Barber received a B.A. (1985) from North Carolina Central University, an M.Div. (1989) from Duke University, and a D.Min. (2003) from Drew University. He has also received seven Honorary Doctorates. From 2006 to 2017, Barber was president of the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP and has been a member of the national board of the NAACP since 2005. He is also a distinguished visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary. Barber’s publications include the co-authored books *Forward Together: A Moral Message for the Nation* (2014), *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement* (2016), and *Revive Us Again: Vision and Action in Moral Organizing* (2018), and he is a contributing op-ed writer for the *New York Times*, CNN, MSNBC and the *Washington Post*. Barber is also a 2018 MacArthur Fellow, 2018 Tar Heel of the Year, an Auburn Seminary Senior Fellow and holds the Visiting Social Justice Chair at St. John’s University.

The Reverend Dr. Liz Theoharis is an ordained minister with the Presbyterian Church, the director of the Kairos Center for Rights, Religions, and Social Justice at Union Theological Seminary and the co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. She has spent the past two decades organizing amongst the poor and dispossessed in the United States. She has led and won major economic and racial justice campaigns across the country, organized hundreds of trainings and bible studies with grassroots leaders, written in major national and international publications and recently published *Always with Us?: What Jesus Really Said about the Poor* and *Revive Us Again: Vision and Action in Moral Organizing*.



In 2018, alongside the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber, Theoharis helped to launch the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. Over the coming years, the campaign will organize poor people across race, religion, geography, political party and other so-called lines of division to fuel a moral revolution of values in the country. Theoharis has been recognized for her work by many national bodies, including the Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn for Peace, the New York Council on American-Islamic Relations and the 2018 *Politico Magazine* Top 50 list of “thinkers, doers and visionaries who are driving American politics and policy.”

Rabbi Arthur Waskow received the Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of Wisconsin (Madison) in 1963. During the period from 1959 to 1982, he worked as a legislative assistant on Capitol Hill and then as a policy analyst and activist at the Institute for Policy Studies and the Public Resource Center. During that period he wrote *From Race Riot to Sit-in* and *The Limits of Defense*, as well as five other books on U.S. public policy, and was a leader in the movement to end the U.S. war against Vietnam. He and Marc Raskin were co-authors of the “Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority.”



Since writing the original *Freedom Seder* in 1969, he has been one of the creators and leaders of Jewish renewal. In 1983, he founded and has since been director of The Shalom Center <theshalomcenter.org> – a prophetic voice in Jewish, multireligious, and American life that draws on Jewish and other spiritual and religious teachings to work for justice, peace, and the healing of our wounded Earth.

In 1996 Rabbi Waskow was named by the United Nations one of forty “Wisdom Keepers” – religious and intellectual leaders from all over the world who met with the Habitat II conference in Istanbul. In 2005, he was named one of the “Forward Fifty” by the *Forward*, a leading American Jewish newspaper. In 2007, *Newsweek* named him one of America’s fifty most influential rabbis. For his lifetime of Torah-rooted work for eco-social justice, he was in 2017 granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

Waskow’s 24 books include *Seasons of Our Joy* on the Jewish festival cycle; *Godwrestling – Round 2* on new interpretations of Torah; and *Down-to-Earth Judaism: Food, Sex, Money, & the Rest of Life*.

He and Rabbi Phyllis Berman wrote *Freedom Journeys: The Tale of Exodus and Wilderness Across Millennia* (Jewish Lights, 2011), a midrashic reexamination of those stories in the light of the present world crisis of top-down pharaonic power, planetary plagues, and efforts to create new forms of shared community.

He and Berman were co-authors, along with Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, and Sufi Murshid Saadi Shakur Chisti, of *The Tent Of Abraham: Stories of Hope and Peace for Jews, Christians, & Muslims* (Beacon, 2006). The book emerged from an ongoing dialogue-and-action group of Jews, Christians, and Muslims called “The Tent of Abraham, Hagar, & Sarah” that was initiated by The Shalom Center. Its sessions were facilitated by Rabbi Berman.

The two also co-authored *A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven: The Jewish Life-Spiral as a Spiritual Path* (Farrar Straus & Giroux) and *Tales of Tikkun: New Jewish Stories to Heal the Wounded World*. (Rowman & Littlefield).

Rabbi Waskow is now leading The Shalom Center’s campaign to combat the danger of global climate crisis, involving religious communities in work to end global scorching and prevent climate chaos. He has edited two major anthologies on Jewish ecological thought, published by Jewish Lights and by the Jewish Publication Society.

In 2002 he joined in founding Rabbis for Human Rights/North America (now Truah) as secretary of its Board and steering committee, and was instrumental in urging it to work on human rights issues in the U.S. (especially torture) as well as supporting RHR /Israel’s work on human rights in Israel and Palestine.

He taught at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College from 1982 till 1989; in 2008 at the Hebrew

Union College in N.Y.C. he taught the first class on eco-Judaism ever given at any rabbinical seminary; and he has taught as a Visiting Professor in the departments of religion at Swarthmore, Vassar, Temple University, and Drew University.

He has been arrested about 26 times for protests against racial segregation, the oppression of Soviet Jews, the Vietnam and Iraq wars, and the lack of U.S. governmental action on the climate crisis.



Dr. Debbie Almontaser is an internationally recognized, award-winning educator, entrepreneur, speaker and authority on cross-cultural understanding. She is the Founder and CEO of Bridging Cultures Group Inc., a for-profit business that provides professional development and coaching for companies, universities, firms, and K-12 education personnel. Her most recent book is *Leading While Muslim*.

Dr. Almontaser was the founding and former principal of the Khalil Gibran International Academy in Brooklyn, N.Y., the first Arabic-language public school in the USA. A twenty-five-year veteran of the NYC Public School System, she taught special education, inclusion, trained teachers in literacy, and served as a multicultural specialist and diversity advisor.

Dr. Almontaser was a featured speaker at the 2016 National Democratic Convention and has been featured on the front page of the *New York Times* and profiled in *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *NY1* and the *Daily News*.

Since September 11, Dr. Almontaser and her family have opened their home to people from across the country to have a social exchange that lends itself to developing an understanding of Arabs and Muslims in New York City. She also organized numerous interfaith and cultural events to develop cross-cultural understanding across New York City, such as the Children of Abraham Peace Walk. This work has led to travel in order to share her peace-building work nationally and internationally in Canada, Russia, Jamaica, Costa Rica, Denmark, Netherlands, Qatar, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kazakhstan, and Portugal.



Ana María Archila emigrated to the U.S. from Colombia at the age of 17 and has become a leading voice for racial justice, economic justice and immigrant rights in New York and nationally, first as co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York (MRNY), and now as co-Executive Director of the Center for Popular Democracy (CPD).

During Ana María's 13 years at MRNY and its predecessor organization, the Latin American Integration Center, Ana María helped build a build the organization into a powerful force for change in New York and nationally. The 16,000+ members of Make the Road New York, mostly working class Latino immigrants, have led some of the most transformative victories for low-income New Yorkers over the last decade: With their determination and strong advocacy, members of MRNY have helped put millions of dollars in the pockets of low-wage workers by winning increases to the minimum wage, paid sick days, and strong protections from wage-theft; and they have led the ambitious campaigns to win public policies that make New York City one of the leading Sanctuary Cities in the country. By organizing in neighborhoods across New York City and Long Island, MRNY members are bringing the experiences of immigrants to the forefront of the public debate and are shaping public policy on housing, education, health care, policing, civil rights and more.

In 2014, Ana María stepped into a new role as Co-Executive Director at the Center for Popular Democracy, and helped build it into one of the largest community organizing networks in the country, with 45 affiliate organizations in 32 states. CPD and its affiliates represent a powerful multi-racial alliance of immigrants, African Americans and white working class communities working to advance an agenda of racial and economic justice, and a vibrant democracy. CPD and its affiliates have played a major role in the national movement to raise the minimum wage and win family-sustaining jobs, resulting in raises for close to 11 million workers. Working with local progressive elected officials, the CPD network has helped elevate the role of cities as places for policy innovation that advances immigrant rights, workplace justice, and economic opportunity for communities of color.

As an activist in the struggle to prevent the 2018 confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, Ana María confronted Senator Jeff Flake in a U.S. Capitol elevator.

Participating Musicians

Children of Adam offer "PMB-Positive Message Bearing music. Their hybrid of original instrumental and vocal music with "World Music" flavoring, multi-lingual blend of Jazz, R&B, African, Latin, Middle East, World Music rhythms is extremely appealing to young and old.

Their truly mesmerizing music is linked to Islamic Culture throughout West, North, East Africa, Middle East and Europe with a twist of the American experience featuring positive, universal, self-esteem lyrics and songs. Performers: Aubrey Kemp, Daniel Theodore Harris, Jibril Abdul Jaleel, Johnny Walker, Leon Schley, Roberto Rashid, Saantis Davis, Sahir El-Amin, Sultana Arifa, Baba Kenya. Contact them at: <http://imagesofthemotheland.strikingly.com/> <https://www.facebook.com/ChildrenOfAdamBand/> Email: imagesofthemotheland@yahoo.com (215) 848-3651 or (267) 235-7310



Hazzan Jack Kessler is a devotee of Jewish spiritual music. He directs, arranges and composes original music for, and is vocalist for, two Jewish touring ensembles: Atzilut: Concerts For Peace and Klingon Klez. Atzilut features Arab and Jewish musicians in concert together to make a powerful statement for peace through shared music. Klingon Klez continues the 500-year-old tradition of Eastern European Jewish celebration music of osmosis with surrounding cultures including Balkan, Gypsy, and American influences like jazz, dixieland, and funk. He directs the Cantorial program of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal (www.aleph.org), and teaches voice and nusach – the traditional Jewish melodies of prayer – for the prize-winning Davvenen Leadership Training Institute (www.dlti.org), an intensive residential program in the high art of Jewish prayer.



Reverend Rhetta Morgan is an interfaith minister, musician, activist, and visionary. Her work encompasses spirituality, activism and creativity, contributing to transformation towards a more just community and world. Rev. Rhetta was an international professional singer for many years before completing studies at One Spirit Interfaith Seminary in NY, becoming an ordained Interfaith minister in 2009.



Some highlights of her work:

- Founder of Ecclesia Spirit, an inclusive, interfaith spiritual community, which has met monthly for the past seven years.
- Founder of the While We Wait Project. Here she provides spiritual and emotional support to loved ones of incarcerated individuals. A Leeway Art for Change grant sponsors this project.
- Facilitator of conversations on race and healing, including with the Interfaith Peace Walk. She is also a facilitator for the Anti-Defamation League, A World of Difference Institute.

Rev. Rhetta is very active in the Philadelphia area, using music she writes and sings to inspire and heal. Alongside ministerial work at Ecclesia, she uses her voice to create inclusive sacred space.

Rev. Rhetta is a board member of Earth Quaker Action Team, co facilitator for the Unitarian Universalist 18 month continuing education program for ministers, Beyond the Call and is featured in the movie, *Grounded While Walls Fall*, directed and produced by Zein Nakhoda

Rabbi Shawn Zevit serves as lead rabbi at Mishkan Shalom, in Philadelphia, PA, committed to the integration of meaningful spiritual living, life-long learning and acts of caring and social justice, and has spent decades consulting to and supporting congregations, organizations, social justice and sustainability initiatives in the Jewish and larger world. He is co-director with Rabbi Marcia Prager of the Davvenen Leader's Training Institute; and with Rabbi Nadya Gross is the Associate Director for the ALEPH Hashpa'ah (Spiritual Direction) training program. He is also a liturgical recording and performing artist and is one of the founders of the progressive Jewish men's organization www.menschwork.org; and author of "Offerings of the Heart: Money and Values in Faith Community" and numerous publications for spiritual life. Rabbi Zevit is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and also has personal ordination from Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal.



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Neil Comess-Daniels in Los Angeles, CA
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Brian Field in Denver, CO
Sarah Freudenberger in Boynton Beach, FL
Mary Gilbert in Arlington, MA
Judith Goldschmidt in Courtenay, BC
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Deborah Peikes in Lansdale, PA
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*This list includes people who were registered as of March 7, 2019, our cutoff of tribute book publication.



Reconstructionist RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION

Hazak, Hazak! Thank you for keeping us focused on the goal of freedom, equality and love of the earth.

Rabbi Seth Goldstein, President
Rabbi Elyse Wechterman, Executive Director



MARCH ON HARRISBURG

is a state-wide, non-partisan group dedicated to making corruption illegal and taking our democracy where it's never been before! We lobby, march, and use nonviolent civil disobedience to pass anti-corruption laws!

We are honored to celebrate the Freedom Seder, and to march together toward the Promised Land.



Philadelphia Neighborhood Networks

We're an independent progressive organization working for 15 years to promote issues and electoral campaigns that build democratic & community power in our city, state, and country.

We support the Shalom Center and the Freedom Seder which inspires us in the struggle for liberation and transformation of our society.

Together with our partners and allies, we continue to work for a country that provides opportunity, equality, and equity to us all.

Find out more and join us at <http://phillynn.org>



CAIR PHILADELPHIA

The Philadelphia
Chapter of the
Council on
American-Islamic
Relations

Commends The Shalom Center & Rabbi Arthur Waskow for a Half-Century of Social-Justice Activism on the Occasion of Freedom Seder + 50





At the Co-op, fresh, delicious food is just the beginning. Nourish your family. Discover local foods. Connect with others and help build a strong community. It all comes together at the Co-op.



Everyone can shop, anyone can join.
www.weaversway.coop
 Ambler • Chestnut Hill • Mt. Airy

Temple Shalom in Broomall



The congregants of Temple Shalom of Broomall are delighted to celebrate The Shalom Center's Interfaith Freedom Seder +50. We wish everyone lives which are free from plagues and full of Beloved Community.

"The task is ... to understand America biblically – not to construe the Bible Americanly."

–William Stringfellow

A half century ago, the Freedom Seder used the biblical vision to critique America and to forge a spiritual and political path for liberation, justice, and shalom. May our faith communities draw inspiration from this important moment in history as we struggle to be midwives to the Kin-dom of God in our times.

The Alternative Seminary

The Alternative Seminary is a program of biblical and theological study and reflection designed to foster an authentic biblical witness in the modern world.
www.alternativeseminary.net.

"You shall treat the stranger with kindness, and justice, for you know the soul of the stranger."

– Exodus 23:9



Celebrating Rabbi Arthur Waskow and 50 years of the Freedom Seder, an ancient act of liberation reimagined for the urgency of our times.



Listen to your Grannies...

Speak Up Against the Threat of Nuclear War

Call your Senators and Representatives
(202-224-3121).

Urge them to:

*support the policy of **NO FIRST USE** of nuclear weapons by the United States, and end the sole, unchecked authority of any President to launch a nuclear attack.



www.grannypeacebrigadephiladelphia.org
Facebook: Granny Peace Brigade Philadelphia

We are *proud to jointly support*
the 50th Anniversary of the Freedom Seder.

Together, we honor this important, intersectional moment in African American and Jewish American history, and embrace its relevance for today.



AFRICAN AMERICAN
MUSEUM IN PHILADELPHIA



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN JEWISH
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N O T E S



**"Far a shenere
up besere velt
- up land -
far ALE !"**

**"For a better and more
beautiful world
- and land - for all!"*

THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE/ARBETER RING of
Northern California (Branch #1054)

WELCOMES AND CELEBRATES our interfaith and
secular friends, April 7, 2019, on the 50th Anniversary
of the 1969 Freedom Seder!

TOGETHER WE STAND: for social, economic, and
ecological justice; for respecting the earth; and for
KEEPING LIBERTY'S FLAME ALIVE!

CONGRATULATIONS to Rabbi Arthur
Waskow, Rev. Barber, and Liz Theoharis for
organizing this engaged celebration!

For Branch info, contact:
dmscott01@yahoo.com or
<https://circle.org/northern-california/>

N O T E S

N O T E S

The 16th
Annual
Philadelphia
Interfaith Walk
for
Peace and Reconciliation



This Year's Theme:
*Seeking the
Light in All*

A Walking Dialogue Among Muslims,
Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Hindus,
Sikhs, Baha'i, Wiccans and others.

**Sunday afternoon, April 28, 2019
from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**



Stops at three Houses of Worship in Center City:
Society Hill Synagogue, Arch Street United Methodist
Church and Friends Center. Plus a pre-walk gathering
at the Al Aqsa Islamic Center.

INFORMATION →

www.InterfaithPeaceWalk.org
InterfaithPeaceWalk@gmail.com
Facebook: InterfaithPeaceWalk



P'nai Or (Faces of Light)
Jewish Renewal Congregation
in W. Mt. Airy, Philadelphia

צדק צדק תרדף

Justice! Justice pursue!

Deut. 16:20

P'nai Or honors
the SHALOM CENTER. and
the FREEDOM SEDER

Together we lift up Torah's call for liberation,
justice, peace and prosperity
for our communities and our world.
www.pnaior-philadelphia.org

**MASJIDULLAH**

extends peace and blessings to our family
at the Shalom Center and congratulates
you on the Interfaith Freedom Seder!

May good health, love, prosperity
and joy be with you all
throughout the year.

Masjidullah, Inc. is on a mission to promote the Holy Qur'an as the book of guidance for all humanity and the Life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the example for human conduct. For more details on how we serve the community, find us at 7401 Limekiln Pike, Philadelphia PA 19138 or on the web at www.masjidullah.org.