MEET THE 2020 CONGREGATION ALBERT RABBI SEARCH COMMITTEE

Rabbi Search Committee Co-Chairs

Many of you know **Charna Lefton** as a long-time member of Congregation Albert (CA) who was born and raised in Albuquerque. Charna is a life-long member of our CA family – she was named, attended Hebrew and religious school, celebrated becoming Bat Mitzvah and was confirmed at Congregation Albert. While she spent a number of years living and working in other locations, CA remained her strongest congregational connection to Judaism. She has been back in Albuquerque and an active member of CA for the past 15 years. Her professional background in executive leadership, communications, facilitation and consensus building makes her skill set an excellent fit for our CA RSC Co-Chair.

**Joe Weiss** has been in Albuquerque for about 23 years after growing up on the East Coast. He has worked for The University of New Mexico almost his entire time in New Mexico and is currently the Senior Director of Development for the Anderson School of Management at UNM. He grew up in a "Conservadox" synagogue and has been a member of CA for over 10 years, having joined when he married his wife Roxanne Turley. They have one son (Levi, 8) who attends and enjoys CA religious school.

Rabbi Search Committee Members

**Joel Berger** is originally from Toronto, Canada, and has lived in Albuquerque since high school. He works as a pediatrician in town and serves the Temple community as a mohel. He served a brief term on the Congregation Albert Board of Trustees several years ago. Both of his daughters (Elaina, 8 and April, 6) attended the CA Early Childhood Center. Joel is married to Diane Berger, who attended the CA religious school growing up. She is the founder of Kids Empowered, an advocacy group whose mission is to teach kids to recognize, prevent, and stop child abuse.
Susan Keith and her family have been members of Congregation Albert since they moved to Albuquerque twenty-six years ago. She grew up in a congregation in Memphis; and prior to moving to New Mexico, her family belonged to a congregation in Rockville, Maryland. Susan’s involvement at Congregation Albert has included being on the Board of Trustees, organizing fund raisers, and serving on the Green, Adult Education, and Scholarship committees. For several years, she was on the Commission on Social Action (CSA) of Reform Judaism which is a joint commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) and the Union for Reform Judaism (URJW) supports social action. While now retired, Susan’s professional background is in international management. She currently volunteers as a public relations specialist for Project ECHO at UNM Health Sciences. Susan’s husband, Sam Keith (also retired), was chair of the Department of Psychiatry at UNM School of Medicine for eighteen years.

Originally from New York, Michael Potok moved to Southern California in 1967, and then to Albuquerque 2005. Michael’s Jewish roots began in an Orthodox congregation in Manhattan. He later became part of a “Conservadox” congregation in Brooklyn, and finally landed in a Conservative congregation in Los Angeles. Michael left organized religion for a while, but a Chabad Rabbi brought him back into the fold. As a member of our Reform congregation and a regular Shabbat service attendee, Michael has experienced Judaism from many different traditional perspectives. Michael and his wife, Carol, have been married for more than 31 years, and have one son (Matthew, 29). He also has two daughters from a previous marriage (Tracy, 37, and Alyssa, 32). Both Michael’s wife Carol and his son are practicing Christians that support Michael in his Jewish faith. Michael owned his own tech business in California, but went back to school when he moved to Albuquerque, got his BS degree and started a new career at age 60. As the Computer Systems Administrator for Christus-St Vincent Hospital in Santa Fe, he commutes daily, but says it is a “walk in the park” compared to California commutes and traffic!
Sarah Winger was raised in Santa Fe where she and her family were active members of Temple Beth Shalom. She has always valued Jewish community and was the president of Hillel at Northern Arizona University during her undergraduate studies. Sarah serves on the Board of Directors for the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society and the Jewish Community Foundation. As a CA member, she is active in the Sisterhood, as well as the Jewish Federation of New Mexico. In her professional role, Sarah is a Clinical Director at the UNM Hospital Children’s Psychiatric Hospital. She also teaches indoor cycling classes at the JCC.

An Albuquerque native, Andy Schultz is a Director and former President of the Rodey Law Firm. He also has served as a visiting an adjunct professor at the UNM School of Law for many years. He is married to Deborah Good, a retired psychotherapist. He has been a member of the Congregation for each of its past Rabbis going all the way back David Shor.

Ex-Officio Rabbi Search Committee Member

Dale Atkinson was born in Phoenix. He enlisted in the Air Force and spent many years overseas in Europe and the Middle East. Dale graduated with his Astronautical Engineering degree from the University of Arizona, completed Officer Training School, and was sent by the Air Force to Albuquerque in 1986. At the Air Force Weapons Laboratory, Dale managed very large research and development projects for satellites and space systems. He left the military in 1990 after co-founding a local software and technology company, POD, Inc. He and his wife of 18 years, Samantha Lapin, managed POD and its over 125 employees across the US for 30 years, until they retired together in 2018. Dale joined Congregation Albert and completed gerut in May 2010. He completed his Anshei Mitzvah in March 2014 and has been on the Board of Trustees since 2015. His two grown sons, daughter-in-law and grandchildren live in the Albuquerque area.