

# GIL STEINLAUF

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## RABBI / COMMUNITY LEADER / CEO



**Nationally recognized spiritual leader who innovatively combines bold vision and grounded wisdom to steward and evolve communities and organizations. Proven achievements in transforming a major American congregation, bringing unprecedented vibrancy and prominence.**

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Extensive experience in shifting paradigms to meet 21st-century challenges and to overcome institutional inertia; proven success as a leader at a 1,500-family, 7 million-dollar yearly budget religious institution, inspiring members and stakeholders to transcend differences and to think in new ways to commit to a common purpose of spirit--all in the service of repairing the world from its brokenness, to inspire interconnectedness and action for the sake of justice and compassion.

### SELECTED ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Galvanized all levels and structures of the community around a clearly articulated **congregational vision**, designed to inspire leaders and members to imagine what doesn't yet exist, and to have the courage to experiment, to fail, and to learn and grow together.
- Strategized, led, and implemented, together with congregational leadership, the successful fifteen-million dollar **Vision of Renewal Campaign** that transformed the synagogue into a vibrant, 21st-century community facility, in keeping with new innovative congregational vision.
- Strategized and achieved significant **grassroots organizing** initiatives designed to empower new upcoming leaders and new leadership task forces and interest groups to **creatively disrupt** entrenched organizational forces, resulting in on-going innovation and growth.
- Brought congregation to national prominence as the synagogue officially representing the American Jewish Community: **The President of the United States**, the **Vice-President**, and world leaders like the **Dalai Llama** all addressed the American Jewish Community from the congregation.

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

#### ADAS ISRAEL CONGREGATION

Washington, DC

SENIOR RABBI

2008 - PRESENT

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*In an era when institutional religious affiliation across the board is rapidly decreasing, the goal was to reimagine what a vibrant major flagship congregation can become in the 21st-century. Assuming the helm of a large staff and board of directors, I introduced multiple innovative approaches to broaden and deepen the experience of connection and community. Membership and revenue increased 20% over the course of eight years. The synagogue is now a leading congregation, setting the example for synagogues across the country and world. The organization has an annual budget of \$7 million, 130 employees, and 85 governing board members.*

#### Vision Implementation

- Envisioned and oversaw the creation of a totally new, institution-wide **branding and marketing** campaign, together with a carefully curated ambiance and aesthetics mission--all designed to optimize a 360-degree experiential immersion in the look and feel of the Adas congregational vision.

**Operations / Management**

- Oversaw and implemented together with executive director the creation of a highly skilled and professionalized “**Team Adas**” of senior staff designed to work with a single focus, grounded in the congregational vision, with a mission to build up membership, implement programs of excellence, and coordinate with marketing and communications and facilities management to create a welcoming, vibrant, dynamic and warm community.
- Worked closely with the synagogue executive director, the trustees, the board of managers, the executive committee, as well as with the budget and finance and investment committees to ensure that all **budget and financial considerations**, as well as all fiduciary obligations of the synagogue were guided by the principles and values of the congregational mission and purpose.
- Supervised and mentored clergy team of rabbis and cantors, as well as other members of the senior staff, emphasizing not only work-performance and goal-setting, but seeking and achieving personal spiritual growth benchmarks, effective strategies for work/life balance, and new opportunities to expand horizons.

**Leadership Development**

- Regularly convened the board of directors, the trustees and executive committee for high-level learning sessions, trainings and workshops specifically designed to link **leadership development** with the values, wisdom and dynamics undergirding the congregational vision.

**Disruptive Innovation**

- Designed and Created the award-winning **Jewish Mindfulness Center** of Washington, a place of contemplative Jewish practice to provide authentic Jewish spiritual experience and community for the Washington DC community.
- Envisioned and implemented the **Biran Beit Midrash** and **MakomDC**, an innovative community gathering place, combing the “Third Place” philosophy of a communal safe haven together with the traditional experience of high-level deep text study, discussion and intellectual conversation.
- Stewarded the creation of **Return Again**, a radical new kind of emotionally stirring and engaging Jewish prayer experience that attracts thousands in the Washington DC region.

**Inclusion / Diversity**

- Spearheaded **radical welcoming** initiatives, integrating interfaith families, LGBTQ members, members with disabilities, singles, and members of color fully into the fabric of a congregation that hitherto had been inclusive only of conventional nuclear families.

**Community Organizing**

- Oversaw the evolution and implementation the **Adas Social Justice Initiative**, moving from standard congregational social action activities to a community-wide culture of authentic spiritual activism, local and national advocacy, and community organizing grounded in deep text-study and inspiration.

**TEMPLE ISRAEL & JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER**

Ridgewood, NJ

**HEAD RABBI**

**2001 - 2008**

*Served as spiritual leader in this 320-family congregation. Fostered community through the three traditional pillars Learning, Worship, and Acts of Lovingkindness. Introduced radically new innovative features that transformed the character of this small suburban congregation--moving from a conventional synagogue to an intellectual and cultural center in its region. The organization had an annual budget of approximately \$1 million, 35 employees, and 45 governing board members.*

**Grassroots Empowerment**

- Initiated a culture of lay-led adult education experiences: numerous classes taught by synagogue members, **Shabbat University**, **Passover University**, and spiritual autobiography sessions, **Journey of the Heart**.

**Deepening Community Bonds**

- Created a **Spirituality Task Force** whose charge is to continually find ways to deepen the personal Jewish experience for community members.
- Created a new **Lovingkindness Task Force** to galvanize the whole community into acts of giving and reaching out to one another. Its mission includes: visiting the sick trainings, meals for the bereaved, rides for the infirmed, visits to shut-ins, and support groups for various interest groups.

**Leadership  
Empowerment**

- Implemented major synagogue-wide **Strategic Planning Initiative**, where representatives of all segments of the community joined together to author a **Temple Israel Mission Statement** to focus all future programming and goals.

**CONGREGATION TIFEREETH ISRAEL**  
Columbus, OH

**ASSISTANT RABBI**

1998 - 2001

*In this large, midwestern congregation, served primarily as community builder through adult education, service leadership and outreach to young families. The organization had an annual budget of approximately \$4 million, 85 employees, and 100 governing board members.*

**High-level  
Programming**

- Program Director of **Midreshet Israel**, Congregation Tifereth Israel's extensive adult education program of traditional text-study, academic courses taught by Ohio State University professors, and innovative outreach-oriented workshops and study circles.

**Deepening  
Community Bonds**

- Spiritual leader/advisor to **Tifereth Israel Young Families Community**, the congregation's burgeoning community in Northeast Columbus. Designed and implemented many outreach programs, classes and events, and diversity education, including the **Tzafona Minyan**, a monthly Friday-night experience designed to build community among the many young families

**COMMUNITY & PASTORAL LEADERSHIP**

**Human Rights Campaign**  
Washington, DC, 2014 - present  
Religious Advisory Committee

**The Jewish Federation of  
Greater Washington**  
Washington, DC, 2010 - 2014  
Rabbinic Liaison to Board of Directors

**Jewish Board of Family and  
Children's Services**  
New York, NY, 1997-1998  
Diversity Educator

**The Jewish Theological Seminary  
of America**  
New York, NY, 2009 - present  
Chancellor's Advisory Committee

**American Jewish Committee**  
Washington, DC 2012 - 2014  
Board of Directors

**National Center for Jewish Healing**  
New York, NY, Summer, 1996  
Program Director

**Center for Learning and Leadership**  
New York, NY, 2012  
Rabbis Without Borders Fellow

**The Institute for Jewish Spirituality**  
New York, NY, 2005-2007  
Contemplative Practice Leadership

**Memorial Sloane Kettering and  
New York Hospital**  
New York, NY, Summer 1996  
Chaplain

**AWARDS & HONORS**

**2017 Outstanding Achievement Honoree**  
The D.C. Center for the LGBT Community

**Crown Fellowship Recipient**  
Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1994-1996

**Rabbi Albert Pappenheim Prize in Professional Skills**  
Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1998

**Carolyn L. Drucker Prize for Senior Independent Research**  
Princeton University, 1991

EDUCATION

**Jewish Theological Seminary of America**

New York, New York. 1992-1998. Rabbinical Program.

**Master of Arts – Rabbinic Literature/Rabbinic Ordination** May 1998.

**University of Judaism**

Los Angeles, California. 1992-1994.

**Master of Hebrew Literature – Judaic Studies** 1994.

Thesis: *Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi and the Messiah at the Gate of Rome: The Lachrymose Reading Reconsidered.*

**Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies**

Jerusalem, Israel. 1991-1992. Traditional study of Talmud, Bible, and Jewish law.

**Princeton University**

Princeton, New Jersey. 1987-1991.

**Bachelor of Arts – Near Eastern Studies** *Summa Cum Laude*, 1991.

Thesis: *Jewish Historical Awareness and Collective Memory in Pre-Modern Europe.*

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