

Rabbi Marina Yergin

Rabbinical Experience: Leadership and Management

Associate Rabbi
Assistant Rabbi

Temple Beth-El, San Antonio, Texas

2020 – Present
2015 – 2020

Strategic Management and Mentorship

- Collaborated with the Director of Philanthropy and Member Services to strategically plan revenue-generating initiatives tied to my upcoming 10-year anniversary celebration, proactively initiated conversations to increase both community involvement and financial contributions to the Youth Fund and Temple-wide campaign (October 2025).
- Provided strategic mentorship and oversight of the Director of Youth Programs and Informal Education (2015-2016, 2020-2024), which contributed to an increase in attendance and the successful launch of new programming for K-12 students.
- Proactively partnered with the Senior Rabbi to gain expertise in strategic program planning and long-term visioning, helping to determine the annual adult education theme and subsequently managed the planning and execution of nearly 20 related programs (2021-Present).
- Mentored and empowered a staff member from Social Justice Intern to Director of Programming and Social Justice, catalyzing the creation of award-winning, multigenerational programs and impactful advocacy initiatives for ages 0 to 105 (2018-2024).

Organizational Leadership and Governance

- Led a search committee of ten members, curating the team and designing a comprehensive, multi-phase hiring process that included virtual interviews and a weekend-long, on-site visit for the Director of Youth Programs position (2022).
- Contributed to long-term organizational development by advising and guiding multiple search committees for high-level leadership positions, including two Executive Directors, providing strategic input on candidate evaluation and helping to envision the ideal leadership fit for the congregation (2016-2023).
- Maintained organizational stability and strategic direction by assuming sole leadership responsibilities for two six-week clergy sabbaticals. Collaborated directly with the Board President to manage a significant leadership crisis and successfully maintained staff morale during a time of transition. Simultaneously, I managed a critical security situation from within the building to ensure the safety of our community (2021, 2022).

Social Justice Advocacy and Organizing

- Served as a CCAR official representative on the URJ's Commission on Social Action (2023-Present), providing strategic guidance and active participation in movement-wide initiatives.
- Directed the development and management of a diverse social justice portfolio, engaging hundreds of community members from age 5 and up. The initiative built key relationships with a variety of city-wide organizations and included programming tied to major cultural and social action themes (2018-present).
- Empowered and partnered with my supervisee, the Director of Social Justice, to lead a multi-faceted civic engagement and advocacy campaign. This initiative engaged over 300 congregants and included a national collaboration with the RAC to direct lobbying efforts rooted in Jewish values on issues ranging from education and women's health to voting rights (2018-present).
- Directed Temple Beth-El's engagement in the RAC's Consultation on Conscience (2017, 2019, December 2025), significantly increasing congregational attendance and advocacy.
- Presented at the 2019 URJ Biennial on "Community Organizing 201: Using Relational Outreach for Congregational Social Justice Engagement."
- Foundational member of the RAC-TX leadership team (2018-2023), contributing to statewide action planning and program development, and mentoring a supervisee who was then empowered to take over the leadership role.
- Acquired advanced community organizing strategies by completing the URJ's "Moving Justice to the Center of Your Congregation Community of Practice" (2016-2018), which served as the foundation for new congregational initiatives.
- Leveraged the above organizing principles to lead "Conversations and Coffee," a congregational listening campaign that engaged over 200 congregants, and subsequently developed "Head, Heart, Hands" (H3), a sustainable community organizing structure that empowered lay leaders (2018-2019).

Youth Program Leadership and Innovation

- Generated nearly \$16,000 in gross revenue for the Temple Youth Fund from the 2025 Purim Carnival, surpassing all fundraising goals.
- Strategically restructured the Youth Programs department, redesigning the program from a one-person role into a multi-staffed team that served nearly 200 K-12 students and 75 families with young children. Designed and implemented new operational processes for communication and registration, while managing the youth budget. Optimized staffing in the second year to increase efficiency and empower key staff members with greater responsibilities (2024-Present).
- Designed and implemented a strategic portfolio of youth educational programs, transforming traditional worship services into a more engaging, hands-on experience. This included creating a four-year rotating T'filah curriculum in collaboration with the cantor and a redesigned 8th-9th grade curriculum that includes experiential learning, such as field trips to key community landmarks (2015-Present).
- Cultivated a pipeline of future professional and lay leaders by fostering strong relationships with religious school teachers (2015-Present) and managing the *madrichim* training program (2024, 2025). My collaborative efforts and professional support resulted in key teachers being hired as Youth Group Leaders and serving on the Board of Trustees, demonstrating a long-term commitment to leadership development.
- Designed and led a decade of Confirmation retreats, creating a safe, experiential environment for teens to explore their Jewish identity, American Jewish life, and their personal relationship with God (2015-2024).
- Guided small groups of teens on high-impact advocacy trips to Washington, D.C. and Austin, Texas, empowering them to speak directly with elected officials and successfully secure support for key initiatives. This included a poignant instance when a student's testimony on their family's immigration status resulted in a referral for direct assistance from a staffer in another state (2017-Present).
- Conceived, designed, and implemented the #MitzvahQuest program (2016-Present), a multi-faceted initiative that now includes managing its dedicated website and overseeing a 2025 revamp to shift its focus to direct service and community building.
- Developed and facilitated Post-Confirmation class sessions on critical topics such as body image, Jews of color, mental health, and combating antisemitism through a collaboration with the ADL and URJ congregations.
- Delegated and coordinated all age-specific youth events, empowering Youth Group Leaders to execute over 3 annual programs and ensuring all resources and communications were in place (2024-Present).

Creative Development of Resources and Empathic Teaching for Adult Educational Initiatives

- Introduction to Judaism and conversion program
 - Designed and led the Introduction to Judaism and Conversion Program, guiding over 150 individuals on their Jewish journeys since 2015. This included managing the program's strategic evolution in 2022 by outsourcing key components to the URJ.
 - Established a featured conversion program recognized for its excellence and innovative approach to Jewish learning, including a unique component with a psychologist to enhance candidate support; the program was subsequently selected to be featured at the Gerech Seminar, an educational retreat for HUC-JIR seminary students (2023).
- Diverse Classes & Themes
 - Led a San Antonio Jewish community program with Former US Ambassador Dennis Ross, engaging over 200 attendees in a discussion on the impact of October 7th on Israel, the US, and the Middle East (2023). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0D8sRPJFwU>
 - Led diverse adult education series and classes on topics including: *Mishkan T'fillah*, *Mishkan HaNefesh*, Reform and Progressive Judaism in Israel, Jewish genealogy, death and dying, ethical misconduct in the Reform movement, Revelation in Relation to Women, Parashat- and nature-based text studies, and specific holidays.

Relational Family Engagement

- Directed community-building efforts for young families by co-leading key events and services. After recognizing families lost momentum with too many offerings, I partnered with staff to strategically restructure the programming to a more limited, high-impact schedule. This led to a significant increase in engagement, successfully fostering the creation of organic community groups (*chavurahs*) that have resulted in lasting family connections outside of the synagogue (2015-Present).
- Guided and supported the organizing and implementation of the annual "Summer of Shalom" events (2017-Present), ensuring the successful execution of diverse off-site activities that engaged hundreds of families and built community touchstones. Often served as the lead staff presence.
- Deepened connections with congregational families in informal settings by participating as a faculty member at URJ's Greene Family Camp (2016-2025) and attending Family Camp (2019).

Community and Interfaith Partnerships

- Leveraged a strategic relationship with the San Antonio Police Department and the Jewish Community Relations Council to successfully advocate for a change in programming for a city-wide interfaith event. As a result, San Antonio was one of the only cities in the nation to adjust its schedule to accommodate the Jewish community (2024).
- Represented the Jewish community as a public-facing leader and speaker at large-scale, multi-stakeholder interfaith rallies and programs. Advocated for and built solidarity with diverse communities, including Muslim (2019), AAPI (2021), police departments (2022, 2024), and forums on domestic violence (2023), successfully fostering deep relationships that strengthened community ties and mutual support.
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2709068209148036>
<https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2023/02/15/religious-leaders-across-sa-learning-about-domestic-violence-together/>
- Served as the synagogue's representative to the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) since 2019, deepening a collaborative partnership to successfully co-lead advocacy initiatives and direct service events. Leveraged this partnership to advise local school districts on sensitive issues, including opposing the adoption of a religious curriculum and challenging the hiring of chaplains as school counselors.
- Collaborated with community networks to strategically address acts of antisemitism, demonstrating the ability to manage high-stakes, nuanced situations and lead with a measured, discreet approach (Current).
- Served as a frequent speaker and representative of the San Antonio Jewish community, delivering invocations, keynote speeches, and leading panels at local governmental, higher educational, and nonprofit organizational spaces (2015-Present).
- Fostered interfaith relations by creating and facilitating programming with the Archdiocese of San Antonio, the Ismaili Jamatkhana, and Antioch Baptist Church for MLK Weekend activities (2015-Present).
- Engaged with the San Antonio Jewish community by providing programming for seniors and collaborating on numerous initiatives, including with PJLibrary and Hillel San Antonio, to foster connections and provide pastoral care (2015-Present).
- Deepened understanding among high school students regarding Judaism and its holidays and traditions while serving on panels and teaching classes, specifically at parochial schools and at my children's public and private schools (2015-present).

Professional Development, Communal Leadership, and Mentorship

Movement-wide & Communal Leadership

- Provided strategic leadership to the URJ Ethics process, serving as a powerful and unfiltered voice on the Leadership, Communications, and Training Committees. Leveraged personal experience and a "calling in" approach to advocate for systemic change and transparency in ethical misconduct cases within the Reform Movement (2021-Present).
- Influenced the development of the URJ's new ethical framework, working in close partnership with restorative justice consultants to provide a survivor-centered perspective. Demonstrated unwavering dedication to institutional accountability by continuing this advocacy beyond the initial process (2021-Present).
- Appointed Advisor for Project GEVURA (Gender-based Violence Rabbinic Awareness), a project of Shalom Bayit, contributing to the development of trauma-informed training for rabbinic seminary students (2025).
- Allocated grants for the RAC's Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus Initiative for Immigrant and Refugee Justice, reviewing congregational applications (2021-2022).
- Served on the Women's Rabbinic Network Nominating Committee, identifying and nominating future leadership (2020, 2025).

Executive & Professional Growth

- Acquired executive skills and tools in fundraising and financial management by completing a course from CCAR and Indiana University's Lake Institute on Faith and Giving (2025).
- Completed an extensive certification in Anti-Racism Training from the Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso (2020), leveraging this learning to co-create a comprehensive, public-facing Anti-Racism Educational Resource Guide for the community. The guide features a curated portfolio of educational resources on topics such as Judaism and racial justice, criminal justice reform, and child-specific learning.
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r6UKx1Vsp0FtSXVyJZnjITx5ER8-gS7dOX9terBRW0s/edit?usp=sharing>
- Completed certifications in supervision with CCAR's "Rabbi as Supervisor", youth mental health first aid, and child safety and abuse prevention, demonstrating a commitment to professional excellence and organizational well-being (2020-Present).
- Completed the Rabbi Balfour Brickner Clergy Cohort and RAC Clergy Series, focusing on using moral voices to address oppression (2022).
- Completed Honeycomb Facilitator Training, leveraging the skills to bring Jewish values to teen programming (2022).

Mentorship & Facilitation

- Mentored a rabbinic student as a CCAR Mentor, providing guidance monthly for three years (2023-2025).
- Created and facilitated an ongoing monthly interfaith clergy support group, fostering collaborative relationships under the supervision of a psychotherapist (2023-Present).
- Participated in Derekh's Clergy Writing Circle to enhance writing skills (2021).

Publications and Presentations

Scholarly Contributions

- Authored a chapter, "The Legacy of Trauma: Reckoning with the Reform Movement's Ethical Misconduct," in *The Sacred Struggle: Jewish Responses to Trauma* (CCAR Press, 2025). The chapter links my personal experience as a survivor of ethical misconduct at a URJ camp to my advocacy for institutional accountability. <https://sacredstruggle.ccarpress.org>
- Served on the CCAR Press Editorial Advisory Committee for *Inviting God In: A Guide to Jewish Prayer* (CCAR Press, 2025) which is an educational companion to the prayer book *Mishkan T'filah*. <https://invitinggodin.ccarpress.org>
- Authored a chapter, "Vayak'heil: Tzedakah: Putting Your Money Where Your Values Are," in *The Social Justice Torah Commentary* (CCAR Press, 2021). <https://socialjustice.ccarpress.org>
- Authored over 270 highly-viewed source sheets on Sefaria (2013-Present), leveraging the platform to create innovative text studies and adult education programs. <https://sefaria.org/profile/marina-yergin>

Public Voice & Advocacy

- Served as a frequent public voice in the Union for Reform Judaism Ethics work, presenting on the URJ's Very Narrow Bridge Project as a survivor of ethical misconduct and participating on "The Restorative Justice Triad" panel at the Safety Respect Equity Network Convening (2024). <https://urj.org/blog/urj-ethics-accountability-sharing-our-progress-march-2024> <https://urj.org/blog/restorative-justice-triad>
- Interviewed for the URJ blog on best practices for conversion (2022) and served as a featured voice for the National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) "Rabbis for Repro" campaign, publicly advocating for reproductive freedom by stating "Abortion bans are against my religion" (2024, 2025). The video has been widely shared and has been reposted during pivotal governmental moments focused on reproductive rights. <https://urj.org/blog/introduction-judaism-five-best-practices-try> <https://instagram.com/p/DGy9mXZMJdx/>

Content Creation & Platform Development

- Published original rituals and writings on Ritualwell (2024-2025), serving as a public resource for the community on topics of communal tragedy, natural disasters, and personal grief. <https://ritualwell.org/author/rabbiyergin/>
- Contributed to the development of Sefaria's site and source sheet builder (2020) by providing user feedback, requests, and proposed improvements as an avid platform user and beta tester.
- Chronicled my zoom officiation of a marriage for an Israeli couple with a focus on my connection to the groom from 2012 when he was part of the *mishlach* at URJ's H.S. Jacobs Camp (2023). <https://jacobscamp.org/2024/01/08/love-joy-and-hope/>

Education

Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management

- Nonprofit Management Essentials: August 2025-October 2025 (Currently Enrolled)

Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio

- Rabbinical Ordination, Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters, May 2015
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), 2013-2014

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Minneapolis, Minnesota

- Bachelor of Arts, May 2010
- Triple Major: Hebrew, Sociology, and Jewish Studies. Minor: Leadership.
- Phi Beta Kappa, Fall 2009

References provided upon request.