

The Road to Peace Medford

Full Panelists' Bios

Rabbi Brian Walt

Co-Founder, *Rabbis for Human Rights-North America*

Member, *Rabbis for Ceasefire*

Born in Apartheid South Africa, Rabbi Brian Walt was active as a student in the anti-Apartheid struggle. He emigrated to the United States in 1974 and has worked as a congregational rabbi in Philadelphia, a human rights activist, and an advocate in the American Jewish community for justice, peace and equality for all who live in Israel/Palestine. He was one of the founders of Rabbis for Human Rights – North America (currently T'ruah) and served as its first executive director. Most recently, he has been active in Rabbis for Ceasefire, an ad hoc group of more than 300 rabbis and rabbinical students calling for an immediate ceasefire and engagement by the international community towards a lasting and just peace in Israel-Palestine. In 2012, Rabbi Walt led the Dorothy Cotton Institute Civil and Human Rights delegation to the West Bank. The delegation included veterans of the American civil-rights movement who met with leaders of the Palestinian nonviolent resistance movement and their Israeli allies. During Passover, he travelled to Israel with a group of rabbis from Rabbis for Ceasefire in an effort to bring food to Palestinians in Gaza.

Dr. Karameh Kuemmerle

Pediatric Neurologist, Boston Children's Hospital

Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School

Dr. Kuemmerle has over 17 years experience as a child neurologist and researcher. As an Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School, she teaches, mentors, and collaborates with students, residents, and fellows. She also practices as an MD at Boston Children's Hospital, where she provides compassionate and comprehensive care to children and families affected by epilepsy, traumatic brain injury and other neurological conditions. She has published multiple publications in the field of child neurology. Originally from Palestine and having completed her medical education in Jordan, she brings diverse perspectives and experiences to her work. She moved to the US for her residency and fellowship at Tufts University School of Medicine. She values excellence, innovation, collaboration, and diversity in her work, and strives to make a positive impact on the lives of children and the global medical community. Dr. Kuemmerle is a dedicated human rights advocate and a

founding member of Doctors against Genocide (DAG), a global coalition of healthcare workers dedicated to succeeding where global governments have failed in confronting and preventing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Dr. Eve Spangler

Associate Professor, Boston College

Author and founding member, *American Jews for a Just Peace*

Dr. Spangler has positioned her work within public sociology, using scholarly methods to contribute to the struggle for social justice. Class inequality has been the focus of much of her work and she investigated the career patterns of blue collar college graduates (they rarely catch up to their more privileged classmates); the experiences of professionals as their work is reorganized from independent to salaried forms (they lose autonomy); and the safety and health of workplaces (generally better served by labor militancy than by managerial enlightenment). Through these studies, she has also become interested in gender, e.g. around issues of sexual harassment at work, and in issues of race, especially as Islamophobia, an emerging form of racism, complicates American participation in a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Her most recent work is focused on human rights and social justice struggles in Palestine and Israel.

Within the community, she serves as a board member of the Human and Civil Rights Organizations of America, a founding board member of American Jews for a Just Peace, various adult education programs, and a frequent evaluator of applied academic programs (e.g. The Center for Women and Politics, and the Center for Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts, Program in Applied Sociology, St. Cloud State University, Minnesota).

Dr. Lara Jirmanus

Instructor, Harvard Medical School

FXB Center for Health and Human Rights

Harvard University

Dr. Lara Jirmanus is a family physician, a Fellow at the FXB Center for Health & Human Rights at Harvard University, and a Clinical Instructor at Harvard Medical School. In February 2017, she founded the Health and Law Immigrant Solidarity Network, a group of healthcare and legal professionals and community organizations supporting immigrants in Eastern Massachusetts. Jirmanus has been involved in grassroots organizing, advocacy and research for many years, addressing worker and immigrant rights in the US, infectious diseases in Brazil and the impacts of conflict and displacement in the Middle East. Her

current research focuses on the impact of immigration enforcement on immigrant health in the Massachusetts, and the health of Syrian refugees and host populations in Lebanon. After graduating from University of Massachusetts Medical School, she completed family medicine residency at Boston University Medical Center, a fellowship in Global Women's Health at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and an MPH at HSPH. Dr. Jirmanus served as chief resident in Family Medicine at the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon. She taught a global health and social medicine course at AUB Medical School and an interdisciplinary seminar on the Syrian refugee crisis at Harvard University.

Rev. Ashlee Wiest-Laird, Moderator

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Jamaica Plain, MA

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Ashlee studied religion and sociology at Wake Forest University and received an M.Div. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1991. For four years, she served as the Southern Baptist chaplain at Harvard University and then spent a year working with Sabeel Liberation Theology Center and the Middle East Council of Churches in Jerusalem. In 1998 Ashlee completed an S.T.M. degree in religion and society from the Andover Newton Theological School. Having received standing in the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts, she served as an interim pastor in Allston, MA and as an associate pastor at Seattle First Baptist Church. In September 2003, Ashlee was blessed to be called to pastor the The First Baptist Church in Jamaica Plain. Over her years as pastor in JP she has overseen the renewal and rebuilding of the congregation and the church building and has encouraged the church to embrace social justice ministries as integral to the gospel message of Jesus. She is married to Lance Laird and mom to Naim, Aidan and Mycah.