

# Senior Faith in Leadership Programme

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024

## CLASS OF 2024 BIOGRAPHIES



### **Ali Amla**

Mohammed Ali Amla is SNS' Youth and Partnerships Director, leading on youth empowerment, strategic partnership development and community collaborations. He is an experienced networker who is responsible for developing new partnerships for SNS across civil society, the education sector, academia, local authorities and communities. He has over 20 years' experience working with communities, the public and private sector. He has worked as a researcher, educator, practitioner, activist and executive coach to empower communities to create social innovation and change. His specialisations are in creating safe spaces for difficult dialogue, leadership development, think spaces, strategic development, knowledge exchange and delivering inclusion and diversity training. He is regularly invited as a guest lecturer on peace leadership, active citizenship, cohesion, interfaith, religion, Islamophobia, the far right, media and community empowerment. Ali is an alumni of the IVLP, Clore Fellow, and the founder of Christian Muslim Encounters, which aims to foster good relations and build bridges across communities, academia, policy and civil society.



### **Joanne Cox-Darling**

Joanne is a tea-drinking writer, preacher, pastor, amateur potter, and mother of two, who currently serves the Methodist Church locally in Wolverhampton, where she leads a team of people across the City; and nationally, where she Chairs the Mission Committee. A regular contributor to 'Pause For Thought', Board Member of Southlands College at Roehampton University, and a teaching Practical Theologian – she is keen to make connections between people's experiences, the wider world, and faith, in all walks of life. Joanne is an innovator and value opportunities to be both creative and strategic; cultivating teams and partnerships along the way. Her family are neurodiverse, and I have a keen passion for inclusion and justice for those who are misunderstood or marginalised. She enjoys Hallmark movies, open fires, and is taking time this year to learn how to throw pots on a wheel.



### **Mark Dimond**

Mark is a priest working in the Diocese of Norwich in the Church of England. He is responsible for the spiritual life and management of King's Lynn Minster. He has also worked in the Church in Wales, where he did his formative theological training. Mark has previously worked in academia, as an historian, and before that in commerce, in the drinks industry. He has an international outlook, having worked and lived in five countries, including Japan, France, Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary. His cosmopolitan upbringing and formation opened up an interest in the world's mainstream faiths. Mark set up the South Cardiff Interfaith Network and is currently the Advisor to the Bishop of Norwich in interfaith dialogue.



### **Shaffiq Din**

Shaffiq is currently working at Al-Emaan Centre, a charity and mosque as Director of Operations. Previously he was a Muslim chaplain working in Prisons and prior to that in professional services. He is a Trustee of The Welcome Directory and Chance to Change Foundation. He is passionate about leadership which enables the delivery of personal and communal transformations in faith communities.



### **Clare Dowding**

Clare is a priest in the Church of England currently serving St Paul's & St Cyprian's in Westminster, in the Diocese of London. Clare was ordained in 2003 and has spent most of her ministry in urban estates parishes in Manchester, Norwich and London. St Paul's is situated at the heart of the Lisson Green and Church Street Estates in Westminster, one of the most densely populated and diverse wards in the UK. Clare works closely alongside Muslim, Jewish and other faith colleagues and serves as foundation governor of a church school which welcomes children of many faiths and nationalities. Clare also acts as Area Dean of Marylebone, offering collegial support to clergy and churches across Westminster. Clare is married to Nathan Eddy, Co-Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, and together they raise two teenagers, a friendly schnauzer & seven urban chickens.



### **Jo Grose**

Jo became Chief Executive of the United Synagogue in February 2023. She joined the charity to implement its Strategic Review and since then became Director of Communities and Strategy. Key areas of responsibility in this role included rabbinic recruitment, community development and the management of community life during the Covid pandemic.

Before working for the United Synagogue Jo was in leadership roles in several Jewish charities following an earlier career in educational publishing. She is an active member of her local synagogue – where her love of community-building was ignited - and is a trustee of a local educational charitable trust. Jo is married to Dan, has three children, Noah, Avi and Sol and is happiest discovering new places outdoors, ideally accompanied by a strong coffee, her dog Otto and a good podcast.



### **Daniel Kada**

Daniel Kada is the community rabbi at Holland Park Sephardi synagogue and member of the Sephardi Beth Din. Daniel studied for over ten years in Rabbinical academies in Israel and the UK and attained a rabbinical qualification with distinction. Following this, Daniel studied to become a Dayan (Jewish judge) through the Montefiore Endowment. He read law at KCL, graduation with First Class Honours. Daniel is passionate about Jewish education in a rationalist and thoughtful manner.



### **Sarah Koster**

Sarah works for Edgware & Hendon Reform Synagogue as the Young Families Lead, working within the Education and Youth team. She is responsible for creating programming to engage families in the community. Prior to this role, she was the Learning and Education Manager for The Faith & Belief Forum, an interfaith charity, heading up multiple educational programmes, creating interfaith resources and facilitating interfaith training. She has a degree in Community & Youth Studies and is a qualified Primary School Teacher having spent many years working for Local Authorities and within schools. She is passionate about creating meaningful encounters and bringing people together, interfaith dialogue and the power of involvement in community.



### **Claire Lemer**

Claire is a General Paediatrician working at the Evelina London Children's Hospital. Claire combines clinical medicine with two roles. Firstly supporting clinical transformation and secondly leading the medicine department. When not working Claire is a Trustee of the United Synagogue and JCAT a multi-academy faith based trust developed by the United Synagogue. Claire is also a trustee of Kisharon a charity that supports children, young people and adults with moderate to severe learning difficulties within the Jewish Community. Claire is also a trustee of another multi- academy trust, the Harris Federation and serves as Chair of Governors of 2 primary schools within this trust. When not working Claire attends her local synagogue, and enjoys the theatre, travelling, reading, opera and cooking and baking for friends.



### **Ashley Lerner**

Ashley grew up in Watford in a British – Jewish family. From a young age he developed a deep connection to the Jewish community which shaped his identity. He participated in a Jewish youth movement and became a sabbatical officer; was elected President of his university Jewish society; and joined Maccabi GB, where after 13 years became CEO in 2021.

Entrenched in the mainstream of the British Jewish community, Ashley has led significant projects, including the Community Fun Run, the Yellow Candle Project, and overseeing delegations at international Maccabi Games, which uses sport as the prism to enhance participants' Jewish identity. He has played a pivotal role in developing informal education programmes that promote confidence building, tackle discrimination and teach essential life skills in British schools.

A father of two, he instills a love for Judaism in his children through Jewish education and participating in Alyth Synagogue, an inclusive community which reflects his values.



### **Halima Limbada**

Halima is a recent graduate from Cambridge Muslim College, where she covered in-depth studies of the traditional Islamic discipline along with a study of relevant fields of contemporary knowledge

that informs the discourse on faith in the modern context. Her final year dissertation analysed the theme of interfaith dialogue and debate between Muslims and Christians through the Qur'an. Upon completion, Halima undertook an internship with Rose Castle Foundation, where she worked with youth from the Abrahamic faiths on skills necessary for peace-building and reconciliation. Her keen interest in interfaith and conflict resolution saw her complete a Christian-Muslim Summer in Oxford in 2022 and an Experiential Education trip to Northern Ireland in 2023.

Halima is also a practising Pharmacist; she completed her studies in the UK before qualifying and practising in Canada. Halima continued to work in community pharmacy in Cambridge whilst completing her BA in Islamic Studies.



### **Mark O'Keeffe**

Born in 1968 the son of an army soldier, Mark lived in various places growing up. His father was from Ireland and his mother from Cornwall. He has one sibling who lives in Exeter. After completing his A levels at school in Dorset, Mark went to Seminary to train for the priesthood. He trained at St John's Seminary- Womersley and was ordained in 1992 to the priesthood. Mark served as an army chaplain from 1996-2007, serving in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq as well as Northern Ireland. His last posting was as a member of the Directing Staff at RMA. He then served in various parishes, including a 2 year mission in New Zealand. On returning from NZ he was assigned to Paignton in Devon and then moved to be the administrator and Dean of the Cathedral in Plymouth in 2018. Mark is currently on the Board of Trustees for the Diocese, a member of the Cathedral Chapter and the Delegate for our Schools within the Diocese.



### **Neil Patterson**

Neil is a priest of the Church of England, ordained in 2004 and serving in rural ministry in the Diocese of Hereford. Since 2015 he has been Director of Vocations & Ordinations, overseeing those seeking ordination or in training, and fulfilling other diocesan staff roles over time, including rural dean. Neil has been a member of the Church's General Synod since 2012 and plays a prominent role in the campaign for a more inclusive church as Chair of the Gender & Sexuality Group. He has an academic interest in ecclesiastical law, and is a Trustee of the Ecclesiastical Law Society.



### **Shahida Rahman**

Shahida is an award-winning author of historical fiction, non-fiction and children's stories, raising awareness of South Asian history, culture and heritage.

Her novels 'Lascar' was published in 2012, and 'An Ayah's Choice' in 2022. She has contributed widely to print and online publications as well as BBC Radio.

She is a trustee of Cambridge Central Mosque, since 2017, which is Cambridge's first purpose-built mosque and Europe's first eco-mosque.

She has won numerous civic and cultural awards for her work such the 'Arts and Cultural Awareness Award' at the British Muslim Awards in 2015. Shahida has also sat on the judging panel of the Young Muslim Writers Awards.

Shahida is an advisor to the trustees of the Museum of Cambridge. She is a trustee of the Karim Foundation which provides food and support with domestic costs; the only organisation in Cambridge to provide culturally appropriate food. Her website is [www.shahidahrahman.co.uk](http://www.shahidahrahman.co.uk)



### **Tanya Sakhnovich**

Tanya was born in Minsk, Belarus. There in 1998 she attained her first MA in the History of Art and Music. After teaching for two years at the University, she began her career working in various capacities for the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). After her graduation from Leo Baeck College in 2009 Tanya served Nottingham Liberal Synagogue and The Elstree Liberal Synagogue before joining EHRS in November 2022. She is passionate about social justice, the environment and interfaith initiatives. Among her community engagements are being a co-founder and a trustee of the Salaam-Shalom Kitchen Charity in Nottingham and is a member of the EcoJudaism Rabbinic Team. Tanya served as the chaplain to Rampton Hospital from 2016 to 2020 and she was a member of the Shrievalty panel in Nottingham, until relocated down south. She works for Leo Baeck College as the coordinator of communities' placement as well as teaching classes on practical rabbinics.



### **James Treasure**

James is married to Esther, with three children, two at university, one studying GCSE's. Outside of ministry, he enjoys running, playing online chess badly and time with family and friends.

## FACULTY & TEAM BIOGRAPHIES



### **Revd Canon Dr C Bannister-Parker**

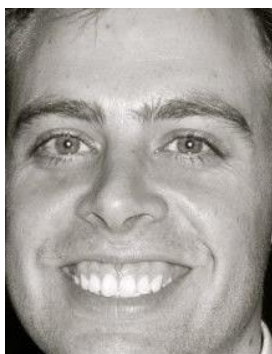
Charlotte has held various positions at Oxford's University Church, including Priest in Charge and Director of Outreach. She is founder of the annual Oxford Interfaith Friendship Walk and the seminar "One Earth, Many Faiths". Charlotte is also an Advisor of The Oxford Foundation, which promotes youth interfaith dialogue and projects in the UK. She is a member of the Oxford Three Faiths Week, "Relating Across Divides" at St John's College, Oxford. Charlotte was Interim Rector of the city of Oxford 2017-2018, and she is a long-time Fellow of the RGS and RSA.

Charlotte for the past decade has chaired, and is currently President of, The Children's Radio Foundation (CRF), a non-profit development organisation training and empowering youth across eight countries in Africa. Charlotte has helped build up CRF following her ministerial posting in 2008 to Oxford's sister diocese in South Africa. Before being called to the priesthood, Charlotte spent fifteen years working in development NGOs and in broadcasting, with a focus on the role and education of women in South Asia.



### **Rabbi Dr Harvey Belovski**

A pulpit rabbi for some 26 years, Harvey is now emeritus rabbi of the Golders Green Synagogue. He is a community leader, organisational psychologist and broadcaster, specialising in organisational development, leadership training and interfaith activism. He is the organisational consultant for the United Synagogue, chief strategist and rabbinic head of University Jewish Chaplaincy and advisor to several other organisations within and beyond the Jewish community. He sits on the community and voluntary service committee of the honours system at the Cabinet Office and is a member of the Patient Safety Commissioner's advisory group. He is a regular live contributor to Pause for Thought on the BBC. Radio 2 Zoe Ball Breakfast Show.



### **Denny Braggins**

For the last 14 years, ever since his first exposure to experiential learning at university, Denny has worked directly in the field of leadership development, organising and delivering programmes at a student, corporate, community and national levels.

A husband and father of two energetic children, Denny devotes what little spare time he has in the study of diversity and world religions. He spent the whole of his formative teenage years in Singapore. Denny's viewpoint and world perspective therefore is deeply affected by his experience of living happily alongside people of different cultures and faiths.

Denny was a pupil of the United World College of South East Asia, and went on to study Geography, Politics and Business Administration at Sheffield University. He is a keen guitarist and is learning to be fluent in Russian.



### **Lucy Bushill-Matthews**

Lucy has nearly 20 years' experience improving organisational effectiveness in local, UK-wide, and international charities of different sizes, working with trustees, senior executives and other staff, after starting out her career in Finance within multi-national corporates. Lucy is a Trustee and the Treasurer of Respect, a domestic abuse organisation working with perpetrators; her most recent exec role is Chief Operating Officer for UK charity National Zakat Foundation. Lucy is an author, has delivered two TedX talks on faith, and speaks on Radio 2 'Pause for Thought'. Lucy holds an Economics Degree from the University of Cambridge. Lucy is married, with three adult children who keep coming back home, and loves walking in the woods.



### **Benjamin Ellis**

Benjamin grew up in an orthodox family in Leeds, and studied for two years at Yeshivat Har Etzion before embarking on his career in medicine. He has been involved with KeshetUK since it was founded and believes passionately that every Jewish organisation can find a way to be more inclusive and welcoming to LGBT+ Jews.



### **Dr Matthew Freeman**

Matthew is the founder of Dialectix Consulting, a Virginia, US based firm that works with organisations on their diversity, equity and inclusion strategies. Matthew's passion for equity and social justice has led him across the United States and around the globe, helping people connect across difference and begin to address the challenges that divide them. Matthew has worked all kinds of organisations, and is equally comfortable with faith communities, small NGOs, members of the US Congress, or Fortune 500 corporations. With degrees in the sciences and in the humanities, Matthew appreciates the opportunities to bring that diverse educational background to bear on topics like unconscious bias exploring what we know about how the brain functions and how that impacts our human interactions. He is the author of the book *Overcoming Bias: Building Authentic Relationships Across Differences*.



### **Krish Raval**

Krish is the Director of Faith in Leadership and the Senior Faith in Leadership Programme. An executive educator, consultant and coach, Krish focuses on leadership development, dialogue and facilitation for change and has worked in the private and voluntary sectors for three decades. A lawyer by background, Krish had a training contract with a prominent Los Angeles law firm before a deep interest in people led him to work with inner city teenagers in 1996. Krish is a Visiting Research Fellow at St Benet's Hall, University of Oxford, and has read and researched law at Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge and the University of Sheffield, respectively. He carried the Olympic Torch in his home city of Sheffield during the 2012 London Olympics and he was appointed an OBE by Her Majesty The Queen in 2018.



### **Andrew Thomas**

Andrew is an Advisor to Faith in Leadership bringing a background in international philanthropy. He is currently Development Director at St Hilda's College (University of Oxford) and has held a variety of similar roles across other parts of the University. Andrew has also had a career in the sports sector, initially with the Lawn Tennis Association and more latterly as Global Fundraising Director at the International Paralympic Committee in Germany. He lives near Oxford and his spare time is dominated by playing cricket, travelling to watch his daughter play professional football, enjoying his son's community cinema/film projects and cooking.



### **Michael Wakelin**

Michael is Executive Chair of the Religion Media Centre an Independent resource helping journalists and others cover stories related to religion and belief. He is a founder director of the Religion and Belief Literacy Partnership working with organisations such as the House of Commons, Tesco and Marks and Spencer to accommodate religion and belief in the workplace. He is also an Executive Producer at TBI Media one of the most successful independent production companies in the country. Michael is particularly responsible for the Pause for Thought strand on BBC Radio Two.

Michael has worked with Krish on the Senior Faith in Leadership Programme since it began in 2012 and serves on the faculty with a particular role in media training - something he also does with major Religious organisations. Formerly Michael read theology at Birmingham University and worked at the BBC for 23 years across all networks ending up as Head of Religious Broadcasting, leaving in 2010. He is Chair of the Reckitt Trust and an adviser to the Oxford University Faculty of Theology and Religion.



### **Dr Tamra Wright**

Tamra wears many hats, both literally and figuratively. She is a Senior Adjunct Professor at Yeshiva University where she teaches graduate courses in modern Jewish thought (over Zoom). She previously held visiting lectureships and research fellowships at Oxford, Cambridge and King's College London, as well as directing the academic programme at the London School of Jewish Studies for two decades. She is the author of *The Twilight of Jewish Philosophy: Emmanuel Levinas's Ethical Hermeneutics* as well as essays on Buber, Rosenzweig, Fackenheim and Levinas. Inspired by the legacy of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, she has also developed an abiding interest in the points of intersection between Positive Psychology and Jewish teaching. During lockdown she trained as a Tiny Habits® Certified Coach and a Mental Fitness coach, as well as founding 2020 Torah, an online Jewish learning platform. Tamra was a founding faculty member of Faith in Leadership's Senior Faith in Leadership Programme and has enjoyed being part of the faculty for every subsequent cohort.



## GUESTS

**Maryam Almahmeed**

**Abdulla Almanai**

**Noora AlMansoori**

**Oliver Bowring**

**Zakarya Gangat**

**Eleanor Green**

**Alex Martins**

**Lord Jonathan Mendelsohn**

**Shiv Shankar Nair**

**Benjamin Thomas**

**Ruth Peacock**

**Sir Trevor Pears**

**Gemma Perella**