TKE’s 40th Anniversary Storytelling Weekend
Scholar in Residence
Dr. Gary P. Zola
Professor of the American Jewish Experience at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and
Executive Director of The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

Friday December 2

8:00p  Shabbat Evening Service
Rabbi Zola to speak on PROFILES IN AMERICAN JEWISH COURAGE

The unfolding legacy of any North American congregation, organization, or association, consistently offers us an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of historical milestones and significant anniversaries. As Kol Emeth marks the 40th anniversary of its founding, Dr. Gary P. Zola, will illustrate how the American Jewish past inevitably inspires us to make history instead of marking history. Dr. Zola will focus on the lives and achievements of a few fascinating American Jews. These “case studies” remind us that our forebears bequeathed to us a proud legacy of courage. Their stories shed light not only on significance of local Jewish history but also on the lofty meaning of the American Jewish experience itself.

Saturday December 3

10:30a  Shabbat Morning Service led by Rabbi Larry Sernovitz

12:30p  Kiddish Lunch & Learn
Rabbi Zola to speak on GEORGE WASHINGTON, JEWS, AND THE STORY OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN AMERICA

In her 2014 dissenting opinion on the U.S. Supreme Court’s “Greece vs. Galloway” decision, Elena Kagan – Associate Justice – made reference to one of the best-known letters in all of American Jewish history: President Washington’s letter to the Jews of Congregation Yeshuat Israel (a.k.a. “Touro Synagogue”), Newport, Rhode Island. According to Justice Kagan, this letter – written in 1790 – confirmed the
Constitution’s “promise” to guarantee every religion in America “full and equal membership” in the nation’s polity.

Professor Zola will provide our community with an opportunity to examine this famous letter closely. Working together, we will explore the historical circumstances that prompted “the father of our nation” to compose the particular letter, and we will consider the first president’s perspective on the tension between the competing ideals of “minority rights” & “majority rules” in the new nation. This dynamic study session constitutes a special opportunity to learn more about the history of this letter written more than 225 years ago, and why it remains remarkably salient to the well-being of the American republic.

Sunday December 4
10:15a Speaker Series Presentation
Rabbi Zola to speak on GREAT VOICES, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND AMERICAN JEWRY

Over the course of American history, rabbis and prominent members of the Jewish community frequently championed the cause of religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Professor Zola will introduce us to the many ways in which American Jewry fought for “equal footing” under the law for themselves and, in the process of doing so, for others. This session will introduce participants to several remarkable primary source documents that illustrate American Jewry’s significant contributions to the process of broadening civil liberties in the American nation.