

Yom Kippur 2018

Change... Transition...

Change is hard. We become used to things as they have been. It's a natural human trait to unconsciously assume that things will go along as they have. When transitions occur, it can throw us off, cause a sense of disquiet, anxiety, even sadness.

That being said, change is a part of our existence. While it can be difficult, it is also absolutely necessary. Without change, there cannot be growth. That is true of us as individuals. It is true of families. It is true of the institutions of our community. It is true of Temple B'nai Abraham.

Rabbi Kulwin has been our spiritual leader for over nineteen years. He has been a part of our lives in profound ways, officiating at weddings, funerals, B'nai Mitzvah, and other life cycle events. He leads us in prayer. He provides wise and valued counsel to those of us in need. He has been active in the wider community. TBA's heritage of involvement in advancing social justice has been advanced during his tenure. We will pay well-deserved tribute to him at our Ways and Means event on March 30, 2019, as well as at events throughout this year of celebration of his tenure.

From the time of Rabbi Kulwin's retirement announcement, we have been working hard on the process of searching for his successor. That process has different phases. The first phase was our own self-assessment, to try to gauge what our congregation wants and needs now and into the future. We began with a very productive and useful congregational forum in January.

Shortly after the forum, immediate Past-President Julie Silbermann agreed to chair the Rabbinical Search Committee. We worked to put together a committee that truly represents our congregation.

The Search Committee continued the congregational self-assessment process. Many of you participated in the congregational survey. Also, many of you attended one or more of our professionally facilitated focus groups. Many thanks to all of you for your participation. The results of the assessment process are extremely valuable to the Search Committee as it continues its work.

The next phase of the search consists of outreach and marketing. Letters were sent over the summer to over 200 Jewish leaders informing them that the position is available and asking them to provide information about the position to possible applicants and others. We have posted the position on websites used by rabbis seeking jobs and congregations seeking rabbis. Some of you have provided referrals of

possible candidates to us. The word is out. Promising individuals have already applied for the position. We anticipate receiving many more applications once these High Holy Days are over. People are still very much free to apply. More than one expert in the rabbi placement field told us that our process has been very well done, is very professional, and is operating ahead of usual timelines.

Our website has been updated. There is now a Rabbinical Search dropdown tab on the site. Please, take a look. Under that tab, you will see a document called “Senior Rabbi Sought,” which describes the position. There is another document, “Temple Profile,” that concisely states the many attributes of our synagogue. You can also see a description of our history. Finally, the tab contains a wonderful video, “See Us in Action...” While we expect that any potential applicant will view the entire website, the information under the Rabbinical Search tab provides a concise introduction to who we are.

The next phase of the process will be interviewing and reviewing applicants, leading ultimately to the selection of our next senior rabbi. I am confident that our Rabbinical Search Committee will continue its excellent work and recommend a truly excellent individual.

Temple B'nai Abraham is one of the leading synagogues in the country. We are located in a desirable area. Our finances are in good order. Our independence from organized synagogue movements is no longer the hindrance to our search that it might have been in years past. There are fewer pulpit rabbi positions than there used to be. All of that and more makes our senior rabbi position an extremely desirable one. We are searching from a position of strength.

I am confident that Temple B'nai Abraham has a bright future. While there are always going to be changes, those transitions will lead to growth and improvement. We will truly go from strength to strength.

May each of you be sealed for a good year. G'mar Chatimah Tovah.