

## RABBINIC SEARCH

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### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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***Rabbi Mark Shapiro has announced his retirement as Rabbi of Sinai Temple.  
His last day is June 30, 2016.***

*We have been blessed with Rabbi Shapiro's spiritual leadership for the past 27 years. The purpose of this document is to clarify Sinai Temple's next steps regarding rabbinic leadership, and Rabbi Shapiro's involvement at Sinai (as Rabbi Emeritus) following his retirement.*

What Is Sinai Temple Doing To Replace Rabbi Shapiro Who Is Retiring As Of The End Of June 2016?

Why is the Temple hiring an "interim" Rabbi rather than going ahead immediately to hire a permanent one?

What is the search process?

May I personally recommend a candidate for the position of senior Rabbi?

Is someone from my demographic represented on the Search Committee?

Will the interim Rabbi be eligible as a candidate for the permanent position?

What does an Interim Rabbi do?

What will be the relationship between Rabbi Shapiro and the Interim and then the permanent new Rabbi? What will be role of Rabbi Shapiro after he retires?

How does the Rabbinical Search Committee plan to involve the Congregation in defining the job of the new permanent Rabbi?

Will the congregation have a chance to meet the candidates for the new Rabbi before one is chosen?

Is this search open to all regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, etc.?

Who will make the final selection of the new Rabbi?

What effect will the search and subsequent selection of an Interim and permanent Rabbi have on those students seeking B'nai Mitzvah?

## **What Is Sinai Temple Doing To Replace Rabbi Shapiro Who Is Retiring As Of The End Of June 2016?**

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Sinai's Board of Directors has appointed a Rabbinical Search Committee co-chaired by Steve Sussman and Jackie Neiman both to hire an interim Rabbi for the year July 2016-June 2017 and a permanent Rabbi beginning July 1, 2017. If you have any questions, please use the feedback form on the [Rabbinic Search page](#).  
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### **Why is the Temple hiring an "interim" Rabbi rather than going ahead immediately to hire a permanent one?**

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Having an interim Rabbi is the recommended course of action from CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) and the URJ (Union for Reform Judaism). Interim Rabbis are especially recommended when the retiring Rabbi was long term and/or well loved. Rabbi Shapiro is both. It would be very difficult for the next permanent Rabbi to follow Rabbi Shapiro without a transition period. We will need some time after Rabbi Shapiro to ease into the reality of his departure.

Different congregants will feel the separation and loss of Rabbi Shapiro in different ways. We need to allow those that need the time to grieve and adjust.

Rabbi Shapiro will leave some very large shoes to fill and our new permanent Rabbi may not be able to (or be expected to) fill them in the way that he did. We will need time as a congregation to make sure those "additional" tasks are accounted for.

Interim Rabbis possess a unique set of skills aimed specifically at helping congregations during the period of transition. They receive specific training for this position and possess skills needed to insure a smooth transition. The skills we need for this transition period are very different than what we need in a permanent Rabbi. For example an interim Rabbi will have skills in crisis appeasement, good pastoral skills, and an ability to quickly establish rapport with families having life cycle events during this year.

They are not retired Rabbis looking for an easy job or active Rabbis who couldn't get a permanent position. They are skilled at easing the new permanent Rabbi into position and whomever we engage will have done the job before and be well acquainted with the issues and emotions typical in our situation.

Given our timeline, our committee cannot do due diligence to the process of hiring a new long term Rabbi, most importantly we would not have time to give the congregation the voice it deserves in the process (focus groups etc). We would be forced to rush the interview and selection process in order to have the new Rabbi under contract in the time needed for a July 2016 start date.

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### **What is the search process?**

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Rabbinic searches are different from the executive searches that you may be familiar with from your professional life. As a Reform congregation, our search will be guided by the rules and regulations established by the Joint Rabbinic Placement Commission, a partnership between the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), and the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC).

As a member of the URJ, we are required to make our selection only from among those candidates who apply through the Placement Commission and comply with its rules and procedures.

The search committee will send a detailed application to the Reform Placement Commission to be viewed by prospective candidates first for the Interim Rabbi and later for the permanent Rabbi on the confidential Placement website.

The search committee will receive resumes and select those candidates with whom it wishes to conduct an initial phone or Skype interview. Following this preliminary round of interviews, a smaller group of candidates will be invited to Sinai Temple for in-person interviews. Usually, members of the search committee also will visit home congregations of a small number of the most promising candidates to experience those candidates on their own pulpits. In time, the search committee will make its recommendations to the Board of Directors.

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### **May I personally recommend a candidate for the position of senior Rabbi?**

We ask that our members adhere to the following Placement Commission rules for engaging with rabbinic candidates:

- If a rabbi approaches you about the position, you may advise him or her to check the CCAR posting and apply;

The CCAR has procedures in place to explore whether rabbis who have not formally applied might be interested in being considered. Whether those procedures should be used for any particular individual will be the discretion of the Search Committee.

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### **Is someone from my demographic represented on the Search Committee?**

Every effort was made to make sure that every segment of the congregation is represented on the Search Committee. However, Committee members were selected primarily for their ability to consider the needs of the entire congregation. Our committee is dedicated to a transparent and inclusive process and to providing many opportunities for communication with the congregation. We honor the diverse perspectives of the congregation, regardless of who is or who is not on the actual Committee.

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### **Will the interim Rabbi be eligible as a candidate for the permanent position?**

No. The interim Rabbi is hired with the understanding that they will not be eligible to become a candidate for the permanent position. Rabbi's who fill these interim positions are specifically looking for this type of position and are trained for them.

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### **What does an Interim Rabbi do?**

- The Interim Rabbi will serve all the Rabbinic needs of the congregation, including Temple services, life cycle events, Bar/Bat Mitzvah training, Weddings, and Funerals.
- The Interim Rabbi will help guide the congregation toward a smooth transition to the permanent Rabbi.
- The Interim Rabbi will **not** change Temple policy, and worship will not change during the Interim Rabbi's term of service.

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## **What will be the relationship between Rabbi Shapiro and the Interim and then the permanent new Rabbi? What will be role of Rabbi Shapiro after he retires?**

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Rabbi Shapiro will become Rabbi Emeritus at Sinai Temple upon his retirement. The Emeritus position is primarily a position of honor offered to a retiring Rabbi. It is a way for Sinai and Rabbi Shapiro to affirm that the relationships we have built up over so many years will continue. At the same time, the Emeritus position does not have any specific rabbinic duties attached to it. The position is left somewhat undefined so that Rabbi Shapiro's successor (and even the interim) have sufficient room to establish their own rabbinic profile at Sinai. Any responsibilities that Rabbi Shapiro will take on will be at the discretion of the successor and interim rabbis as well as the Board of Directors.

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## **How does the Rabbinical Search Committee plan to involve the Congregation in defining the job of the new permanent Rabbi?**

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The Search Committee itself with its 15 members represents a broad segment of the Sinai congregation. In addition, the committee plans to hold focus groups and other discussions with the congregation and engage in surveys to elicit as many opinions as possible about what are the most important specifications that should define the new Rabbi's person and position.

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## **Will the congregation have a chance to meet the candidates for the new Rabbi before one is chosen?**

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The finalists for the position will be invited to visit Sinai Temple. The exact format for those visits has not yet been defined, but the Committee intends that these visits allow as many people as possible to meet the final candidates.

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## **Is this search open to all regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, etc.?**

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We will be searching for the very best candidate. As reflects the congregation's mission statement, the search will follow Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines and be open to a diverse set of candidates.

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## **Who will make the final selection of the new Rabbi?**

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The final decision about which candidate will be chosen as the new Rabbi will be up to the Board of Directors. The job of the Search Committee is to find the best candidates and then recommend the best person to the Board.

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## **What effect will the search and subsequent selection of an Interim and permanent Rabbi have on those students seeking B'nai Mitzvah?**

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One of the main reasons for hiring an Interim Rabbi is to make the transition for lifecycle events such as B'nai Mitzvah as smooth as possible. The Interim Rabbi will be prepared to take over the preparation for and performance of these rituals as appropriate and to make sure there is a smooth transition to the permanent Rabbi once hired.

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