

Temple Israel Rabbi Search Committee (RSC) Update

for December Bulletin

The Rabbi Search Committee has been hard at work, and though our work so far has been “behind the scenes,” we are very excited to move into the next phase where we will be introducing you to some terrific candidates. Before we tell you about that, we’d like to describe where we are in the process.

RSC Conducts Candidate Review and Virtual Interviews (Oct-Nov): Over the past two months the RSC has reviewed candidate applications and conducted virtual interviews. So far, we have received ten applications. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) said that this was a “strong” showing. As you all know, Temple Israel is a wonderful community and thus, our Senior Rabbi position is a very attractive one! You should know that the candidate pool is very targeted. Candidates can only apply if they are in good standing with CCAR, have 3 years of experience or more, and are contractually unencumbered. As a result, the candidates we reviewed represented quite a strong pool. Their applications detailed their education and experience but also included personal statements that helped the RSC to get a sense of who they are. Once the RSC decided that we were interested in having a virtual interview with a candidate, we then reviewed sample writings (sermons and D’var Torahs), listened to sermons, and viewed sermons and services that each of the candidates led. Live streaming has really changed the search process!!

After our research, we elected to conduct virtual interviews with six of the ten candidates. It was a wonderful experience to get to meet such a wide range of talented, inspiring, passionate individuals and to get to hear what they believe they would bring to Temple Israel. Our interview questions were carefully crafted taking into consideration the results from the congregational Rabbi Attribute survey, the results of O.I.I. values focus groups, your comments to us in email and in person, and suggested questions from Rabbi Simon and CCAR. The questions covered a wide range of topics including spiritual leadership, collaboration, building community and temple unity, working relationships, leadership experience, developing connections to the greater community, strategies to connect with all of our congregations and our different needs. Based on these interviews, we have invited 2 candidates for in-person visits and both have accepted our invitations. It is possible that we may still receive applications and may invite one or two more candidates for in-person visits.

In-Person Candidate Visits, Congregational Participation (Dec.-Feb.): As a reminder, up to four of the top candidates from the previous phase will be invited for an on-site in-person visit to Temple Israel where the congregation will have a chance to learn from them, engage with them, and provide their feedback. When the candidates visit our community, they will spend two very full days with us. During that time there will be at least two opportunities for you to meet them. They will offer a teaching in the morning preceded by a breakfast meet and greet and a teaching in the evening followed by a reception meet and greet. Remember that the candidates will be interviewing us, as much as we are interviewing them. We will be seeking your feedback on the candidates after they visit. Please make your best effort to meet all the candidates and provide feedback to the RSC via the survey that will be distributed and via our email address tirabbisearch@tilb.org. As you know, the last step of this process is a congregational vote, so your participation is **crucial!**

Based on the rules from the Placement Commission and CCAR, names and any other identifying information about the candidates must remain confidential until their actual visits. However, we are

pleased to tell you that we have one candidate confirmed to visit December 18th/19th and another confirmed for January (dates TBD). More details on their schedules will be forthcoming. We are thrilled to be bringing these first candidates to meet our congregation. We have a tremendous opportunity in front of us, to find the next Rabbi who will lead Temple Israel into the future. Let us bring open minds and open hearts as we work for towards strengthening our Kehillah Kedosha – a holy community.

B'Shalom,

Temple Israel Rabbi Search Committee

Anne Gundry (Co-Chair), Vicki Scherwin (Co-Chair), Carmel Artstein, Deborah Fabricant, Alan Kreida, Alan Lilien, Amy Lipeles, Barry Potter, Andrea Salisbury, Scott Smeltzer, David Tillman, Rachel Van Raalte, Ed Zwieback