

Temple Etz Chaim
Rabbinic Search Committee

Frequently Asked Questions About the Rabbinic Search

Our congregation has begun the process of searching for and hiring a new rabbi. The Rabbinic Search Committee (RSC) recognizes that you will have various questions regarding the search, so we thought we would try to anticipate some of them and do our best to provide answers. We are aware that there may be additional questions as the process continues, and we will always be open to answering them to the best of our ability. Hopefully the answers to the questions that follow will provide a start to our dialogue. If you have any comments, information or ideas that you would like to share with the Search Committee, please email them to RSC@templeetzchaim.org or mail your comments to the Temple in an envelope addressed to the Search Committee at the Temple address.

We thank you for your support as we progress over the next year.

Why are we conducting a search for a new rabbi?

In July 2018, after serving our congregation for over 18 years, Rabbi Spiegel is retiring and will become Rabbi Emeritus.

Who hires the new rabbi?

As directed in our By-laws, the RSC will recommend a candidate to the TEC Board of Trustees, who will hire the new rabbi. To assist them in making their decision, Sherri Finn, President of the Board of Trustees, has appointed a RSC to interview potential candidates, and recommend the best person for the position. The RSC is chaired by Dan Lubetkin and Eric Feigenbaum and is composed of 10 additional members. The members of the RSC are: Cindy Goldberg, Susan Kane, Patty Kaye, Ken Leon, Gideon Manzur, Buzz Schoenkerman, Jeff Solomon, Benny Sommerfeld, Sam Slomowitz and Terri Zwicker. This group is comprised of a diverse and dedicated group of congregants. They represent a wide range of the TEC community, while being small enough to work effectively and efficiently on behalf of our congregation.

What is the process for selecting a new rabbi?

The Search Committee has been appointed and begun its work on behalf of our congregation. The committee's work involves identifying and representing the needs and desires of the congregation, communicating with the Joint Placement Committee

(JPC), recruitment, interviews, and eventually making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees as well as communicating with you, the congregation. *The Board of Trustees then has the responsibility to approve the candidate.* If you have thoughts that you would like to share please contact the RSC at RSC@templeetzchaim.org or by regular mail addressed to the RSC at the Temple address.

As a member of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), Temple Etz Chaim (TEC) is required to participate in a search process governed by the Joint Placement Commission (JPC). The JPC is the only advisory group and decision-making body regarding rabbinic placement in the Conservative movement. The JPC sets and maintains a set of rigorous standards and ethical policies to guide this process. The JPC provides the questionnaire that we must complete and post to the Rabbinical Assembly (RA) website before we will receive applications for the position. The questionnaire that will be completed by the RSC provides information about our congregation's shared values, philosophy, history, future goals, community, staff and other pertinent information.

Eligible rabbis interested in our position may respond by forwarding their resumes and background information to our RSC. We will keep you informed of the search process on a monthly basis with articles in the Etzetera and on the TEC website. You may also receive occasional email updates and announcements from the RSC.

What input can I have in the search process?

In order for this process to be successful and representative of the many groups that make up Temple Etz Chaim, it is imperative that everyone participates in the activities of the search process. These will include surveys, parlor meetings and candidate visits, and we strongly encourage you to attend and respond to any and all calls for input. If for some reason, you have missed these events, you can always contact a member of the RSC, but we cannot stress enough the value of attending a group event. Sometimes hearing other people's ideas causes you to think of something that you might otherwise have missed. We believe that just getting together and talking about what you value in a new rabbi will be an incredibly powerful experience that will benefit our entire congregation in the years to come.

The committee began by sending a brief survey to the congregants for some initial input. The next step is to conduct Parlor Meetings, which will provide an opportunity to get together in small groups to gather input and to dialogue about your needs in our next rabbi. Your input as well as comprehensive information about TEC is used to fill out a questionnaire provided by the JPC. Once the questionnaire is completed, it will be posted on the Rabbinical Assembly (RA) website. Candidates will apply and the committee will begin a methodical process of reviewing resumes, interviewing applicants and meeting candidates for the position of our rabbi. Please plan to attend services and activities during each of the finalist candidates visits to TEC. You will have

an opportunity to share your input after each of these weekend visits. The Search Committee is charged with selecting one candidate to recommend to the Board of Directors as our next rabbi. The Board then has the responsibility to decide if they will hire the candidate.

What is the timeline for the search?

The work has already begun. Below is a general outline of some key points in time relevant to the Rabbinic Search. These are subject to change as new developments arise in the process.

- Ongoing: Provide congregants with current status of search process via Etzetera, website, and emails when appropriate.
- April 2017: Rabbinic search committee is formed.
- June 2017: Survey congregation.
- August – September 2017: Parlor meetings held.
- October 2017: Search Subcommittee submits questionnaire/application to the JPC.
- November – January 2018: Search committee receives and reviews rabbi applications, conducts telephone and/or skype interviews.
- January - March 2018: Rabbinic finalists invited to Temple Etz Chaim for a weekend to lead services and meet congregation.
- April 2018: Final candidate, along with their family, visits TEC for a weekend.
- March – April 2018: Search committee forwards hiring recommendations to the Board. Offer is extended.
- July 2018: Temple Etz Chaim welcomes new rabbi.

What characteristics and skills are we looking for in the new rabbi?

The RSC will use the wealth of information gathered in our survey and Parlor meetings. We hope to describe the qualities and behaviors we seek in a rabbi. As we move forward in the search process, the RSC would like your continued input to supplement this information. We are searching for a rabbi with the skills and personal attributes to help us achieve our goals, although we recognize that no one person (or one rabbi) is “perfect”.

How much experience is required to be considered as a candidate for the position of rabbi at TEC?

The JPC stipulates that for a congregation the size of Temple Etz Chaim, all rabbis can apply for the position. This includes newly ordained rabbis (ordained by JTS or Ziegler School) as well as those with years of experience.

Will the congregation have a chance to meet the candidates before a final decision is made?

Absolutely. Each final candidate will be scheduled to visit and spend time at TEC, and meet with various groups. There will be numerous opportunities to meet and interact with all of the final candidates.

Why is the search process kept confidential?

The JPC procedures suggest that the names and resumes of candidates remain confidential. A chief reason for confidentiality is that the mere suggestion or rumor that a rabbi is considering another congregation may tarnish his or her current employment relationship to the great detriment of all parties. In addition, the RSC must address many personal facts about applicants that are not appropriate to be communicated publicly. Only by assuring confidentiality will the RSC achieve open and frank discussions with and about those who apply. After the Search Committee identifies its final candidates, they will be invited to visit our Temple. At that time, their names and credentials will become public. In order to assure the highest ethical standards in our search, however, the remainder of the search process must and will remain confidential.