Temple Emanu-El

From Strength to Strength
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What's the timeline on the search for two new rabbis?
A: A 22-member senior rabbi search committee has begun meeting and hopes to have applications from candidates by early October. The smaller Core Planning Team will conduct Zoom interviews with candidates, and the search committee hopes to have in-person visits for finalists in November. A search for a new assistant rabbi to join our talented clergy team is expected next year. We will share additional details of these searches as plans progress.

Q: What are the criteria for selecting a new senior rabbi?
A: The 300-plus conversations captured in the Sharing Our Strengths listening campaign held in early 2026 have given us a clear and powerful picture of what the congregation wants and needs in a new senior rabbi. Thank you to all who participated in this very important part of the process!

Out of that, we have clear criteria and a thorough job description for the new leader Temple seeks. In short, our congregants told us they are ready for leadership to both continue to make a community of 2,500 member households feel small, warm and personally known, and to guide us to an even stronger, thriving future. According to the findings, we seek a senior rabbi who is visionary but humble, intellectually serious, pastorally present, gifted in the pulpit, a leader in the community and capable of directing and nourishing our outstanding clergy team.

Q: Who actually makes the selection?
A: A recommendation from the search committee will be sent to the Board of Trustees and the Leadership Council, both of which have the responsibility under Temple's bylaws to approve offering a contract to a new senior rabbi.

Q: How should we respond if we are contacted by or on behalf of a possible senior rabbi candidate?
A: Please thank the person for their interest and let them know it will be conveyed to President Sara Albert.

Q: When would the new senior rabbi begin at Temple.
A: July 1, 2027.

Q: What happens if we don't find a candidate we love?
A: Temple is committed to finding the right rabbi in a rigorous, fair and transparent process, and we have every confidence that our strong, vibrant congregation will attract outstanding candidates. If we don't find the right person this year, however, we are prepared to engage an interim rabbi to serve while the search continues. In that event, the search committee would repost the job next August and conduct a new search on much the same schedule in 2027.

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Q: What will the departure of our two rabbis mean for Temple membership?
A: Temple Emanu-El is stronger than ever. We have a dynamic team of remaining clergy and a 150-plus year old legacy of strong lay leadership and are excited about the opportunities that this transition will present. We will also be appointing a team of Temple leadership to fully prepare for the welcome and integration of new clergy in true Temple style, with warmth, curiosity, excitement and with ongoing support for both our members and our new clergy.

Q: Rabbi Stern and Rabbi Robbins have built up so many wonderful relationships over the years. Who will be there for us now?
A: We understand that saying good-bye to a beloved retiring rabbi represents a loss. As you wish Rabbis Stern and Robbins a fond farewell, we encourage you to find opportunities to get to know our other outstanding and experienced clergy—through classes, travel, committee work and more—all of whom provide continuity and care for our congregation. Additionally, please contact Meredith Pryzant, MSW, Director of Pastoral Support, if you'd like to speak to someone about the congregational transition or other situations for which you may need help.

Q: Are you accepting volunteers to help plan the celebrations?
A: Yes, volunteers contribute meaningfully to Temple planning and celebrations. We will be sure to communicate volunteer opportunities during the planning process.