



THE INTERIM RABBI

Prepared by Kolot Chayeinu's Rabbinic Search Committee

MAY 2017 / IYAR-SIVVAN 5777

Kolot's successful experience with an Interim Rabbi will include:

- The Interim Rabbi ensuring that the Settled Rabbi is positioned for success.
- The Interim Rabbi engaging the congregation in two key capacities:
 - Leading and managing all day-to-day Rabbi responsibilities;
 - Advising and supporting the congregation through the transition process by serving as a transition consultant.
- The Interim Rabbi and the congregation recognizing, exploring and embracing a framework for transition that includes an ending (time for the difficult task of saying goodbye to the outgoing Rabbi), a neutral zone (time of possible uncertainty and wandering as the congregation considers this next phase in its lifecycle), and a beginning (time of emerging and embracing a new identity that the congregation has formed).
- The Interim Rabbi helping the congregation focus on the important question of, "what does Kolot Chayeinu want to continue becoming as a congregation and a community?"

The Interim Rabbi:

- Is aligned with Kolot's Mission, Vision and Values;
- Acts as a full Rabbi; handles all day-to-day traditional rabbinic functions (life cycle rituals, pastoral care, religious/ritual leadership, engagement with Children's Learning Program, coordination with Staff and Board, engagement with Adult Education);
- Guides and supports the congregation in reflecting on the transitional aspects of the rabbinic change and assisting us in processing these changes; helps introduce change into a system that hasn't experienced this before;
- Works at a deep emotional level with the congregation on issues of separation and rabbinic transition;
- Helps surface where the congregation is and where it wants to go;
- Provides the congregation a chance to explore another way of doing things;
- Has training or experience in an interim role or in transitioning organizations;
- Provides a sense of stability for the congregation as it processes the departure of the outgoing Rabbi and the arrival of the new Settled Rabbi;
- Informs the search process for the Settled Rabbi position but doesn't participate directly in the process;
- Is not a candidate for the Settled Rabbi position.

Distinct from the Interim Rabbi, the Settled Rabbi**:

- Is aligned with Kolot's Mission, Vision and Values;
- Serves as the spiritual leader of the congregation;
- Provides for the long-range success of the congregation by participating in strategic planning, visioning and other leaderships initiatives;
- Serves as a conduit to and from the congregation and the wider community;
- Leads and sets the tone for the congregation's membership outreach, retention and connection efforts;
- Leads and sets the tone for the congregation's civic engagement;
- Helps plan and implement processes around significant decisions regarding Jewish observance and Jewish life, and leads pastoral care;
- Supervises the Directors of Education and Action and of the Children's Learning Program and works with them to develop and refine these programs;
- Plays a key role in fundraising efforts.

(**Please note that the above are general parameters, the job description for Kolot's Settled Rabbi will not be drafted and finalized until 2018.)*

Important dates and benchmarks for the Interim Rabbi position:

May 2017: Board approves Interim Rabbi position description and job posting

June – August 2017: Interim Rabbi posting advertised

Fall 2017 (post-High HolyDays): Search Committee begins initial review and assessment of candidates, including resume and personal statement review, phone-screening conversations, interviews of top candidates, checking references

January 2018: Leading Interim Rabbi candidate selected by Search Committee and announced to congregation

February 2018: Leading Interim Rabbi candidate invited for weekend visit

March 2018: Search Committee recommends candidate to Board for vote; Board President and Search Committee Co-Chairs negotiate contract; Board votes on contract

June 2018: Interim Rabbi begins term

Best practices from the Search Committee's research on the Interim Rabbi's role:

From January-April 2017 the RSC met with numerous leaders from other congregations and the Rabbinic seminaries to learn more about Interim Rabbis and Rabbinic Transitions. These included folks from the Reconstructionist and Reform movements who deal with rabbinic placement, board members from congregations that have recently gone through rabbinic transitions including those with Interim Rabbis, people studying the role of Interim Rabbis, and several rabbis who have served as Interim Rabbis.

Our research and conversations helped identify the following suggestions and best practices:

- Be sure to celebrate the outgoing Rabbi before her departure.
- Ensure that the congregation's professional staff are engaged in the process and have access to information about the Interim Rabbi's role.
- Seek an Interim Rabbi who is a "quick study," with the ability to listen and assess and development a coherent narrative about the congregation, one which incorporates what makes Kolot unique.
- Let the Interim Rabbi change some things; if the congregation doesn't like these adjustments, change them again once the Settled Rabbi has arrived (little changes are a good way to "till the soil" and prepare for the Settled Rabbi).