

Rabbinic Transition and Kolot's Transformation:
Key Elements of the Coming Years
December 2016 / Cheshva-Kislev 5777

Summary Overview

With Rabbi Lippmann, our founding rabbi, approaching retirement in June of 2018, Kolot is approaching our first major clergy search in our 20+ year history. This is an exciting moment of transition and transformation for us as we choose new leadership for the next phase of our congregational life. The Transition Team, in consultation with our current leadership, has developed a plan moving forward that involves three key elements:

- a gala in June 2018 honoring Rabbi Lippmann's retirement and celebrating Kolot's 25th anniversary;
- hiring an interim rabbi for the period of July 2018-June 2019;
- and, finally, hiring a new rabbi to begin working at Kolot in the summer of 2019.

FAQs

Q. Why do I keep hearing the word “exciting” and the phrase “transition and transformation”?

A. While we are sad to see our rabbi go, and we will miss her dearly, this actually is an exciting time for our community as we seek a new rabbi to lead us into our next chapter. Many congregations report that their rabbinic transitions were transformative experiences, providing an opportunity for reflection and decision-making about the future. Kolot is growing up; the year Rabbi Lippmann retires, we will turn 25! As we embark upon our first-ever rabbinic search, this is an exciting opportunity to reflect together on how we will continue Rabbi Lippmann's legacy and move forward together with a new rabbi. And we are also excited for Rabbi Lippmann that she will begin a new chapter in her life beyond the demands of daily congregational activity.

Q. How will the congregation be involved in hiring the new permanent rabbi?

A. Several stages of the transition process require the input of the entire congregation. These include:

- Nominating members to the Search Committee
- Participating in House Meetings to provide the Search Committee with information about our priorities for a new rabbi
- Attending the audition weekends of finalists for the permanent rabbi position, and submitting feedback to the search committee
- Voting to hire our new rabbi at the congregational meeting

Q. Why an interim rabbi?

A. Interim rabbis play a crucial role in helping congregations process the experience of saying good-bye to their former (and in our case, founding!) rabbi and prepare to welcome new rabbinic leadership. Often, an interim rabbi is someone with particular expertise and training in helping congregations navigate transitions. The Transition Team learned in our research that interim rabbis are especially recommended for congregations that, like ours, are embarking on their first rabbinic search following the retirement of a founding rabbi.

Q. What if we really like the interim rabbi? Could we ask them to stay?

A. Hopefully, we will love our interim rabbi! However, because of the unique role we want them to inhabit as the person who helps us transition, the interim rabbi will be ineligible to apply for the permanent rabbi position. Our research tells us this is important.

The Transition Team and Committees

Transition Team - Kolot's board created this team in the fall of 2015 to carry out three tasks: to learn about rabbinic transitions; to use what we learned to develop a process for Kolot's transition; and to communicate with the congregation. The Transition Team is currently in the process of talking to other congregations about their experiences of rabbinic transitions, as well as planning ways to solicit input from the congregation about what we're seeking in our next rabbi. Kolot Board member Carolyn Klaasen leads this committee.

Gala Planning Committee - This group of people will take on the responsibility of planning the gala. Kolot Board member Samantha Anderson will be leading this committee, and is looking for more people to volunteer to join.

Nominating Committee – Composed of Kolot Board members Roger Westerman and Sarah Lowe and Kolot member Andrea Greenblatt, this committee will propose to the Board a slate of candidates for the Search Committee. The Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations from the congregation.

Search Committee – This committee, comprised of seven or nine members representing the diversity of Kolot's community, will conduct the searches for both the interim and permanent rabbi positions over a two-year period. Their responsibilities will include drafting and posting job descriptions, reviewing applications, conducting first and second-round interviews (with key staff), selecting an interim rabbi, planning audition weekends for three finalists for the permanent rabbi position, and recommending a final candidate to the congregation for their vote.

How To Be Involved

To join the team that is **planning the Gala**, contact Samantha Anderson at slboval@gmail.com.

To volunteer to **host a house gathering** in 2017 to solicit input from the congregation about our next rabbi, contact Carolyn Klaasen at carolyn.klaasen@gmail.com.

To **nominate someone to the search committee** (it can be yourself!), contact Roger Westerman at roger@westermadesign.com. Please include one or two lines of pertinent information, such as: how you know the person, how the person is connected with Kolot, and with the Jewish world, and specifically why you think your nominee would be a good choice for this critical committee. **Deadline for nominations is December 21st.**

All hands will truly be needed to carry our congregation through this period of transition and transformation. Please **watch your inbox** for more updates from the Transition Team and opportunities to participate.