

Rabbi Search Committee
Report to the Congregation
June 27, 2021

The Rabbi Search Committee began our work on Feb. 4, 2021. I am privileged to work with a group of dedicated volunteers who represent a broad demographic of our membership. I want to thank them for their diligence and sincerity in what we remind ourselves at each meeting is sacred work.

Phase 1 of our process - Charting a Course for Our Future - is now winding down. Our goal has been to determine who we are as a congregation, who we aspire to be and what our priorities are as we look for a rabbi to help us achieve that vision. I am proud to report that more than 80 people participated in either focus groups or 1:1 conversations with members of the Search Team during Feb. and March. Participants represented a broad demographic of our membership and included some unaffiliated families that were identified as well. We are grateful to all of you for your time and your invaluable input. Your voices have been heard! We have learned a great deal from our many conversations and have organized what we heard into 3 categories: Strengths, Challenges and Recommendations. Here are the major recurring themes:

Strengths:

- Rabbi Seth has provided a strong foundation on which to build.
- KI is a warm and welcoming community, that is both accepting and inclusive.
- KI offers excellent programming - adult education, social action/social justice, Shabbat Out of the Box (an alternative Shabbat experience), varied volunteer opportunities in the broader community, collaborations with other Jewish organizations and more...
- Interfaith families are made to feel welcome at KI.
- KI was able to find creative ways to keep KI members connected during COVID.

Challenges:

- KI needs to focus on engaging our youth and younger families, retain members post B'nai Mitzvah and recruit new members, particularly younger families.
- These are not challenges exclusive to KI as I have learned in my conversations with Presidents of Reform congregations in our region.
- KI needs to re-examine the internal and external communication tools and platforms we use, so that we can reach members, and potential members more effectively.

Recommendations:

- Many concrete suggestions were made to meet the challenges we face. They were shared with the Board of Trustees. Action has already been taken in two key areas.

- A Youth and Family Engagement committee is being formed. It will be exploring innovative ways to connect younger families in order to cultivate a stronger social community among young families and their children.

KI Website will be updated to more accurately tell our unique KI story we are all so proud of so that we will attract outstanding rabbi candidates and new members.

Rabbi Search survey recently completed as of June 18.

Thank you to the more than 138 people who responded to the recent survey. A broad demographic was represented that included respondents from ages 13 - 90 plus. Your opinions matter!!! The rabbi search committee will be analyzing the data at our next meeting in early August and we will be looking forward to sharing the results with the congregation at a special meeting to be scheduled for later in August. A special thank you to our survey expert, Michele Salomon for organizing the survey and tabulating the results. Both the conversations and survey results will guide us in the next phase of the search process.

The timeline for the next phase of the search is as follows:

After the High Holy days in September, KI will submit our application to the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis), the organization that manages career placement for Reform Rabbis. The job will be posted on the CCAR website and we should expect candidates to begin to apply in October/November. Because of our size - approx. 280 families - we are eligible for, but not limited to, newly ordained rabbis from the Reform Movement. In my conversations with the CCAR, we are more likely to have applications from Reform rabbis who may be currently serving as associate rabbis in larger congregations and who are looking to become solo/senior rabbis.

The search team will hold a series of zoom Interviews late fall, early winter in order to screen applicants. We will be inviting finalists (2-3) to come to visit with us at KI, at which time congregants will have the opportunity to meet potential rabbis. The goal is to recommend a candidate to fill the position to the Board by March/April. At that point the congregation will be invited to vote its approval. A new rabbi will begin as of July 1, 2022.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at rabbisearch@kilv.org or call me. On behalf of the entire committee, thank you for the opportunity to serve KI.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Carlis, Chair

And now for the moment you have been waiting for - THE BIG RAFFLE - Thanks to chef Eric for providing a Fajita Feast for four and to Lynda Pollack and Sarah Morse for suggesting the other two mouthwatering prizes.

Drawing

