

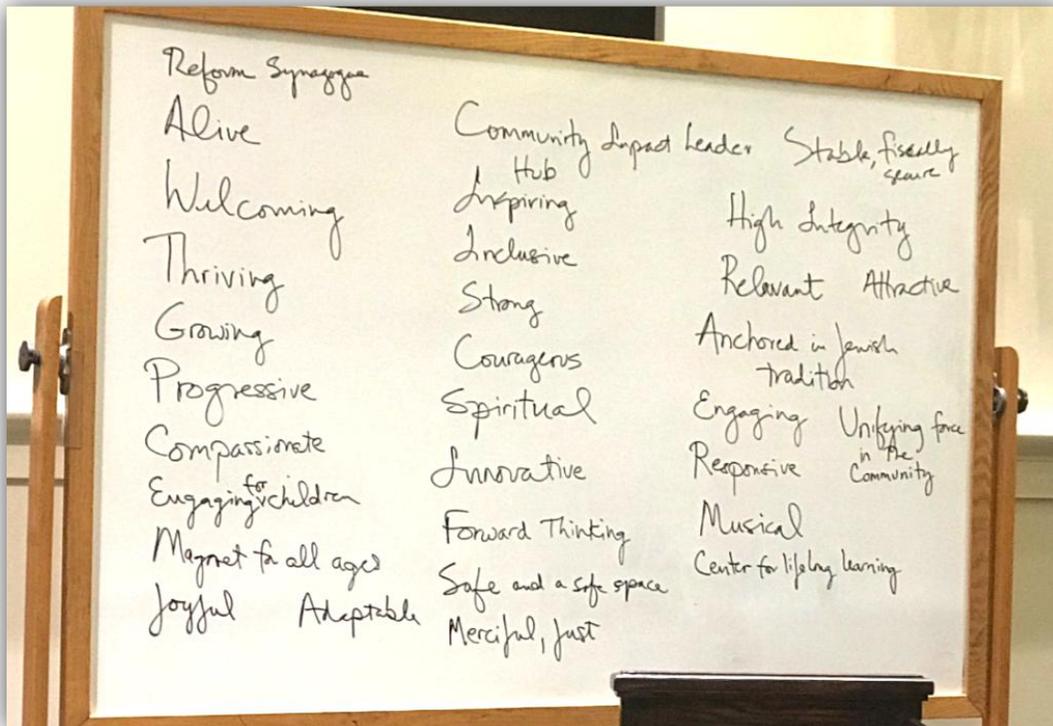
Touro Synagogue Town Hall Meeting
Sunday, December 16, 2018
Agenda

Welcome	Teri
Desired outcomes of meeting	Teri
Any lingering questions about Rabbi Berk's departure	Teri
Looking Forward: What words do we want to use to describe Touro Synagogue 5 years from now?	Teri
Choosing the next Senior Rabbi who will lead us to that description. What are the qualities and priorities we want from our next Senior Rabbi?	Laura
The Search Committee, who they are	Laura
The Search Process <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Search process conducted through CCAR● Settled vs Interim● The steps moving forward● The timeline	Laura
Congregational communication about the Search ongoing <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Survey responses important - viewed by Search Committee, de-identified● Comments to any search committee member are welcome, but we encourage use of the survey because responses are reviewed by all committee members	Laura

Notes from Congregational Town Hall Meeting December 16, 2018

Words to Describe Touro Synagogue Five Years from Now:

- Reform Synagogue
- Alive
- Welcoming
- Thriving
- Growing
- Progressive
- Compassionate
- Engaging for Children
- Magnet for All Ages
- Joyful
- Adaptable
- Community Impact Leader Hub
- Inspiring
- Inclusive
- Strong
- Courageous
- Spiritual
- Innovative
- Forward-Thinking
- Safe and a Safe Space
- Merciful/Just
- Stable, Fiscally Secure
- High Integrity
- Relevant
- Attractive
- Anchored in Jewish Tradition
- Engaging
- Unifying Force in the Community
- Responsive
- Musical
- Center for Lifelong Learning



Next Rabbi – Qualities and Priorities

- Discussed the confidential responses to the on-line survey to date:
 - Welcoming and inclusive to all – interfaith, mixed race, same sex couples, Jews by choice were mentioned
 - Committed to social justice
 - Topics from the pulpit – seemed split on whether to address secular issues
 - Israel was mentioned but not a lot
- CCAR has provided guidance on how to ask about a candidate's personal stance on interfaith, same sex marriages – something like “what is your position and how did you come to it?” This should enable us to understand the nuances that a rabbi considers. CCAR advises that 50% of the candidates may not agree with our requirements – especially if stated as all or nothing. So, we need to be careful – and thoughtful – as to how we ask / explore with the candidates.
- How will the candidates interview us – will they tell us what they are looking for to ensure we are a good fit for them?
- Lifelong learning and social justice are important activities – as well as prayer and spiritual support. We must be a spiritual place. Someone mentioned that we should ask about ideas to get more folks to Saturday morning services.
- How will we learn about a candidate's knowledge of New Orleans – given its differences and challenges (schools, government bureaucracy, streets as examples). We need to be sure that they have researched and have time to learn about New Orleans – so that we don't hire someone who leaves quickly as a result of not adapting to this place or being unaccepting of its unique qualities. This has been an issue with some of the young cantors we have hired
- Empathy is an important quality (and Laura reported that we will be asking about pastoral training and experience)
- Someone who exudes warmth and invites personal contact
- Important that the rabbi listen and hear congregants' views. Differences are expected and should be welcomed. Part of being an inclusive, safe space. Ability to talk through disagreements respectfully.
- Rabbi must have opinions – and must express them. If that isn't done, it doesn't invite discussion.
- Role of the cantor in this process? Laura explained that both Kevin and Todd are ex-officio and important – that we wouldn't hire anyone without their input.
- Are the job descriptions of the three clergy clear – or in need of adjustments? Roles evolve and are fluid – the new team will work it out together.
- Diversity on the bimah – it was asked if the committee would give priority to hiring a woman. Laura explained that we will evaluate all candidates regardless of age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or marital status.
- Can we expect a lifetime rabbi? Can we ask about long-term plans? The current trend is away from lifetime appointments – but that doesn't mean we might not get someone like that. Additionally, we have mentioned in our application the revolving door for cantors – and it's clear that we are disappointed about that.
- Will we interview a candidate's significant other? No, but we will have opportunities during the visit to have meals and meet that person. Agreed that this is very important.
- Importance of the three clergy working well as a team.

- We should provide a lot of help to the new rabbi in finding a home in a neighborhood that is a good fit for the rabbi and schools for children. Establish an active welcome committee for the whole family.
- Go for the “A” candidate – don’t settle for the “B” candidate – even if that “B” candidate seems more likely to stay longer.
- Do we have data on why families have left Touro – and is that information instructive to our rabbi search? Discussed politics and the Reform Movement’s position as possible reasons.

Search Committee members named – and positive feedback received.

Search Process described.

- CCAR process described. Zoom – then on-site visits.
- Board Policy – to follow CCAR rules
- Minimum of three years’ experience required for our size congregation.
- Question about whether a longer than 2-day visit is possible – yes. But not over Shabbat.
- Engagement of congregation? If the candidate agrees – part of the confidentiality aspect of the process. At the very least, the search committee will engage in a mid-week service and a teaching session.
- Settled vs. Interim – explained the terms and how we will proceed to first try to hire a settled rabbi – and if, by end of Feb / early March, that hasn’t happened, we will switch our focus (and application) to an interim. Explained that interim rabbis are specifically trained for the purpose of serving as an interim rabbi during a transition. Also explained that an interim rabbi is not a candidate to stay on in a permanent role.