

**RABBINICAL PLACEMENT COMMISSION**  
**355 LEXINGTON AVENUE ~ NEW YORK, NY 10017**  
**212-972-3636 ~ F: 212-972-5192**

**APPLICATION FOR CONGREGATIONAL SEARCH FOR A RABBI**

*PLEASE COMPLETE APPLICATION ELECTRONICALLY AND RETURN VIA EMAIL AS AN ATTACHMENT TO [MTOMPSON@CCARNET.ORG](mailto:MTOMPSON@CCARNET.ORG)*

DATE	<b>FEBRUARY 26, 2008</b>
CONGREGATION	<b>OAK PARK TEMPLE B'NAI ABRAHAM ZION</b>
ADDRESS	<b>1235 N. HARLEM AVENUE</b>
EMAIL / TELEPHONE	<b>708-386-3937</b>
PRESIDENT	<b>LINDA ROSS</b>
EMAIL / TELEPHONE	<a href="mailto:MROSSMERE@AOL.COM">MROSSMERE@AOL.COM</a> / <b>708-447-4319</b>
CURRENT RABBI AND LENGTH OF TENURE	<b>RABBI GARY S. GERSON / 28 YEARS, 7 MONTHS</b>
CHAIR OF SEARCH COMMITTEE	<b>JEFFREY N. BLAINE</b>
ADDRESS	<b>803 MONROE AVENUE, RIVER FOREST, IL 60305</b>
EMAIL / TELEPHONE	<a href="mailto:JEFFBLAINELCSW@COMCAST.NET">JEFFBLAINELCSW@COMCAST.NET</a> / <b>312-201-4400</b>

PROFESSIONAL STAFF:	PLEASE LIST THE NAMES AND TITLES OF MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF. INDICATE "P" FOR PART-TIME; "F" FOR FULL TIME.
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ASSOCIATE RABBI	N/A	NURSERY SCHOOL DIRECTOR	<b>MARCI SPERLING FLYNN "F"</b>
ASSISTANT RABBI	N/A	ORGANIST	<b>JAMES WINFIELD "P"</b>
CANTOR	<b>CANTOR JULIE YUGEND GREEN "F"</b>	RITUAL DIRECTOR	N/A
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	<b>LEE KARROW "F"</b> <i>RETIRING 3/1/2008</i>	SECRETARIAL	<b>CINDY EVANS "P"</b> <b>ALENE GOREN-TAYLOR "P"</b> <b>SUZANNE DUBIN "P"</b>
EDUCATOR OR PRINCIPAL	<b>ROBIN ARBETMAN "F"</b>	YOUTH DIRECTOR	<b>DAVID COHN "P"</b>
BOOKKEEPER	<b>ELLEN COPE "P"</b>	OTHER	

PLACEMENT POLICY: IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGH IDEALS OF REFORM JUDAISM, OUR CONGREGATION WILL NOT EXCLUDE A CANDIDATE FROM CONSIDERATION BASED ON AGE, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR MARITAL STATUS. THE CONGREGATION AGREES, ALSO, TO FOLLOW THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ENCLOSED DOCUMENT ENTITLED "GUIDELINES FOR RABBINICAL-CONGREGATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS."

**LINDA GLAZZER ROSS** DATE **2/26/2008**  
SIGNATURE OF PRESIDENT (PLEASE KEY IN SIGNATURE)

<b>CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY</b>			
NUMBER OF MEMBER UNITS TODAY. TOTAL:		<b>506</b>	
FAMILIES / <b>~426</b>	SINGLE MEMBERS / <b>~80</b>	CHILDREN 0-4 / <b>~125</b>	CHILDREN 5-13 / <b>~300</b>
AGE DISTRIBUTION / <b>0 - 90</b>			
NUMBER OF MEMBER UNITS FIVE YEARS AGO: TOTAL /		<b>~425</b>	
FAMILIES / <b>~350</b>	SINGLE MEMBERS / <b>~75</b>	CHILDREN 0-4 / <b>~100</b>	CHILDREN 5-13 / <b>~250</b>
FUTURE DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTS ARE: ?			
DATE SYNAGOGUE FOUNDED: <b>1864</b>	IS THERE A SYNAGOGUE BUILDING? <b>YES</b>	DATE BUILT / <b>1957, NEW WING CONSTRUCTED 2000</b>	
PROVIDE A BRIEF HISTORY OF SYNAGOGUE AT END OF APPLICATION		<b>SEE END OF THIS APPLICATION</b>	
WHAT ARE YOUR CONGREGATION'S CORE VALUES?		<p>The purpose of this Congregation shall be to worship God in accordance with Judaism, to cultivate a love and understanding of the Jewish heritage, to stimulate fellowship in the Jewish community, and to strengthen the bonds of loyalty with the Jewish people everywhere. This Congregation shall promote Judaism in all aspects of life through public and private worship, religious education, and through social welfare activities and such other means as shall serve to convey the teachings of Judaism.</p> <p><i>[CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF OAK PARK TEMPLE B'NAI ABRAHAM ZION AS AMENDED JANUARY 26, 2007, ARTICLE II]</i></p>	
<b>SYNAGOGUE FACILITIES</b>			
PERMANENT SEATS IN SANCTUARY / <b>280</b>		SANCTUARY SEATING EXPANDABLE TO / <b>1,000</b>	
NUMBER CLASSROOMS / <b>10</b> + 2 FLEXIBLE CLASSROOMS	NUMBER OFFICES / <b>5</b>	SOCIAL HALL/AUDITORIUM / <b>1</b>	KITCHENS / <b>2</b>
LIBRARY / <b>1</b>	YOUTH LOUNGE / <b>1</b>	RABBI'S STUDY / <b>1</b>	CHAPEL / <b>1</b>
OTHER / <b>ROTUNDA, BABY SITTING ROOM, CHOIR LOFT</b>		CONFERENCE ROOMS / <b>5</b>	
ADULT EDUCATION ROOMS / <b>4</b>		GIFT SHOP / <b>1</b>	
<b>RELIGIOUS SERVICES</b>			
THE PRAYERBOOKS USED FOR:			
<b>SABBATHS AND FESTIVALS: MISHKAN T'FILAH - CCAR</b>		<b>HIGH HOLY DAY: GATES OF REPENTENCE - CCAR</b>	

<b>RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS</b>			
DO YOU HAVE: WEEKDAY HEBREW SCHOOL / YES		HIGH SCHOOL / YES	
DO YOU HAVE: NURSERY SCHOOL / YES			
WHAT GRADES / PRESCHOOL - 10	NUMBER OF TEACHERS / 18	PUPILS / 265	NUMBER OF DAYS/WEEK / 2
DO YOU HAVE A SCHOOL BUILDING? <b>No</b>		IF NO, WHERE DO CLASSES MEET? <b>CLASSROOMS IN THE TEMPLE -SCHOOL WING</b>	
IS HIGH SCHOOL PART OF COMMUNAL SCHOOL?		<b>YES, THROUGH 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE</b>	
SUMMARIZE THE SCHOOL PROGRAM AND PHILOSOPHY:		<b>SEE BELOW</b>	

## **OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL'S MISSION STATEMENT**

Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion recognizes the right of our children to a program of religious education, which will:

- Promote the development of a positive Jewish identity through word and deed, mitzvot and tzedakah.
- Enable our children to become observant and active members of the Jewish community.
- Provide quality studies of the pillars of Judaism: God, Torah and Israel; of our rituals, observances, services and prayers; and of our holidays.
- Create a warm, welcoming and inspirational environment where student-teacher-temple relationships will flourish.
- Nurture each child to assert a proud Jewish identity that will help each to live a life of joy and celebration of self, family and community.

## **SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL**

Recognizing the family as the primary site for the formation of spiritual values, the goal of the religious school is to support and facilitate this process. The meaning of God is discussed in an open fashion. Each child is given the opportunity to explore a unique and personal relationship with God. Self-expression is encouraged in order to provide an optimum environment for growth. Our spiritual philosophy rests upon the belief that our lives have meaning, that each of us matters and that we are connected to something greater than ourselves.

As a spiritual resource and in an atmosphere of caring, openness and trust, the Temple provides a safe place where values-related concerns are discussed. The idea of mitzvot is central to our curriculum at every grade level, reinforcing values, ethical behavior, and the responsibilities of the individual within our society.

The spiritual dimension of Jewish life permeates our religious school experience. As they explore their own developing spirituality, our children are encouraged to do so with creativity, freedom of thought and open minds.

## **THE PRESCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Beatrice and Morris Glasser Preschool is to provide an educational foundation for young children including teachings of Judaism as embraced by Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion.

Glasser Preschool promotes each child's physical, emotional, educational, educational, ethical and social growth. Our curriculum is designed around the concept that children learn through play. Our classroom environment encourages children to make choices, develop a positive self-concept, and promote learning through experimentation and problem-solving.

Glasser Preschool enhances the Oak Park Temple community by providing religious, educational and social support for families with young children.

Glasser Preschool welcomes all children regardless of religious affiliation, and strives to promote acceptance and understanding of the benefits of diversity.

<b>COMMUNITY PROFILE</b>	
OTHER JEWISH AGENCIES AND FACILITIES / <b>YES</b>	
JEWISH HOME FOR AGED / <b>NUMEROUS</b>	JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL / <b>YES</b>
FEDERATION AND WELFARE FUND / <b>CHICAGO</b>	DAY SCHOOL/
HOW MANY OTHER CONGREGATIONS / <b>2 + MANY MORE IN THE GREATER CHICAGO AREA</b>	HOW MANY CONSERVATIVE / <b>1 + SHIR AMI (CONSERVATIVE HAVURAH)</b>
OTHER MAJOR INSTITUTIONS IN COMMUNITY /	
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN AREA:	<b>ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO</b>	<b>COLUMBIA COLLEGE OF CHICAGO</b>
<b>NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY</b>
<b>LOYOLA UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>CONCORDIA COLLEGE</b>
<b>UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS</b>	<b>NATIONAL LEWIS UNIVERSITY</b>
<b>DEPAUL UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>BENEDICTINE UNIVERSITY</b>
<b>SPERTUS INSTITUTE OF JEWISH STUDIES</b>	
<b>IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
<b>WHAT THREE QUALITIES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU IN YOUR NEW RABBI?</b>	
<p>The three most important qualities in our new rabbi are 1) <b>the ability to lead</b>, based on a foundation of spirituality, a warm and approachable personality, and the ability to both inspire and exude enthusiasm; 2) <b>the ability to teach</b>, grounded by a deep knowledge of Jewish history, culture and liturgy, and the ability to convey that knowledge in an accessible manner; and 3) <b>the ability to make a personal connection</b> with all of our members through engagement in all facets of Temple life.</p>	

**THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES OF OUR RABBI SHOULD BE:**

1. **Enhancing Oak Park Temple as a warm and welcoming place** by being accessible to and meeting the personal, spiritual, and life-cycle needs of congregants particularly our youth and younger congregants, being an approachable, visible and integral part of the Temple community and supporting the safe expression of minority views in our congregation.
2. **Revitalizing and transforming the worship experience for congregants**, with a focus on Shabbat, while enhancing congregants' Jewish knowledge, commitment, and identity through sermons and other avenues of intellectual engagement.
3. **Leading and teaching congregants** through personal example, as well as from the pulpit, in both formal and informal settings, and effectively leading and collaborating with Temple staff, lay leaders, and people in the broader Jewish and secular communities in and beyond Oak Park.

**THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING A RABBI NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS CONGREGATION IS:**

We are a Reform Jewish congregation, very diverse in our religious backgrounds, levels of observance and Jewish literacy, family structures, ethnicity, politics, economic status, and sexual orientation.

Our diversity reflects the community in which we are located. While Jews are a minority population in the western suburbs of Chicago, our choice to live in this community largely reflects a commitment to this diversity.

**THE THREE ACTIVITIES YOU LEAST WANT THE RABBI TO BE INVOLVED IN:**

The Rabbi should not be overly involved in anything that distracts from being the spiritual leader of our congregation.

**WHAT ARE THE THREE PRIMARY GOALS OF YOUR SYNAGOGUE?**

- 1) **To build a sense of community** and a vibrant, welcoming Reform Jewish home in the western suburbs of Chicago.
- 2) To continue our congregation's rich tradition of **Jewish education, social action** and **artistic expression** for all members, across the life span.
- 3) **To create meaningful worship** that energizes our membership and inspires spiritual growth and a passion for righteousness.

**THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES TO CONFRONT IN YOUR SYNAGOGUE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WILL BE:**

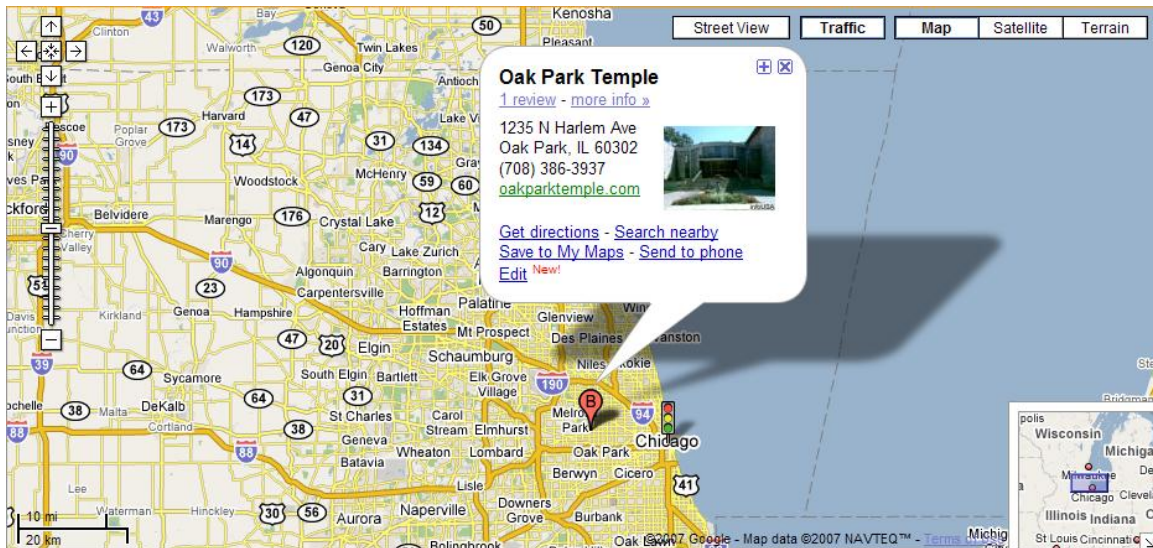
1. Retaining current members and attracting new members by being a warm and welcoming community, with specific focus on engaging pre-school and post-B'nai mitzvah families; creating new avenues for current members to participate in temple life; recruiting and developing more lay leaders; and embracing the varied needs of our congregation.
2. Achieving financial strength and maintaining the Temple building through growth in both dues and non-dues revenue, as well as prudent cost controls.
3. The transition to a new Rabbi, who will replace a Rabbi retiring after 30 years of service to this congregation.

**WHAT ARE YOUR CONGREGATION'S STRENGTHS?**

The strengths of Oak Park Temple include our diverse membership, our cantor, our professional educators and our commitment to high quality educational programming. Our congregation is strengthened by an extensive array of backgrounds, traditions, and family structures. Our thriving preschool, religious school, two Jewish summer camps and our Annual Congregational Retreat are embraced by our members. Our vibrant adult programs offer creative avenues for members to share their knowledge and explore Judaism.



MAP: THE LOCATION OF A COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT TO THE CANDIDATE. PLEASE PROVIDE A MAP THAT INDICATES WHERE YOUR SYNAGOGUE IS LOCATED, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHERE YOUR COMMUNITY IS LOCATED IN RELATION TO A MAJOR URBAN CENTER. THE MAP CAN NOT BE LARGER THAN 8-1/2" X 11" SO IT MAY BE PHOTOCOPIED.



## Temple History

The congregation traces its history back to 1864, when Zion Congregation, the fourth Chicago synagogue, was formed. Our other parent congregation, B'nai Abraham Congregation, was formed in 1873. The two congregations merged in 1919 to form Congregation B'nai Abraham Zion or Washington Boulevard Temple, as it came to be known. In 1957 the congregation moved to Oak Park and became Oak Park Temple.

The Congregation has been served by many distinguished rabbis. Rabbi Bernhard Felsenthal, Zion's founding rabbi, served from 1864 until 1887. He was an outspoken abolitionist and one of the first Reform Zionists (hence the Congregation's name). Rabbi Felsenthal authored *Kol Kore Bamidbar*, Chicago's first publication of Jewish content. He was the first President of the Rabbinical Association of Chicago and was the founder of the Jewish Publications Society of America and the American Jewish Historical Society.

Dr. Joseph Stolz, the first American born rabbi, followed Rabbi Felsenthal at Zion, serving from 1887 until 1896. At that time, Dr. Stolz, later to become the President of the CCAR, followed the bulk of Zion's members, who had moved from Chicago's West Side to the South Side, and became the first rabbi at the new congregation that they established.

Rabbi Samuel S. Cohon held the Zion pulpit from 1913 until the merger in 1919. Rabbi Cohon went on to teach theology at Hebrew Union College for thirty-five years. While there he rose to the presidency of the CCAR and was a principal author of the Columbus Platform of 1937.

Rabbi Samuel S. Schwartz shepherded the congregational merger, serving as head rabbi from 1920 until 1945 and as Emeritus rabbi well into the 1960's. Rabbi Schwartz and his wife, Charlotte, are credited with uniting the two merging congregations into one entity.

In 1939 the Temple chose W. Gunther Plaut as its Assistant Rabbi. After serving as an Army Chaplain, he became Associate Rabbi and later Head Rabbi, staying until 1948. Rabbi Plaut later became the commentator and editor of *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*.

Rabbi Leonard J. Mervis arrived to lead the congregation in 1951 and stayed 28 years. He was relentless in his efforts to understand the Civil Rights Movement, the War on Poverty, and opposition to the War in Viet Nam in the context of Jewish thinking.

In 1979 Rabbi Gary S. Gerson succeeded Rabbi Mervis. He promoted significant expansion of the congregation's adult education program. Rabbi Gerson spurred the formation of the Temple's first Torah study group as well as the three others that followed. With his prodding increasing numbers of adults began to study Hebrew and Temple members began participating more extensively in religious services, reading Torah and delivering Divrei Torah.