

TBS Transition FAQs (January 2018)

1. What is a settled rabbi?

A settled rabbi is the long-term congregational Senior Rabbi.

2. When will Rabbi Perlin officially retire?

Rabbi Perlin's last day as the TBS settled rabbi will be June 30, 2018.

3. What opportunities will there be to honor Rabbi Perlin before she leaves?

The Board is currently planning two events to honor and celebrate Rabbi Perlin. A gala event will be held in Rabbi Perlin's honor on May 12, 2018, which we hope as many members will attend as possible. Additionally, the weekend of April 27-29 will include a guest sermon in honor of Rabbi Perlin on Friday night by Rabbi Dr. Aaron Panken, President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and a special Saturday night Havdalah concert in her honor for all of our members, as well as a Sunday morning Mitzvah Day featuring all of her favorite charities. Watch your mail and email for more information about these important events.

4. What is an Interim Rabbi?

Interim Clergy have existed for many years, and this has been a successful model in churches for decades. More recently, the CCAR (the Central Conference of American Rabbis) has begun recommending that congregations follow this model, especially in cases of long-serving clergy. An Interim Rabbi is specifically trained to be a transitional rabbi. The purpose of an Interim Rabbi is to help a congregation transition to a new full term rabbi thoughtfully and with plenty of time to vision for the future. There are one and two-year models. The Board chose to follow a two-year recommendation to give the congregation time to grieve the loss of Rabbi Perlin and then to have an expert in transitions help our entire TBS community prepare for the rigor of a new rabbi search in a thoughtful way.

5. When will the Interim Rabbi begin serving the congregation?

TBS has given Rabbi Darryl Crystal a two-year contract to be our our Interim Rabbi, effective July 1, 2018.

6. Why did the Board select Rabbi Crystal to serve as the Interim Rabbi?

Rabbi Crystal is one of the leading Interim Rabbis in the Reform movement. He has traveled the United States, serving as Interim Rabbi for thirteen congregations that ranged in size from 230 to 975 households since 2004. He is also the manager of the Interim Rabbi Program for the Reform movement, responsible for training and consulting with all Interim Rabbis.

7. Why did the Board hire an Interim Rabbi for a two-year period?

Hiring an Interim Rabbi for a two-year term allows the congregation time to adjust to having a new spiritual and congregational leader. This two-year interim period will also allow the TBS Board to better define our community's needs for the future and establish our community's search criteria for a settled rabbi. In other words, this process ensures the settled rabbi we ultimately select will be the best possible fit for our community.

8. What will be the role of the Interim Rabbi at Temple B'nai Shalom?

As an Interim Rabbi, Rabbi Crystal will fulfill all of the responsibilities of a congregational rabbi in conjunction with Rabbi Rappaport and consistent with our TBS minhag, and work with TBS during this two-year transition as we develop a vision for the future and search for a settled senior rabbi.

9. Will Rabbi Crystal perform B'nai Mitzvah and other life cycle events?

Yes. Rabbi Crystal will perform all of the functions of a congregational Senior Rabbi. The specific division of duties will be decided by Rabbi Crystal and Rabbi Rappaport, in consultation with the Board.

10. What if I want Rabbi Perlin to perform a life cycle event for my family after her retirement?

Although Rabbi Perlin will be retiring from TBS on June 30, 2018, she is not retiring from our lives, and she will retain the title Rabbi Emerita. Her participation in life cycle events at TBS will be determined by her in consultation with the new rabbis. For the most part, Rabbi Perlin will not be available for life cycle events.

11. Is hiring an Interim Rabbi unique to TBS?

No. Although this transition may be new for many of our members, the practice of utilizing an Interim Rabbi is common across the Reform Jewish movement. The URJ and the CCAR created a robust Interim Rabbi program to help congregations transition from long-standing spiritual leaders.

12. Have any other Reform congregations gone through a similar process?

Yes. Below are links to the transition pages that other congregations have used in recent years to document and communicate their processes.

- [Temple Israel of Boston Rabbinic Transition Process](#)
- [Temple Beth Am \(Seattle\) Rabbinic Transition Process](#)

13. Were many candidates considered for the Interim Rabbi position?

The Board received and reviewed over twenty applications for the Interim Rabbi position. These materials were screened by the search committee, and the top candidates were interviewed both in person and via Skype.

14. How will the settled rabbi be selected?

The Board will select our settled rabbi after a rigorous process of interviews and congregational visits, and then present the choice to a congregational meeting, as required by our Bylaws. Further communications will explain additional functions and processes designed to involve the entire congregation in the selection process. This will ensure that the settled rabbi will be the best possible fit for our congregation. Jack Schreiber will continue to lead the TBS Rabbinic Search

Committee to search for and bring the best settled rabbinic candidates forward to TBS.

15. Why didn't TBS hire a settled rabbi now?

The TBS Board consulted closely with the URJ and CCAR to determine the best process with which to identify a settled Senior Rabbi. Experienced experts suggest that hiring an Interim Rabbi will give our temple community time to both honor Rabbi Perlin and adjust to her no longer being our spiritual and congregational leader. Congregations that jump into hiring a new Senior Rabbi without a transition often experience problems, as there is too much comparison and often not enough time to thoughtfully consider what the congregation truly wants from a rabbi in the future.

16. Will the Interim Rabbi be considered for settled rabbi position?

As an Interim Rabbi, Rabbi Crystal's role is specifically to guide TBS as our congregation transitions to a new settled rabbi. CCAR rules, which TBS accepts and included in our contract with Rabbi Crystal, specifically excludes the Interim Rabbi from applying for the settled rabbi position.

17. Will Rabbi Rappaport be considered for the the settled rabbi position?

Rabbi Rappaport has grown to become an integral part of the TBS community, and the Board does not expect anything to change with respect to her relationship with TBS. TBS's Board is committed to a transparent and inclusive process with the highest level of integrity. When we formally post the job description, we expect to have a strong pool of qualified candidates that could include an internal candidate. Rabbi Rappaport is fully supportive of our decision and committed to being part of TBS's bright future.

18. Was Rabbi Rappaport considered for the Interim Rabbi position?

No. Rabbi Rappaport was not considered for the Interim Rabbi position because the Board explicitly sought to hire an expert in congregational transition who will leave our community after two years. Furthermore, the Board specifically wanted to keep Rabbi Rappaport in her current position to provide an important element

of continuity, especially for our religious school. We are very grateful that Rabbi Rappaport will provide the continuity and consistency we need from one transition to another over the next three years.

19. Where can we learn more about Interim Rabbis?

You can learn more about the Interim Rabbi program and the role of an Interim Rabbi by reading "[When Your Rabbi Leaves](#)" by Deborah Prinz (Reform Judaism Magazine, Summer 2010) Additionally, Rabbi Crystal, our new Interim Rabbi, wrote a wonderful article entitled, "[The Interim Rabbi: Anatomy of a Transition.](#)"

20. What if I have additional questions?

You can send your questions to transitions@tbs-online.org. All comments will receive a personal response from the appropriate TBS Board member. Additionally, questions submitted by TBS members may be used or consolidated in future FAQs.