

Temple Solel Settled Rabbi Search

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is a “settled rabbi”?

This is language the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) uses to distinguish a long-term rabbinic hire from hiring an interim rabbi. Basically, it's the senior rabbi of the congregation with whom we want to have a longer relationship.

What is the CCAR, and why are we working through it?

The CCAR is the professional organization for Reform rabbis. It manages the official placement process between congregations and rabbis. As a Union of Reform Judaism-member congregation, Temple Solel must use the CCAR system to identify and hire our next senior rabbi.

How is the next senior rabbi selected?

According to our bylaws, the **Board of Trustees** is responsible for hiring the senior rabbi. To carry out this work, the Board appoints a **Rabbinic Search Committee (RSC)**. The RSC will:

- Develop and submit an application to the CCAR (based on previous congregational input),
- Review applications from interested rabbis,
- Conduct interviews, and
- Recommend a final candidate to the Board.

If the Board approves the recommendation, it will extend an offer and negotiate a contract with the chosen rabbi.

Who serves on the Rabbinic Search Committee?

Members were appointed by Immediate Past President Eve Danoff and President Jennet Kirkpatrick to reflect the diversity of our congregation—by age, family status, and professional background.

 [\[Link to Committee bios and photos – to be added\]](#)

What is the search process timeline?

Here's an overview of the steps:

1. **Spring 2025:** The RSC uses congregant feedback gathered by a Research Committee in 2024 to shape our CCAR application and a brochure.
2. **By August 15, 2025:** Application submitted to CCAR.
3. **Fall 2025 – Winter 2026:**
 - Rabbis express interest via CCAR.
 - RSC reviews applications, contacts qualified candidates, and conducts video interviews.
 - Promising candidates are invited for repeat interviews and in-person visits, including tours and meetings with clergy and lay leaders.
4. **Winter-Spring 2026:** After final interviews, the RSC recommends one candidate to the Board.
5. If approved, the Board makes an offer and begins contract negotiations.
6. We aim to welcome a new settled rabbi by **July 1, 2026**.

The process is dynamic and depends on the number of rabbis searching and the number of congregations hiring. In 2008, for example, Rabbi Linder was not identified until late autumn of 2007.

When will we know who applied?

Not for a long time—and possibly not until a decision is made.

The search process is **strictly confidential** to protect the rabbis involved. Candidates often do not inform their current congregations unless they receive an offer. Leaks could harm their reputations or relationships. For that reason, Committee members will not share any identifying details with family, friends, or the wider community.

Will the congregation meet the candidates on the bimah?

No. Candidates will not give public presentations or lead services. The process emphasizes confidentiality, consistent with CCAR guidelines.

What happens if we don't find a rabbi by July 1, 2026?

We believe the cultural amenities, lifestyle, and vibrant Jewish community in greater Phoenix, not to mention all the positives of Temple Solel's community, promise to attract a good field of candidates. Most congregations successfully meet their timelines for selecting a settled rabbi, and we are planning with that in mind. But if our timeline is not met, we will consult with the CCAR for additional guidance and next steps.


What is our current clergy's role in the search?

- **Rabbi Linder** will retire in June 2025 and become Rabbi Emeritus. He will not participate in the selection but may speak to candidates upon request.
- **Rabbi Debbie Stiel** has chosen **not to apply** for the settled rabbi position. She and **Cantorial Soloist Todd Herzog** will meet the final candidates.
- **Executive Director Peter Pishko** is supporting the Committee throughout the process.
- **Rabbi Crystal** is offering guidance based on his experience with rabbinic transitions.

Final hiring decisions rest solely with the Board of Trustees.

How will the congregation be kept informed?

We are committed to transparency where possible. Here's how updates will be shared:


- Regular reports to the **Board of Trustees**
- Updates in **eNUZ**
- Information posted on the **Rabbinic Search Committee page** of the temple website
 **[Insert link when available]**

Certain elements must remain confidential, but everything we are allowed to share, we will.

Have questions or input?

We welcome your thoughts throughout this process.

 **Email:** rabbisearch25@gmail.com

 **Committee Co-Chairs:** Howard Rosen and Judy Schaffert
(Their contact information is also available in the Temple directory.)
