February 26, 2020

A LETTER FROM CONGREGATION ALBERT BOARD OF TRUSTEE PRESIDENT DALE ATKINSON REGARDING THE SEARCH FOR A NEW RABBI

Dear Congregation Albert Members:

As you may know, Rabbi Rosenfeld has announced his retirement effective June 30, 2021. We are grateful for his many contributions to Congregation Albert (CA) over the past eight plus years, and will continue to appreciate his leadership during the next 16 months. And, of course, when June 2021 rolls around, we will wish him much mazel on his retirement. We are happy that he and his wife, Michele Hope, will remain part of our CA family.

We are beginning our search for a new rabbi this month. While 16 months may seem like quite a ways off, starting now will allow us to offer multiple opportunities for ALL our members to provide input and participate in the selection process. Throughout this year we will conduct a number of meetings for CA members and distribute a survey to help us identify what experience, qualities and skills we would like our new rabbi to have. We will work together to create a description of our aspirations for our new rabbi that reflects the highest priorities of our CA membership. By beginning our rabbi search now, we can be prepared to bring our new rabbi on board without having to bring in an interim rabbi.

We are fortunate to have a framework for this process that has been developed by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). We will be using this framework as we conduct our search for our new CA rabbi. We have added a CA Rabbi Search page to our website at https://www.congregationalbert.org/rabbi-search and have posted the four modules outlining the URJ process. We also encourage you to visit the CA Rabbi Search Committee (RSC) web page for more information about the search process, including our "CA Journey to a new Rabbi Frequently Asked Questions."

I am pleased to announce that Charna Lefton and Joe Weiss will be serving as the Co-Chairs of our CA RSC. Many of you know Charna as a long-time member of CA who was born and raised in Albuquerque. Charna is a life-long member of our CA family – she was named, attended Hebrew and religious school, celebrated becoming Bat Mitzvah and was confirmed at Congregation Albert. While she spent a number of years living and working in other locations, CA remained her strongest congregational connection to Judaism. She has been back in Albuquerque and an active member of CA for the past 15 years. Her professional background in executive leadership, communications, facilitation and consensus building makes her skill set an excellent fit for our CA RSC Co-Chair.

Joe Weiss has been in Albuquerque for about 23 years after growing up on the East Coast. He has worked for The University of New Mexico almost his entire time in New Mexico and is currently the Senior Director of Development for the Anderson School of Management at UNM. He grew up in a "conservadox" synagogue and has been a member of CA for over 10 years, having joined when he married his wife Roxanne Turley. They have one son (Levi, 8) who attends and enjoys CA religious school.
Charna and Joe both represent and deeply appreciate the diversity of our CA family. They are committed to making the rabbi search process inclusive and welcoming. They will name up to five other members of the RSC in the next several weeks, and will share that information with you. As Co-Chairs, Charna and Joe will also form an RSC Advisory Committee of CA members who represent our many stakeholder groups, including the various organizations, committees, educational programs, and other constituencies that are so important to our congregational identity. We plan to have the RSC Advisory Committee in place in March. There will be four distinct elements to our rabbi search:

- Everyone will have opportunities to provide input, and all comments will be shared with the Advisory Committee.
- The Advisory Committee will analyze the comments and provide guidance to the RSC about what characteristics, skills and abilities CA members think are important for a new rabbi to have. This information will be used to develop our job announcement.
- The RSC will interview candidates and select finalists. The finalists will be invited to visit CA and for another interview.
- The RSC will make a selection recommendation to the CA Board of Trustees. The congregation will vote on the Board-approved candidate. Thus, the new rabbi will ultimately be selected by a vote of CA members.

Beginning in April, the RSC and Advisory Committee will host meetings and activities over several months designed to guide us through the process of discussing and refining what characteristics and skills we envision for the rabbi who will lead our congregation into the future. As noted earlier, there will be multiple opportunities for every member of our CA family to share in the development of these priorities and goals. The RSC will use CA members’ feedback to develop our new Rabbi’s recruitment announcement.

**We will be using volunteer facilitators to collect comments and ideas from CA members during the search process. If you are an experienced facilitator, mediator and/or meeting manager and would like to volunteer to facilitate our input gathering process, please let Charna and Joe know via an email to the RSC gmail account (see below).**

In addition to the CA RSC, we will be forming a Transition Team to support our CA members as we transition to a new rabbi. We will provide further information on the Transition Team in the coming weeks.

One of the most important components of change and transition is communication. This letter marks our first, but certainly not our only, effort to communicate with our CA family as we work through the process of selecting our new rabbi. We will provide regular updates via our CA website, email, *Ma Yesh*, announcements at services and events, and future correspondence. We have also established a dedicated email account for our CA rabbi search. Please feel free to send an email at any time if you have questions, concerns or other input for the CA RSC. That email address is: [carabbisearch@gmail.com](mailto:carabbisearch@gmail.com).

Change can be both exciting and stressful. As we begin our journey of transition to a new rabbi over the next 16 months, I am so grateful that we will have the support of the URJ, the CCAR, and – most importantly – one another. Together we will traverse this change with both growth and grace.
Sincerely,

Dale Atkinson
President