



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Temple Emanu-El Welcomes Rabbi Ashira Stevens as New Spiritual Leader

Temple Emanu-El of Haverhill is thrilled to welcome Rabbi Ashira Stevens as its new spiritual leader beginning July 1. Rabbi Stevens succeeds Cantor Vera Broekhuysen, who has served as cantor since 2016 and spiritual leader since 2018.

“We are so excited to have Rabbi Stevens back in our community,” said Temple Emanu-El President Jennifer Lampron. “Rabbi Stevens first came to Temple Emanu-El as an intern four years ago. Since then, she has continued her engagement and strengthened her bond with our community. Rabbi Stevens’ rich background—from her wealth of educational experience to her ability to reach those of various levels of observance—makes her the perfect choice to lead our congregation.”

“I am delighted to be returning to Temple Emanu-El in this new role!” said Rabbi Stevens. “As their intern, I was struck by how warm and nurturing everyone was. As rabbi, I am looking forward to being part of this holy caring community. I hope to share my love of Judaism such that people of all ages and from all backgrounds find their place within our traditions and as a part of Temple Emanu-El. Judaism offers so many ways ‘in’—whether through studying our sacred texts, engaging in acts of social justice to repair our world, or sharing a good meal— and I am excited to explore the many ways we can connect and grow together.”

Cantor Broekhuysen added that “President Lampron and the board have made a wonderful choice. Rabbi Ashira Stevens is a thoughtful, musical, generous, experienced, deeply committed Jewish clergyperson. She teaches with every breath she takes, and she connects warmly and genuinely with every person she meets. I am overjoyed that she is coming to serve this community, and I know that she will partner deeply and beautifully with Temple Emanu-El’s lay leadership and staff.”

Rabbi Ashira Stevens was ordained at Hebrew College in June 2023.

Rabbi Stevens is originally from the Midwest and completed her undergraduate education at Indiana University in marketing and international studies. After moving to Boston, she discovered her passion for learning Hebrew and anything related to Judaism. In 2005, she completed a master of arts in Jewish studies at Hebrew College, where she also helped to develop the online learning programs.

Through her experiences teaching in local area synagogues and at Prozdor, she fell in love with Jewish education which led to her decision to pursue the rabbinate.

During her time as a rabbinical student, Rabbi Stevens served as the rabbinic intern at Temple Emanu-El, at the Jewish Learning Collaborative of Metrowest, and at Temple Beth David in Westwood. She also spent a summer as a student chaplain at Brigham and Women's Hospital. She finds particular delight in making Judaism accessible and relevant for people of all ages and backgrounds, whether through exploring sacred texts, sharing meaningful ritual moments, or talking over coffee or a meal.

Rabbi Stevens lives in Natick with her spouse, Aaron, and their three children—Caleb (17), Ellie (15), and Jacob (10). In addition to enjoying time with her family and friends, Rabbi Stevens spends her free time reading, practicing Zentangle (a meditative art form), enjoying music—sometimes even playing clarinet—baking, and walking through the woods. She is thrilled to be returning to Temple Emanu-El and looks forward to meeting and reacquainting herself with the community.

About Temple Emanu-El

Temple Emanu-El is a dynamic Reform congregation with a traditional yet creative orientation serving a community of diverse needs and backgrounds. Since 1937, members of the Jewish community of Greater Haverhill, the Merrimack Valley, and southern New Hampshire have joined together to express our Jewish identities through worship, education, social action, and friendship. As a congregation, we foster a deep commitment to a Jewish way of life and to the future of our community. For more information about membership, religious school, adult education, and social programs, contact Lisa Anthony at 978.373.3861 or visit www.TempleEmanu-El.org.

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