

Dear Prospective Rabbi,

We welcome your interest in Congregation Beth El, and the chance to get to know each other. We are based in Bennington VT with membership from surrounding towns, including Washington County in New York, and northern Berkshire County in Massachusetts. Our community has been an anchor for Jewish life in the region for more than a century, and we are committed to continuing this role into the future. Over the last few decades our rabbis have been ordained through the Reconstructionist movement, though we are now open to other affiliations. What's important to us is the match. And so we are pleased to work with the Makom Fellowship Program, allowing us to engage with a broader group of candidates.

Here in southwestern Vermont we are fortunate to live amid great natural beauty across all seasons. The area affords the kind of space and serenity that can be difficult to find today. Vermont is special. We have been voted the best, safest and healthiest state to live in. Our educational system is superior. As befits a state small in size and population, there is a sense of closeness, friendliness, and accessibility; one routinely runs into state and national leaders at the general store or corner café. At the same time we have easy access to major cities: Albany, Boston, New York and Montreal are all within driving distance. We are friendly and welcoming to people of all lifestyles and cultures. There are many wonderful outdoor activities available, like skiing (nordic and downhill), kayaking, hiking, and swimming at our doorstep. As for the arts, we have renowned museums, theater, and musical venues in Bennington, nearby Cambridge NY, Williamstown MA, and the Berkshires. Our beloved synagogue is in Bennington's downtown, which is experiencing a social and commercial revival.

Our congregation is a diverse and tolerant group that includes artists, craftspeople, and activists of all types and ages as well as many professionals. We are environmentally and socially aware, and favor a relaxed and casual lifestyle. We treasure our Jewish heritage and traditions and always rally when needed. This is a good place to raise a family and enjoy a healthy, active and aesthetically fulfilling life. People have discovered this—yes, the secret is out—and we're seeing an influx of people moving to Vermont. This is why our search for the right rabbi is so important. We could be seeing a new diaspora of our people looking to resettle in our corner of the Green Mountains. By reaching out to these new residents to find out what they are looking for, we could again increase our membership. Also, this is a time of transition and challenges in the nation and the world. How can our Judaism offer meaning, clarity, and community as we move through the coming years? These are questions we look forward to exploring with a new rabbi.

With respect and *kavannah*,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart DuBoff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stuart DuBoff Chair, Search Committee

**Reconstructing Judaism and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Placement Office**

1299 Church Road
Wyncote, PA 19095

Reconstructing Judaism
Interim Director of Rabbinic Placement and Employment
eskiddell@reconstructingjudaism.org
215-576-0800 ext. 217

RABBINIC SEARCH APPLICATION

Date December 27, 2021

Name of Congregation Congregation Beth El

Address 225 North Street

City Bennington

Zip or Postal Code 05201

E-Mail cbevtoffice@gmail.com

Website cbevermont.org

State/Province VT

Phone Number 802-442-9645

Fax Number 802-442-8788

Search Chairperson

Name Stuart DuBoff

Contact Information:

Address 2455 Monument Avenue

City Bennington

Zip or Postal Code

E-Mail studuboff@gmail.com

State/Province VT

Phone Number 802-379-4040

Fax Number

Congregation President

Name Wendy Klein-Faller

Contact Information:

Address 727 Carpenter Hill Road

CONGREGATIONAL IDENTITY

Overview:

Number of member units/households today: Total 44 Families _____
Singles _____

Number five (5) years ago: Total 63 Families _____
Singles _____

CBE believes that the potential Jewish community in our region well exceeds current membership.

Future Jewish demographic projections for the congregation and area are:

A significant number of newcomers, including families with children, retirees, empty-nesters, and singles, have moved into our service areas. We would anticipate an increase in growth of our congregation with meaningful outreach.

When was the congregation founded: 1909

Please attach a brief history of the congregation (Word document). (Please indicate if on website.)

Our history is detailed on our website at: www.cbevermont.org

Rabbinic History:

Please indicate the names of your last 3 rabbis, their affiliation and how long and when they served you.

	Name	Length of Service & Years	Affiliation
1.	Joshua Boettiger	8/1/09- 7/31/12	Reconstructionist

2. Jarah Greenfield 8/1/12- 7/31/17 Reconstructionist

3. Micah Becker- Klein 8/1/19 - 12/31/20 Reconstructionist

4. Howard Cohen 12 Reconstructionist

Rabbi Cohen was our fulltime Rabbi for several years before Rabbi Joshua. He then served again as interim Rabbi after Rabbi Jarah, and then again after Rabbi Micah.

Affiliation:

Does the congregation have a national movement affiliation? yes no

If yes, with whom and for how long?

Reconstructing Judaism since 1997

Was the congregation previously affiliated with a different organization?

yes no

If yes, please explain why the affiliation was ended (please include dates of affiliation): Orthodox over 35 years ago.

Staff:

Assistant/Associate Rabbi full-time part-time

Cantor full-time part-time

School Director full-time part-time

Family Educator full-time part-time

Administrator	<input type="checkbox"/> full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> part-time
Preschool Director	<input type="checkbox"/> full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> part-time
Ritual Director	<input type="checkbox"/> full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> part-time
Youth Director	<input type="checkbox"/> full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> part-time
Assistant Director	<input type="checkbox"/> full-time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> part-time
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> full-time	<input type="checkbox"/> part-time

Policies/Guidelines: (Please attach copies as appropriate – Word documents.)

Does the congregation have a written policy or guidelines on the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> Shabbat and festivals	<input type="checkbox"/> Bar and Bat Mitzvah
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kashrut	<input type="checkbox"/> Role of the non-Jew in the congregation
<input type="checkbox"/> Religious School	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Section 5 of the By-laws of Congregation Beth El reads as follows: Kashrut – In an effort to be inclusive, the Beth El kitchen and all food served in it shall be vegetarian or dairy (packaged foods shall have the appropriate label). This will allow Jews regardless of affiliation or observance of Kashrut standard to share meals with our community.

Synagogue Facilities:

Does the congregation own a building rent a building

If you own, when was the building built - 1923

What is the seating capacity - 175

Does the rabbi have a private office yes no

If no, where does the rabbi work:

Do you have a computer system with internet access yes no

If not, will one be provided for the rabbi _____yes _____no

Do you have a kitchen _____X_____yes _____no

Briefly describe the rest of the facility: A synagogue (sanctuary) with classrooms downstairs and in a separate recently renovated bldg. are offices, a social hall and kitchen. Each bldg. contains two restrooms, with an additional one outside the offices upstairs.

Religious Services: (If men and women do not participate equally, please attach an explanation.)

Prayer books used:

Daily

Shabbat Kol Haneshamah – Shabbat Vehagim and Etz Hayim

Festivals

High Holy Days Kol Haneshamah – Mahzon Leyamin Nora'im

Torah Reading Cycle: _____full _____X_____triennial _____other
(Please explain on a separate sheet)

Who normally reads Torah: Rabbi, Lay Members

Friday evening services: _____early _____late _____X_____other (please explain)

Usually not held except an occasional Shabbat dinner.

Average attendance: _____8-10_____Friday evening _____5 to 20_____Saturday morning
daily minyan _____

Religious School: Due to demographic shifts during the past few years, CBE has not run a religious school.

Total number of students now _____ five years ago _____

Number of teachers _____

Number of classrooms _____ If none , where does school
meet _____

What grades: _____ K-7 _____ 8-10 _____ 11-12

How many days a week does the school meet _____ How many hours _____

Does the school have: _____ administrator _____ office manager _____ secretary

Please briefly describe the rabbi's role in the school: We are hopeful that with an organized outreach program we can attract new younger families and establish an active program for children of all ages.

Do you have a pre-school? _____ yes _____ X no Number of students _____

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Population: General 50,000 Jewish 300 to 600 families

Are there other congregations in your area?

<u> </u> Reconstructionist	How many <u> </u>	
<u> </u> Conservative	How many <u> </u>	
<u> X </u> Reform	How many <u> 2 </u>	North Adams, MA, Brattleboro
<u> x </u> Orthodox	How many <u> 1 </u>	Manchester, VT-Chabad
<u> X </u> Other	How many <u> 1 </u>	Unaffiliated, Manchester, VT

Are there in or near the community: N kosher restaurants N kosher meat markets

 N kosher bakeries If not, where can kosher food be obtained - Some in the large local super markets in our area

Are there Jewish day schools in or near the community: (Please list.) No

What major cultural institutions are there in your area: Clark Art Institute, Bennington Museum, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Williams College Museum of Art, many Regional Theaters, Sage City Symphony, Southern Vermont Art Center, Tanglewood, Jacobs Pillow, Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and Bennington Performing Arts Center. In addition to cultural venues, there are several golf courses, indoor /outdoor tennis and pickleball courts and sports leagues. There is also downhill and cross-country skiing at Bromley, Stratton, Mount Snow and Prospect Mountain Ski Areas. We also have numerous lakes and hiking trails including the Long Trail.

What colleges or universities are there in your area: Williams College, Bennington College, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Community College of Vermont, and several colleges and universities in Albany, NY as well as Albany Medical College.

MISSION and VALUES

What qualities are most important to you in your new rabbi? (If you will not accept a resume from a rabbi with a non-Jewish partner please clearly write that here. If there are any ritual or officiation issues which would lead you to not accept a resume from a rabbi please also indicate here. Thank You.) Good interpersonal skills; compassion; empathy; capacity to listen; good service-leading skills; flexibility/adaptability; solid understanding of Torah.

The most important areas for rabbinic involvement are: Creating a spiritual home for Jewish people in the region. Making the Shabbat services a vibrant experience. Community outreach – recruitment of new members, especially those with children. Programs for families; planning for Jewish education for all ages. Fundraising with the assistance from the CBE Board and training from the Makom Fellowship Program.

The least important areas for rabbinic involvement are:

Since we are a small congregation all areas of involvement are important.

Some things of which our congregation is most proud are:

1. Inclusive atmosphere – welcoming and respectful of people from a wide variety of backgrounds, with differing takes on theology, rituals and lifestyles.
2. Promoting lay Torah readers and leadership.
3. Our beautiful, historic synagogue.
4. A Jewish community that is involved with and respected throughout the region.

Our congregation's strengths are:

Perseverance and resilience. Our strong desire to see our Jewish community grow and prosper. Congregation Beth El is eager to participate in the Center for Small Town Jewish Life's Makom Fellowship Program, which provides outstanding training, membership, and peer support to emerging professionals who serve select small Jewish communities. As a Fellow, our rabbi will receive three years of Zoom-based and in-person training as well as a dedicated mentor with deep experience

serving communities like ours, and will participate in a cohort of emerging leaders facing similar challenges and opportunities.

Our congregation's weaknesses are:

Inability to grow the congregation; recruiting new families. The responsibility for everything tends to fall on the shoulders of a small group of people. We have a minimal number of families with children.

Some issues which face our congregation are:

1. We face the same issues that many synagogues face - the trend away from people being active in religious congregations.
2. A steady income stream due to our small membership. We hope this will improve with effective fundraising efforts and with the recruitment of new members

Some goals we would like to achieve in the next year are:

1. Recruit and welcome a new rabbi.
2. Bring in new members, especially families.
3. Build a strong education program.
4. A successful fundraising campaign.

The single most important thing a rabbi should know about us is:

We're an eclectic group who care about one another, building a progressive Jewish community that is centered around Judaism, social justice, and the responsibility to care for Mother Earth.

How would you describe your community in one or two sentences?

We favor a relaxed, creative approach to community life, while wanting and appreciating a leader who is warm, smart and thoughtful. We honor tradition and ritual and wish to grow spiritually and to welcome others on this journey.

If you have a mission statement or statement of principles please attach a copy or provide a link.

Vision Statement

<https://www.cbevermont.org/#:~:text=Vision,century>

FINANCES

Size of congregation budget:

Minimum dues _____

Average dues \$959 _____

Briefly describe your dues plan:

See next page.

2021 Membership Contribution Pledge Form

Please fill out and return this form by March 20th – whether you are renewing your membership or pledging for the first time. You may choose whatever payment schedule works with your budget, but it is extremely helpful to our planning to have the pledges in as early as possible. You may also make your pledge online at <http://www.cbvermont.org/membership-form>. Thanks in advance for your timely attention to your annual pledge.

Names of Adult Members:

Names and ages of children living at home (include college students):

Address:

Phone(s): _____

Email(s): _____

Membership Contribution:

Please select your membership category below, and circle or write in your pledge amount:

Full Membership

	Recommended minimum	Break Even	Stretch Goal	Other amount
1-adult Household	\$500	\$650	\$1000	
2+-adult Household	\$900	\$1200	\$1800	

New Full Membership

		Recommended minimum	Break Even	Stretch Goal	Other amount
1-adult Household	Year 1	\$250	\$325	\$500	
	Year 2	\$325	\$423	\$650	
	Year 3	\$450	\$585	\$900	
2+-adult Household	Year 1	\$450	\$600	\$900	
	Year 2	\$585	\$780	\$1170	
	Year 3	\$810	\$1080	\$1620	

Associate Membership

	Recommended minimum	Break Even	Stretch Goal	Other amount
1-adult Household	\$200	\$350	\$400+	
2+-adult Household	\$350	\$500	\$700+	

Please indicate below how you would like to pay:

Check	Credit Card - Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Signature _____ Cardholder's Signature: _____
Full Payment Enclosed	Charge full amount to my credit card today
Equal monthly payments of _____ on the _____ day of each month	
Other Schedule:	

Congregation's Annual Income

Dues and donations - \$94,703

Endowments –Over \$500,000 Managed by an investment firm

fund-raising – We have had no fundraising activities in years

other – Investment income \$42,300. Investment dividends \$3,000

Briefly describe the financial condition of your congregation:

Good – no debt. Runs in the black and we have a significant endowment fund. However, we are challenged financially due to our small size.

What is the expectation (if any) of the rabbi in terms of fundraising? (High Holiday appeal, fundraising committee, etc.)

We understand that fundraising is the responsibility of the Board but we feel it is important for the rabbi to actively participate in these efforts.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

1. COMPENSATION.

As compensation for this service hereunder, the Rabbi shall be paid in each year during the term of this Agreement the following:

(a) **Base Salary.**

Regular compensation at the rate of one hundred and twenty-five thousand (\$125,000) per annum payable on the ____ day of each month consistent with the provisions of the Internal Revenue Service Code.

(b) **Social Security Contribution.**

(i) It is understood that for tax purposes, the Rabbi shall participate in the federal social security system, including the Medicare surtax if due, and shall make the payments therefore from the compensation herein prescribed;

(ii) the Synagogue shall reimburse to the Rabbi one-half (1/2) of such payment, which shall be considered earned income pursuant to the terms and provisions of the Internal Revenue Code.

(iii) Should the Rabbi and Synagogue utilize the "Employee" status for tax purposes (filing Form W-2), then all taxes and social security payments including the Medicare surtax may be withheld, and employer contributions paid, in the usual and customary manner.

(c) **Expense Allowance.**

Without prior approval, and subject to any relevant provisions and/or requirements of the Internal Revenue Service, the Rabbi shall be reimbursed for the ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in connection with the fulfillment of the duties as Rabbi of the Synagogue, in an amount not to exceed seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$750) per annum unless an additional amount is authorized in writing by the Synagogue's Board of Trustees (the "Board").

(d) **Moving Expenses.**

(i) The Synagogue shall pay the actual cost of moving the Rabbi's family and possessions from his domicile, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, to the Bennington, Vermont area, up to three thousand dollars (\$3000), after which the cost of which shall be approved in advance by the Board or its designee.

(ii) Any extraordinary moving costs, (e.g., expenses of packing non-breakable items, transporting motor vehicles, pianos and other similar items) shall not be paid by the Synagogue unless approved in writing by the Board in advance of the move.

2. BENEFITS.

(a) Health Benefits.

(i) The Synagogue shall provide the Rabbi and the Rabbi's spouse and dependent children with a health and major medical insurance program.

(ii) This health benefit from the Synagogue shall pay one hundred percent (100%) of the cost of the health insurance premiums as identified and approved by the Board, the cost of which shall not be deducted from the Rabbi's annual compensation.

(b) Convention Expense.

(i) It is understood that both the Rabbi and Synagogue benefit greatly from the Rabbi's attendance and participation in conventions of Reconstructing Judaism.

(ii) It is therefore expected that the Rabbi will attend and participate in such conventions when they are scheduled with forty-five (45) days advanced notice to the Board.

(iii) Therefore, the Synagogue shall pay up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per year, non-cumulative, toward the cost of the Rabbi to attend such conventions and/or other conventions mutually agreed upon by the parties.

(iv) Expense reimbursements to the Rabbi shall be evidenced by printed receipts unless the Synagogue makes a relevant payment directly.

(c) Disability Benefits.

(i) If the Board agrees to pay the Rabbi for any disability insurance, that benefit will be paid towards the premium of said insurance in a sum not to exceed ----- dollars (\$ _____) to obtain the agreed upon disability benefits obtainable from either the group disability insurance policy sponsored by the Reconstructing Judaism or some other similar disability insurance policy as may be agreed upon by the Board.

(ii) The Rabbi's compensation payable hereunder shall be reduced by the amount, if any, of the disability insurance proceeds paid for under the disability insurance and/or received by the Rabbi thereunder.

(d) Vacations.

(i) The Rabbi shall be entitled to a vacation of four (4) weeks during each year of the term of this Agreement.

(ii) Vacation shall occur at a time mutually agreed upon and shall not include absence due to ordinary illness, injury, military duty, if any, as may be specifically agreed upon by the parties, attendance at conventions of Reconstructing Judaism, time required for professional and community purpose outside of the community, or absences for the purpose of interviewing for other positions upon delivery of notice of termination or non-renewal of this Engagement Agreement from one party to the other as required herein.

(e) Birth or Adoption Leave.

(i) After one year or more of the Rabbi's employment by the Synagogue, the Rabbi shall have three (3) months of leave to be taken immediately prior to and/or following the birth or adoption of his or her child or children.

(ii) During such time, the Rabbi shall receive all usual compensation and benefits.

3. DISCRETIONARY FUND.

(a) "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund" shall be defined and described, as follows:

(i) The Synagogue shall establish a Rabbi's Discretionary Fund in a local bank account, into which members of the Synagogue and others may contribute thereto.

(ii) The monies in the Fund are to be used solely at the discretion of the Rabbi for appropriate purposes consistent with the Synagogue's charitable and tax-exempt status, to assist individual, educational and communal needs as the Rabbi shall deem necessary or appropriate in accordance with the Synagogue Bylaws and Board guidance, a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part of the Agreement.

(iii) Upon the expiration of the Agreement, and the non-renewal thereof, this Rabbi's Discretionary Fund shall remain the sole and exclusive property of the Synagogue to be administered by the subsequent Rabbi designated and approved by the Board.

(b) The content or value of the "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund" shall not be spent, assigned or utilized in any way for the Rabbi's personal use or inconsistent with the relevant restrictions provided by the Internal Revenue Service.

4. Honoraria

(a) The Rabbi shall perform all life cycle events and ceremonies for members of the Synagogue without any charge or cost whatsoever.

(b) If the Rabbi receives any remuneration or money ("Honoraria") for those events, they shall be placed in the "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund," as described and defined in Paragraph 3, above.

(c) Honoraria for such events received from non-members of the Synagogue who are not immediately related to members of the Synagogue shall be placed in the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund.

5. Understandings

(a) It is understood that the congregation will reimburse all transportation, food and lodging expenses for a Rabbi invited for an interview and/or a weekend.

(b) It is understood that the members of the search committee and officers of the synagogue have read and will abide by the information provided in the Reconstructionist Placement Guidelines and the information provided on the placement form. The guidelines are available at www.reconplacement.org – menu upper left corner

(c) It is understood that all resumes from Reconstructionist rabbis come directly from the Reconstructionist Placement Office. Any resume received directly from a rabbi will be forwarded to the placement office and if he rabbi is eligible for placement, the congregation will be informed in writing and the resume will be returned to the congregation.

(d) It is understood that a congregation not affiliated with Reconstructing Judaism or URJ or USCJ will pay the required non-refundable listing fee of \$500 and that an invoice will be sent to the congregation for this purpose. Please make the check payable to "Reconstructing Judaism" and mail to the placement office at 1299 Church Road Wyncote, PA 19095

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart DuBoff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stuart DuBoff

Title Chair, Search Committee