

Welcoming New Clergy to the Community

By [LOIS GOLDRICH](#) August 23, 2018

Rabbis and cantors are all the same/different/special, depending on your viewpoint. This year's crop of new clergy members suggests that "different" and "special" are the appropriate labels. Some want to help fashion Judaism 5.0, some want to connect with and personalize their relationship to each of their congregants, and some — well, at least one — raises chickens. We welcome them all to Bergen County.

Rabbi Lindsey Healey-Pollack
Congregation Kol HaNeshamah, Englewood

Rabbi Healey-Pollack, who grew up Catholic in a suburb of Houston, had her first real exposure to Judaism at Scripps College in Claremont, California.

"As a college student I learned more about Judaism and had a lot of Jewish friends," she said. "It afforded me my first opportunity to learn about Jewish tradition. I was drawn to the culture. I'm really interested in a culture of learning, of openness to asking questions." She was particularly attracted by the fact that "any question was able to be asked and get a serious answer. Also, Judaism places an emphasis on actions we take in our daily lives. It's a way of life, encompassing all aspects."



Now in her first rabbinic position, Rabbi Healey-Pollack — who started learning with a Hillel rabbi in California and entered the conversion process after moving to New York, working with both Rabbi Larry Sebert at Town and Village Synagogue and Rabbi Stephen Lerner of Teaneck — completed her conversion in 2009. She received ordination at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary.

When she was in rabbinical school, Rabbi Healey-Pollack was a rabbinic intern at Congregation Shaare Zedek in Manhattan and at the United Synagogue of Hoboken, where she taught the Rabbinical Assembly's Introduction to Judaism program and created other learning opportunities for the community. She also spent two years as the High Holy Days rabbi for Anshei Chesed: The Conservative Synagogue of Cape Cod, and completed a chaplaincy internship at Dorot, working with older adults in Manhattan.

Rabbi Healey-Pollack will take up her position just in time for Sukkot, according to the congregation, which describes itself as "the only Conservative and egalitarian shul in the Englewood/Tenafly area." She brings with her "an openness and passionate commitment to learning and sharing with others," she said. "I have a commitment to supporting my community in its Jewish journey." She thinks the congregation will be a good match for her, "as a community that shares this spirit of openness and curiosity — a special and participatory community that is welcoming to people at all levels of observance."

While she is not expecting any surprises, "I'm sure there will be a learning curve," she said, noting that she already has had several opportunities to meet members of the congregation. "My first goal is trying to get to know the people in the community and learn more about what they're excited about, their hopes and dreams. I'm also passionate about adult education." She hopes to expand learning opportunities, as well as youth and family programs, in the congregation, which embraces some 55 member households.

Now living in Englewood with her husband, David, and two children — a three-year-old son and a two-month-old daughter — Rabbi Healey-Pollack said she loves spending time outdoors, and "I'm excited to do that and to get to know areas for hiking. I'm also into yoga and love to expand my horizons by reading."

This is a condensed version of the article appearing in The Jewish Standard.
For the article in its entirety, please click below.