



CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

It is instinctual to pull away from change; we all fear the unknown. And none of us can stay in the same place nor do we really want to! I am writing to let you know about a transition that is coming which I know will be timely and healthy for all: at the end of June of 2025, I will be retiring from the position of Senior Cantor at Congregation Beth Israel.

As I sit down to write this letter, a new lunar month, Nisan, begins. It feels significant to me because Nisan is known as *Rosh Chadashim*, the head of all the months. Our sages teach us that it was at this exact moment that Moses was instructed by the Holy One to begin keeping time by the moon.

As another wonderful teacher, “Rent” composer Jonathan Larson, instructed us: “Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes. How do you measure a year?” For me, I have measured my time with you as your Cantor, not in cups of coffee, but in moments of connection with you during the saddest and most joyous of times. I am filled to the brim of my *neshama* with beautiful memories and am ready to soon hand over the responsibility of being your cantor.

As Jews, we are continually embracing life’s movement and changes; our rituals and holidays follow a cycle. In the larger orbit of life, this change is a welcomed one. An opportunity for rest, renewal, and reclaiming parts of me I have yet to discover. Thank you to our supportive board, our stellar clergy team, our gifted musicians and teachers, and to each one of you for giving me the privilege of being your Cantor as well as my partners and my teachers since I first started working here in 2007 with Cantor Judith Schiff and Rabbi Michael Cahana. Cantor Schiff served our congregation with beauty and integrity for thirty-two years! I became senior Cantor in 2012 at the same time the amazing Rabbi Rachel Joseph joined our clergy team. Then, just about three years ago, our community welcomed back another remarkable clergy leader, Cantor Rayna Green, and we four have loved sharing the bima or any sacred space together ever since.

This coming year will be a culmination and also a window into the next fantastic chapter ahead for Congregation Beth Israel. Look for spectacular musical events, guest cantors, and many surprise musical friends throughout the year as we mark this significant year in the history of our congregation.

I measure our minutes, hours, days, months, and years in love and with immense gratitude.

Yours always in song and with abiding friendship,

Ida Rae Cahana
SENIOR CANTOR