

***We welcome
Cantor Judith Berkson***



to our PJC family!

A Message from the President

Welcome Cantor Berkson! That feels great to say, write and read. On behalf of myself and the membership of Plainview Jewish Center we are pleased that you have agreed to be our Cantor. Cantor Berkson, we look forward to working with you. Cantor Berkson's education, professional experience and her spiritual outreach will certainly bode well for our synagogue.

Without our Cantor Search Committee, chaired by Stacy Meyerson, who once again went above and beyond for PJC, and its past and present committee members listed in alphabetical order: Doris Cooper, Alan Greenberg, Liz Kessler, Larry Leventhal, Joel Moskowitz, Kym Newborn, Steve Rubinfeld, Sheryl Saltiel, Neil Wilensky and, of course, the Rabbi, who was such an integral part of this committee, we would never be hiring Cantor Berkson. We are so appreciative to the committee for the tireless hours they gave of themselves to the process. This committee made sure the integrity of the process was always maintained. This committee went above and beyond and never gave up until they found the best Cantor for PJC. Thank you for your time and the seriousness with which you applied to your roles. Thank you for finding Cantor Berkson.

There were so many other people who gave of themselves throughout the Cantor search process and to name everyone I would be leaving people out. But, I want to say a special thank you to Robin and Howard Kaufman for their never ending hospitality.

Once again Cantor Berkson, we welcome to you and your family to the Plainview Jewish Center family. ***Charlie Wasserman***

Dear Fellow Congregants,

I am excited to share with you that Cantor Judith Berkson will be joining our clergy staff on September 1, 2019. She will be preparing for her start over the summer and making appearances before that at Shacharit b'nai mitzvot (June 15th, & 22nd). For more information on Cantor Berkson, please see the bio included in this special publication of *The Orbit*. From the onset, the committee agreed that we would not settle just to fill the position and would bring the congregation the candidate we found to be the best fit. We have found this in Cantor Berkson and I am honored to be sharing this news with you.

As has been reported during the search process, Cantor Berkson is a part-time Cantor for PJC. Since that is something new for us, please see her job responsibilities outlined below to familiarize yourself with what this means for us all.

- Shabbat Morning services, including Junior Congregation participation
- Monthly Family Friendly Friday Night Services
- Scheduled Klezmer and other themed Services held during the course of the year
- High Holiday and all Festival Services
- B'nai Mitzvot officiating
- Teaching at PJC on Thursdays and Sundays to include
 - o Weekly B'nai Mitzvot tutoring preparation and lessons
 - o Preparation of Religious School Class Shabbat Services
 - o Conducting and leading music classes in the Religious School over the course of the academic year at a schedule mutually agreed upon with the Educational Director
- Torah and Haftarah Reading as needed
- Participation in Synagogue/community-wide events including: membership events, Journal and related Fundraising events, annual picnic, Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, etc. Cantor will make every effort to participate in other like events.
- Best efforts to cover the Rabbi for "Lifecycle Events" (funerals, brit milot, weddings, unveilings, baby namings, etc.) taking place when the Rabbi is on PTO

(continued on Page 4)

(continued from Page 3)

- Any additional duties discussed in cooperation and agreement with the Rabbi, President, Ritual Committee and /or Board of Trustees

The search process has been lengthy and tedious at times; however, very rewarding. I have worked with a tremendous network of people without whom I could not have brought Cantor Berkson to you. I would be remiss if I did not recognize and thank everyone who helped to make this process possible. First, the search committee comprised of Doris Cooper, Alan Greenberg, Elisabeth Kessler, Larry Leventhal, Joel Moskowitz, Kym Newborn, Steve Rubinfeld, Sheryl Saltiel, and Neil Wilensky. Your time and thoughtful consideration given to the search process is greatly appreciated. You kept focus and delivered on what was promised. You have been wonderful to work with and made my job much easier.

Thank you to Rabbi Conn for being a never-ending resource and support. From attending all of our meetings and interviews, posting the position on Jewish job search sites, conducting the post-visit surveys, to helping visiting candidates to prepare, this process would not have been successful without your guidance and input.

In addition, others who have helped in the process along the way and deserve thanks include: Robin and Howard Kaufman for opening your home and inviting visiting candidates to stay with you, Freddy for his technological assistance with our Skype interviews, Freddy and Bob for preparing the space for our meetings, dinners, and for those Shabbatot where we had a guest Cantor, Dorit in the office for sending out the many email and phone tree notifications and taking all my crazy phone calls, Robert Ian Caterers and the Kiddish committee for the beautiful Friday night dinners and Saturday kiddushim that helped to make the visiting Cantors feel welcome, Allan Furman for helping to coordinate last minute torah and haftorah readings when we had a guest Cantor, Fred Skolnik for his *The Orbit*, Cantor Wolk for his insight into the job and feedback along the way, the Board for your support in finding the right candidate, and most importantly, thank you to YOU, the congregants, for your trust and participation in the process and providing your feedback throughout. Your patience and support throughout this process has been exceptional.

Please join me in welcoming Cantor Berkson to our community. Be on the lookout for events in the fall where we more formally welcome her into the PJC family. With warm regards,

Stacy Meyerson, 3rd Vice President and Chairperson, Cantor Search Committee

About Cantor Berkson...

Judith Berkson is a cantor, composer, and multi-instrumentalist who has been active in Jewish music, Jewish education, synagogue leadership and spiritual outreach for over 15 years. She has worked with distinguished musicians including Theodore Bikel, Frank London of the Klezmatics, John Zorn, and Hankus Netsky and has performed on WNYC, PBS, at Picasso Museum Malaga, BrucknerTage, Joe's Pub, National Sawdust, Zankel Hall and the Krakow Jewish Music Festival. Her cantorial compositions have been championed by the Kronos Quartet who performed her arrangements of early cantorial recordings at Lincoln Center Out of Doors Festival in 2013 and featured them on their latest release "A Thousand Thoughts" for Nonesuch Records in 2014. Judith was an artist in residence at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research from 2014-2016, where she was commissioned to create cantorial music in conjunction with their archival collection. In 2018 she was chosen to be a "New Cantorial Voices" artist at the Taube Center for Jewish Studies at Stanford University and was invited to lead services using her repertoire of cantorial chant at Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco. Her cantorial music has been written about in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, TimeOut, Lilith Magazine, The Jewish Week and Tablet.

In addition to her cantorial projects, Judith has served as a cantor since 1999, beginning at Temple Beth-El in Quincy, Massachusetts and continuing at Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation and as Music Director at Kane Street Synagogue in Brooklyn, New York. Inspired by traditional nusach, she composes melodies and chant to promote joy, k'hilah, communal singing and participation during services. She combines all of her skills as a teacher, accordionist, and pianist into her spiritual practice and educational work. She is passionate about bringing Jewish musical traditions into the present by composing her own melodies and by passing down the traditions of nusach, giving people the tools to be creative in their own chanting. She is fluent in Hebrew, knowledgeable in layning and davening and has experience in B'nei Mitzvot preparation and leading life-cycle events. She has worked closely with families and students with special needs to help them achieve their spiritual and ritual goals. A Religious School educator for over ten years, she has developed a distinct musical prayer curriculum for Hebrew School children grades 2-6 and has trained several generations of Bar and Bat Mitzvah students. She is the daughter of a cantor and has been singing sacred music since she was five years old. She attended Solomon Schechter and Camp Ramah and graduated from the New England Conservatory where she majored in voice, composition and Jewish music with Dr. Hankus Netsky. She is currently completing a Master's degree in Music at Wesleyan University with a focus in cantorial studies.

Judith currently lives in Brooklyn with her husband and 3-year old son.

**Thank you to DJC's
Cantor Search Committee**

Rabbi Steve Conn
Doris Cooper
Alan Greenberg
Elizabeth Kessler
Larry Leventhal
Joel Moskowitz
Kym Newborn
Steve Rubinfeld
Sheryl Saltiel
Neil Wilensky

**Your dedication, time commitment, and
thoughtfulness toward this responsibility
were remarkable. I could not have done
this without you!!**

**Sincerest thanks,
Stacy Meyerson
Cantor Search Committee Chairperson**

