

Dear STBZ Community,

By now I trust you have heard that we have a new Rabbi, Joshua Ginsberg. I cannot tell you how lucky we are to have found this man to be our spiritual leader.

I have gotten to know Rabbi Ginsberg better than most during his recent visit. I was privileged to host the Rabbi and his beautiful family in our home, including his wife Jenna (who is also a cantor; we had the chance to hear her beautiful voice as she made the Shabbos blessing over the candles with our family), 4 year old son, Ranon and 18 month old, Elijah. During our visit, we shared a wonderful Shabbos with delicious food (I had no idea Kosher Vegetarian could be so good), and genuine warmth and friendship. Our children played together, and Chloe and I even got to catch fireflies and go on a bike ride through Peterson Park with the Rabbi and Ronan. We were also blessed to have Rabbi Ginsberg's parents over to our home after services, which, as many of you know, they attended.

I would like to tell everyone a little bit about our new Rabbi. Although he became a Rabbi in New York and Israel (The Jewish Theological Seminary), he currently lives in Washington D.C. (Rabbi for the Hillel at George Washington University). He grew up right here in Skokie, near McCormick and Main, and attended Nilas North High School. He IS a local, and is intimately familiar with Chicago's "Jewish landscape". During one of our first correspondences, he expressed a desire to help us "maintain a Conservative presence in Peterson Park." When Rabbi Ginsberg's mother attended services, she said that when she entered the Shul, "it felt like home."

When the Rabbi Search Committee inquired about the Rabbi's references, we were blown away by what we received from past employers, congregants and friends: Story after story that illuminated a man of deep faith, integrity, compassion, intelligence and passion and love for Judaism. I trust many of you were able to glimpse these qualities during his Shabbat visit, at the Torah Study, and during services as he chanted beautifully from the Torah and gave an insightful and eloquent D'Var Torah. During an almost three hour interview, the Rabbi Search Committee and ultimately the Board of Directors were similarly impressed and convinced that this was the man to help us build a sacred community of worship, study and care for one another.

I know that all of you will welcome Rabbi Ginsberg and his family as he makes his homecoming and assumes the Rabbinate at Shaare Tikvah B'nai Zion. And I ask that everyone rededicate themselves to our congregation. If you do, I am confident that you will be rewarded with many gifts that the future holds for us.

Rabbi Ginsberg recently informed me that he has found a house less than a block from our own, on the same street. Our family feels that we are not only gaining a wonderful Rabbi, but new neighbors and friends.

L'Shalom to all,

Bradley Fisher, President

