

## JLCMW Middle School for grades 6-8

### STAFF

Shoni Aronowitz  
Rabbi Josh Briendel  
Scott Newman  
Rabbi Allison Poirier  
Rabbi Louis Pollison  
Orna Sonneschein  
Adam Rifkin

Rabbi Josh Breindel joined Beth El on July 1, 2018. Previously, he served nine years as rabbi of Temple Anshe Amunim (TAA) in Pittsfield, Mass. Some of his accomplishments at TAA included revamping and expanding the synagogue's religious school; instituting a popular monthly sequence of Kabbalat Shabbat services with themes of study, students, song and stories; and engaging in outreach to the broader Berkshires community. He served for two terms as the president of the Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations and represented the houses of worship in Berkshire County at the Berkshire Leadership Impact Council.

Rabbi Breindel earned a B.A. in philosophy with a minor in classics and a concentration in legal studies from Brandeis University. Settling in the Boston area, he served as education consultant at Kerem Shalom in Concord, core instructor for 11th-grade students at Prozdor of Hebrew College in Newton, and assistant director of education at Temple Shir Tikvah in Winchester. After completing master's degrees in Jewish studies and Jewish education, he was ordained at Hebrew College in 2009.

Rabbi Breindel has particular interests in Jewish storytelling, theater and folklore and is passionate about Jewish science fiction and fantasy. He and his wife, Stephanie, spend their free time playing Legos with their two children, Elijah and Eliana. He's delighted to return to the Boston area and is excited to partner with the congregation's staff to bring blessing to the Beth El community. You can follow him on Facebook at [RabbiJoshB](#).

### SCOTT NEWMAN

Scott joined the Beth El team in July 2015. Having grown up in a small but notable Jewish setting in Monroe, NY, Scott's life experiences have prepared him well for his current position. Scott discovered his Jewish professional path after graduating from SUNY Albany with a B.A. in communication and a double minor in business and Hebrew language. Initially, he went out into the advertising world, but quickly found that his work was not fulfilling in the way he imagined. Upon reflection, he discovered that Judaism was a meaningful and common theme in his history. It offered him guidance, community and support.

Scott's college experience included a year in Israel at the Hebrew Union College "College and Kibbutz" program. This program ignited his love for *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel) and *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish people). Scott founded "RUACH!", a Reform *chavurah* (group) on campus that still exists. Similar successes in building two youth programs motivated him to continue what he considers to be the holy work of fostering Jewish community and continuity through a "Jewish journey" model. It is this model that he brings to our youth education program at Beth El.

Scott loves utilizing Jewish music and his guitar as a teaching tool for families and children alike. He is also an avid technophile and can't get enough gadgets and techie toys. Scott is a

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resident of Natick where he lives with his wife Andrea, son Gabriel, and daughter Eliyana. His children are enrolled in the BE InSpirEd Education Program at Beth El.

### SHONI ARONOWITZ

Shoni has taught middle school and high school classes at Beth El and is the advisor for WASTY (We Are Sudbury Temple Youth). He also coordinates the HiBur program, which features a weeklong visit by Beth El 10th-graders to host families in Haifa, Israel and a visit here by the Israeli teens.

A native of Tel Aviv, Shoni has been with Beth El since 2017. He holds a B.A. in Jewish philosophy and Jewish history and a B.Ed. in Jewish philosophy, all from Tel Aviv University's Ofakim program. "I truly believe in the creative aspect of Jewish learning, in the sense of creating and owning something with what you learn and not just keeping it on the paper. I try to engage my students in different forms for interacting and creating with our Jewish materials," he says. Shoni's hobbies include travel, nature, films and cooking.

Rabbi Allison Poirier joined the Temple Beth Sholom community in July 2019, and is TBS's first female rabbi. Rabbi Poirier brings to our community great energy, creativity, and the ability to make immediate connections with people of all ages. She embraces TBS's goal of continued growth through outreach and innovating programming.

Rabbi Poirier has dual undergraduate degrees from Barnard College and the Albert A. List College of the Jewish Theological Seminary. After graduation, she spent two years traveling the south as an Education Fellow with the Institute of Southern Jewish Life. She has also returned to the south to lead several small-town seders for the ISJL Passover Pilgrimage.

She received her Rabbinical Ordination and Master's of Jewish Education from Hebrew College in Newton. Rabbi Poirier's Master's Thesis explored the use of the Torah Godly Play curriculum with elderly populations, and she is eager to share Torah Godly Play with students of all ages at TBS. While in rabbinical school, she also served as Rabbinic Intern at Temple Israel in Sharon where she created the Chevra, a group for young professionals.

A native of Medfield, Mass., Rabbi Poirier has just recently relocated to Framingham with her husband, Matthew, and their daughter, Maya. When she's not at TBS, Rabbi Poirier can be found hiking, reading, and cheering enthusiastically for all the Boston sports teams.

Rabbi Polisson is thrilled to have recently joined Congregation Or Atid as Rabbi, drawn by the community's warmth, energy, and commitment to *Torah* (lifelong learning), *Avodah* (meaningful prayer), and *Gemilut Hasadim* (acts of lovingkindness).

Originally from New Haven, Connecticut, Rabbi Polisson earned his B.A. in Classical Studies from Brandeis University, where he met his wife in a co-ed Jewish cappella group. He received rabbinic ordination and an M.A. in Jewish Thought from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in May 2018. As a Gladstein Fellow in Entrepreneurial Rabbinic Leadership, he previously served as Rabbi of Congregation Eitz Chaim of Monroe, NY and as Rabbinic Intern at Temple Israel Center of White Plains, NY.

Rabbi Polisson has taught in an array of Jewish educational settings, cultivating in all ages an understanding and love of Judaism. He has served as an educator at Jewish organizations, camps, and Hebrew schools across the Northeast.

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Rabbi Polisson is a musician and a composer, and has studied klezmer and world Jewish music with such luminaries as Alicia Svigals, Cantor George Mordecai, and Joey Weisenberg. Most recently, he was awarded a grant from the Hadar Institute to record and produce an album of original Jewish and spiritual songs with his wife, Gabriella Feingold, released in November 2018. [Click here](#) to listen.

Rabbi Polisson studies and teaches Jewish meditation and spiritual practices and is passionate about connecting people to Judaism, Jewish community, and the Divine. In addition, he understands the power of relational community organizing and the importance of relationship-building, which is central to his work as a rabbi.

Rabbi Polisson invites you to join him in living out a vision of Conservative Judaism that is rooted in tradition, meaningful, and relevant to our lives today.

Orna Sonnenschein has recently joined Congregation Or Atid as our new Education Director. Orna comes to us with over 15 years of administrative and education experience working with several synagogues and Jewish organizations in the Boston area. She served as Director of Education at Temple Israel in Boston, Temple Hillel B'nai Torah in West Roxbury and Temple Beth Am in Framingham. Her experience includes all aspects of synagogue education including family education programming, adult education and Jewish culture and heritage programming. Orna's strength is in her commitment to the well-being of children and their parents, her dedication to designing meaningful yet fun experiences in the classroom, and encouraging social and emotional growth while nurturing the development of self and identity. Orna grew up in Brookline MA. She graduated from UMass Amherst with a Bachelor's in Political Science and a minor in Judaic Studies. She received her Master's in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies from Brandeis University.

### Adam Rifkin

Adam Rifkin is returning for another year of teaching 6th grade. He grew up in Framingham going to Temple Beth Shalom and is thrilled to be able to continue his relationship with the community in such a meaningful way. He is currently a senior at Brandeis University majoring in both Psychology and Music while also minoring in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.