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Rabbi David Chapman

Named New Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom

by **DEANNE FRIEDMAN** • *photo provided by* **CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**

The Congregation Beth Shalom Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that Rabbi David Chapman has been named as Senior Rabbi, effective January 1, 2025.

Rabbi Chapman has served as the congregation's Assistant Rabbi since 2022. "Rabbi Chapman brings warmth, compassion, and commitment to both tradition and innovation. We feel incredibly fortunate and inspired by his dedication to creating a vibrant and inclusive environment for all members of our community. He is an inspiring spiritual leader and teacher with an incredible ability to engage with people of all ages and backgrounds."- Sue Lampert, President

Rabbi Chapman came to the rabbinate as a second career, after a decade as a theater director and several years in the Jewish nonprofit sector. He holds a Master's in Nonprofit Leadership from Fordham University. He received rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) in New York, where he was a Wexner Graduate Fellow. Prior to coming to Congregation Beth Shalom, Rabbi Chapman served as a rabbi in communities in Orlando, Florida, and New York City. He has also held leadership roles in various foundations, created public engagement programs supporting social justice in Israel and spearheaded millennial outreach efforts. He served as Vice President of the Board of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York, the largest LGBTQ+ synagogue in the world. While in New York, Rabbi Chapman was named to the Jewish Week's list of "36 Under 36" making a difference.

As the Assistant Rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom, he has overhauled outreach and engagement efforts for families with young children, including new Shabbat offerings, parents-only social spaces, and a highly popular weekend-long Shabbaton. Rabbi Chapman has led congregants on a meaningful civil rights journey in the US South and taught some of the synagogue's most well-attended classes in Jewish law, Jewish liturgy, and Jewish American theater. He has placed an emphasis on pastoral care throughout the congregation, initiating innovative programs such as The Waiting Room (Care for Care Partners) and The Art of Starting Again: Journaling Through Elul.

Rabbi Chapman actively engages with both local and national organizations, enhancing Congregation Beth Shalom's visibility through these efforts. He serves on the Chicago Board of Rabbis, the Rabbinical Assembly Social Justice Commission, the JUF Education Committee, the Northbrook Clergy Association and has collaborated with a wide range of other organizations.

"Rabbi Chapman is admired among the members of the Chicago Board of Rabbis. He is creative, energetic, warm, and welcoming. He is communally minded and knows the Chicago landscape. We are so fortunate that David and his family have made Chicago and Congregation Beth Shalom their permanent home." – Rabbi Reni Dickman, Executive Vice President, Chicago Board of Rabbis and Senior Jewish Educator, JUF

Rabbi Chapman is excited to embark on this next chapter alongside all the members of Congregation Beth Shalom. "I wanted to be a congregational rabbi to help others find joy and meaning in Judaism. My dream was to find a community that was both a "home" and a "gateway" – the words Jacob uses to describe the place he encounters God in Genesis 28 – A home in that we meet people where they are, and a gateway in that we help people access deeper meaning in their Jewish lives. At Congregation Beth Shalom, I have found the perfect mix of those two qualities." – Rabbi David Chapman

Rabbi Chapman will be installed as the Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Shalom on Saturday, May 10, 2025. He is one of the few openly LGBTQ+ people in the world leading a large Conservative synagogue. He lives in Northbrook with his husband Jonathan Chapman, a nationally recognized Jewish educator, and their two children. If you are interested in meeting Rabbi Chapman or learning more about Congregation Beth Shalom, please contact the synagogue at 847-498-4100 or visit the website at www.bethshalomnb.org

Congregation Beth Shalom is the spiritual home to more than 950 families. We offer egalitarian services and daily morning and evening minyan every day of the year. Beth Shalom has a thriving Religious School for Kindergarten through High School, youth programming for all ages, a full array of classes and programs for lifelong Jewish learning, and in the fall of 2025 will open a unique Jewish after school program for K-5th grade. We are a strong and diverse congregation and think of ourselves as a large family and a place people comfortably call their "home away from home." ■