

Temples evolving

Zecher to lead Boston's Temple Israel; Malden, Peabody synagogues to merge

By Alexandra Lapkin
Advocate staff



[Rabbi Elaine Zecher](#)

BOSTON – Rabbi Elaine Zecher is poised to become Temple Israel of Boston's senior rabbi. On Jan. 21, the congregation voted on Zecher's appointment, which is the final step in the approval process. At press time, the results of the vote were not known, but observers have noted it is likely congregants will vote in favor.

The Rabbinic Search Committee, the Temple Israel Board of Trustees and the Leadership Council were unified in their decision to recommend Zecher for the role of senior rabbi, according to a written statement from the temple.

"After nearly a year of surveys, meetings, conversations, phone calls, and interviews, our journey to find a new Senior Rabbi is one step closer to being complete," it said.

When Zecher came to Temple Israel in 1990, she was the synagogue's first female rabbi. Zecher "has been instrumental in adding to the spiritual and intellectual richness of our congregation," the statement said. "Her impact is also felt far beyond our congregation."

She succeeds Rabbi Ronne Friedman, who has served as senior rabbi for 17 years and will retire on June 30. Friedman's 38-year tenure at TI started in 1978, when he served as an associate rabbi. In 1994, he left to work at [Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo, N.Y.](#), returning to TI five years later.