

Cantorial Placement Commission of the Conservative Movement Congregational Questionnaire

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Congregation: Chizuk Amuno Congregation

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Website: *Where can I look on the Web for info about the local Jewish community?* ChizukAmuno.org, ksds.edu, Associated.org, JCC.org/know-j/shalom-Baltimore, JewishTimes.com, Jmoreliving.com

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SYNAGOGUE MISSION

What are the three primary goals of your synagogue?

- Invigorate and facilitate practice of Judaism among diverse members and community, remaining relevant to the current generation of emerging Jewish adults
- Provide educational, cultural, *hesed*, and engagement opportunities for all members of the community
- Foster a broad, nurturing, and inviting Jewish community - home for the celebration of lifecycle events in the embrace of community, a Jewish home away from home

*Please see Appendix for expanded mission statement.

What are your synagogue's strengths?

- **Emphasis on Education:** Chizuk Amuno Congregation and Schools has traditionally maintained a strong emphasis on education for learners of all ages. We are home to a Jewish Day School, a Religious School, a Preschool, and an adult learning center, demonstrating our community's value of lifelong learning. We are eager to learn and are looking to welcome a Hazzan who will be an inspiration on the *bimah*, in the classroom, and in the community.
- **Size/Diversity/Depth/Resources:** The Chizuk Amuno community is made up of a large synagogue (nearly 1,200 families) and multiple schools (see above for details) providing a solid foundation, strong core of families, and financial resources. Our membership can be characterized as active, passionate, engaged and Jewishly knowledgeable. Our Shabbat community comprises multiple service opportunities, including vibrant and well-attended services for families with children, from toddlers through teens. Our community members have a wide spectrum of vocations and interests, which they share with the community in both casual settings and at synagogue-sponsored programs. Our members also take advantage of diverse opportunities for engagement with the community, including *Gemilut Hasadim*, daily morning *minyana* (with breakfast!), adult education, and communal events.
- **Honoring our past as we embrace our future:** The leadership and community at Chizuk Amuno are faithful to the traditional principles and practices of Conservative Judaism as well as being dedicated to fulfilling the needs, hopes and dreams of future generations. Our nearly 150 years of history have resulted in a unique culture that has been a true strength, giving context as we have evolved over time. While we honor our deeply rooted traditions and our history, we are keenly aware of the need to innovate and respond to new and emerging voices in our community.

What are your congregation's weaknesses?

As a large community we naturally have a diverse spectrum of interests, opinions and approaches to ritual observance and education. We view challenges as opportunities to be addressed including:

- More fully integrating our various schools and departments in order to maximize the potential of our overlapping communities
- Engaging and meeting the needs of our diverse synagogue membership (e.g. members across a wide spectrum of observance, Jews by choice, non-traditional households, interfaith families, young families, youth/teens, retired/empty-nesters)
- Making a large synagogue feel more intimate, personal, and joyful. We view music as a critical element in providing more engaging services and want the next Hazzan to be able to help us do so.

The three most important issues to confront your synagogue in the next five years will be:

- First, among the most important issues to confront Chizuk Amuno in the next five years is transforming our synagogue culture and practice for new circumstances and generations, capitalizing on the unique nature of our institution with a tremendous depth of dedicated and resourceful members and a vibrant Jewish educational system.
- Second, the need to continue and expand our engagement with all elements of our diverse community, including young families, seniors, empty-nesters, interfaith families, Jews by choice, young professionals, LGBTQ, and those new to the community, whether they are members of our synagogue or visitors to the *shul*.
- Third, as with most synagogues, the continuing development of human and financial resources to maintain and update our large facility and campus, sustain our schools, provide additional scholarships, enhance religious services and expand other congregational programming.

What three qualities are most important to you in your new Hazzan?

- Spiritual motivator - someone who will help transform Chizuk Amuno into a congregation known for inspirational, passionate, participatory and joyful music and to be able to navigate the balance between tradition and innovation.
- Music educator - a motivating and accessible teacher for adults, children, and fellow staff, teaching the depth, breadth, and sound of Jewish prayer. We are a learning community who want very much to learn from our clergy.
- Pastoral partner - a compassionate and caring member of the clergy team, who cultivates relationships with members of the community, participates in community programs, and serves as a resource and representative for Chizuk Amuno and the greater community.

The three most important priorities of our Hazzan should be:

- Create and facilitate a joyful, highly participatory prayer experience for Shabbat and holiday services
- Work with the community (including b'nei mitzvah families, students in the schools, and other stakeholders) to enhance familiarity and skill with the music of prayer, meeting people where they are
- Be deeply involved in the life of the community beyond the bimah, making a concerted effort to get to know the diverse membership - both those who are highly engaged and those on the fringes - and seeking out opportunities for engagement with the broader community

Appendix

CHIZUK AMUNO CONGREGATION & SCHOOLS

Hazzan Position Description

At Chizuk Amuno we see music as a core way to express our spiritual longings and to bring emotion into our prayer experience. We would like to become a singing congregation where music is often heard in our hallways, classrooms, auditoriums and sanctuaries. Our Hazzan will be a person who helps us achieve this goal and builds on the rich and unique musical history of the congregation by bringing new musical offerings from around the world to our repertoire. The Hazzan is a key member of the senior staff and clergy team and participates in every aspect of congregational life, including our three schools. He/she serves as a member of the clergy and community of Chizuk Amuno Congregation as a religious role model espousing and living the teachings and practices of Conservative Judaism while fulfilling the duties and responsibilities normally related to the position of Hazzan, including but not limited to, the responsibilities described below.

Spiritual Motivator

- **Serve as שליח ציבור for prayer services, including Shabbat, Yom Tov, High Holidays, and other special occasions**
- **Attend and support the daily minyan**
- **Develop and implement a variety of service styles that encourage congregational participation and spirituality in partnership with other members of the clergy team**
- **Engage the congregation in prayer, both through skilled application of traditional modes (*nusah*) and through innovative and varied musical content, striving to achieve a workable balance between the two**
- **Encourage active congregational involvement in prayer**
- **Ensure appropriate service leadership including preparation of service participants and choirs as necessary**
- **Support and assist alternative worship services**
- **Provide opportunities for musical engagement in our community for participants of all ages and skill levels**
- **Serve as point person for maintaining the quality of musical environment in the synagogue**

Music Educator

- **Organize and direct the synagogue's bar/bat mitzvah preparation including training the students, working with clergy and staff, supervising tutors, oversight of teaching materials, and managing the process**
- **Assist with recruitment and training of Torah, Haftarah, and Megillot readers**
- **Be a presence in the schools of our community, coordinating with clergy and staff to be an integral resource to our teachers, students, and families**
- **Be available as a resource for musical programming in the schools and youth groups**
- **Participate in community education programs including adult education, adult bar/bat mitzvah, family programming, both at Chizuk Amuno and in the outside community**
- **Facilitate integration of school programs with the prayer life of the community**

Community Connector

- **Officiate and participate in life cycle events including weddings, funerals, baby namings, brit milah, b'nai mitzvah, and shiva minyanim**
- **Provide pastoral support to congregants and others including visiting hospital patients, nursing home residents, homebound individuals and providing pastoral support to congregants as needed**
- **Be available to the local community as an advocate for Chizuk Amuno, Conservative Judaism, and the Jewish community at-large**
- **Be a presence for all constituencies within the community, including and especially our teens, attending both formal community programs and participating in more casual opportunities for building relationships**
- **Contribute as a full member of the team of the synagogue clergy, educational, and professional staff, working collaboratively to promote the mission of the synagogue**
- **Participate in all relevant committees dealing with matters relating to the worship service and liturgical music**
- **Be involved in the larger local musical scene, both within the Jewish community and beyond**

- **Any other duties as assigned**

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Please e-mail Congregation Questionnaire and complete Job Description to teriwoodruff@cantors.org. Page 4



Chizuk Amuno
CONGREGATION AND SCHOOLS
Goldsmith Early Childhood Education Center
Krieger Schechter Day School
Rosenbloom Religious School

Mission

Chizuk Amuno has a long history of proud service to Baltimore's Jewish community. Dedicated to strengthening faith in our people's covenant with God, the mission of Chizuk Amuno Congregation is to create a sacred Jewish community. Here individuals and families can find meaning for their lives from serious engagement with the texts, wisdom, and celebrations of Judaism. Chizuk Amuno is dedicated to perpetuating and affirming Judaism by strengthening the faith and nurturing the religious development of its members. In pursuit of this mission, Chizuk Amuno, guided by its rabbinic and educational staff, and lay leaders, ascribes to the rabbinic teaching: "The world is sustained through *Torah*, worship and acts of loving kindness."

Kehilah Kedoshah – A Sacred Community

Finding Meaning • Strengthening Faith • Creating Community

In Hebrew there are two letters, actually the same letter written twice – *kuf, kuf*, placed before our synagogue name, Chizuk Amuno Congregation. They stand for *Kehilah Kedoshah, Sacred Community.*" That description comes first. Before we have a name, we have a purpose – to be a sacred community.

Dedicated to strengthening faith in our people's covenant with God, the purpose of this synagogue is to create a sacred Jewish community. Here individuals and families can find meaning for their lives from serious engagement with the texts, wisdom, and celebrations of Judaism.

Kadosh means holy, set apart. Membership in this synagogue should not be like belonging to any other organization. Instead, it should reflect that special part of an individual's personality, experience or story that gets shared in community with others. Members of a sacred community devoted to God, *Torah*, and each other are part of something larger.

Synagogue membership, as Judaism, is based in covenant – *brit*, shared responsibilities and privileges. Covenant compels us, and it makes demands of us. Just as God commands our performance of *mitzvot* as a holy people, so too does belonging to a sacred community require us to observe more than we do now, and to grow toward honoring the highest expectations and standards of *Torah*.

In a sacred, covenanted community dues are understood as covenant contributions, different offerings of equal significance that sustain the community and provide for every member's needs.

Drawing closer to God's presence in celebration and observance at home, as well as in participation at services, in classes, at meetings, and in support of one another are also covenant contributions.

Equality and accessibility are the ethic of membership. The belief that every person is a *Tzelem Elohim*, an image of God, is the first and fundamental moral claim of Judaism. We believe that and put that into practice. It defines who we are, why what we do here matters, and how we ought to speak to and greet one another respecting every individual.

As manifestations of God no one of us is more entitled to anything at Chizuk Amuno than any other, and all of us are expected to be present, adhering to communal norms of conduct.

We aspire to be inclusive, honoring human dignity and welcoming every person who wants to celebrate as their own the values of Conservative Judaism we practice.

In a *Kehilah Kedoshah*, a sacred community, sometimes there will be disagreement. A sense of community is not based on unanimity. It is built on the distinctiveness of Jewish identity.

Jewish tradition teaches that proper disagreements, *mahloket l'shem Shamayim*, are constructive when they reflect mutual respect for those on both sides of the matter at issue. If not, they violate Jewish ethics.

As a synagogue community we experience God's presence through such sacred conversation, as well as in learning and prayer, service and celebration, ethics and compassion, meeting and participation.

A sacred community is rooted in Torah, but more so, participating in a sacred community inspires us to bring the message and purposes of Torah into our lives and into the world.

This is our vision – to become a *Kehilah Kedoshah*, for only in this form can we effectively fulfill our congregation's mission of *Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Hasadim*.