

Wood River Jewish Community
Sun Valley, Idaho

What we are looking for in our new Rabbi (qualifications, skills and ability)

The Wood River Jewish Community is located in Sun Valley, Idaho. We are a community that embraces all Jewish denominations, and we are looking for a versatile, inspirational Rabbi to provide Jewish guidance, education and leadership to our small (but growing) mountain congregation. The Wood River Jewish Community is more than 40 years old and recently completed construction of the first synagogue in Central Idaho. While our congregation is considered a “medium sized congregation” – with more than 200 families, approximately 40% of our congregation lives full-time in the Wood River Valley; the other members of our congregation are seasonal residents who are here part-time in summer and winter.

We seek a Rabbi who can serve the varied religious, spiritual, educational and emotional needs of our members and act as a liaison to the broader community. Therefore, adaptability is essential.

Sun Valley and the surrounding Wood River Valley offer the charm of small-town living, an active lifestyle and are filled with intellectually engaged residents. While Sun Valley was the first ski resort in the United States it is now also home to many cultural events including The Sun Valley Summer Symphony and the Sun Valley Writers Conference. Beyond skiing, it is a haven for hiking, mountain biking, fly fishing, figure skating and a wonderful outdoor lifestyle.

Different than many mountain towns in the West, where affluence can be offsetting and unwelcoming, Sun Valley and its surrounding towns of Ketchum, Hailey, and Bellevue are warm and welcoming. The entire community, not limited to the Wood River Jewish Community, values public service and philanthropy in the interest of the region and its 15,000 residents.

The Wood River Jewish Community is searching for a full-time Rabbi. We would also consider a part-time Rabbi, living within the community. June 1, 2023 would be an ideal start date. We expect to dedicate the Wood River Jewish Community’s permanent home and synagogue in December 2022.

Primary Responsibilities

- Provide religious and spiritual leadership to invigorate and energize our community, which includes members at all levels of observance
- Inspire, challenge and encourage all members in their Jewish knowledge, understanding, beliefs, cultural history and practices
- Create personal and meaningful interactions with congregants and community members
- Promote communal activity
- Actively work to increase membership and participation
- Support the larger vision of the community and be committed to our growth

Bimah and Pastoral Duties

- Lead regular Friday night Shabbat services, including a Zoom option if practical
- Lead Saturday morning services (or other services) for b'nai mitzvah candidates
- Create the spiritual and religious content for all Jewish holidays. Work with the Board, Board Committees and our Executive Director to create appropriate programming around all holidays.
- Write a weekly explanation of the week's Torah reading, for inclusion in the weekly newsletter.
- Write a "Rabbi's message" for WRJC's quarterly Shofar newsletter
- Attend monthly Board meetings and provide a Rabbi report
- Work with the Board, Board Committees and our Executive Director to create a regular rotation of visiting rabbis and cantors
- Encourage strong lay participation, and provide training where necessary
- Coordinate and officiate at the life cycle needs of the community, including b'nai mitzvot, weddings (including interfaith), baby naming ceremonies, funerals, shiva services and yahrzeit support
- Coordinate with the Ritual Committee to analyze current ritual practices, tunes, and service activities and make recommendations on ways to modify or innovate services to enhance prayer and spirituality of our congregation
- Provide spiritual and emotional support to members. Serve as a resource for the community on questions of Jewish law, traditions and values

Education

- Work with the Board, Board Committees and our Children's Education Committee to create a "Sunday" school experience for our children. Note: total enrollment currently is approximately 25 students ranging in age from 5-13.
- Work with the Board, Board Committees and our Executive Director to create a robust Adult Education program, centered on Jewish religious themes, Jewish education, Jewish history and Israel and other timely topics.
- Coordinate with the Children's Education Committee to develop and deliver educational programs, Shabbat and holiday programs.
- Work with our Hebrew teacher to prepare b'nai mitzvah candidates, including adult b'nai mitzvah candidates.
- Work with our Shaliach to develop and deliver teen and young adult programming designed to maintain teen/young adult connection and instill pride in our youth in being Jewish.

Tikkun Olam

- Working with the Board, Board Committees and our Executive Director to organize and lead activities that reflect our community's commitment to Tikkun Olam. The activities need to include all generational levels of our community.
- Work with the Caring Committee to visit the sick, elderly and bereaved and be in contact, as necessary, with their families, which may be local or distant.

Membership Commitment and Outreach

- Work with the Membership Committee and the Board to attract and retain new members. Help new members integrate in all aspects of WRJC's communal activities.
- The Rabbi is an important part of the community; build and grow friendships across the WRJC spectrum. Collaborate with the Executive Director and others to create activities (Dinners? Lunches? Coffee? Hikes? Bike Rides? Snowshoeing?) that introduce members to one another in a community (as opposed to religious) setting.

Community Relationships

- Serve as an ambassador for WRJC to the community at large -- non-profit organizations, other religious communities and other civic groups.
- Foster respectful relationships with other local religious organizations.

Administrative Duties

- Maintain regular office hours
- Be available via telephone, email and text
- Attend Board meetings
- Work with committee chairs and attend committee meetings, as appropriate, which are integral to the Rabbi's duties (e.g., Ritual, Adult Education, Children's Education, Caring, Tikkun Olam, Shaliach, Membership).
- Work effectively with the Executive Director

Required Qualifications

- Rabbinical ordination from an accredited program/seminary
- Congregational experience
- Outstanding leadership and interpersonal skills
- Comprehensive Jewish spiritual and cultural knowledge
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills
- Welcoming to mixed marriage couples and their children
- Welcoming to LGBTQ members of the community
- Ability to work with the Board, Board Committees and the Executive Director on fundraising

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- A good listener and an outstanding communicator
- Enthusiastic and engaging, outgoing, welcoming and hospitable, open, gracious, empathetic and tolerant
- Eager to engage positively with and motivate people of all ages
- Capable of and willing to work collaboratively as part of a team with the Executive Director, Board of Directors, Board Committees and other volunteers

Desirable Qualities

- A plus: Interest and commitment to taking advantage of the unique outdoor experiences available in the Wood River Valley
- A plus: Ability to carry a tune

Compensation package

- We expect to provide a full-time candidate with a compensation package of \$100,000 to \$150,000, including housing, based on qualifications and experience. The package would be modified for a part-time candidate, but would include housing.

About the Wood River Jewish Community

- The Wood River Jewish Community is located in the beautiful Wood River Valley surrounding Sun Valley, Idaho – a world-renowned ski and summer resort.
- The Wood River Valley is a four-season playground surrounded by mountains, trails, parks, and glacial lakes. Year-round activities include skiing, snowboarding, figure skating, ice hockey, golf, horseback riding, bicycling, fishing, and tennis, making this a popular vacation destination.
- The towns in the Wood River Valley are quaint and pedestrian friendly with an array of excellent restaurants, unique shopping and a vibrant cultural scene. Locals enjoy concerts, theater performances, summer symphony, hockey games, arts festivals, lectures, among a multitude of other social activities.
- The Wood River Valley has excellent public and independent schools, a good hospital, access to an international airport, and a strong sense of community spirit.
- WRJC membership contains a mix of mature retirees, young families, and everything in between.
- Our members are actively involved in the culturally diverse Wood River Valley community at large.

Questions and/or expressions of interest should be addressed to Rhea.Schwartz@gmail.com