

Monmouth Reform Temple

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PRESS RELEASE

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Monmouth Reform Temple welcomes Rabbi Renee Goldberg Edelman as its new rabbi. She will begin her new role on July 1.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monmouth Reform Temple Welcomes Renee Goldberg Edelman as their New Rabbi

Tinton Falls: The Monmouth Reform Temple (MRT) community in Tinton Falls heartily welcomes its new rabbi, Renee Goldberg Edelman. She will assume her leadership of the temple on July 1.

Jay Feigus, who chaired the rabbi search committee states, “Rabbi Edelman will be a great fit for MRT. Her compassion, spirituality and love of Judaism shines through in everything that she does!!”

Rabbi Edelman comes to MRT from Temple Sha’arey Shalom, in Springfield, where she served as the congregation’s spiritual leader since 2014. A native of the greater Boston area, she graduated from Brandeis University where she studied Journalism and initially pursued a career in that field until she fulfilled her childhood Rabbi’s prediction (when she was only seven years old) that she would become a rabbi.

“Rabbi Larry Kushner saw in me, at a young age, someone that would always challenge him and push myself to learn more; yet he also recognized that I was empathetic, able to connect with people of all ages and stages of life. As a teenager, my friends and I were extremely active in social action and social justice and on Friday afternoons, we would visit people in nursing homes.”

She loved her modern, Reform-Hasidic synagogue, Temple Beth El of the Hudson Valley where all the congregants were one family. She credited that wonderful atmosphere, in part, to her mother, a heroine in her life’s story, who assumed the directorship of the religious school.

Rabbi Edelman states, “My mother would explain in awe how every day she would learn something from the schoolchildren of all ages. How amazing is that?”

She shares her mother’s passion of Jewish Education and taught a challenging middle school grade soon after her college graduation and later assumed the directorship of her own temple’s religious school.

Renee Goldberg attended the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City and was ordained in 1997. While living in New York, she worked extensively with the homeless community, earning their trust and respect. She pursued that

passion in Springfield operating an active soup kitchen and housing the homeless during Christian holidays. She has also been very involved in making connections to the interfaith community in organizing, hosting, and running all the interfaith rallies and vigils.

She began her career as an associate rabbi in Westfield where she first met MRT's long time Cantor Gabrielle Clissold, who states of her old friend, "Rabbi Edelman leads with her heart-Monmouth Reform Temple is so fortunate!"

Along her career path she met and married network engineer Shane Edelman. The couple have three teenagers, Bailey, a freshman at Boston Conservatory, and twins Jackson and Sophie, currently juniors at Millburn High School. The family lives in its 100-year-old home in Short Hills. Rabbi Edelman continued her full-time career following her first daughter's birth. At two, that daughter announced, on behalf of herself and her infant siblings, that Mommy should fire their full-time nanny and stay home. So, Rabbi Edelman sought and found a life-balance of work and child-rearing which included a new role as part time rabbi and eventually Community Service Rabbi in the northern New Jersey area. She credits her husband as key to keeping that delicate balance.

Despite her packed schedule, she found time to write and publish poetry, articles, and a clergy column for the Star Ledger. She also was the creator and consulting editor of the book, Sacred Calling: "Forty years of Women in the Rabbinate." She is currently working on a historical fiction mystery about Hannah Werbermacher for Simon and Schuster. Hannah was an early 19th century Hasidic woman Rabbi who founded her own shul and was eventually forced out of her congregation by the Talmudic scholars of the time who felt that she needed to be married to be a Rebbe.

Rabbi Edelman is delighted to be taking on her new role at MRT, stating, that she had been following the congregation for a long-time, "MRT is such an amazing community, with incredible energy and excels in bringing people together." The latter is also a trait in which she also excels. She sees many synergies of her own passions with the temple as MRT is known for its social justice work and interfaith outreach.

She adds, "There are three levels to Judaism, prayer, study, and social action/justice, I feel that many people are engaged in the path of social action. I would like to engage MRT members to enrich their own pathway to Judaism through text study, connecting the past to the present; lively, joyful prayer experiences that are generationally connective and engage not only new members, but those who have not traditionally felt at home in the sanctuary."

Congregants at that service just might be treated to some poetry and the forays of an early 19th century secret female Rabbi.

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