

## ABOUT RABBI LEAH BERKOWITZ

Rabbi Berkowitz has strong roots in eastern Pennsylvania. She grew up in the region and attended Temple Sholom in Broomall, PA. She notes that “After many transformative experiences both at URJ Camp Harlam and with the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) I decided to become a rabbi.”

She is a graduate of Brandeis University and earned a B.A. in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and Journalism. She attended Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion where she earned a Master of Arts in Hebrew Literature (2007) and a Master of Arts in Religious Education (2008). She was ordained as a rabbi ten years ago.

She currently serves as the spiritual leader of Vassar Temple in Poughkeepsie, NY. Previously she served as the associate rabbi at Judea Reform Congregation in Durham, NC (2008-2013) and taught on the faculty of Gann Academy in Waltham, MA (2013-2015).

Her community and religious service includes serving as a member of Concerned Clergy for Choice at Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts and fulfilling two terms on the board of the Women's Rabbinic Network.

She served on the editorial board of the *CCAR Journal: The Reform Jewish Quarterly*. She also collaborated on the creation of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, *Mishkan Ha-Nefesh*, the Reform movement's new High Holy Day prayer book (which we use at *Kol Ami*) and *Mishkan Ha-Nefesh* for Youth, which was just released at the 2017 Biennial.

Her passions include sharing the stories of heroic women in the Bible, writing *Midrash*, exploring modern Jewish literature, live storytelling, teaching prayer, and creating inspiring worship and life cycle experiences. Her goal as a rabbi is to “empower people to live their best lives by creating meaningful experiences rooted in the Jewish story.”

A prolific writer, her essays have appeared in the Jewish Women's Archive Blog, *The Sacred Calling: Four Decades of Women in the Rabbinate*, *God: Jewish Choices for Struggling with the Ultimate*, and *Spirituality 101: Your Guide to Keeping-or Finding-Your Spiritual Life on Campus*. Her short stories have appeared in the *Drum Literary Magazine*, *The Helix Literary Magazine* and *Jewish Women's Literary Annual*.

Her first book for children, *The World Needs Beautiful Things*, comes out in Fall 2018 (KarBen).

She is thrilled with the prospect of moving back to the area and being close to her family and helping Kol Ami in this important next phase of our congregational life.