Los Angeles, CA — Today, January 28, 2020, Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn honored Cantor Ilan Davidson for his 25 years for service to Temple Beth El in San Pedro.
“For 25 years, Cantor Ilan Davidson has not only faithfully served his own congregation at Temple Beth El, he has been a leader in the interfaith community and a beacon of light in San Pedro for so many good causes,” said Supervisor Janice Hahn who presented Cantor Davidson with a commendation from the County of Los Angeles.

Cantor Ilan Davidson has served Temple Beth El since 1995. The youngest in a long familial line of cantors, he began his training at the age of five with his mentor, Hazzan Philip Model z”l. With a strong performing arts background from the University of California, he is also a talented secular musician and contemporary Jewish singer and songwriter. He released his first album, Stained Glass, in 1995.

“At Temple Beth El all are loved, welcomed, and embraced and I have been so proud to be part of that welcoming committee for these past 25 years,” said Cantor Ilan Davidson during a meeting of the Board of Supervisors. “It has been my honor to serve the San Pedro community, the Los Angeles Interfaith Community, and the County for these past 25 years. Thank you again for your recognition today.”

In 2008 Cantor Davidson created a nonprofit organization, Kindred Spirits, a humanitarian foundation that has produced concerts and golf tournaments – events designed to raise awareness and funds for partnering aid organizations. Cantor Davidson is a past president of the South Coast Interfaith Council and, in 2017, Supervisor Janice Hahn appointed him to the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations.
SOUTH BAY’S OLDEST CONGREGATION CONTINUES ITS MISSION OF ENRICHING JEWISH LIFE THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH RABBI CASSI KAIL

Temple Beth El’s First Female Rabbi Leads the Congregation Towards Its 100 Years in San Pedro

San Pedro, CA - September 3, 2019- Temple Beth El, the oldest synagogue in the South Bay, announces the selection of Rabbi Cassi Kail. Rabbi Kail is the latest in a historic line of talented clergy members, including Rabbi David Lieb (of blessed memory) and Rabbi Charles Briskin.

“The first time I came to Temple Beth El, I felt at home. I was drawn in by the warmth, diversity, and kindness of Temple Beth El members,” said Rabbi Kail. “It is an incredible community with a rich history, dedicated leadership, and a commitment to produce quality education, artistic, and social programming, in and outside of temple walls. Temple Beth El is a congregation which deeply cares about its members, about Judaism, and about the South Bay communities of which we are a part.”

Rabbi Kail joins Temple Beth El at an exciting time in the congregation’s history. Following major renovations in 2016 and just three years shy of its centennial celebration, the temple is amid a communal renaissance. Leading up to the addition of Rabbi Kail, Temple Beth El has revitalized it’s programing to encapsulate the entirety of Jewish life in the South Bay.

From its Half Pint Havurah, which focuses on their youngest members, to its vibrant teen youth group, to the endless list of guest lecturers, art events, social groups and activities, Beth El has created a place which welcomes and engages all. Under the leadership of Cantor Ilan Davidson, the congregation has created a lively music program which mixes traditional melodies with the latest Jewish music trends, creating prayer experiences unlike anything in the area. Rabbi Kail’s arrival further adds to this time of growth and energy with her passionate commitment towards creating a place of inclusivity. No matter what your background or beliefs are, Temple Beth El welcomes you into its doors.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Rabbi Kail has lead congregations in Pennsylvania, and New York. She received a master’s degree in Hebrew Literature in 2010 and was ordained from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2011. Rabbi Kail believes that Judaism is ever evolving, and deeply personal. She uses liturgy and theology as inspirations for how we interact with each other and world around us. “I decided to become a rabbi as a teenager,” she explains. “I was playing Jewish music in my grandmother’s nursing home, and suddenly all the Alzheimer’s patients on her floor came alive. They were dancing and singing. In that moment, we were all spiritually connected. I realized that I wanted to devote my life to making Judaism accessible to people of all ages and abilities, in a way that speaks to them.”
Rabbi Kail, the clergy staff and board presidents are available for interview and comment.