



# Informing the Search for Temple Sinai's Next Cantor

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RESULTS OF THE MEMBER INPUT SURVEY

JUNE 2022

# Overview

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As Temple Sinai prepares for Cantor Croen's retirement in June 2023, the congregation has begun the process of searching for our next cantor.

A "Pre-search" Working Group, chaired by Bobbe Mintz, was established to help obtain input from the broader community in advance of the search. In an initial meeting with a representative from the American Conference of Cantors, Working Group members learned about the many different roles a cantor can play within the synagogue community.

The Working Group undertook a brief survey of the Temple Sinai community to obtain input on the key cantorial and religious leadership functions they would like to see prioritized in the search.

The survey was sent to a total of 1877 recipients including Temple Sinai members, current nursery school families, and current religious school families. Of these, 317 respondents completed the survey for an overall response rate of 17% (a good response rate for a survey of this type).

# Key Findings

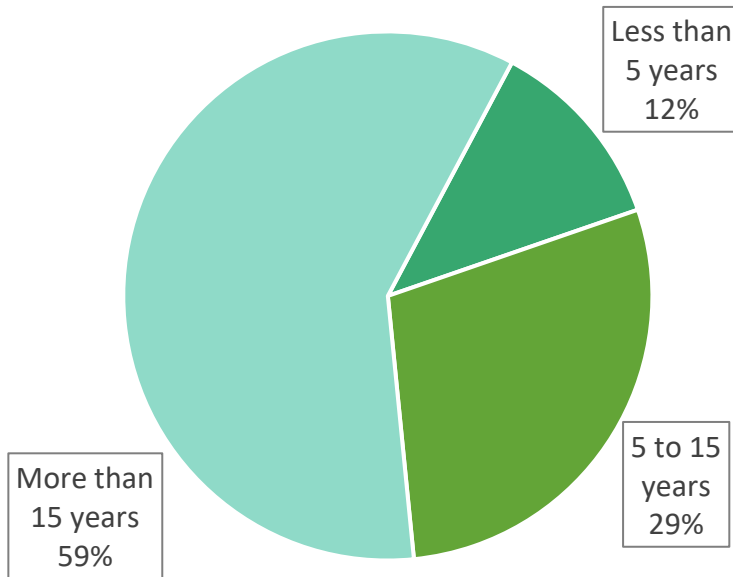
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**Leading worship was the highest rated priority across all demographic categories, followed by directing the music program. Working with b'nei mitzvah families was ranked third overall but was the second highest priority for those with children in the nursery school, religious school or those who have an upcoming or recently celebrate b'nei mitzvah in their family. Teaching adults was ranked lowest by all groups.**

- Leading worship, directing the music programs, and working with b'nei mitzvah families were rated as among three responsibilities regardless of length of membership. Newer and mid-term members rated working with b'nei mitzvah families higher than longer-term members.
- Leading worship and directing the music programs were rated as the top two items for respondents who regularly attend services, participate in committees and programs, and/or participate in the music program. Providing pastoral care was ranked higher by people who regularly attend services and regularly participate in the music programs than other groups (Note: people in these categories also tend to be longer-term members).
- Leading worship was the top ranked item for respondents with children in the nursery school, religious school, and those respondents who have an upcoming or recently celebrated b'nei mitsvah in their family. These groups all ranked working with b'nei mitzvah families as the second most important priority, significantly higher than those who do not have children in these programs or life cycle stages.

# Profile of Survey Respondents

## Length of Membership



## Other Demographic Categories

**33%** regularly participate in temple committees and programs (e.g., Daytimers, TSWRJ, TSMRJ, Library, Davis Center, Multiracial Sinai)

**24%** attend services at least once per month

**20%** have an upcoming or recently celebrated b'nei mitzvah in their family

**20%** regularly participate in the music programs

**18%** have a child or children in the religious school

**5%** have a child or children in the nursery school.

# Longer-term members were overrepresented in the survey

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Survey respondents skewed toward longer-time members (*15+ years*).

As such, it is important to “overweight” the responses from newer members (*less than 5 years*) when analyzing the feedback.

The response rate from “mid-term” members (*5 to 15 years*) reflected their actual representation among the full membership.

Length of Membership	Actual per member database	% of survey respondents
Less than 5 years	23%	12%
5 to 15 years	30%	29%
More than 15 years	47%	59%

# The Different Roles a Cantor May Play

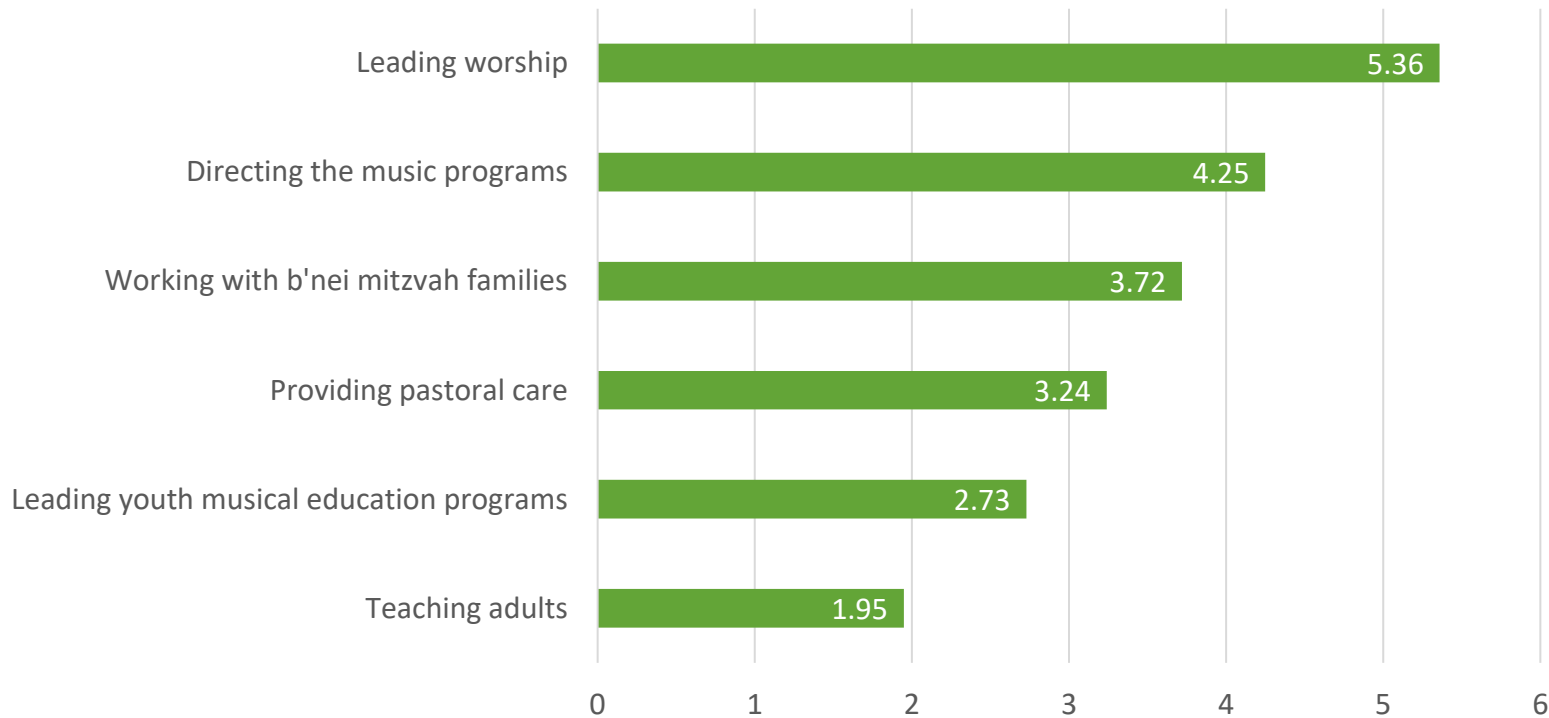
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The American Conference of Cantors describes different roles that a cantor may play in a synagogue. In addition to having a beautiful voice and helping to lead the congregation in song, and beyond their administrative responsibilities, some of the roles that cantors may play include:

- Leading worship (e.g., Shabbat services, holidays, music on the bimah)
- Directing the music programs (e.g., adult and youth choirs, special music programs, instrumental ensembles)
- Providing pastoral care (e.g., officiating at funerals and weddings, leading shiva services, visiting the sick and providing support)
- Working with b'nei mitzvah families
- Leading youth musical education programs
- Teaching adults (Adult B'nei Mitzvah, other educational opportunities)

Survey respondents were asked to rank the cantorial responsibilities listed below from most important to least important for them. Items with a higher score were ranked higher by respondents.

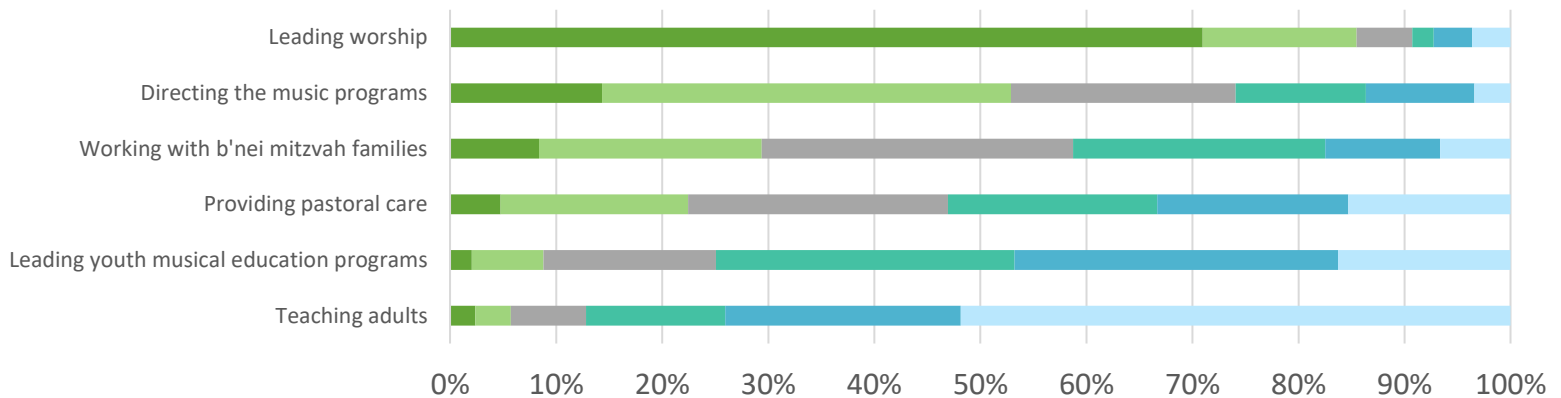
### All Respondents (Overall Score)



*Note: The highest possible rating is 6.00. Items with higher ratings were ranked as higher priorities by respondents.*

Leading worship was by far the highest rated area, with 85% of respondents listing it in their Top Two. Directing the music programs was ranked second, with 53% of respondents ranking it in their Top Two.

### All Respondents (Overall Score)



	Teaching adults	Leading youth musical education programs	Providing pastoral care	Working with b'nei mitzvah families	Directing the music programs	Leading worship
■ Priority 1	2.4%	2.0%	4.8%	8.4%	14.3%	71.0%
■ Priority 2	3.4%	6.8%	17.7%	21.0%	38.6%	14.5%
■ Priority 3	7.1%	16.3%	24.5%	29.4%	21.2%	5.3%
■ Priority 4	13.1%	28.1%	19.7%	23.8%	12.3%	2.0%
■ Priority 5	22.2%	30.5%	18.0%	10.8%	10.2%	3.6%
■ Priority 6	51.9%	16.3%	15.3%	6.6%	3.4%	3.6%



# Comparison of Ranking by Demographic Groups

Category	Ranking
<b>OVERALL RANKING</b>	Leading worship (5.36) Directing the music programs (4.25) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (3.72) Providing pastoral care (3.24) Leading youth musical education programs (2.73) Teaching adults (1.95)
<b>Newer Members (less than 5 years)</b>	Leading worship (5.31) Directing the music programs (4.06) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (4.06) Leading youth musical education programs (3.09) <i>[Rated higher than other groups]</i> Providing pastoral care (2.82) Teaching adults (1.89)
<b>Mid-term Members (5 to 15 years)</b>	Leading worship (5.54) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (4.17) <i>[Rated higher than other groups]</i> Directing the music programs (3.89) Providing pastoral care (3.12) Leading youth musical education programs (2.69) Teaching adults (1.84)
<b>Longer-term Members (more than 15 years)</b>	Leading worship (5.32) Directing the music programs (4.48) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (3.42) Providing pastoral care (3.40) Leading youth musical education programs (2.63) Teaching adults (1.99)

Note: The highest possible rating is 6.00. Items with higher ratings were ranked as higher priorities by respondents.

# Comparison of Ranking by Demographic Groups

Category	Ranking
<b>OVERALL RANKING</b>	Leading worship (5.36) Directing the music programs (4.25) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (3.72) Providing pastoral care (3.24) Leading youth musical education programs (2.73) Teaching adults (1.95)
<b>Regularly attends services (at least 1x per month)</b>	Leading worship (5.48) Directing the music programs (4.32) <i>Providing pastoral care (3.62) [Rated higher than other groups]</i> Working with b'nei mitzvah families (3.30) Leading youth musical education programs (2.44) Teaching adults (2.20)
<b>Regularly participates in Temple committees and programs (other than worship and religious school)</b>	Leading worship (5.42) Directing the music programs (4.48) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (3.40) Providing pastoral care (3.38) Leading youth musical education programs (2.51) Teaching adults (2.22)
<b>Regularly participates in the music programs</b>	Leading worship (5.43) Directing the music programs (4.45) <i>Providing pastoral care (3.50) [Rated higher than other groups]</i> Working with b'nei mitzvah families (2.94) Leading youth musical education programs (2.52) Teaching adults (2.33)

Note: The highest possible rating is 6.00. Items with higher ratings were ranked as higher priorities by respondents.

# Comparison of Ranking by Demographic Groups

Category	Ranking
<b>OVERALL RANKING</b>	Leading worship (5.36) Directing the music programs (4.25) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (3.72) Providing pastoral care (3.24) Leading youth musical education programs (2.73) Teaching adults (1.95)
<b>Have a child or children in the nursery school</b>	Leading worship (4.88) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (4.00) <i>[Rated higher than other groups]</i> Directing the music programs (3.87) Leading youth musical education programs (3.60) <i>[Rated higher than other groups]</i> Providing pastoral care (3.25) Teaching adults (1.75)
<b>Have a child or children in the religious school</b>	Leading worship (5.33) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (4.22) <i>[Rated higher than other groups]</i> Directing the music programs (3.63) Providing pastoral care (3.24) Leading youth musical education programs (2.89) Teaching adults (1.86)
<b>Has an upcoming or recently celebrated b'nei mitzvah in their family</b>	Leading worship (5.42) Working with b'nei mitzvah families (4.26) <i>[Rated higher than other groups]</i> Directing the music programs (3.73) Providing pastoral care (3.14) Leading youth musical education programs (2.64) Teaching adults (1.95)

Note: The highest possible rating is 6.00. Items with higher ratings were ranked as higher priorities by respondents.

# Key Themes from the Open-Ended Comments

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- Respondents hope that the cantor will create an environment in which the music is accessible, inclusive, participatory and a central feature of Temple life. There is a desire for someone who will instill love of Jewish song and music and who will sing “with” the congregation, not “to” the congregation.
- It is important to respondents that there is a “good fit” between the Cantor and the congregation, as well as with the other members of the clergy. Several respondents noted that many of the other members of the clergy are also very musical and there need to balance the musicality and roles of the multiple team members.
- Characteristics such as warmth, kindness, an accessibility were noted, connected to both the youth music programming and the pastoral care roles.
- Musical style was a key point of difference among respondents. There were multiple mentions of the cantor having a “pleasant singing voice” though it was clear that people have different definitions of what they means. Some respondents hoped to see a “traditional, classically trained” cantor (particularly during High Holy Days), while others hoped to see a more “modern, less formal” singing style who brings a full range of musical styles.
- There were multiple mentions of the cantor being active in the Temple’s social justice efforts and programming, including the use of music to promote inter-congregational and interfaith collaboration -- and even as a way of showing up at protests, etc.
- A few respondents mentioned their desired for an ordained cantor; others did not see this as a requirement.