

Rabbi Micah Becker-Klein brings to the rabbinate tremendous energy and vision, as he draws upon a rich array of rabbinic skills and experiences.

Rabbi Becker-Klein grew up in Blue Bell, PA, where he was active in his local Conservative shul, and in the youth group which he served as regional president for United Synagogue Youth. As an undergraduate, following one-year study in Israel with the Conservative movement's Nativ program, he enrolled in the joint program at the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University. In addition to his studies, which focused on Jewish Liturgy and Comparative Religion, he served as *gabbai* at the JTS egalitarian minyan, where he helped run Shabbat services.

After graduating with honors in 1993, Rabbi Becker-Klein's love of music and love of Israel brought him to Jerusalem, where he began graduate studies in ethnomusicology with a focus on Jewish liturgical music in the United States. When he returned to the U.S., he taught and led singing and services in a number of synagogues, summer camps, day schools, and community centers throughout the North East. In addition, he worked for the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education in New York.

In 1995, Rabbi Becker-Klein's grounding in Conservative Judaism combined with the Reconstructionist presence in and around the Philadelphia area, led to his decision to attend the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. This decision was a natural extension of Rabbi Micah's own vision for Judaism, which is progressive in its social stance, and creative in its spiritual approaches. While at the Reconstructionist Rabbinic College, among other jobs, Rabbi Becker-Klein served as Associate Rabbi for B'nai Mitzvah at the Conservative synagogue, Temple Sinai, in Dresher, PA. He also helped form "Shabbat Unplugged," a collaborative, creative Shabbat experience that provided him a chance to play guitar, mandolin, percussion, and vocals. This focus on Jewish liturgy and music is also exemplified by his editorial work on the Reconstructionist High Holy Day Mahzor published in 1999. Music and the outdoors are key elements to Rabbi Becker-Klein's spirituality; to listen to Rabbi Becker-Klein, go to <http://www.rabbimicah.com/>, where you can hear selections from his 2003 recording, "Rabbi Micah -- Walking Humbly."

While in rabbinic school and during his first year after ordination in 2000, Rabbi Becker-Klein served as Rabbi for Temple B'nai Abraham in Bordentown, New Jersey for four years. He then moved to Keene, New Hampshire, where he led Congregation Ahavas Achim for six years. Both are Reconstructionist congregations. During that time, Rabbi Becker-Klein helped increase attendance at services and membership in the synagogue of 120 families; he also directed the religious school, formed meaningful relationships with his congregants, and provided outreach to the broader community.

Eager to gain new skills, in 2007 Rabbi Becker-Klein assumed the position of Director of Jewish Life and Education at the Jewish Community Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. In this position, he oversees the educational programs, services, and summer camp for the 2,500 member JCC. Among his diverse responsibilities, Rabbi Becker-Klein supervises teachers and other staff members, works collaboratively to provide educational experiences for everyone from preschool kids to seniors, and writes and administers grants.

He is particularly proud of a program he helped create called "Gleanings," which brings adults and children to a nearby farm to collect the produce left behind after the harvest. Participants then deliver the food to a soup kitchen where they distribute it to those in need. He is currently the Associate Rabbi at Temple Beth El in Springfield, Massachusetts, a Conservative congregation.

While Rabbi Becker-Klein loves Judaism and strives to make Judaism alive for people. He enjoys connecting with people and working collaboratively. He seeks to create an environment where people feel empowered to be Jewish, where they can explore meaningful ways to be Jewish in the 21st century. He is passionate about studying and teaching Jewish sources. Topics of recent adult education courses include: Bad Girls/Good Girls: Women in the Hebrew Bible, Jewish Views of the Afterlife, Tattooing in Judaism, Angelology, and Kashrut Concerns in the 21st Century. This last topic reflects his concern for the ethics involved in the kosher food industry, which led Rabbi Becker-Klein to learn how to *shecht *(kosher slaughter) chicken and sheep -- a good example of his hands-on approach to Judaism.

Rabbi Micah Becker-Klein is married to Rachel Becker-Klein, who has a Ph.D. in Community and Developmental Psychology. She currently works as a Senior Research Associate at an evaluation firm that specializes in environmental education programs. They have two children, Sophie (age 9) and Reuben (age 7).