Samantha will be forever indebted to her sister, Keri, for prompting their parents to join the Reconstructionist Synagogue of the North Shore 20 years ago. It was there that Samantha learned how Judaism could be thoughtful, participatory and relevant. That also was the time when Samantha first considered becoming a rabbi.

Samantha studied classics and philosophy at Colgate University and worked in film preservation before migrating to the professional Jewish community in southern California and, eventually, to rabbinical school at RRC. During her time at RRC she served as a chaplain at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania; rabbinic intern at Reconstructionist congregation Temple Beth El in Newark, DE; rabbinic advisor at the University of Pennsylvania, Vassar College and Bryn Mawr College; education fellow at the Brandeis Collegiate Institute; and community organizer for GreenFaith. Samantha is profoundly humbled to have been a recipient of the generous Ziegelman Scholarship.

Samantha would like to thank her instructors and classmates for their wisdom and humor, her friends and family—especially her “Nanas”—for their love and support, and the RSNS community for inspiration. She would like to thank her sister for her unwavering friendship and her parents for Friday night movies, family dinner time, teaching her to pursue her interests and encouraging her to choose a meaningful career. She would like to thank her daughter, Naya, for bringing so many smiles into her life. And finally, she would like to thank her loving husband, Sacha, for taking a cross-country leap of faith; for being an infinite source of strength, guidance and joy; for always believing in her; and for unconditionally offering her the great fullness of his heart.

“We are not only the tellers of our stories. We are the stories themselves.”
—Jonathan Safran Foer

Judaism is an anthology of stories. We have been telling and retelling our stories for thousands of years, passing them on from one generation to the next. Our stories inform our values and consciousness as a people, and, ideally, help us become more reflective human beings and more engaged citizens of the world. Yet not only are we obligated to tell our tales, we are equally mandated to cast ourselves as active players in them—we all were slaves in Egypt; we all received the Torah at Sinai. By asserting that we, too, belong in the narrative, we become inheritors of the Jewish past and stake our claim to the Jewish future. And because our tradition is constantly evolving, we also affirm that the Jewish story is forever unfolding and that we have the potential to make a significant contribution. As a rabbi, Samantha is excited about empowering the Jewish people to own their stories, both ancient and contemporary, as rich, organic and essential expressions of the perpetual Jewish narrative.