

# STATE OF THE MISHKAN

Leading people toward purpose, connection, and inspiration



# Welcome to Mishkan. We're glad you're here.

Dearest Mishkanite,

Exhausted. Anxious. Lonely. Scared. Feeling like things are coming apart at the seams. These are some of the most common answers we heard to the usually straightforward question, "How are you?" this past year.

Then again, we danced with you at your weddings, celebrated your baby namings and brides, sang mazal tov with you at your kids' B'Mitzvahs, and clinked glasses at home-cooked Shabbat dinners all year. We learned together with visiting scholars, in small groups, and in hevruta. We kvelled as a new class of BluePrint students joined the Jewish people, and we rocked out at one joyous service after the next.

Remember the mantra we started repeating at Mishkan during the 2020 lockdowns? It's time to dust it off again: **We were built for this.**



We don't get to choose the moment in history we're born into as Americans and Jews, but we do still have a choice: despair or hope, isolation or community, giving up or getting in the game. Or, to quote the Torah, life or death, blessing or curse. We choose to resist hopelessness and despair. We choose life.

Spirituality and tradition are nice to have when the going is good, but they become tools of survival when the going gets tough. And it's in those moments that we see how resilient, creative, and brave we are. Our daily, weekly, and annual practice of Judaism trains us to wake up with gratitude, count our blessings, and pray and fight for a better world like it depends on us. Because it does.

Wherever this year takes us, we'll meet it with the Jewish values and community that have kept our people strong for 3,000 years. We were built for this. You were built for this, too.

*L'shannah tovah u'metukah* — may this year be sweet, good, and filled with reasons to find hope, connection, and joy.



Rabbi Lizzi Heydemann

Rabbi Steven Philp



**5,000**  
**PEOPLE**  
**SERVED**  
**IN 5785**

**500,000+**  
STREAMS AND DOWNLOADS  
OF OUR DIGITAL CONTENT

**17** FULL-TIME  
STAFF

**340** CHILDREN  
LEARNING  
INFANTS TO TEENS

PART-TIME  
STAFF **38**  
AND CONTRACTORS

Leading people towards purpose, connection, and inspiration isn't just a tagline. It's the spirit and values we bring to everything we do.



Abrams Achler Adler Ainis Alberg Alicea Allen Bass Ehler Bassewitz Baude Baumgarten Becker Beckerman Beer Bell Bellowe Benca Bennett Berenson Berger Berman Berman-Cutler Bernstein Berry Beshers Beslow Besmann Bigelow Bilger Blackman Blankstein Bleecker Block Bloom-Hirschberg Bodenstein Bolin Bomberg Brack Brennan Brenner Bresler Bricker Brody Bronson Brown Broxman Bruch Brumfield Buller Burch Burdin Buxbaum Cahnman Calder Callis Canny Cantor Caplan

# Learning, Social Justice, and Community Building

Mishkan creates spaces to build knowledge, deepen spiritual practice, flex leadership, and orient our collective moral compass toward Jewish values. Our classes, partnerships, small groups, concerts, and events throughout the year help us all thrive as individuals and as a community.

## CROSS-CULTURAL, CROSS-FAITH LEARNING

Our relationship with Lawndale, a neighborhood with deep Jewish and Black history, continues as we work together with our partners at Lawndale Christian Community Church (LCCC) to examine and dismantle racism and antisemitism. Mishkanites raised \$50,000 to dedicate a mezuzah at Lawndale Christian Legal Center's new facility for restorative justice. In 5786, we'll launch a crosstown *Bet Midrash* (text study community) with LCCC to discuss some of the thorniest issues in our shared sacred texts as progressive people of faith.

## MICRO-COMMUNITIES CREATED BY BUILDERS

Yoga. Torah study. LGBTQ+ and north suburban Shabbat potlucks. Jewish movie and book groups. Crafting. These are just a few of the 20 small groups that are flourishing with over 240 participants. Builders dream up and lead these groups, providing spaces for Mishkanites to connect more deeply over shared interests and identities. Shoutout to our New Arrivals Support Team—over 100 volunteers pulled off 8 food and supply drives for our migrant neighbors.

## WALKING THE WALK, TALKING ACROSS DIFFERENCE

As a pervasive culture of polarization continues to isolate people into echo chambers, Mishkan remains committed to cultivating the Jewish art of honest self-expression and resilient listening—especially around Israel and Palestine. This year, we hosted Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, statespeople, humanitarians, rabbis, and scholars; screened the Oscar-winning documentary *No Other Land*; and helped Mishkanites explore their evolving, complex feelings in brave dialogue in our *Heart of Many Rooms* program. Our rabbis continue to join Jewish leaders worldwide in calling for a ceasefire/hostage deal and promoting paths toward a peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians rooted in mutual recognition, dignity, and equality.





### GROUNDBREAKING IN-HOUSE HOLISTIC WELLNESS

In 2018, Mishkan launched Maggie’s Place, in memory of Maggie Miretzky, pioneering a model of mental health support in a synagogue setting to provide direct services and to destigmatize mental illness—and its success is inspiring other communities to do the same. As the mental health needs of our LGBTQ+ community increased this year, so have our offerings to support them. We launched a monthly Queer Youth Group and brought in a scholar in residence who advocated acceptance and allyship in the Jewish community from an Orthodox perspective. The number of people seeking support at Maggie’s Place increases each year, and, through generous donors and foundation support, we are able to keep all services completely free of charge.

**822** INDIVIDUAL  
**BUILDER**  
CONNECTIONS/CONVERSATIONS  
**WITH RABBIS**

The Rabbis and staff at Mishkan make me feel so cared for! I love being a Builder. It makes my commitment visible and gives back to a place that gives so much.

There are so many ways to be involved, at any level—even when I’m not in Chicago.

– Beth Rosenthal, Mishkanite since 2018



With every *mazal tov*, *Kaddish*, and *amen*, our holidays, Shabbat, and ritual celebrations are the spaces where we show up and immerse ourselves in the joy, reflection, learning, prayer, and community that propels and buoys us through the seasons of life.

**213 PROGRAM  
EVENTS  
AND SERVICES**

## Ritual and Celebration

### MUSIC: THE BEATING HEART OF MISHKAN

Mishkan Chicago has become the Midwest address for soul-stirring Jewish music-making. Our talented music staff join Rabbi Lizzi to level up our sound and your ability to participate, whether on the Davening Team, in seasonal music jams, Edat Zemer (our small group song community), or at concerts in partnership with Hadar's Rising Song Institute and leading musicians on the contemporary Jewish music scene.

### TURNING TOWARDS EACH OTHER FOR INSPIRATION AND COMMUNITY

The Jewish calendar provides ways to find stability and joy throughout the year—and to lift our spirits in hard times. Over 2,400 people joined us last year for high holy inspiration in person and online for the High Holidays, and our family services have grown to serve over 400 people with kids and babies! For Purim, over 600 people channeled Queen Esther's resistance and courage during multiple days of costumed revelry for adults, kids, teens, and toddlers.

We lit up the night with Hanukkah celebrations for people across the age spectrum and debuted our first low-sensory Hanukkah party for our neurodivergent kids and families. Our online Morning Minyan has 30+ people every weekday praying, supporting one another, and processing the day's news in community. And, after a hard week where the world may have you feeling down, our Shabbat services are weekly touchstones of joyful song, dance, and learning over wine and a nosh, grounding you in rest.

### CHOOSING JUDAISM

BluePrint is our signature class to explore Judaism's foundational ideas and practices for people considering conversion, as well as Jews catching up on a lifetime of learning. We completed another great year, welcoming 18 new Jews to join the People of the Book in 5785!

# Kids and Families: Raising the Next Generation of Inspired, Down-to-Earth Jews

**64**  
KIDS &  
FAMILY  
PROGRAMS

## **MENSCH ACADEMY: BUILDING POSITIVE JEWISH IDENTITY**

Hebrew School enrollment in the United States has been steadily declining over the past decade, while Mishkan's Mensch Academy has grown 10-15% every year. Families begin with Mishpachton, our preschool introduction to formal Jewish learning where parents and kids engage in fun, age-appropriate projects together. Our pre-K through 5th Grade programming has 130 students learning three days a week about Jewish values, holidays, and our place in the global Jewish community. We heard your feedback and can't wait to open up Sunday programming this fall! This year, we're excited to welcome back 14 Mensch Academy graduates as teen classroom helpers (Team Ozrim) for our newest students.

## **COHEN KADIMA: KEEPING FAMILIES AND KIDS ENGAGED DURING AND AFTER BMITZVAH**

We're making good on our intention to make Judaism relevant and exciting for middle and high schoolers. Our first full Cohen Kadima school year was a smashing success with over 120 pre-teens and teens participating in programs like 6th Grade Fundamentals, 7th Grade Kehillat BMitzvah, and a variety of learning and social programs. This year, we launched a Teen Davening Team, established a Teen Youth Group, did social action on school days off, and took a trip to Capitol Hill to lobby lawmakers with hundreds of other Jewish teens.

## **SHARING SHABBAT JOY WITH KIDS OF ALL AGES**

Our Saturday services offer multiple opportunities for kids and their grown-ups to develop muscle memory around the tastes, prayers, songs, and community of Shabbat. Rise & Shine is a musical drop-in program for families with kids 0-4 and Mah Tovv, our programming for children ages 5-8, allows them to explore the themes and stories in the weekly Torah portion through arts and STEM education. Build Your Village is a quarterly Shabbat morning group for families with new babies to explore the inherent spirituality of baby and toddlerhood and get an early introduction to other families in the BMitzvah class of 5798.

Mishkan's growing education programs enable kids of every age to meaningfully engage in Jewish services, learning, spirituality, and justice.

We take kids' ideas seriously, respond to their curiosity, and incorporate joyful song and prayer, all of which helps them develop a positive sense of Jewish identity.



Kimchi Kimerling Kindleberger King Kinney Kinning Kirsch Klein Klevan Klinenberg Klitzner Kluk Kobeck Koblenz Koch Kohn Komlofske Korenthal Kornick Koss Kothari Koutsky Kraft Kriebberg Krischer Kroot Kuchnir Kurtzon Kutcher Kwak Labow Lambert Laminack Lanzona Lara Lasky LaVanway Laveman Lavin Leis Le Vine Leavitt Lebergott Lee Lehrer Lenz Less Lessin Lester Levenstein Levie Levin Levine Levine French Leving Siegel Levinson Levitan Levitt Levy Lewis Lewittes Liberman Lieb Liebo Linker Linzer Lippitz Listernick Littman Litvin Lizcano Logan Labow Lothan Loughran Lovitt Lowenstein de Loys Lurie Lustbader Lustig Lyons Mahn

Everyone is welcome at Mishkan regardless of ability to pay for Buildership or programs. We are grateful for every dollar of support from every donor at any level. Those who are able to give at higher levels make our financially inclusive model possible. Thanks for your visionary support!

## Our Givers

### MACHER COLLECTIVE: \$10,000+

In Yiddish, *macher* means a person who gets things done, literally a “maker.” This group makes this community possible for so many others with their support.

Anonymous (x7)	Margaret and Paul Lurie
Hannah Bloom-Hirschberg and Gary Hirschberg	Dorlee and Jonathan Michaeli
Britta Bolin and Peter Kupferberg	Sharon Kahan and Alan Miretzky
Anita and Stephanie Cohen	The Morgenstern Wilson Family
Lisa and Bruce Cohen	Naomi Pollock and David Sneider
Margaret and Lee Cohn	Lisa Portnoy
Melanee Cooper	Elizabeth and Ross Posner
Sari Gluckin and Lance Friedman	Rebecca Richards and Matthew Kutcher
Gabriel Felsen	Ann and Stephen Ross
Kate Grossman and Peter Fidler	Joshua Schwartz
Terri and Michael Freeman	Caryn and Larry Straus
Vered Hankin, Jeremy Kaufman and family	Rona Talcott and Owen Deutsch
Vicki and Bruce Heyman	Ericka and Matt Thacker
Karen and Andy Jacobs	Joshua Turnbull
Karen and Larry Kurtzon	Laren Ukman
Avi Lewittes and Family	Lesa Ukman
Katherine Linzer	Alicia Weber and Adam Case

### MISHPUCHA: \$5,000-\$9,999

You are family! And like any strong *mishpucha*, people contribute in different ways to create a warm, vibrant, loving home for themselves and others.

Anonymous (x4)	Jennifer Hogan
Kathy and Peter Bresler	Meme and Gary Hopmayer
Denise Burch and Eric Weinstein	Abigail Kuchnir and Jacob Levin
Rachel Cort and David Frankel	Anna and Jake Lewis
Gabriel Felsen	Bonnie L. Lovitt
Morris Fisher *gift to Mishkan's endowment	Molly G. Levitt
Liz and Gary Fisch	Sharon and Lee Oberlander
Galit and David Gottlieb	Andi and Larry Wolfe
Rachel and Devin Gross	Cindy Wolfson
Rabbi Lizzi Heydemann and Henry Bernstein	Deb and Jeff Zaluda

### FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

An Anonymous Family Foundation	Carylon, Julius and Marcie Hemmelstein Foundation
The Bruce C. Abrams Foundation	Jewish United Fund
Crown Family Philanthropies	National Center to Encourage Judaism

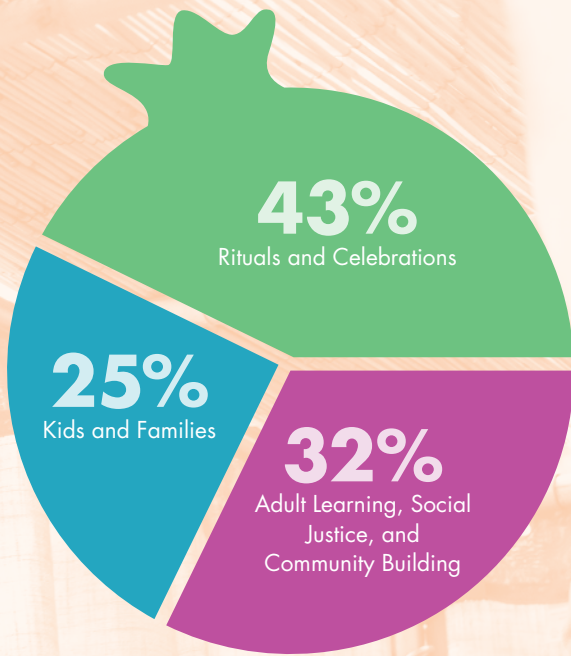
### CONSIDER A LEGACY OR ENDOWMENT GIFT

By including Mishkan in your estate planning or making a gift toward our endowment, you can sustain us for the long haul and leave a legacy of Jewish revitalization in Chicago for future generations. For more information, contact Rachel Cort at [rachel@mishkanchicago.org](mailto:rachel@mishkanchicago.org).



Let's build the Mishkan together.

5785 SPENDING: \$2.8 MILLION



A national foundation has afforded Mishkan an incredible matching opportunity this year! If you have the capacity to make a new gift or multi-year commitment of \$5,000 or above, we would love to talk to you. Contact Rachel Cort at [rachel@mishkanchicago.org](mailto:rachel@mishkanchicago.org).

The spark that ignited all of this is as strong as ever. I think it's an accomplishment to go from no people to this enormous operation while keeping that sense of freshness. It gives me hope.

– Jacob Kaufman, Mishkanite since 2011

Team Mishkan 5786: Our full-time staff and clergy.



Padowitz Palmer Panjwani Pantell Parthum Passman Persin Peter Petersen Philipsborn Philp Pierce Pilchen Pimentel Pinkert Pinkert-Lieb Pitt Plotin Podhorzer Polkow Pollock Pollock Pomfrey Portman Portnoy Posner Price Prior Pytluk Quinn Raineri Raleigh Rapoport Rapp Rapport Rassner Ratzabi Raz Redfield Redleaf Reich Reinfeld Reise Reitzes Renner Resnick Richards Riesman Riff Ring Rittenberg Ritvo Rivkin Robboy Rockwood Rosen Rosenbaum-Cooks Rosenberg Rosenthal Rosin Ross Rossi Roth Rothenberg Rothfeder Rothstein Rubin Rudman Ruzdski Russ Russek-Sobol Ruzkowski Rzepka Sabin Saltzman Samborn McCool de la Sancha Sanden



## Buildership

### MEMBERSHIP MISHKAN-STYLE

Buildership is like a synagogue membership, but more of a partnership that allows us to co-create your spiritual journey with you. Covering about 20% of our annual budget, we offer Buildership at the individual, couple, or family level. We subsidize \$120,000 annually in Buildership fees, programs, and tuition for our community members. Just as in the ancient Mishkan, every contribution counts, and no one is turned away for lack of funds.

Let's build this world from love, together. [www.mishkanchicago.org/join](http://www.mishkanchicago.org/join)

**630** BUILDER HOUSEHOLDS  
**1,200** TOTAL INCLUDING CHILDREN



For me, Mishkan is the perfect mix of spiritual, political, and educational engagement.

The staff is clearly putting themselves in the shoes of community members and thinking through what they need and then giving it to them.

– Prudy Gourguechon, Mishkanite since 2023

I always leave High Holiday services feeling renewed. It uplifts my soul.

We call people in, not out, and we listen to each other's opinions. I love the diversity and acceptance of the community. It makes me feel wonderful, like my soul has been given a hug.

– Ricky Halle-Podell, Mishkanite since 2019

I spent decades exploring different communities and congregations. About 20 minutes into my first 5-hour Rosh Hashanah service in 2014, I thought, "I'm home." That feeling has never left.

– Susana Darwin, Mishkanite since 2020

# Like what you see? Join us!

LET'S BUILD THIS WORLD FROM LOVE, TOGETHER.



Become a  
Builder.



Donate.



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on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok.

[www.mishkanchicago.org](http://www.mishkanchicago.org)