

# *Celebrating*

**the Rededication of  
the historic Sanctuary at  
KAM Isaiah Israel**

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**December 14, 2025**

# *Welcome!*

Whether you are a member of KAM Isaiah Israel, a member of the wider Hyde Park-Kenwood community, or someone who worked to bring our sanctuary back to its magnificent original glory, I want to welcome you to our ceremony of rededication.

Many, many people helped bring us to this moment.

First and foremost, nothing would have happened without our congregational donors, who stepped up and gave from the heart to bring this project to fruition. Donations large and small were all welcome and necessary. Also essential were numerous grants from a variety of outside organizations. And of course, the various skilled and knowledgeable people who did the actual repairs, restoration, installations, cleaning, and revitalizing allowed the vision to come to life.

Current and former staff of KAM Isaiah Israel, too, were an integral part of all the work, which could never have been completed without them.

Today's program was carefully planned by a wonderful and diverse group of KAM Isaiah Israel members and staff. I hope you all find it meaningful and beautiful, and enjoy looking around our restored sanctuary as much as I do.

We are so glad you are all here, and we're looking forward to gathering together for worship, celebration, and building community in this space for many decades to come!

Lenore Mass

## *The Rededication Committee*

Lenore Mass, Chair  
Venice Czarnecki-Lichstein  
Debbie Green  
Kineret Jaffe  
David Litvak  
Lauren Mostrom

Rachel Rhodes  
Irene Sherr  
Roberta Seigel  
Beth Sklarsky  
Max Stein  
Joel Worthington



# *Rededication Ceremony Program*

- **Welcome**—Julie Volchenboum, KAM Isaiah Israel President
- ***“Lift up Your Heads,”*** Composed for the original 1925 dedication of the sanctuary by Heniot Levy, and dedicated to Rabbi Joseph Stolz--Cantor David Berger, KAM Isaiah Israel Community Chorale, and Kol Zimrah
- **Lighting of Chanukah Menorah**—House Committee chair and past chair Patrick Rosen and Fred Stein
- **Hanging of Mezuzah**—Rabbi Daniel Kirzane, Lenore Mass
- **Bringing the Torah to the Ark**—Osnat Strulov-Shlain
- **Address**—Rabbi Daniel Kirzane
- **Blessing**—Rabbi Frederick Reeves
- ***“KAM Isaiah Israel Sanctuary Song,”*** Composed for the 2025 sanctuary rededication by Cantor David Berger—Cantor Berger, Community Chorale, and Kol Zimrah
- **Words of Congratulations**
- **Words of Gratitude**—Campaign Co-Chairs Dan Mass, Lainey Canevaro Weinstein, and Amy Wishnick
- **Closing**

Reception to follow in Vick Hall

**A special “THANK YOU” goes out to the incredible staff of KAM Isaiah Israel, who rise to the occasion every day. We wouldn’t be the vibrant synagogue we are without your dedication.**

Rabbi Daniel Kirzane

Cantor David Berger

Osnat Strulov-Shlain, Executive Director

Elisa Aranoff, Interim Youth Educator

Kimberly Kent, Administrative Operations Coordinator

Jacob Perkins, Administrative Assistant

Eva Griffin Stolbach, Program Assistant

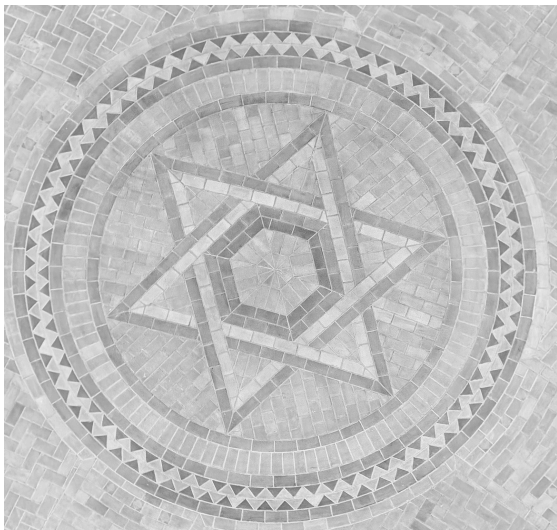
Deanna Neil, Special Projects

James Mackey Jr., Facilities Team

Olga Perez, Facilities Team

John Sefner, Facilities Team

Gabiella Betancourt, Facilities Team





## **SPECIAL THANKS**

With gratitude, we recognize the leaders, partners, and contributors whose vision and dedication guided this restoration to completion.

### **Clergy & Executive Leadership**

Rabbi Frederick Reeves  
Executive Director Scott Nelson

### **Congregational Leadership**

Past Presidents: Max Stein, Kineret Jaffe, Lenore Mass  
House Committee Chairs: Fred Stein, Patrick Rosen

### **Campaign Leadership**

Campaign Co-Chairs: Dan Mass, Lainey Canevaro Weinstein, Amy Wishnick

### **Fundraising Partners**

Avrum Lapin (The Lapin Group)  
Gianfranco Grande (Partners for Sacred Places)

### **Restoration Partners**

Our profound gratitude to the teams whose craftsmanship  
returned the sanctuary to life—

Bulley & Andrews (especially Christopher Bruns) · Daprato Rigali  
Studios · Carol Seating · Diversify · CCI Flooring · Rosen Architecture  
· JLK Architects · Jones & Cleary · The Lapin Group · Partners for  
Sacred Places, and more



## **Mini-History of KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation**

In 1847, our congregation was founded as an Orthodox institution, primarily at the instance of the six Kohn brothers, who had recently arrived in Chicago with their families. They were gravely concerned that their mother would wither away because she refused to eat meat that had not been ritually killed by a shochet and there was no shochet in the city. The new congregation, Kehilath Anshe Ma'arav, Congregation of the Men of the West, composed primarily of immigrants from the Bavarian region of Germany, quickly hired a shochet from New York who doubled as a rabbi.

Thus began our remarkable history. Only five years later, the minority of members who were from Prussian Poland decided that KAM was not sufficiently Orthodox. So they formed a new congregation, B'Nai Sholom. Through the founding of other congregations in the 1890s and various mergers, B'Nai Sholom became Temple Isaiah Israel in 1924. In 1971, KAM and Isaiah Israel merged.

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, KAM and B'Nai Sholom shed their Orthodox lineage and became nationally prominent Reform congregations and adopted Reform rituals. But in the 20th and 21st Centuries that has not meant a lockstep unity of approach to major issues of the day by our clergy or our laity. For example, we have had a staunchly anti-Zionist rabbi, Gerson Levy (1906-1937), a rabbi so devoted to the State of Israel that he retired early to make Aliyah, Morton Berman (1937-1957), and a rabbi who loved Israel but was often highly and vocally critical of its actions, Arnold Jacob Wolf (1980-1998).

In other ways, there has been remarkable consistency over time. The best example is the prominent role which women have played in our congregation almost from the beginning. In 1858, B'Nai Sholom formed one of the first sisterhoods in the country. Immediately following the Columbian Exposition in 1893, women from both KAM and B'Nai Sholom played a prominent role in founding the National Council of Jewish Women. During the Great Depression, the Isaiah Israel Sisterhood was far more successful than the all-male Board of Directors in raising money to pay interest on the mortgage on this building. During the 1950s, the KAM and Isaiah Israel sisterhoods took the congregational leads in actively fighting the scourge of McCarthyism through lobbying of state and federal officials, public education events, and the like. They were also active in the efforts to preserve Hyde Park-Kenwood as an integrated community in the 1950s and 1960s. And today, fifteen of the officers and directors of the congregation are women and only four are men.

From the beginning, intellectual pursuits have been an integral part of our congregational life. KAM's first scholar-in-residence, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, appeared in 1856. In 1909, Jane Addams spoke at Isaiah Israel on the occasion of Leo Tolstoy's eightieth birthday, talking about both his literary legacy and his staunch opposition to Czarist policies. In 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King gave an extraordinary speech at KAM.



We have also had a strong love of music. Jascha Heifitz performed at Isaiah Israel and Pete Seeger performed at KAM. KAM and Isaiah Israel jointly honored the composer Ernest Bloch, whose Kol Nidre for solo cello is performed every year during our Kol Nidre service. KAM/KAMII's long-time music director, Max Janowski (1938-1991), wrote much of the musical liturgy that is still used by congregations around the world. Max also had a contract with Metro Goldwyn Mayer to record his arrangements of "Palestinian music." Isaiah Israel Cantor, Andrew Foldi (1950-1959), and his choir, gave the first ever performance in the Chicago area of Handel's oratorio, Jephthah.

Throughout most of our history, congregants have had a strong commitment to social justice. While they have invariably manifested that commitment through their work, they have also seen the value of communal efforts through our congregation.

For 175 years, our congregants has been committed to Jewish rituals as they have evolved over time and to intensive study of Jewish concepts, history, and beliefs. They have also sought to live those beliefs in their daily lives, as well as enjoying the beauty that a Jewish life can provide. For 175 years, this has been a truly remarkable congregation.

Jerry Meites



## **Want to Read More History?**

During the KAMII Sesquicentennial in 1997-98, the History Committee wrote a highly entertaining and informative decade-by-decade history of KAMII. Each chapter depicted life in the congregation(s) during that decade. Beginning next month, that history will be made available to the congregation on the KAMII website for the first time since its original publication.





# KAM Isaiah Israel Sanctuary Architecture

A feeling of awe and majesty, a sense that something important will happen, envelopes those entering the sanctuary designed by architect Alfred S. Alschuler (1876-1940) for Isaiah Temple, which was founded in 1895. Opened on September 12, 1924, the sanctuary was envisioned as the first piece of a complex designed in a picturesque Middle Eastern style, including a chimney disguised inside a minaret, that suggested the historic roots of the Jewish people and was inspired by recent archeology in the Middle East. The brick exterior of the sanctuary, with a band of blue and green tiles near the roofline, was loosely inspired by a 1913 domed synagogue in Essen, Germany.

As a building of the 1920s, the octagonal sanctuary, while it may have looked to the past, was built with contemporary technology: it has a steel support structure, and its interior walls and columns, resembling large blocks of stone, are actually finished with plaster tooled to resemble stone. True stone is found in the marble walls and columns surrounding the ark.

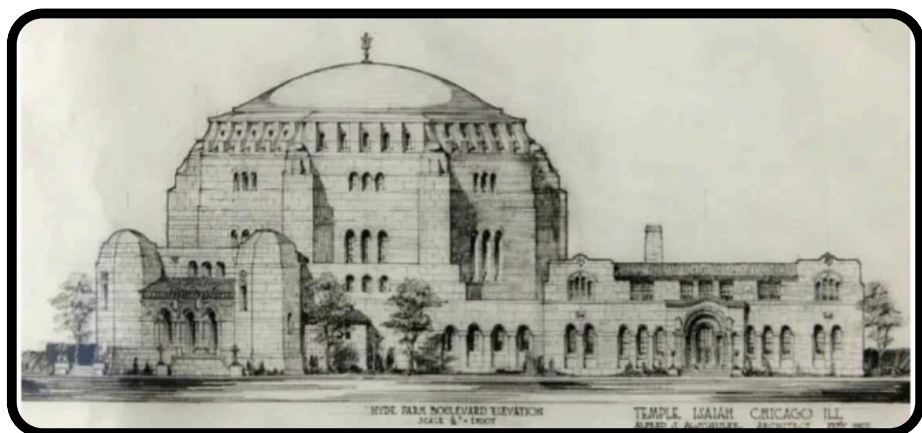
Stained glass windows feature Moses, holding two tablets of the Law on which the numbers one through ten, representing the 10 Commandments, are written in Roman numerals (!), and the prophet Isaiah, for whom the congregation was named. Other windows represent the values of Justice, Peace, Truth, Holiness, Love, and Piety through various motifs.



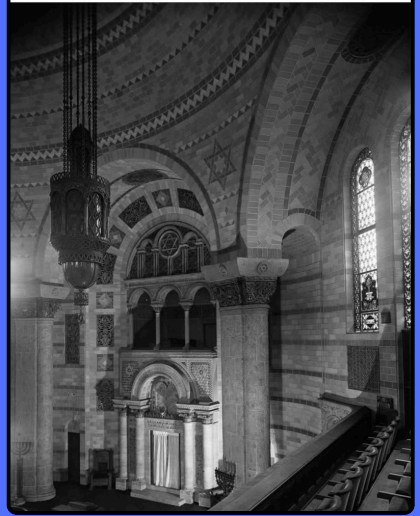
What accounts for the acoustics of the sanctuary? A Guastavino vault! Spanish architect Rafael Guastavino brought this Catalan system of thin arched tiles to the US, allowing for large spaces to be covered without support columns.

On October 19, 1924, Isaiah Temple merged with congregation B'nai Sholom Temple Israel, and the month-old building was renamed Isaiah Israel. In June of 1971, KAM congregation, founded in 1847, merged with Isaiah Israel congregation and moved into the Isaiah Israel building, and a third name was engraved in the limestone above the three doors facing Greenwood Avenue.

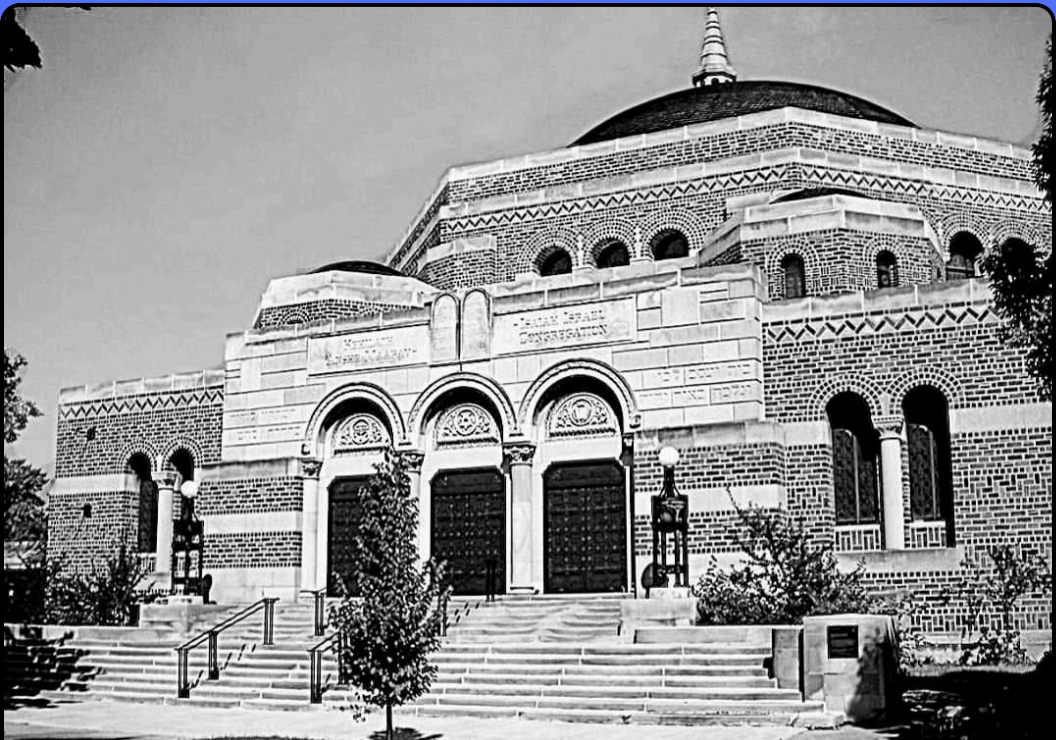
Joan Pomaranc



Circa 1925 interior image of Temple Isaiah designed by Alfred Alschuler. Photo by Raymond W. Trowbridge from a glass negative. Collection of The Chicago History Museum.



**DESIGNED IN 1924 BY ARCHITECT  
ALFRED ALSCHULER, OUR SANCTUARY  
STANDS AS A CORNERSTONE OF  
JEWISH LIFE IN CHICAGO.**





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Becky & David Rubin – and to the congregants who  
came before us and built our community and

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Grace Wolf

Aveva, David, and Lisa are making this donation  
from The Robert I. and Gloria L. Yufit Family Fund  
in memory of our parents.

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Save America's Treasures – Chicago Park District Partnership



# Greetings from the Governor of Illinois



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

**JB PRITZKER**  
GOVERNOR

November 24, 2025

KAM Isaiah Israel  
1100 East Hyde Park Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Rabbi Daniel Kirzane and congregation,

I am pleased to celebrate with KAM Isaiah Israel on the event of the rededication of their historic 100-year-old sanctuary, following its renovation.

Since its founding, KAM Isaiah Israel has been a spiritual home to countless Illinoisans. That influence is due in no small part to its congregation's resilience and commitment to its community and values.

And of course, that we can celebrate such a storied history of KAM Isaiah Israel is a testament to the faith and connection of its congregation and staff. I am honored to join in celebrating the rededication of KAM Isaiah Israel Temple.

On behalf of the people of Illinois, I offer my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable celebration, and for many more great years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker".

Governor JB Pritzker

# Greetings from the Mayor of Chicago



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR CITY OF CHICAGO

**BRANDON JOHNSON**  
MAYOR

December 14, 2025

Dear Friends

As Mayor, and on behalf of the City of Chicago, I extend my congratulations to Congregation KAM Isaiah Israel on the reopening of your historic sanctuary.

First built in 1924 by Isaiah Temple, which united in 1971 with KAM, Illinois first Jewish congregation, this sacred space reflects a legacy of progressive Jewish values that stretches back to 1847.

Today, after essential repairs for the last three years, the sanctuary stands renewed. Its restored artwork, strengthened structure, and state-of-the-art geothermal heating and cooling system honor your past while embracing a sustainable future. This investment ensures that the building will continue to serve not only as a spiritual home for Jewish life, but also as a vital hub for interfaith, civic, and community gatherings.

Chicago is proud that this extraordinary treasure remains rooted on the South Side, where your congregation has long been an anchor of community engagement, justice, and partnership. May this revitalized sanctuary continue to inspire all who enter it for generations to come.

Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "BJ", followed by a horizontal line.

Mayor

# Greetings from the Jewish United Fund

**Lonnie J. Nasatir**  
*President*

November 19, 2025

Rabbi Daniel Kirzane  
Julie Volchenbourn, President  
KAM Isaiah Israel  
5039 S Greenwood Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Rabbi Kirzane and Ms. Volchenbourn,

On behalf of the Board and Staff of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Chicago I write to congratulate you on the rededication of your sanctuary, appropriately scheduled for the first night of Hanuka.

Kehilath Anshe Ma'arav – Congregation of the Men of the West was, as you know only too well, established on November 3, 1847, as the first and oldest synagogue in Illinois. Indeed, it is noteworthy that the history of KAM Isaiah Israel parallels the history of the Jewish Federation itself. Some of its leaders were the founding members 125 years ago of the Jewish Federation. With the rededication of your sanctuary, you testify to this great legacy and to the honor you have done to this great legacy by continuity. The years since 1847 have been among the most momentous in modern Jewish history. One honors the past with continuity in the present and on into the future.

As you continue to serve the Jewish community of Hyde Park and the larger Jewish community, may you be endowed with all the blessings that our tradition bequeaths to those who serve God, Torah, and Israel.

Sincerely,



Lonnie Nasatir

LN:bb

# Greetings from Hebrew Union College



December 14, 2025 / 24 Kislev 5786

Rabbi Daniel Kirzane and Julie Volchenboum, President

KAM Isaiah Israel

5039 S. Greenwood Avenue

Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Daniel, Julie, and the Congregation of KAM Isaiah Israel,

The Board of Governors, faculty, students, alumni, and administration of Hebrew Union College join in expressing our heartfelt congratulations on the completion of your historic sanctuary restoration and its rededication on the first night of Hanukkah.

As a proud pillar of Chicago's Jewish community, KAM Isaiah Israel has been a beacon of Reform Judaism, enriching the spiritual and cultural life of the city. For a century, your magnificent sanctuary has served as a sacred gathering place where generations have come together in worship and celebration. The multi-year renovation you have undertaken is a testament to the congregation's deep commitment to preserving this architectural and spiritual treasure for future generations. Through your vision and dedication, you have ensured that this beloved sanctuary will continue to serve as a beacon of Jewish life and learning.

On a personal note, writing as a former board member who spent a decade learning, praying, making music, and celebrating holidays with my family within the beauty of that sanctuary, I am deeply grateful for your investment and for the powerful message it conveys about Jewish continuity on the South Side.

The timing of this rededication during Hanukkah is especially meaningful. You are preserving not merely a building but, like the rededication of the ancient Temple, a kehillah kedoshah—a sacred community devoted to Torah, worship, and acts of human kindness.

May your sanctified work continue to bring light, learning, and inspiration into the world as you go from strength to strength.

Chag Hanukkah Sameach, and mazal tov on this historic achievement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Rehfeld'.

Andrew Rehfeld, Ph.D.

The Gus W. Herrman President and Professor of Political Thought

**Office of the President**

One West Fourth Street, New York, NY 10012 | 212-824-2201 | [rehfeld@huc.edu](mailto:rehfeld@huc.edu)



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