

Information for Spiritual Leader Candidates

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adas Yoshuron seeks a dedicated and welcoming spiritual leader who will provide a theological and ethical center. We envision a leader who brings a connecting thread encompassing the range of Jewish experience in Midcoast Maine to enrich and invigorate our membership and inspire social action. Leadership at Adas Yoshuron will include collaborating with active lay leadership and volunteer teams. The leader of our synagogue will provide pastoral care and guidance to members and, as possible, to the wider Jewish community, as well as officiating at life cycle events, including same-sex and interfaith marriages.

The Adas Yoshuron board is committed to supporting the financial, mental, and physical well being of our leader. In addition to a salary between \$85,000 and \$100,000, the board will work with the selected candidate to develop a benefits package to include a health insurance contribution and other programs to provide for secure and balanced work/life conditions. The selected candidate will have the opportunity to participate in the Center for Small Town Jewish Life Makom Fellowship (jewishlife.colby.edu/makom/), which provides training, mentorship, and peer support to leaders who serve small Jewish communities like ours. Adas Yoshuron board and membership participation in this program is anticipated to be an opportunity for us to learn and grow in support of a new leader.

Adas Yoshuron provides a strong anchor to Midcoast Maine's small but growing Jewish population. Last summer, we celebrated our synagogue's 110th anniversary at a lakefront lodge, eating delicious local food, dancing to klezmer music performed by a rabbinic couple with ties to our congregation, and laughing together as we shared stories and saw the future embodied in a multigenerational presence. Our remarkably welcoming congregation includes 100 member entities spanning a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds. Our community is committed to integrating spouses and partners who are not Jewish. We accept the principles of both matrilineal and patrilineal descent and therefore consider children and adults who have at least one Jewish parent to be Jewish by birth. Adas Yoshuron's active lay leadership integrates spiritual elements from Conservative to Reform and Renewal traditions in Shabbat and holiday services and an engaged volunteer programming team strives to offer inclusive Jewish religious, cultural, and educational opportunities throughout our widespread geography.

Our synagogue's home is a quiet block on Willow Street in the city of Rockland, a short stroll to a thriving and walkable downtown known for its innovative locavore restaurants and flourishing art museums, galleries, and theater. Located near the center of Midcoast Maine, Rockland is a micropolitan city set against the stark beauty of the granite coast, the rich agricultural land that feeds our community, and the incredible natural wonders of Maine that beckon adventurers in all seasons. With a working waterfront of fisheries and boatbuilding and a vibrant "Art Capital of Maine" downtown, Rockland draws seasonal and year-round residents that engage with the diversity of opportunity and experience that all of these attractions offer.

Learn more about our synagogue and Midcoast Maine at adasyoshuron.org. Contact us at leader-search@adasyoshuron.org with questions or to submit a resume.

OUR CONGREGATION AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF MIDCOAST MAINE

Congregation Adas Yoshuron has been a beacon for Jewish life in Midcoast Maine since its founding by Russian immigrants in the late 19th century. Originally an Orthodox congregation, our synagogue is now unaffiliated and serves a broad geographical range and philosophical array as the only synagogue within 50 miles.

Jews have lived in the Midcoast since before the Civil War and there is a rich history of Jewish life throughout the state of Maine. Today, the Midcoast Jewish community is small but tightly knit and has grown significantly in recent decades. Through the leadership of Colby College's Center for Small Town Jewish Life, Adas Yoshuron is a part of a strong network of engaged congregations and Jewish leaders. We are supported by the eager participation and generous contributions of the Midcoast Maine Jewish community.

Our community includes doctors, lawyers, businesspeople, farmers, educators, artists; young families, mature adults, singles, and couples; those who were raised or self-identify as Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, Orthodox or Unaffiliated; full time residents and those who come to the Midcoast to vacation or to live some part of the year. All of these are important members of the Adas Yoshuron community, many of whom are involved in Rockland and Midcoast Maine as business and professional leaders and all of whom engage with the political and community life of our region. Though small in number, our membership has a strong presence in Midcoast Maine and is a meaningful voice in the social and political life of our broader community.

When asked about Adas Yoshuron and what attracts congregants to the synagogue, we often hear that our Shul is more than a community - it is an extended family with a sense of belonging; "my Jewish family in a place that feels like home." The warmth, familiar faces, mutual care for one another's wellbeing, and the connected nature of our small Shul all support the vibrant and caring nature of our community. This community includes and celebrates members with interfaith marriages and marriages of all genders, many of which have been conducted in our sanctuary. We are committed to integrating and welcoming spouses and partners who are not Jewish into all aspects of our observances.

In terms of religious observance, there must be something for everyone. The membership of Adas Yoshuron ranges from the traditional who would attend daily minyan if such existed to those who come only at the High Holidays. An array of religious services are offered that address a wide variety of observances and customs designed to support the needs and interests of full and part-time residents in our geographically widespread area. The opportunity to participate in services and programming remotely has been beneficial to congregational engagement in the past years, not only allowing connection during times when it has not been safe to gather, but also affording ongoing engagement to members who may be far from Rockland or unable to travel.

In addition to providing a setting for religious services and needed support to those facing or celebrating life-cycle events, Adas Yoshuron is the locus of opportunities for learning and connection for culturally and ethically engaged Jewish residents of Midcoast Maine; those who simply want to gather with like-minded souls to share a meal or to discuss the events of the day, study and learning about great books, the challenges we face as Jews, opportunities for expanding our diversity, equity and inclusion and social action activities, and much more. Accordingly, our synagogue also fills a role as a Jewish community center with cultural programs for the entire family and Jewish education for children ranging from pre-school to post-Bnei Mitzvah.

We are eager to attract young families with children to enliven our services and celebrations, attend Hebrew School, and participate in family programming. We envision a robust youth program that involves our teens with Jewish experiences that provide nurturing and fun opportunities to cultivate their Jewish identity. We anticipate the presence of a spiritual leader will provide a strong center from which to grow our membership and expand and deepen the breadth of educational opportunities for children, B'nai Mitzvah, and teens.

We believe that dedicated spiritual leaders perform critical leadership functions in congregations. They help shape and communicate vision, lead prayer, teach, administer, manage, and offer pastoral care. They build community and connect individuals and groups to one another. Through vision and example, they engage their community in social action endeavors. Spiritual leaders are critical in building the vitality that we envision for our synagogue. Vital congregations are unusually active, inspiring, and engaging and they stimulate feelings of belonging—features that help members grow and learn as Jews. Vital congregations perform critical functions—for their members, Jewish life, and their local communities, and the larger society as well.

Over the next three years, a principal goal of our Board is to encourage a steady increase in involvement from a new generation and demographic of members. This would be a time of passing on the collective wisdom and institutional memory to a new generation of leaders. We will consider it a success when we have recruited, trained, and retained new community leadership to participate on synagogue committees, our Board, and volunteer opportunities. Our commitment to cultivating a pipeline of vibrant, knowledgeable leaders is intended to lead to seamless leadership transitions and help ensure the vitality of our congregation's future.

Finally, we envision our Shul community filled with spirited opportunities for connection, engagement, and learning. We envision Shabbat and holiday services of meaningful prayer, beautiful music, and thoughtful meditation. We envision a spiritual leader who respects and honors the history of our synagogue community, celebrates and encourages lay leadership and the tradition of community involvement while bringing their own strengths, knowledge, and questions and offering us new perspectives and the joy of discovery.

THE SPIRITUAL LEADER WE ENVISION

A successful spiritual leader for the Adas Yoshuron community will lead Shabbat and High Holiday services that both reflect and express the wide range of Jewish backgrounds and practice in our community. This may include translation of prayers, non-traditional material (such as meditation, music or poetry), discussion, and learning during certain services. They will collaborate with lay leaders and committee members to develop services and to create meaningful opportunities for observance of major and minor Holidays, including Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Passover, Shavuot, Purim, Chanukah, Tu Bishvat and Yom Hashoah.

Adas Yoshuron offers many things to many people, including activities for those who regularly attend religious services, those who are engaged in Jewish culture through activities like Books and Bagels and Jewish Food in Culture, Jews of the Midcoast who participate in learning and community through Talmud study, adult education, and Hebrew school, and dedicated community members who serve as members of the Board and Chevra Kadisha.

We envision a spiritual leader who brings a connecting thread strengthening these existing but sometimes disparate elements of our congregation and broader community and whose presence draws in, through outreach, welcome, and inspiration, Jews living in Midcoast Maine who do not yet belong to a congregation. Adas Yoshuron is a synagogue as well as a Jewish center for Midcoast Maine. The leader of our congregation will take an active role on the Programming Committee to develop programs to enrich and invigorate the membership and our community and collaborate with the committees established by the Board of Directors and the Congregation.

The Adas Yoshuron spiritual leader will provide pastoral care and guidance to members of the Congregation, provide comfort and guidance to members experiencing illness and to grieving members of the Congregation and their families, and will extend these services, whenever possible, to Jews in Midcoast Maine who may not be members. They will welcome non-Jewish family members, increasing their knowledge of Judaism and helping those who wish to convert as well as welcoming non-Jews interested in exploring Judaism and teaching and guiding those interested in conversion.

Involvement with the [Makom Fellowship](#) at the Center for Small Town Jewish Life at Colby College is a benefit offered to the selected candidate for leadership of Adas Yoshuron. Maine is rich with experienced rabbis offering mentorship and collegiality to new rabbis coming to the state. Participation in the Makom Fellowship will offer an opportunity for the spiritual leader to engage with and learn from this community as well as supporting our congregation to grow and learn in support of our new leader.

Spiritual leadership at Adas Yoshuron will include:

Leading religious services, including leyning Torah and sharing insights based on Hebrew and religious knowledge.

Engaging with the Programming, Ritual, and/or High Holidays Committees who will serve as partners in developing programming such as Torah study, outdoor Shabbat/holiday programs, community dinners, onegs and seders.

Inspiring members to social action. This may take the form of educational programs, social action projects, etc.

Actively partnering with and advising the Hebrew School in development and delivery of curriculum through participation in planning for the school year and attending Hebrew School on a regular schedule.

Coordinating training of B'nai Mitzvah students to complete their preparation to be called to the Torah, including working with the Hebrew School teacher and others to ensure students are supported in writing their speech, learning prayers, and leying Torah.

Developing an adult education program to meet the needs of those who are new to the religion as well as those with some knowledge.

Officiating at life cycle events, such as marriages, including same-sex and interfaith marriages, birth celebrations, Mitzvah celebrations and funerals of Congregation members.

Working with the Membership and Fundraising Committees to increase the size and financial stability of the congregation.

Representing our community in the larger religious (including interfaith) and secular communities of Midcoast Maine.

GREATER COMMUNITY

Adas Yoshuron synagogue is located in Rockland, Maine – a small and vibrant city with a year-round population of about 7,000. Our city sits in a gorgeous setting of rural Midcoast Maine, with a working waterfront of fisheries and boatbuilding, a walkable, vibrant “[Art Capital of Maine](#)” downtown, and a local population that enjoys engaging with the diversity of opportunity and experience that both of these attractions offer.

Rockland enjoys a vital cultural landscape, with world-class museums, music, film, and foreign policy forums. The region is home to [The Farnsworth Art Museum](#), [The Center for Maine Contemporary Art](#), [The Maine Media Workshops](#), [Bay Chamber Concerts](#), [The Camden Conference](#), and [The Points North Institute](#), sponsor of the [Camden International Film Festival](#). With forested hiking and biking trails, mountains, and picturesque small New England towns, Midcoast Maine attracts people from around the world. As a vacation destination for many, we see a significant jump in population during the summer months and our community is driven and shaped by both part-time and year-round residents.

Our rural setting means that rather than Uber, you'll be calling Joe's taxi and, because there's no grub hub, you'll be eating in or getting take-out from one of our many farm to table restaurants. Many folks in Maine have never (knowingly) talked with a Jew before and we're far from traditional centers of Jewish community. Without the access or total anonymity of the city, Midcoast residents find joy in making do with what we have and in the feeling of community and belonging that comes from knowing how important our contributions are.

While you can find Matzoh and Shabbat candles at the local Hannaford grocery store, great local bagels, and Dr. Brown's on Passover, you'll have to get your kosher meat delivered from Boston. Some of Midcoast Maine's treasures can be hard to find, but talk to the locals and wander a bit and you'll discover anything from amazing sushi places to the best farm to cuddle a goat and eat fresh cheese. Summer and year round resident journalists, writers, and artists have created a rich body of work featuring the Midcoast, from articles in the New York Times inviting tourists to our favorite restaurants and skiing destinations to literature featuring the people and places of our many varied

communities. Midcoast Maine has a range of socioeconomic experience with working class generational Mainers, artists and farmers who've come to Maine to get back to the land, people whose vacation homes have become the place where they spend most of their year, and a host of cultural institutions that are supported by the whole cast of characters.

Portland is just under 2 hours away; Bar Harbor and [Acadia National Park](#) is just over 2 hours; and Boston is a 4-hour drive. Rockland has a small regional [airport](#) with several small daily flights to Boston.

Our population in Maine skews among the oldest and whitest in the nation. Among the three counties we generally draw from (Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo counties), the median age of 49 years is the highest in the nation. Of a total of 115,000 people in these counties, 6.9% are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, or of multiple races. Household median income is ~\$58,000/year.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Lay-led services at Adas Yoshuron have tended toward traditional conservative or reconstructionist with plenty of English readings. Past and visiting rabbis and cantors have brought a wide range of approaches that have been well received, including song circles, Torah study, tot Shabbats, and services centered around meditation and the outdoors. Our sanctuary holds about 150 comfortably, and it has been known to overflow on Kol Nidre and often fills on Bnei mitzvah celebrations.

We generally enjoy one or two Bnei mitzvot per year, though we did recently have four in one year. In years without a resident rabbi, we have held one or two Shabbat services per month. Shabbat evening and morning attendance varies, as few as six – there is a core group of regular attendees – or as many as forty. A call for a mourner's minyan is invariably answered. One of the wonderful things about our synagogue is that we can have 3 or 30 people at a service (dressed in jeans or a sports coat and tie); regardless of size, we find kavanah.

This year at the High Holidays, most of the services followed the Conservative movement's Mahzor Lev Shalom, but on the first day of Rosh Hashanah we enjoyed a more interpretive Musaf, and Shacharit on the second day consisted of a discussion session. The services were held off site in a beautiful barn event venue with estimated attendances of 100 at Erev Rosh Hashanah and Kol Nidre, 80 at first day morning services of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and 40 on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. Zoom attendance was as high as 30, with remote participants joining us from all over the United States.

Other holidays that are regularly celebrated by Adas Yoshuron include Sukkot with Sukkah building, Simchat Torah, Hanukkah and Purim parties, second night Passover seder, Shavuot and Tu B'shvat seder. We have many copies of [Joseph Rosenstein's Eit Ratzon](#) which features transliteration of every Hebrew word. We also have about twenty copies of [Siddur Lev Shalem](#) and thirty Siddur Hadash. There are two Jewish cemeteries in the area and a Chevra Kaddisha that is independent of the synagogue but staffed by members.

LEARNING

The Adas Yoshuron Hebrew school meets once a week on Thursdays for 2 hrs. from September through May. Students range in age from 6-12 years old and numbers average around 10-12 pupils. There is also a pre-Hebrew school that meets once a month for an hour. Students enrolled in this program range in age from 3-8 years old. We expect participation for a portion of each week's class time by the spiritual leader that would enhance the depth of study offered to students and touch upon aspects including prayer, ritual, Torah and Jewish values. Adas Yoshuron has 1-4 bar/bat mitzvahs per year. Tutoring for students is offered by the Hebrew school teacher. The spiritual leader would provide assistance with tutoring as well as guidance in prayer leadership, dvrei Torah and community action.

Books and Bagels is a twentyish year old book group associated with the Synagogue. We started out meeting in people's homes but have gathered in the Synagogue for more than a decade. The group is open to synagogue and community members who want to discuss books seriously. We meet one Sunday morning a month, from Sept to June, with a group of about 18 regulars and other occasional attendees. Our selection criteria include books about Jews, books by a Jewish author or about a topic

important to us as Jews. Someone in the group takes responsibility for leading each month's session and circulates questions a week or two before the meeting. We've been fortunate in that the group is often joined – in person or online – by the author. We've been told our Books and Bagels has a reputation as one of the best book groups in the Midcoast.

Food in Jewish Culture is about 12 years old. Our interest is in learning about food Jews eat in different parts of the world, the role food plays in some holidays and in daily life. We have invited authors (Joan Nathan, Louisa Shafia and others), food historians (Naama Shefi of the Jewish Food Society) and chefs to speak. We prepare food selected by the speaker for those who attend the talk. We sometimes provide food specific to a holiday for the Synagogue or for a group of participants and occasionally cook and share a meal representing Jews of a specific country or community. The talks often draw a full house. Due to the pandemic Food in Jewish Culture has been inactive the last few years, but we have plans to start up again, perhaps in March with a repeat of our 2015 tasting of about 20 different Charosets.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Adas Yoshuron Synagogue has a long history of civic involvement and our members are eager for a spiritual leader who will continue and build on our history of engaging and collaborating with interfaith organizations in Midcoast Maine. We envision a leader who encourages community participation both within the Shul and outside the synagogue. We look for leadership to create conversations about social issues such as housing, anti-racism, gender diversity, Jewish people of color, and the environment, and to develop programming that is accessible to all levels, all ages, and all starting points.

Over 30 years ago, Adas Yoshuron joined the local ecumenical soup kitchen, [Loaves and Fishes](#), and started preparing a monthly meal for the hungry in the community. That meal is still served at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Rockland, albeit in takeout form now due to Covid-19. During fiscal 2021, Adas Yoshuron served 600 take-out meals with the help of 150 multi-generational volunteers - cooking, baking, packing, cleaning, and delivering food.

The synagogue was one of the founding members of [Area Interfaith Outreach](#) (A.I.O.), a community group that addresses the problems of food insecurity and high energy costs. The Shul makes a yearly financial donation and members participate in A.I.O.'s administration and programs.

The Shul has participated in interfaith collaboration with local Lutheran clergy as part of the Midcoast Interfaith Alliance (M.I.C.A), attending monthly meetings to discuss hunger. Members also participated in "The 21 Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge" run by the [Food Solutions New England Network](#). Adas Yoshuron has supported efforts to welcome new immigrants and asylum seekers to our area. Members have attended the Tzedek series, monthly programs related to social justice issues (LGBTQ), domestic abuse, indigenous rights, and racism.

In addition, we support the local Food Pantry, participate in the Midcoast Interfaith Council, offer pastoral services and visit with Jewish patients at local hospitals. We are actively engaged with the Center for Small Town Jewish Life, located at Colby College in Waterville (1.5hrs away), and work with a variety of local non-profits on numerous initiatives throughout the year, to the benefit of all residents of the Midcoast community. Our Shul has included the wider community in its Chanukah party and annual beach cleanup.

STAFF AND LAY LEADERSHIP

Adas Yoshuron has a dedicated core of volunteer service and community leaders who have served along with part-time rabbinic presence at many points in our history. This core has been remarkably effective, providing consistent Shabbat and holiday services, as well as educational and social opportunities to the community, even without a consistent spiritual leader. While we offer less than we did when we had a rabbi, our offerings are not significantly diminished due entirely to phenomenal community effort and the resolve to keep going even through unexpected challenges. We anticipate continued participation from lay leadership and volunteers that will actively support the spiritual leader and the community.

We are committed to a meaningful, trusting, and compassionate bond with our future spiritual leader, including clear expectations, respect for boundaries for a spiritual leader's personal time and space, and active engagement of our lay leadership, Board, and volunteers.

Currently the synagogue employs a part time administrative assistant and a custodian. Additional staff and volunteers include our Hebrew school teacher and the newsletter editor.

Synagogue committees established by the Board include:

- Membership
- Programming
- High Holidays
- Fundraising
- Education
- Building and Grounds
- By Laws/Policy (ad hoc)
- Ritual
- Hineni (caring committee)
- Soup Kitchen

FACILITIES

Our building is approximately 120 years old. Built as a church after the Civil War, it was converted to a synagogue in 1912 and became the home of the Adas Yoshuron community. Its 2 1/2 story historic structure is well-maintained and in excellent shape. This past year we completed security and life safety upgrades on both the exterior and the interior of the building. The lower level was renovated several years ago. We have two projects planned for 2023: additional security upgrades at the front, new landscaping, and a fire sprinkler system for the entire building.

The main floor of our synagogue holds our 1700 sq. ft. sanctuary; featuring soaring ceilings, a beautiful ark and bima, stained glass windows, custom pews, and wood paneled walls. Above the sanctuary is a balcony of approximately 700 sq.ft. with additional seating. The balcony level also includes a sizable private space that can serve as an office and meeting space for the spiritual leader. The lower level of the synagogue building is a walkout basement with a wall containing full windows and an accessible entryway that opens onto a paved patio. This level houses a small open kitchen and a social area that is also used as a classroom, library, meeting space and office.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

As an all-in-one organization under a single roof, frequently led solely by volunteers, Adas Yoshuron has completed its first 110 years with strong fiscal and intangible strengths, owning our own building debt-free. Our operating budget is approximately \$179K with approx. \$30K coming from donations, approx. \$60K coming from dues, approx. \$80K coming from investments and the balance coming from various fundraising events and fees. Our primary expense comes from payroll for the rabbi, administrative assistant, and maintenance person. Other expenses include Administration (Approx. \$19K), building (Approx. \$12K), utilities (Approx. \$7K), etc. We have family and individual membership to our synagogue. Family membership is set at \$750. And individual membership is \$500. However, we never turn anyone away who can't pay or needs a reduced fee.

RABBINIC COMPENSATION

Salary: \$85,000 - 100,000 depending on experience

Health insurance contribution: \$3,000/year

Pension: 3% of salary to qualified 'church' plan per IRS

Professional expenses such as rabbinical organization membership, conferences, and professional development activities: up to maximum of \$2500/year