

## FAQs

### **How was the decision made?**

The 18-member Senior Rabbinic Search Committee conducted a comprehensive and thoughtful search guided by clearly defined leadership criteria. The process included broad congregational engagement, through small group meetings, surveys and emails to gather input, multiple rounds of interviews, consultation with clergy, staff, Board members, the Emeritus Council, donors, and community partners, and guidance from the Central Conference of American Rabbis. The Executive Committee fully and unanimously endorsed the recommendation by the Search Committee, and the Board of Trustees approved the recommendation unanimously.

### **Why was Rabbi Joshua Caruso selected?**

Across feedback from congregants, clergy, staff, Board members, and donors, Rabbi Caruso was consistently described as grounded and reflective, thoughtful about both the strengths and challenges of Mishkan Or, and someone who leads with care, intention, and clarity. Evaluators repeatedly noted his ability to build connection, strengthen community, and bring people together around shared purpose.

### **What leadership qualities were prioritized in the search?**

The Search Committee structured its work around leadership categories reflected in its interview questions and evaluations, including:

- Vision and fit for a newly unified congregation
- Spiritual leadership and worship
- Organizational leadership and collaboration with clergy, staff, and lay leaders
- Engagement and relationship-building across the congregation
- Jewish education across ages and life stages
- Commitment to social justice and the rabbi's public role
- Input gathered from hundreds of congregants helped shape these priorities and informed how candidates were evaluated.

### **How many candidates were considered?**

The committee received nine applications. Through the interview and evaluation process, three finalists were identified.

### **Were internal and external candidates considered equally?**

Yes. All candidates were evaluated using the same leadership criteria and structured process, including multiple rounds of interviews and feedback gathered across the community, reference checks and a leadership assessment.

### **How was the congregation involved?**

Congregational input was gathered through surveys, living-room conversations, Sparks of Light gatherings, affiliate group meetings, and ongoing communication through a dedicated webpage. Feedback helped shape the leadership criteria and informed the evaluation process.

### **Who served on the Search Committee?**

The Senior Rabbinic Search Committee was co-chaired by Debra Mayers Hollander and Eric Silver. Committee members included Liza Adams, Linda Barnett, Ben Becker, Robert Blumstein, Jon Eisenberg, Ken Hochman, Keith Kerman, Shelley Milin Marcus, Kevin Margolis, Lev McFarland, Amy Nadler, Cynthia Tancer, Margot Tomer, and Brian Young, with Julie Raskind and Bruce Goodman serving ex officio.

### **How was the Search Committee chosen?**

The Search Committee was appointed by the Co-Presidents and the Search Committee co-chairs, with the intent of being broad and reflective of the makeup of the congregation. The committee's work was guided by clearly defined leadership criteria and a structured process.

### **When will Rabbi Caruso begin as Senior Rabbi?**

Rabbi Caruso's appointment as Senior Rabbi is effective July 1, 2026, with a formal installation to follow.

### **What is the role of Interim Senior Rabbi Andi Berlin during this period?**

Interim Senior Rabbi Andi Berlin will continue to lead Mishkan Or through the transition period, providing continuity in worship, pastoral care, learning, and congregational life, and supporting thoughtful preparation for the leadership transition.

### **What is expected of Rabbi Caruso during the transition?**

Rabbi Caruso will continue serving in his current capacity on the clergy team while also participating in relationship-building and transition planning, working in partnership with Rabbi Berlin, the clergy team, and lay leadership.

### **What will happen during the transition period?**

The months ahead will focus on continuity, relationship-building, and preparation. There will be opportunities to connect with Rabbi Caruso in the coming months, along with intentional planning for the leadership transition and for Rabbi Caruso's formal installation. Details will be shared as plans take shape.

### **Why aren't the names of other candidates being shared?**

Out of respect for confidentiality and professional ethics, the committee does not share the names of candidates who were not selected. Maintaining confidentiality is standard practice in senior clergy searches and ensures a fair and ethical process.