



Vision

The Downtown Synagogue envisions itself as a broadly inclusive institution: one in which anyone may discover Judaism in a safe and welcoming environment. It offers a place in which all can openly observe and reflect upon their role as Jews —both historically and in contemporary society—and provides a hub for collective action in support of the Jewish community as well as the general community of greater Detroit.

Mission

The principal mission of the Downtown Synagogue is to serve as a beacon for the Jewish community of Metropolitan Detroit by maintaining a traditional, egalitarian synagogue in Detroit; by acting as a conduit for Jewish activity in the city; by offering a wide range of programming that will support the revitalization of the city; and by ensuring accessibility to all.

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History

GUIDING VALUES

- ✿ Maintaining the tradition and culture of Judaism
- ✿ Offering accessibility and inclusion
- ✿ Sustaining a vibrant, multi-generational institution
- ✿ Promoting social awareness and consciousness
- ✿ Representing Jewish identity and history in Detroit
- ✿ Providing education about Judaism and its history



The Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue (IADS) was founded in 1921, at a time when many synagogues were located in Detroit. Established by a society created to honor the memory of Isaac Agree, its principal mission was to provide an open and accessible place of study and worship for the local Jewish community as well as out of town visitors. of a Synagogue that would provide an accessible and open space of worship and study for everyone.

Initially, the Agree Memorial Society underwrote the cost of supporting the Synagogue. Today, IADS maintains such a modest a dues structure that anyone wishing to affiliate may do so. For 90 years, the Synagogue has held weekly Shabbat morning and High-Holiday services, free and open to all. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, many hundreds attend.

The Synagogue is currently housed in a four-story building that it has occupied and owned since the early 1960s. Located at 1457 Griswold, it is ideally situated in downtown Detroit, adjacent to the recently refurbished Capital Park.

As the last freestanding synagogue in Detroit, the Downtown Synagogue is in the process of revitalizing itself: a new Board of Trustees is in place; a viable committee structure has been re-established; programming has been expanded; and membership and community participation have both increased.

DOWNTOWN SYNAGOGUE

Programming

The beacon of IADS throughout the tumultuous history of Detroit, has been to hold Saturday morning services, whether it is February and there is no heat in the building, or our sanctuary is filled with families gathering for a simcha. We are proud to say that the tradition continues today, now in it's 90th year, and that there is always a free lunch following prayer.

Over the past two years, passionate new members have been experimenting with new programming to rejuvenate the synagogue. At present, we have instituted an additional weekly service of Kabbalat Shabbat, monthly Lunch & Learns and interactive holiday celebrations.

FRIDAY NIGHT *KABBALAT SHABBAT* SERVICES : Welcoming the Sabbath with song and soul precedes a weekend of urban activity.

SATURDAY MORNING *SHABBAT* SERVICES : Celebrating the Sabbath with tradition, Torah and our congregation.

LUNCH & LEARN : A monthly gathering of downtown professionals and interested parties to hear a guest speaker address a relevant topic and participate in animated conversation as lunch is eaten.

FILM SCREENINGS : A staple in attracting new visitors to the IADS, film screenings have show cased both Israeli and local films that highlight Jewish cultural experiences.

MUSIC, ART, & DANCE PARTIES : By bringing in local and national artists, bands, and DJs, we connect with the secular Jewish community by showing how hip Judaism can be.



Membership

We currently have 150 paid memberships, a compilation of over 500 friends of IADS, and we serve over 800 people a year. These numbers continue to grow every year.

“IADS showed me that the Jewish community is still very much alive in the city”.

- Jay Bassin, IADS Board Member



SIMCHAT TORAH



Three years strong. Our tradition is a community reading of the end and then the beginning of the Torah, followed by a procession around the Griswold neighborhood, singing songs and carrying our Torahs.



PURIM

The Whole Megillah! We participate in an interactive reading of the Book of Esther, drink in honor of her commitment, and dance to a local DJ as we once again celebrate the rescue of the Jews.

TU B'SHVAT

In celebrating the holiday dedicated to trees, we combined a short service, offering thanks for the abundance of the land in which we live, with a community discussion devoted to urban agriculture in Detroit.



PESACH

Our second night Passover Seder is growing beyond our facility's capabilities. Last year counted eighty participants in our reading of the Jews exodus from Egypt. We sat comfortably, yet close together, and compared our struggles then to our challenges now. And of course, we ate in abundance.



Holidays

ROSH HA'SHANA & YOM KIPPUR

Serving the Metropolitan Detroit Jewish community for ninety years, our High Holiday services are always free and open to all.



IADS Board of Trustees

From left to right: DaVid Powell, Mitch Alexander, Courtney Smith, Marty Herman (President), Leor Barak, Kate Bush, Oren Goldenberg, Jay Bassin.

In 2008, the Synagogue elected a new slate of officers and Board of Trustees who have implemented expanded programming, re-established a committee structure, and are aggressively seeking funds to assure the Congregation's continued existence.

Currently, the Synagogue leadership is revisiting our volunteer and committee infrastructure. Each day, more people seem to be taking a renewed interest in the Synagogue and the City. Consequently, our coterie of committed and active members is expanding as many new volunteers offer to participate in Synagogue activities.



Leadership

Collaborations

IADS, in addition to being a synagogue, serves as a conduit for interaction between the Jewish community and the city. We thrive on social action, collaborative efforts with other Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, and open our doors to a broad array of activity.

YOUTH OUTREACH

What began as a regional service event for J-SERVE in the spring of 2009—when two bus loads of teens drawn from numerous Jewish youth groups, descended on IADS to help paint and repair the synagogue—has become a continuing relationship with BBYO.



For over a year, the Greenberg AZA has been spending one Sunday a month performing minor repairs to the Synagogue building. On a number of occasions, they down their tools and members of IADS have spoken to them about Detroit and its history, particularly its Jewish history, and given them tours of the city.



“The most intergenerational Jewish group in Metro Detroit”

- Jewish Funds for Justice

Collaborators:

Young Adult Division (YAD)

Detroit Interfaith Coalition

B'nai Brith Youth Organization

The Jewish Historical Society

Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Shir Shalom Synagogue

Jewish Funds for Justice

Hillel of Metro Detroit

The Burton Theatre

New Detroit, Inc.

Wayne State University

Feet on the Street Tours

Grosse Point Jewish Council

Reconstructionist Congregation of Detroit



YOUTH CENTER



We are considering renovating the fourth floor of the Synagogue and turning it into a youth center where teens from the City and suburbs could come to educate themselves about Jewish history in Detroit. Such a center could serve many Jewish organizations and provide a safe environment for our youth to engage the city of Detroit.

RENTAL SPACE

To partner with other organizations and to utilize the space in our building most effectively, we would consider housing offices of not for profit organizations who share our values and with whom we could work as agents for Tikkun Olam.



GREEN BUILDING

Our goal is to make IADS as environmentally friendly as possible, A recent partnership with WARM Training Center, to increase our building's energy efficiency, can serve as a launching pad for greater collaboration with green-architecture to create a truly sustainable synagogue, Green-Roof anybody? to create a sustainable synagogue. Green-Roof anybody?



Currently, only two of our four floors are being used. It is our hope that renovating the building will provide us with additional space to house other like-minded organizations and create opportunities for partnerships.

Sustainability

Rennaissance Detroit

2011-2021

"The Downtown Synagogue has deepened the way I view myself as an American Jewish woman. - Elana Weinstein, IADS Member

A Renaissance is currently taking place in Detroit. As the Jewish community at large increasingly recognizes the need to retain a young Jewish presence in the area, IADS stands ready to serve as a conduit for a serious Jewish reconnection to the city.

The year 2011 marks the 90th anniversary of the Downtown Synagogue. Over the next ten years, we hope to completely renovate our building and transform IADS into an all-inclusive hub for Jewish Detroit as well as a sustainable house of worship.



As the Jewish re-emergence in Detroit continues to unfold, IADS has been leading dialogue and community discussion surrounding Jewish involvement in the city. We welcome this new wave of interest in Detroit, and are excited about committing ourselves to social justice - a cardinal value of Judaism. We aspire to be the home to amazing projects such as **Jewish urban farms**, educational outreach programs through **inter-faith dialogue**, a Jewish/Black **oral histories project** and a safe space for young people to dance, sing and be spiritual in the city of Detroit.

"Passionate and creative young people, elders who are committed and engaged; the narrative of Detroit's continued evolution as a hub of Jewish community."

- Blair Nosan, Detroit Resident and Pickeler



Be Part of Our Vision!

WINDOWS CAMPAIGN

We are currently raising funds for a matching grant from DTE to heighten the energy efficiency of our building. We are updating our window insulation and replacing all light fixtures. We need to raise \$20,000 by January 31st, 2011.

DONATE TODAY AT THE DOWNTOWN SYNAGOGUE FACEBOOK PAGE,
OR SEND US A CHECK.



90TH ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

On April 28th, 2011, IADS will celebrate it's 90th Anniversary. In honor of this milestone, we are launching towards our century mark with a ten-year fundraising campaign. Our first year goal is to hire a part-time employee and Rabbi for our congregation.

By December 31st, 2011, we will raise \$135,000.

2011-2021 100 YEARS OF IADS

By 2021, our institutional goal is to raise \$3,000,000 in capital. This will allow us to:

- ✿ *Fully renovate our building into a sustainable Jewish community and educational space.*
- ✿ *Expand programming to reach a maximum number of Metro-Detroiters.*
- ✿ *Hire Executive-Director*
- ✿ *Hire Rabbi and Cantor*
- ✿ *Youth Center*
- ✿ *Tikkun Olam*

The Downtown Synagogue has the potential to fill a void – an unmet need that if not fulfilled, might hinder the establishment and growth of a strong Jewish urban core. With the support of the larger Jewish community, we offer an opportunity to invest in our future in this region.

Please contact The Downtown Synagogue: <http://downtownsynagogue.org>
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