



# KEEPING IT SACRED

ACCESSIBLE • RELEVANT • EMPOWERING



## ANNUAL REPORT

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**FOR THE YEAR 2023**

TOGETHER, WE'RE #KEEPINGITSACRED

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# SHALOM!

*shalom!*

Keeping It Sacred's 2023 was a year of maturation. We have expanded this sacred community that holds space for connection, creativity, learning, and wellness, while holding true to our core mission of making all that we do accessible, relevant, and empowering.

Our membership grew 22% through an intentional scaling of all that we do best: leading programs, performing meaningful ritual officiation, engaging in social justice, and valuing each and every member. In turn, we saw significant growth of our financial contributor base in numbers (including growth of our monthly subscriptions) and in terms of magnitude (with our first 5-figure contribution received).

As our numbers swelled, so did our prominence across the landscape of sacred organizations, Jewish and beyond. We are frequently sought out for partnerships, media commentary, and our expertise in innovation. Keeping It Sacred is an organization with a strong mission and perspective, and we are happy to share who we are.

As our year of maturation was powering along, we, and the world were confronted with the horrors of the massacre October 7 and the events following in Israel and Gaza. I was able to personally check in with many of our members to provide spiritual space and support to process it all. Still, I wondered, could the KITS Community hold each person's individual concerns, pain, and brokenheartedness when we gathered together again as a community?

And then, in our first Healing Circle since October 7, we saw a record number of participants. We showed up to hold one another in this moment. And not only did our membership turn out, but so did our clergy partners from other traditions who just wanted to show they cared. They were there for us at this most difficult time. It was the most beautiful holding of one another— across the miles, across traditions— just bearing sacred witness to one another's ancestral traumas, fears, concerns, and deepest prayers.

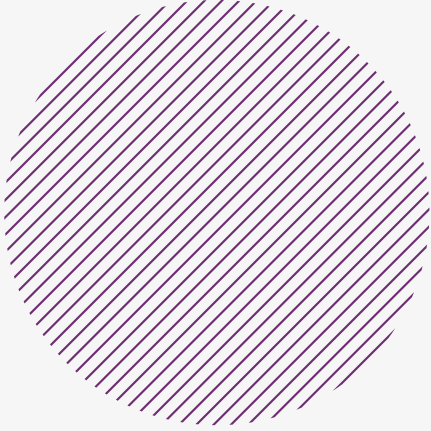
We emerged over the past few months not only as the nerdy and tenderhearted community we already were, but also a community of compassion and deep connection. By our Hanukkah season which included a program with our friends who work for peace in the Jezreel Valley, and our December 15 Shabbat gathering of dozens of folks in person and scores more online, we were able to ignite our menorahs with the light of hope. In the last quarter of 2023, we truly defined ourselves as a light of goodness across the world. We enter into 2024 more united, stronger, and more connected than ever before.

**Together, we are sharing this community locally, nationally, and internationally. Together, we're #keepingitsacred...**

**Enjoy!**

*Rabbi Hester Miller*  
**Founder, Keeping It Sacred**





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# BUILDING THE TEAM

Keeping It Sacred is powered by a brilliant and dynamic staff of individuals who are in this work with full hearts. Individually, each brings music, vision, technical skills, creativity, spirituality, and joy. Together, they keep Keeping It Sacred moving forward.

**Get to know members of the team below.**



**Kimberly Dueñas** is a seasoned international Jewish educator passionate about wellness. She is a founding Team Member at *Jewtina y Co.* and led the Keeping It Sacred community in personally transformative programs for various holiday programs for the Hebrew and Secular Calendar New Year.



**Rachel Rothman** brought an incredible amount of skill and heart to our High Holy Day program this year. She is deeply rooted in Judaism and leads with her heart. She also holds a master's degree in Vocal Performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and spends summers enjoying opera festivals in Italy.



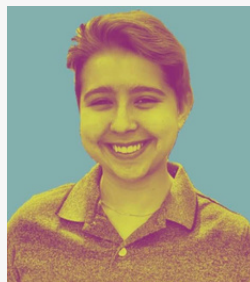
**Molly Flanagan** is our talented Digital Marketing Director overseeing the technical aspects of all of our programs: from the entire marketing and registration process, to promotion and publicity. Molly offers technical assistance to our members with a practice of care as they have for the past 3 years.



**Jeffrey Silverstein** is a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion who brought his passion for Jewish life and learning to the Keeping It Sacred community by co-leading our monthly Shabbat Services and other holiday observances the first half of 2023 as he entered his 4th year in rabbinic training.



**Joanie Leeds** is a Grammy-winning musician and advocate for Jewish music. Again, this year, she co-led our annual Interfaith Intergenerational Passover Seder with joy and skill. Her inspiring approach to the Jewish musical tradition uplifts ritual elements and encourages participation.



**Ilan Tamir** joined us again for the second year in the row to help with the technical aspects of our robust High Holy Day season, intentionally designing our Keeping It Sacred services as warm, welcoming, innovative, and transformative sacred spaces.



**Rabbi Heather Miller** is the founder of Keeping It Sacred and as such, is committed to creating accessible, relevant and empowering experiences for our members. She is devoted to the practice of creating this global spiritual community of wellness for all.



**Max Winer** is a master storyteller and musician who grew up in the Reform Jewish movement. He brings an enthusiasm for Jewish textual and musical traditions to the monthly Shabbat Services he co-leads with Rabbi Miller. He has become a cherished member of the Shabbat Team in just six months.



# BUILDING THE COMMUNITY



## BY THE NUMBERS

**3958 UNIQUE**

Website visitors (↑ 30%)

**933 INSTAGRAM**

Followers (↑ 24%)

**470 NEWSLETTER**

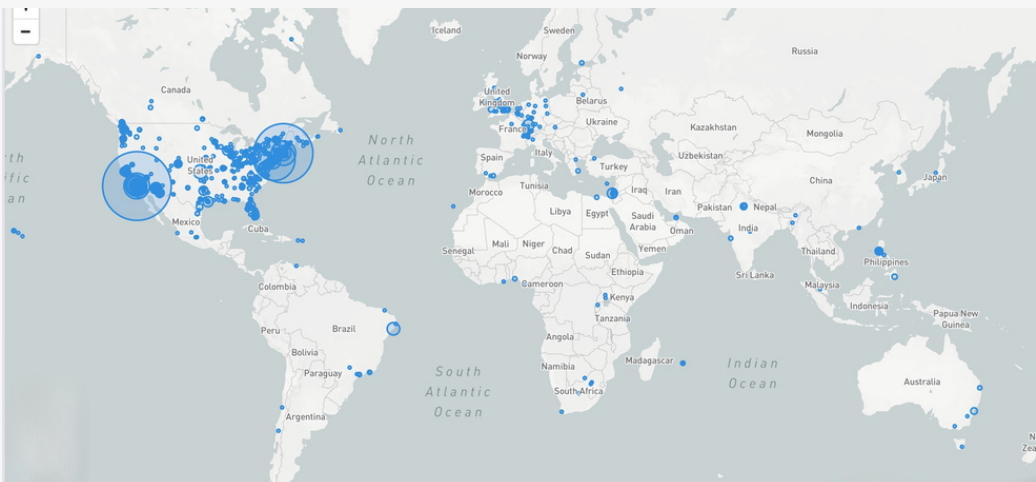
Weekly readers (↑ 22%)

**116 YOUTUBE**

Subscribers (↑ 2%)



In an age where Jewish communities are dwindling, not only is Keeping It Sacred growing, but our membership grew by a whopping 22% (welcoming 134 new members around the world in 2023). Our engagement has grown as well with newsletter readership increasing by 23% meaning that week over week, people are turning to our newsletter for support, perspective, and content. Plus, our members meeting up online and in-person from Los Angeles to Portland to Paris! Keeping It Sacred is a place of spiritual relevance, accessibility, empowerment, and connection.





# IN THE NEWS



## Dissenting sides clash at Saticoy Elementary School protest over a Pride assembly



## Local Church Hosts Sunday Interfaith Gathering on Gaza Crisis

Published on Saturday, November 25, 2023 | 5:42 am

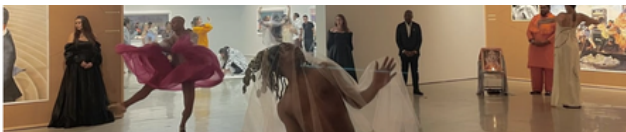


In 2023, Keeping It Sacred participated in various programs that were picked up by local and national news including everything from an interfaith gathering on the Gaza Crisis to LA Fashion Week to advocacy for queer kids in schools.



## LA Fashion Week kicks off with a blessing for peace and upcycling

Kicking off the new edition of LA Fashion Week by N4XT Experiences, Los Angeles-based artist and movie director Tara Subkoff, founder of *Imitation of Christ*, staged a performance show in Hollywood. In the Hole Gallery on North La Brea boulevard, opposite the *Rick Owens* boutique, 200 guests waited patiently for the opening show.



## spirituality hits the runway at the LA fashion week.

Oct 20 at 1:04 PM

0:00 2:07 1x SUBSCRIBE

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NEXT

[House Republicans drop Jim Jordan as](#)

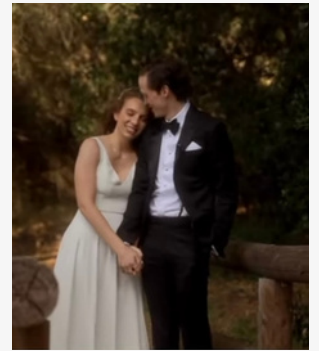


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# SACRED MOMENTS



Rabbi Miller stood with couples and families at some incredibly personal sacred moments at the chuppah, mikveh, in front of the Torah, and at the gravesite this year. Each service was customized to fit the participants and informed by the best of Jewish tradition.





# HOLIDAYS

## BY THE NUMBERS

**49 DAYS COUNTING**

the Omer on Facebook

**29 ELUL DAYS**

observed on Instagram

**16 HOLIDAYS**

observed

**12 SHABBAT**

services hosted

**11 TIMEZONES**

gathered together



This year, we were moved deeply by our incredibly talented holiday co-leaders including a bona-fide opera singer, a master storyteller, and a Grammy-winning singer/songwriter. Our members gathered in droves to participate and mark these holy moments in time.





# LEARNING TOGETHER



## BY THE NUMBERS

**2,859 TICKETS**

Reserved for programs

**365 PAGES**

Of Talmud discussed

**201 EDUCATIONAL**

Programs delivered

**229 PARTICIPANTS**

Enrolled in Talmud

**157 PARTICIPANTS**

Enrolled in Access Judaism Programming

**11 TIMEZONES**

Participated in learning



## STEREOTYPES OF JEWISH WOMEN BALABUSTA MASK FROM ESTHER TO MRS. MAISEL

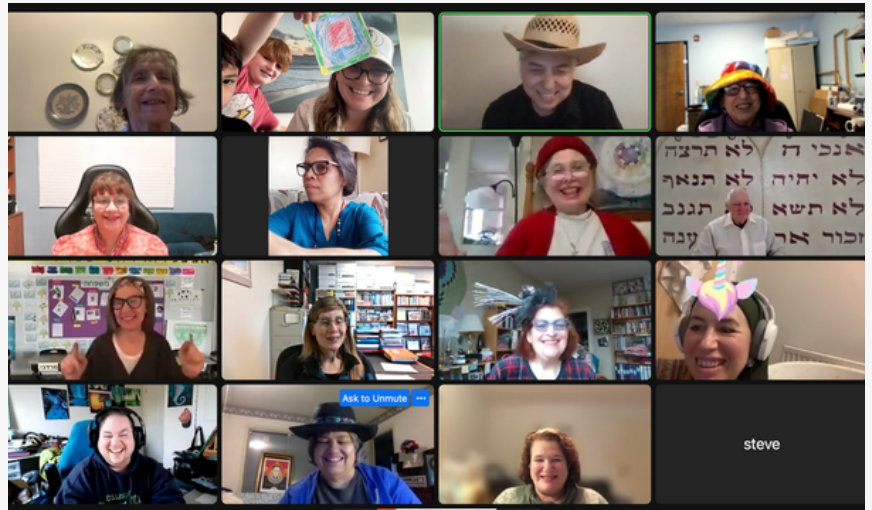
7 MAR 2023

9AM PT/NOON ET

THE COLORFUL "HOT PINK" RABBI ROSE DURBIN IS BACK TO LEAD US IN AN INTREPID EXPLORATION OF STEREOTYPES OF JEWISH WOMEN ACROSS THE MILLENNIA. WE CAN'T WAIT TO EXPLORE THE TEXTUAL AND VISUAL INSIGHTS SHE HAS TO SHARE TO JOIN US, REGISTER AT: [KEEPINGITSACRED.COM/UPCOMING](https://KEEPINGITSACRED.COM/UPCOMING)

This year, Keeping It Sacred continued our tradition of learning and growing together. We studied Midrash and Mishnah, Torah and Talmud, the Prophets and the Purim story. Rabbi Miller's writings were included in the CCAR Press-published *Prophetic Voices*, and she brought insights from our community to her colleagues at the Center for Rabbinic Innovation in New York.

## Ancient Texts & Modern Perspectives





# PURSuing JUSTICE





Keeping It Sacred is known for our commitment to the pursuit of justice. We have marched for Black lives, supported hotel worker sit-ins, stood up against anti-Asian hatred, advocated for queer students, and promoted a heart-centered approach to the grief experienced by Israelis and Palestinians. In sum, we hold fast to the value of promoting human dignity wherever it is threatened.





# PARTNERSHIPS

**Spiritual Preparation for the New Year**

Another year in the books, what does this mean for us? How can preparing for Rosh HaShanah support our lives in this new year? Join Kimberly Dueñas of Jewtina y Co. as she leads us in a special pre-high holiday session with mindful reflection and intention setting our next trip around the sun - here's to 5784!



Keeping It Sacred was pleased to bring our community varied experiences through partnerships. This year, we created meaningful programs with the National Council for Jewish Women, Tzedek Box, Jewtina y Co., Interfaith Solidarity Network, LA PRIDE!, the LA County Library, the Israeli Shared Society community of Nigun HaLev, the First Unitarian Universalist Church, and of course our partner congregation, All Saints Church, Pasadena, and more! Locally, nationally, and internationally, we are stronger together.



**The KITS Community joins dozens of communities to discuss the Jewish values behind the struggle for reproductive freedom**



**REPRO SHABBAT**





# THE NEW YEAR AHEAD

## SAVE THE DATES:

### HIGH HOLY DAYS:

- 10/2 Erev Rosh Hashanah
- 10/3 Rosh Hashanah Day I
- 10/4 Rosh Hashanah Day II
- 10/4 Tashlich
- 10/11 Kol Nidrei
- 10/12 Yom Kippur
- 10/25 Simchat Torah

## ROSH CHODESH

Racial Justice Book Review  
Please save the dates to join us:  
1/11, 2/8, 3/14, 4/4, 5/9, 6/6,  
6/27, 8/1, 9/5, 10/10, 10/31, 12/5

## EVERY DAY

Please enjoy our 7-episode web series and podcast: People Keeping It Sacred on YouTube [HERE](#) or on your favorite podcast player (like: [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Apple + Podcasts](#), [RadioPublic](#), [Breaker](#), and [PocketCasts](#)). To learn more about Jewish holidays, check out our "A bit about... the holidays" [HERE](#).

## ONGOING: SPIRITUAL COUNSELING

Rabbi Miller is available for 1-on-1 spiritual counseling. Topics are based upon the participant and can include your personal theological understanding of coronavirus, spiritually making space for others in your home, the spirituality of isolation and finding your way back to sacred connection. For more information, click [HERE](#).

We have so many great programs already planned for 2024:  
Check out the full lineup at: [keepingitsacred.com/upcoming](https://keepingitsacred.com/upcoming)  
Consider this your official invitation. And bring your friends—all are welcome!



## EVERY THURSDAY

### PRAYER CIRCLE

Join us as we gather Thursdays for a Prayer Circle. Lift up names of those who are ill, and join together for support and community. All are welcome. 10:30am PST/ 1:30pm EST/ 3:30pm Brazil time, 6:30pm London-time. Register for this 10:30am PT | 1:30pm ET program [HERE](#).



## SAVE THE DATES:

### OTHER HOLY DAY PROGRAMS:

- 1/25 Tu Bishvat
- 3/24 Purim (3/22 with us)
- 4/23 Passover Seder (2nd night)
- 5/6 Yom HaShoah
- 6/1-6/12 Shavuot
- 6/19 Juneteenth
- 8/13 Tisha B'Av
- 8/18 Tu B'Av
- 12/25-1/2 Hanukkah



## KEEPING IT SACRED-DAF YOMI GROUP MEET-UP

We have read half of the 2,711 pages of the Talmud and our weekly review continues every Thursday at 11am PT/2pm ET. Register for this program [HERE](#).

