

Rabbi David Shmidt Chapman loves building creative, inclusive Jewish communities and joining seekers of all backgrounds on their Jewish journeys. David came to the rabbinate as a second career, after a decade as a theater director and several years in the Jewish nonprofit sector.

While working in theater, David focused on international collaboration and developing new work that addressed social issues. David worked on and off-Broadway and at prestigious venues around the world, including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, London's Camden People's Theater, and the Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He has performed his solo play Raoul Wallenberg: Letters to Young Men, about the Holocaust-era "righteous gentile" in several cities around the country. David received a Fulbright scholarship to study post-Cold War dramaturgy in Hungary and a Henry Luce Scholarship to spend a year in Vietnam teaching drama. He has also worked at the International Theater Institute at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

After discovering his new vocation in the Jewish world, David held leadership roles in several foundations making change through a Jewish lens, including the Nathan Cummings Foundation and the New Israel Fund (NIF). With NIF, David spearheaded the NY region's millennial outreach efforts and helped create public programs that engaged people in supporting social justice in Israel. In 2014, David created and produced PEW-ish, an evening of short plays inspired by the (in)famous Pew Study, supported by the Schusterman Foundation.

David is currently a senior rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He is a recipient of the prestigious Wexner Graduate Fellowship, the AIPAC Leffell Fellowship, a Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago academic scholarship, and the New York Jewish Week's 36 Under 36 recognition. This year David was awarded the Cyrus Adler Prize for the most outstanding student in the Rabbinical School senior class. David is passionate about learning for all ages, from early childhood to seniors. He is also deeply invested in his role as a pastoral caregiver, having completed two units of Clinical Pastoral Education. Alongside his ordination, David is earning a Master's Concentration in Israel Education and a Certificate in Pastoral Care and Counseling. David also holds a Master's in Nonprofit Leadership from Fordham University. David served for two years as the rabbinic intern at Sutton Place Synagogue in New York City, under the mentorship of Rabbi Rachel Ain. He is currently the student/interim rabbi at Southwest Orlando Jewish Congregation, a 150-family Conservative synagogue.

A native Chicagoan, David currently lives in New York with his husband Jonathan and their son.