

A Tour of Our Sacred Space

BETH EMET THE FREE SYNAGOGUE

Beth Emet's original Sanctuary was located on the second floor of what is now the Loundy Education Center. As membership grew, a larger space was needed. Built in 1963, Beth Emet's current Sanctuary seats 320 people, and when extended into the Herman Crown Room, can seat more than 1,200. The building is filled to the brim, with not only spiritual and emotional memories, but also physical artifacts of Beth Emet's commitment to Judaism, Israel and our community. Read further as we take you on a tour of the multitude of meaningful pieces we have acquired as a result of the generosity of the Beth Emet family.



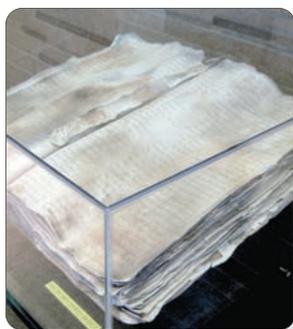
Outside the building, to the east of the Sanctuary entrance, hangs a metal sculpture of a *Magen David*. Donated by congregant Esther Keegan, it remains a visible symbol of Judaism to the Evanston community.

As you walk into the building through the Sanctuary entrance you will notice two archways of brick and a brick floor. These bricks were saved from the old mansion that once stood on the Beth Emet property. Walter Sobel, the architect who designed the Sanctuary, included these bricks in the original design, built in 1963.



The multi-panel Holocaust memorial that hangs in our foyer is entitled "Resurrection" and was painted by the very famous expressionist, Irving Kriesberg. The work was part of a larger piece to be displayed in Jerusalem, and was donated in 1971 by his brother, Lee K. Thorpe, who was part of our Art Acquisition Committee.

The *mezuzah* by the chapel was given as a gift to the Synagogue from the *Kabbalat Torah* class of 1992. Many *Kabbalat Torah* (our 12th grade confirmation program) classes commemorate their graduation by gifting a lasting artifact to the synagogue. This *mezuzah* was crafted by local Judaica artist Richard Bitterman.



The Holocaust memorial book located in the foyer was created by founding member Ruth V. Weiner. The work, entitled "And the Birds Stopped Singing" II, is made entirely out of porcelain and was hand-crafted by Weiner. The open pages of the book detail the actual names of victims of the Holocaust.

On the left side of the *Bimah* sit two rocks from Israel and a set of candlesticks. One of the rocks was brought back from New Jerusalem and the other from Old Jerusalem. The rocks, which represent our commitment to Israel, were donated by the DeWitt family, founding members of Beth Emet. The accompanying candlesticks were a gift of the Huckman family and were made by the famous Judaica artist, Ludwig Wolpert.



To the left of the *Abrn Kodesh* (the Ark) is a *menorah*. This *menorah* is the oldest and most authentic symbol of Judaism in our Sanctuary. It was completed with the original Sanctuary and was based on the "tree of life" theme.

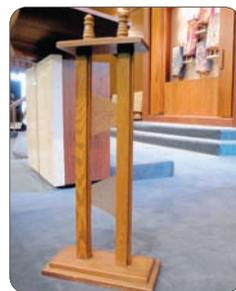
Our Torah scrolls and covers are the greatest symbols of our sacred space. The Torah scrolls were donated in 1985 by the following individuals: Mason and Jeanette Loundy, Lee K. and Lucille Thorpe, Myrtle and Lou Gordon, Lenore and Sam Sherwin, and Hy and Mimi Spector.

Torah covers, which give *kavod* (respect) to the Torah are modeled after garments of the High Priests in the time of the Temple. Each of our Torah covers was created uniquely for Beth Emet by renowned fiber artist Ina Golub. The Hebrew written across the covers spells out the following key phrase about God in the Torah: “*Adonai, Adonai, a God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*” — Exodus 34:6–7. All five Torah covers were donated by Dr. Richard and Mrs. Marian Kaufman.

Our High Holiday torah covers were also created by Golub and donated by the following families: Samuel and Ruth Locin, John and Gloria Levin, Dorothy Sheridan, and Marian and Richard Kaufman.



Each time we undress a Torah, we place the cover on our torah cover holder. The torah cover holder, which is located on the right hand side of our *Bimah*, was created by Phillip Pollack, who generously donated the piece in honor of his presidency.



Above our Ark is the *Ner Tamid*, the eternal light. The *Ner Tamid* most likely dates back to the original Sanctuary. It is in the shape of an *aleph*, which stands for “*or*” (light) and represents *Elohim*, God’s presence in the Sanctuary.

The tapestry that hangs to the right of our Ark depicts the Western Wall and was created by the renowned Israeli artist, Motke Blum. It was selected by Rabbi David and Aviva Polish while visiting Israel and donated by the Iverson Family. The Hebrew written along the top of the tapestry, “*Even Mikir Tiz’ak Lig’ula*” translates to, “The stone of the wall cries out for redemption.”



The scroll that hangs above the choir section in the Sanctuary was created by New Orleans artist, John Clemmer, in memory of his mother-in-law, Sarah Iker. Carved into the scroll is a quote from Psalms that translates to “God is near to all who call.” Smaller versions of this scroll hang in the Minyan room (located downstairs) and in Rabbi Knobel’s home, and were given as a present to him in honor of his 10th anniversary with Beth Emet.

The trellis that hangs above the *Bimah* (the pulpit) represents a *chuppah* (a canopy), which traditionally is used in Jewish weddings. A *chuppah* symbolizes hospitality for one’s guests, and this trellis embodies the notion that the Sanctuary is our spiritual home.



Beth Emet The Free Synagogue is Evanston’s oldest Reform Synagogue and a leading congregation in the Union for Reform Judaism. We serve to enrich and expand the Jewish content of members’ lives through worship, study, and communal opportunities. We actively promote the integration of Jewish ethical teachings into members’ daily lives and collectively apply these teachings to the betterment of society and the Jewish community.



בית אמת
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