

Beth Emeth Congregational Artwork & Activities

Like a small-but-beautiful gem in an elegant setting, Beth Emeth presents congregational activities in a small-but-significant building. Enjoy a guided tour and learn about the art, architecture and symbolism of the stained glass windows and building appointments.

The Entry Window

THE ENTRY WINDOW
(as viewed from the outside)

Sabbat Sabbath
Candles and Prayerbook

Chanukah
Festival of Lights
Eight-branched candelabrum, Chanukiah

Hands in the configuration of the priestly blessing, to emulate the Hebrew letter **ש**, which stands for Shaddai, the ancient name of God.

Yom Ha'atzmaut
Israel Independence Day
Flag of Israel

Yom Hashoah
Holocaust Remembrance
Center candles spell zachor, Remember

Rosh Hashanah
New Year
Shofar, Ram's horn

Yom Kippur
Day of Attonement
Scales of Judgement

Hoshana Rabba
Seventh Day of Sukkot
Gates of Heaven

Sukkot
Feast of Tabernacles
Lulav, sheaf of mixed branches, Etrog, citron, Sukkah with table and chair



ברוך אתה בנאך
וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתְךָ

"Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out."
Deuteronomy 28:6

First Hebrew line reads correctly on entering and second line reads correctly upon leaving.

Simchat Torah
Rejoicing with the Torah
Torah with word Eitz

Pesach
Passover
Cup of Elijah, Broken chain, Parting of the Red Sea

Purim
Lots
Queen Esther's crown, Megillah

Shavuot
Feast of Weeks
Tablets of The Law

Bird with olive branch, tower of David: Peace over Jerusalem where the three Festival pilgrimages were made.

For detailed explanations of the Holidays and the symbolism of the window designs, please turn the page.

The Jewish Holidays

THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS AND SYMBOLISM IN THE ENTRY WINDOW



SHABBAT has the most significance of all the observances. The **Sabbath Lights** are shown as well as a **Prayer Book** on which are written the words, **שבת קודש, Shabbat Kodesh, Holy Sabbath.**



ROSH HASHANAH is the **New Year** and is observed in the autumn as the beginning of a ten-day period of serious and solemn soul-searching. It is marked by the sounding of the **Shofar**, a ram's horn, recalling the days in the wilderness when a shofar heralded great moments and events. Today, the sound of the Shofar is meant to awaken the individual consciousness of deeds and misdeeds.



The Ten Days of Repentance are culminated by **YOM KIPPUR**, the **Day of Atonement**, a day of fasting, praying and reflection. This is the day when God decides on the morality of each individual life, weighs the good and the bad, and determines the quality of that individual's life for the coming year. The **Scales of Justice** symbolize that decision.



Five days later, the joyous Festival of **SUKKOT**, the **Feast of Tabernacles** is celebrated. Sukkot is the first of three festivals that in ancient days called for a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. Three important symbols are shown: the **Lulav**, the **Etrog** and the **Sukkah**. The lulav, a palm branch with willow and myrtle, and the etrog, a citron, recall that this is a harvest festival. The Sukkah evokes the temporary huts the Israelites used during their wanderings. A **Gate**, symbolizes **HOSHANAH RABBA**, which literally means **Great Praise** and is the seventh day of Sukkot when, according to tradition, as an extension of Yom Kippur, the **Gates of Heaven** are finally closed. **SIMCHAT TORAH**, **Rejoicing With the Torah**, ends the Sukkot holiday. This is the time when the cycle of reading the Torah ends and begins. The last portion of Deuteronomy is read and is immediately followed by the first portion of Genesis. A **Torah** with the word **Etz**, **Tree**, denotes the symbolism of the Torah as the **Tree of Life**.



CHANUKAH is marked by the eight-branched candelabrum known as a **Chanukiah**, in commemoration of a documented historical event when a small guerrilla band of Jews led by Judah Maccabee overcame the might of the Greek empire. The Temple had been desecrated by these pagans. There was only enough sacramental oil to last one day in the Great Menorah. But a miracle happened and it lasted for eight days. Thus the holiday is observed by kindling lights for eight days.



Two very significant events in the history of the Jewish people have happened in the twentieth century. The Holocaust in which six million of our brethren perished is denoted by **Six Candles**, the middle four of which are Hebrew calligraphy for **zachor, Remember**. A day on which to remember is observed and is called **YOM HASHOAH, Day of the Holocaust**. The establishment of the State of Israel is commemorated by **YOM HA'ATZMAUT, Day of Independence**. The **Flag of Israel** symbolizes this holiday.



PURIM is a revel which recalls the redemption of the Jews of Persia from the evil Haman. Queen Esther was the prime mover in that event and the Megillah (Book of Esther) is read. To signify Purim, the artist has shown the **Crown** of the Queen and the **Scroll** of the Megillah. The name **Esther** is written in Hebrew across the scroll.



PASSOVER, the second of the pilgrimage festivals, commemorates the great exodus from the bondage of Egypt. The Hebrew word **Pesach** is spelled out in the calligraphy of a **Broken Chain**, symbolizing the breaking of the fetters of slavery. The **Cup** is the Cup of Elijah, an important feature at the Passover Seder, a ritual feast to mark the beginning of the holiday. **The Parting of the Red Sea**, another of God's miracles which facilitated the Hebrews' escape, is also noted in this part of the window.



The final pilgrimage festival is **SHEVUOT**, the **Feast of Weeks** and marks the passage of seven weeks since the end of Passover. This is the moment when Moses received the **Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai**.



Judaism

JUDAISM

GOD MAN TORAH

If Judaism could be summed up in a word, that word would probably be oneness. The oneness of God was a concept of startling and revolutionary proportions when it was conceived more than fifty centuries ago. During this age of worship of many gods, it was our father Abraham who introduced monotheism to the world.

Today, the unity of God is proclaimed everyday by Jews in every corner of the earth when they say

שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד

Sh'ma Yisrael Ado-nai Elo-henu, Ado-nai Echad:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord Our God, The Lord is One."

A yad pointer, used to indicate proper reading place on the Torah.

In the course of history scholars and sages have arisen to further the concept of oneness to embrace God, Man and Torah into an indivisible whole.

Jews today perceive themselves as oriented into one of three perspectives of Judaism . . . Orthodox, Conservative or Reform. Beth Emeth is a Conservative congregation, accepting certain modern religious practices while retaining many of the old in order to ensure the Jewish heritage.



The centrality of the Jewish faith is the Torah — the Law. The Torah is the familiar scroll containing the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. A portion is read in the synagogue every week. The laws contained therein are the expansion of the great authoritative law of western civilization — the Ten Commandments. Jewish tradition holds that every Jew must consider that he or she, too, stood at Sinai to receive the Decalogue and to abide by its caveats.

THE BIBLE For Jews, the Bible spans the time period and books of Genesis to Second Chronicles. It is divided into three parts: The Law, The Prophets and The Writings. A relevant and prescribed portion of The Prophets (haftarah) is read each week to accompany the reading of The Law.

The Bible is written in Hebrew, the vernacular of Israelis today and the language of prayer for all Jews throughout the world. The Hebrew alphabet is composed of 22 letters and is read from right to left.

SYNAGOGUE Judaism finds its expression in two places: the home and the synagogue. Traditionally, every religious observance that can be done in the home is done there. The synagogue is used for larger gatherings who come to the services for communal prayer and the reading of the Torah.

In the twentieth century, particularly in the United States, the synagogue has become much more than a place for worship. It is a center for communal activities of a social, educational and cultural nature.

JUDAIC ART Jewish artists have been in evidence throughout the long history of the Jewish experience. Their art, though, was not the graphic, representative kind that comes to mind with the word "art."

Until the twentieth century, the second Commandment with its ban on graven images was taken quite literally. Hence, Jewish artists have had to work their creativity into ritual objects used for religious observance.

Jewish artists are inspired by their Biblical progenitor, Bezalel, who is described in Exodus 35:31-32 as . . . filled with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship . . . to devise skillful works . . .



Judaism has certain rites and ceremonies to mark the significant moments in the life span of its people.

BIRTH The BIRTH of a baby boy initiates the ceremony of *Brit Milah*, the Covenant of Circumcision, a rite which goes back to our father Abraham. It is performed on the eighth day of life.

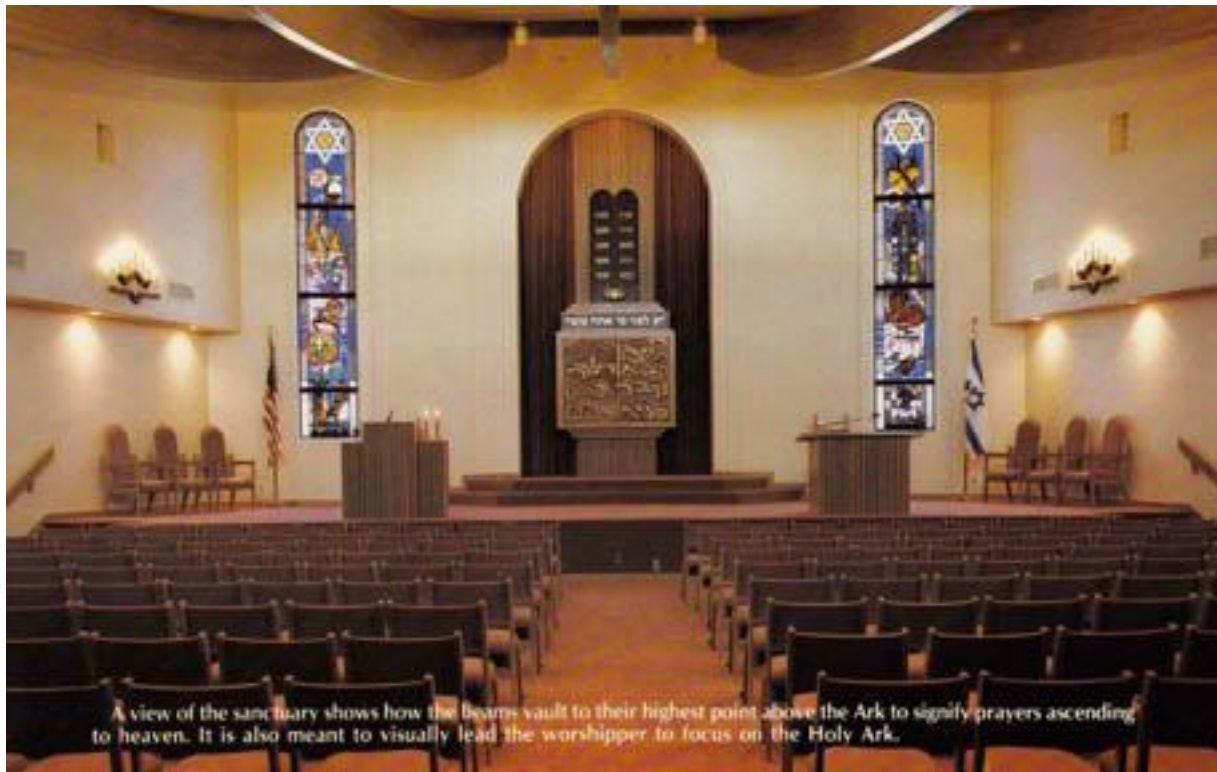
For a baby girl, a naming ceremony takes place in the synagogue.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH (Son/Daughter of the Commandment) Coming of age is signified by BAR MITZVAH for boys at age 13 and BAT MITZVAH for girls at 12. At this time they are called to the Torah for the first time and are then considered adults for religious purposes.

MARRIAGE A Jewish WEDDING takes place under a *chuppa* or marriage canopy, which symbolizes the home the couple is establishing. A marriage contract, *Ketubah*, is signed by both bride and bridegroom.

DEATH A DEATH in a Jewish family brings about many rituals, the best-known of which is the recitation of the *Kaddish*. Used as a prayer of remembrance, the *Kaddish* is actually a reiteration of the sanctification of God's Name, and the word death is never mentioned.

The Sanctuary



A view of the sanctuary shows how the beams vault to their highest point above the Ark to signify prayers ascending to heaven. It is also meant to visually lead the worshipper to focus on the Holy Ark.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL



SHIVVITI שִׁוּיִתִּי

DAN
DAN... shall judge his people... is depicted by the scales of justice. Dan shall be a serpent on the way... that dash the horse's heels. So that his rider falleth backward. Dan's second calling was one of guerrilla warfare. Genesis 49:16-18

גָּד גָּד

GAD's militia role as border guards against raiding bands is denoted by teeth. Genesis 49:19

אֲשֵׁר אֲשֵׁר

ASHER means "fortunate." This was to be a prosperous tribe. The *poised plant* is an indication of luxury. Genesis 49:20

נַפְתָּלִי נַפְתָּלִי

NAPHTALI... is a hind for swiftness and grace of movement. Genesis 49:21

יוֹסֵף יוֹסֵף

JOSEPH... is a fruitful vine... The mythical *ankore* has come to be a symbol for this tribe. The traits of strength and dignity ascribed to Joseph are embodied in the unicorn by virtue of its lofty horn. Genesis 49:22-26

בִּנְיָמִן בִּנְיָמִן

BENJAMIN... is a wall that aveneth... The tribe was meant to have a warrior character. Genesis 49:27

A frequent theme of Jewish artists is the representation of each of the twelve sons of Jacob outlined in his blessing (Genesis 49:1-27). The sons were to become the heads of tribes that would bear their names and the traits Jacob observed would become the individual characteristic of each tribe. The artist has worked the names into the design in stylized calligraphy. A *tallit*, or prayer shawl is shown framing the sides of each window. A *tallit* is the garment with fringes enjoined by Numbers 15:37-41 which is to remind the People of Israel to Remember all the Commandments.

NOTE: Since Hebrew is read from right to left, begins in the upper right.

At the top of both windows is the Magen David, the shield of David, a contemporary symbol of Judaism. Within the star on the right window is the word *mizrach*, which denotes the eastern wall — the direction of Jerusalem toward which one must face when praying: *mizRach Shemesh*... From the rising of the sun... The Lord's name is to be praised (Psalms 113:3). The star on the left window has the word *shivviti*. A *shivviti*, a votive plaque, is also placed on the eastern wall inscribed with the first four words of Psalms 16:8: *Shivviti Ado-nai*... I have set the Lord always before me.

read from right to left, begins in the upper right.

MIZRACH מִזְרָח

REUBEN
REUBEN was the first born. Jacob observed that he was the eldest adding, My right and the first-birth of my strength... Genesis 49:34

שִׁמְעוֹן שִׁמְעוֹן

SIMEON is depicted as a warrior, a symbol of the strength of the warrior. Genesis 49:5-7

לֵוִי לֵוִי

LEVI is the tribe determined as the priesthood which is symbolized by the *brassplate* of the High Priest. The configuration and stone settings of the brassplate are set forth exactly in Exodus 28:15-36. Genesis 49:5-7

יְהוּדָה יְהוּדָה

JUDAH is universally depicted as a lion for power and leadership. Many of the kings of Israel were descended from this tribe. The *escapee* shall not depart from Judah. Nor the ruler's seat from between his feet... Genesis 49:8-12

זְבֻלֻן זְבֻלֻן

ZEBULON shall dwell at the shore of the sea. And he shall be a shore for ships... This was a seafaring tribe of sailors and fishermen. Genesis 49:13

יִשָּׂשכָר יִשָּׂשכָר

ISSACHAR... bowed his shoulder, to bear and became a servant under taskwork... This was the laboring tribe. Genesis 49:14-15

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel... Genesis 49:28



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The Holy Ark

THE HOLY ARK

Synagogues all over the world have a Holy Ark, *Aron Kodesh*, a place of honor and safekeeping for the Torah. This follows the Biblical dictates for the establishment of a Tabernacle of the Law which takes up a good deal of the Book of Exodus and has minute prescriptions for size, structure, colors and materials. This Ark is a reflection of the artist's use of that resource material.

The doors (see next two pages) are surmounted by the *Tablets of the Law*, this version giving the first two words of each Commandment in gold relief.



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The *Ner Tamid*, *Eternal Light*, also a fixture in all synagogues, is meant to express the ever-presence of God in this house. Here, the design depicts the concept of cupped hands protecting the flame.



The words above the doors are:

דע לפני מי אתה עומד
Da Linye Mi Ata Omed,
Be Aware before Whom
you are standing.

Drapes complete the Biblical direction for the construction of the Tabernacle as outlined in Exodus 26:1-13.

Doors of the Ark

THE BRONZE DOORS OF THE HOLY ARK

Traditionally, when the Torah is taken from the Ark Isaiah 2:3 is chanted. *Ki Mizion . . . For out of Zion Jerusalem is emphasized across the Ark doors to express the Law . . . the guidepost for all of Judaism.*
 Within the calligraphic design is depicted the sdered holy to Jews and in which there has been a

to be read during a service, the historic quotation from shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from the feeling for what lies behind the doors . . . the Torah, architecture of the Old City of Jerusalem, long continuous Jewish population since Biblical times.

Shechina, the spirit of God, hovers over the holy city of Jerusalem across both doors.

The left door, with its sense of loftiness and space conveys the spiritual message:

TORAH, תורה, the Law, represents the cornerstone of Jewish ethics and morality.

GOD, ה, resides in the seventh or highest of the seven spheres of heaven according to a Biblical legend. The seven circles represent these spheres with God's name in the innermost circle.

PEACE, שלום, Shalom, is embodied in the last letters of ירושלים, Jerusalem, the City of Peace. Further, the ש is depicted as the Western Wall and the ל is presented as the Citadel of David.

The message expressed by the artist is: If one observes the laws of the TORAH and believes in GOD, there will be PEACE in the world.



© 1986, Max Gimpel

If I forget thee,
 Let my right hand
 Let my tongue cleave to
 If I remember
 N I set not
 Above my

O Jerusalem,
 forget her cunning,
 the roof of my mouth,
 thee not;
 Jerusalem
 chiefest joy.
 Psalm 137:5-6

The right door with its many crowded buildings of Old Jerusalem is intended to express the physical aspects of Judaism.



Jerusalem has always been the spiritual root of Judaism. It is remembered at every service, its direction is always faced during prayer. The hope to be there in the next year is always voiced to conclude the Passover Seder. For Jews, the name of Jerusalem evokes an emotional response of both historical and spiritual dimensions.

Chapel Ark & Chapel Windows

THE CHAPEL



Behind the Eternal Light rest the Lions of Judah flanking the Tablets of the Ten Commandments.

The Hebrew words read, *Torat Ado-nai P'mimah*, תורת ה' תמימה. The Law of the Lord is perfect. Psalm 19:8

והסנה
אינו
אכל

The doors recall the Biblical account of the burning bush. The calligraphic interpretation reads, . . . *V'hasne yynaynu uchal . . . and the bush was not consumed*. The burning bush has often been taken as a symbol of the Jewish people . . . small but indestructible because of the Divine Spirit within. Exodus 3:2

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The Chapel is used for daily services for which a *minyan*, quorum of ten, is required, and for small gatherings as may be needed.

THE CHAPEL WINDOWS



© 1986 Max Gimpel

The Chapel windows signify the ageless symbols of *Shabbat*, the Sabbath. The sanctity and reverence for *Shabbat* is rooted in the Fourth Commandment, *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy*, Exodus 20:8. Later on in Deuteronomy 5:12, the Children of Israel are enjoined to *Observe the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy*. These two mandates have been interpreted to mean that at least two lights must be kindled to begin the Sabbath. The candle images in the window are flanked by the words, זכור *Zachor*, Remember and שומר *Shamor*, Observe.

The right window symbolizes the beginning of the Sabbath, *Shabbat* is ushered in at home as the family sits down for the Friday night meal. (The Jewish calendar counts days from sundown to sundown.) The candles are lit and an appropriate blessing is recited. A benediction over the wine, *KIDDUSH*, is made. Kiddush is an extended version of the simple blessing for wine, the last three words of which, בורא טרי תבן *boray p'tree haggofen*, the fruit of the vine, may be seen across the top of the Kiddush cup.

A ceremony called *Havdalah*, Separation, ends the Sabbath Day Saturday evening and is indicated in the left window. The separation is the division between the holiness of *Shabbat* and the mundaneness of the other weekdays. The three elements of *Havdalah* are shown in the window: the braided taper consisting of two or more wicks, the *b'somim*, spice, box, and the wine cup with the inscription above ליל קדש ליל חול *hamavdil bain kodesh l'chol*, . . . who maketh a distinction between holy and profane.

Memorial Wall

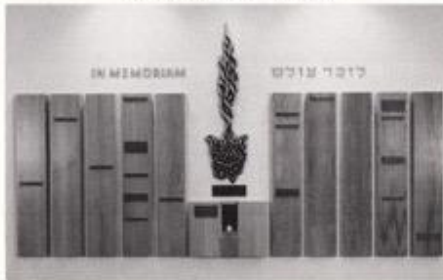
WALL MENORAH



The artist's design of a traditional menorah, the seven lamps rise from a Shield of David.

© 1984 Max Gimpel

MEMORIAL WALL



© 1984 Max Gimpel

A tradition followed by most synagogues is to set aside some space where congregants may remember their departed loved ones. Here at Beth Emeth, the artist has used a wall where bronze plaques with the names inscribed are mounted in vertical rows. Above are the Hebrew words, *L'zacher Olam*, לְזַכֵּר עוֹלָם, which mean *In Memoriam*.

The center is the site of the Holocaust Memorial with a commemorative plaque (see next page). Below that is the inscription, "May the memory of the righteous be for blessing." This space is for the placement of plaques of those whose current *yahrzeits* are being observed. A *yahrzeit* is the anniversary of the death and is remembered by lighting a memorial lamp adjacent to the plaque.

We must never forget . . .



© 1978 Max Gimpel

The immense proportions of the catastrophe we call the Holocaust has prompted many artists to remember it — each in their own way. Max Gimpel has created this calligraphic sculpture.

A flame is the universal symbol of memorial. Here, it is made up of the letters which spell *Sh'ma Yisrael, Hear O Israel*, the prayer which declares the Jewish people's eternal commitment to the One God and which is the last thing uttered by a Jewish person facing death.

The upraised arms show not clenched fists of hostility but open hands of supplication.

The flaming *Sh'ma* ascends from a mass grave where the calligraphy spells out the first four words of Maimonides' Credo of Faith, *Ani Maamin B'Emunah Sh'Temah*, אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה .

I Believe with a perfect Faith . . . the chant of the Jewish martyrs down through the ages as they went to their death in the sanctification of the Lord. Gimpel has taken the Hebrew word *Ani*, אֲנִי, which means *I*, and has further deepened its significance in that the *K* stands for the word *anashim*, אַנְשִׁים, *MEN*, the *2* refers to *nashim*, נְשִׁים, *WOMEN*, and the *3* is for *otam*, אוֹתָם, *CHILDREN*. Thus the word *I* is meant to convey the annihilation of whole families.

At the Passover Seder we are exhorted in the Haggadah (Seder book of rituals) that in every generation, each person is bound to regard himself as if he had personally gone forth from Egypt. Here, in this sculpture, with the heightened use of the word *I*, the artist wants to impart the significance of the individual obligation of those who live on, for all generations, to learn and to remember as if they too, had experienced the Holocaust.

Below the sculpture is a plaque on which is written a memorial as well as two words, the Hebrew *zacher* זָכַר and the Yiddish *gedenik*, געדענק, both of which mean *Remember*.

Rabi's Study Windows & The Tree of Life (Etz Chayim)

WINDOWS IN THE RABBI'S STUDY The Symbols of Judaism



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Though the **Magen David**, *Shield (or Star) of David*, today is a universally accepted contemporary symbol of Judaism, it actually had very little usage as such until the seventeenth century. Its adoption as the symbol of the first Zionist Congress in 1897 completed its acceptance as a universal signal of Jewishness. The Magen David became sacred when it was used a symbol of shame during the Holocaust. Because of its long usage, the Shield of David became the principal element of the flag of Israel.

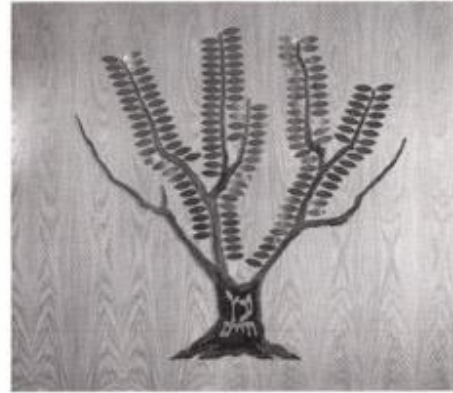
The **Menorah** has been the symbol of Judaism since the Divine instructions given in Exodus 25:31. (See inside front cover.) Archaeological digs have unearthed the seven-branched candelabra dating back to 586 B.C.E. The number seven has many mystical connotations in Judaism: the seven days of Creation, the seven continents and the legendary seven heavens. Today the Menorah is the official emblem of the State of Israel.

TREE OF LIFE ETZ CHAIM

The metaphor of the Torah as a Tree of Life comes from Proverbs 3:18. **עֵץ חַיִּים הוּא לְמַחְזִיקֵים בָּהּ** *It is the Tree of Life for those who hold fast to it. The tree will fill with leaves as congregants commemorate happy occasions.*

The words **Etz Chaim**, may be seen in the trunk of the tree.

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Mezzuzah, literally, a doorpost; a small container, usually decorated, which holds a rolled parchment. The mezzuzah is affixed to the doorpost. On the parchment are written passages from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-20 commanding the children of Israel to write them on the doorposts of thy house. A mezzuzah marks the home as distinctively Jewish.

