



*Congregation Ohav Emeth  
Centennial / Chanukat Habayit  
Celebrating 100 Years  
&  
The Completion of Our  
Renovation and Beautification*

*Shabbat Hagadol*

*April 12 – 13 2019*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR RABBI

Dear Friends,

Recently a dear friend discovered in the Jewish Archives an old photo of the beautiful Aron Hakodesh that majestically stood in the original Ohav Emeth synagogue in New Brunswick, a shul built by the first generation that founded OE. On the Aron Hakodesh was carved in bold letters a pasuk from the Torah **בַּתְּozֵם לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכְנָתִי** - and you will make for me a sanctuary and I will dwell amongst them.

It is that pasuk that has been beautifully refinished and still hangs today on the wall in OE's beit medrash.

Today, 100 years later, we appreciate and are grateful to all of the generations of OE members who fulfilled so beautifully those holy words of our Torah. They were a generation that made the dream of a kehilla and a vibrant makom Torah into the blessed reality of today. They labored and worked hard for their shul, building and creating a Mikdash Me'at; making it a reality. We, and all of the countless Jewish souls throughout the years, are the recipients of the great spiritual blessing that OE provides.

It is those lofty words of that pasuk that I am delighted to say remain for us, our members, friends, and everyone who is part of the OE family, an inspiration that brings us to the reality of today's joyous celebration in the creation and completion of our new OE. Indeed, it is that same timeless and glorious pasuk that has also been chosen to adorn the Aron Hakodesh in the renovated main sanctuary.

How happily we celebrate now, in our time, as was done at the times of the completion of the various sanctuaries and buildings of OE in the past, the complete renovation and beautification of our mikdash me'at, and with it, the great promise of a bright and shining tomorrow!

That clarion call of those sublime lofty words of our Torah, **בַּתְּozֵם לִי מִקְדָּשׁ** - has inspired so many of our shul members and friends to do what they could to make the beautiful, renovated OE of today a reality. For this, we and future countless souls are and will be eternally grateful.

Our sincere thanks go out to our renovation committee headed by co-chairmen Norman Heyden and Michael Garber who have worked so very hard, overcoming every obstacle, and never wavering from their desire to complete this magnificent project.

We additionally thank Michael Garber together with Norman Heyden, Alan Borck, Jack Atkin, and Richie Kollmar, the financial committee, who raised the money that has made this renovation come to reality. We are also grateful for the responses by so many individuals and families who have come forward to generously donate with a full and open heart, giving of their material blessings and treasure towards this project, thus enabling us to accomplish the dream and realize the vision that we join together to celebrate today.

I feel it is also important to note that, due to such generosity, we have the added blessing of having been able to accomplish all of this without undertaking any debt. Such is due, in no small

part, to the years of our OE Presidents and Board of Directors having year after year administered and responsibly managed the operating budget with such great skill.

So we celebrate today the triple blessing of our shul centennial, of the realization of our dream come true in the renewed, magnificent, and beautiful Shul that we now have, and that it was accomplished free of debt. We truly have reasons to celebrate, celebrate, and celebrate again our beautiful renewed OE, an accomplishment that, G-d willing, we and future countless souls will benefit from in a bright and promising future.

Our celebration of this historic achievement will allow future generations, e.g., a hundred years from now, to look back on our accomplishments, as we look back now at the generations of OE that precede us for 100 years, and that, G-d willing, they will say that we too fulfilled so beautifully those exalted and lofty words of our Torah: *ונְשׁוּ לִי מַקְדֵּשׁ וּשְׁכֹנֶתִי בָּתָּחֲכָם*

Wishing you all Torah's blessings on this historic centennial year of our Shul.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Eliyahu D. Kaufman

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As I sit down to try to express my thoughts at this auspicious occasion I can only feel humbled to be just a small link in the chain that has taken Congregation Ohav Emeth from its founding by a small group of immigrants in New Brunswick to the Kehillah that we have become today, one hundred years later. During the hundred years of our history, OE has established itself as a warm congregation at which all who come to pray can feel welcome.

Now as we celebrate our centennial we also celebrate a rededication of our renovated building. The process was long and difficult but the results are absolutely stunning. It is truly a privilege to call OE not “my shul” but “our shul.” We as a community are what makes this shul special and there is no better proof of that than what we celebrate today. The entire project could not have happened without everybody who is part of the shul today or in its past. Those who worked to establish the shul, move it to Highland Park and plan and build our current building paved the way for us. Now all of us can take pride in the way we worked together to make these latest renovations a reality. I especially would like to thank the committee which for years spent endless hours planning, organizing, fundraising and supervising every aspect of the project. Our Rabbi has tirelessly devoted much of his time working with, supporting and advising the committee. I also would like to thank all those who donated so generously in order to make the whole project possible and all of the contractors and artisans who took this on as a labor of love.

As we begin our second century, we do so with renewed vigor and the feeling that when we all work together there is nothing we can’t accomplish. It is that achdut, unity, that will define us going forward as a shul that will attract new people to join us not only because of what our building looks like (and it is gorgeous if I must say so myself) but because of who we are - a warm, friendly, unified, welcoming congregation that everybody should feel proud to be a part of.

Mazel Tov!

Jay Dobin, President

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF OHAV EMETH

In 1917 a group of Hungarian Jews met in the home of Eugene Nagy and formed a minyan to be held at Moritz Katz's home under the leadership of Rabbi Samuel Baskin, a man noted for his skills as an orator of Jewish thoughts, the first Rabbi of OE. This minyan eventually became known as Congregation Ohav Emeth Anshe Ungarn - Congregation Lovers of Truth of the Hungarians. Two years later, in 1919, Congregation Ohav Emeth Anshe Ungarn incorporated as a religious organization. The congregation moved to a larger facility within the A. S. Marcus YMHA, 62 New Street, which quickly became a center of Judaism in the city of New Brunswick. About ten years later, OE moved to a beautiful majestic building with onion spires at 71 New Street, New Brunswick, which would its home for the next 50 years under the Rabbinic leadership of Rabbi Anton Klein, Rabbi Pesach Raymon, who was the Rabbi of the New Brunswick community, and Rabbi Greenberg. Several decades later The City of New Brunswick purchased our property at 71 New Street and the synagogue moved to a facility on Morris Avenue in New Brunswick.

Rabbi Greenberg departed the synagogue after serving with distinction for many years. In 1967 a committee chaired by Ernie Gross, a member whose family goes back to the founding of OE, hired Rabbi Kaminetzky, who served as OE's Rabbi for the next 32 years along with his wife Aviva. Rabbi Kaminetzky is currently our Rabbi emeritus and remains an important member of the OE family.

The late 1960's was a tumultuous time in the United States and New Brunswick was not immune to the civil unrest. In the 1973 - 1974 time period, OE partially moved to Highland Park conducting services in the basement of Rabbi Kaminetzky's home.

In 1927 as OE was building its building in New Brunswick, Acme supermarket was building a store at 415 Raritan Ave. The supermarket building subsequently became an insurance company's office, which in turn in 1977, under the guidance of Herman Weisberger, was purchased for use by OE to conduct its services. Services were conducted in what is today the social hall of our current shul.

Technology was a booming business area in the 1970s and driven in part thereby, the Orthodox Jewish community of Highland Park – Edison also grew exponentially. As a result, OE outgrew its building. This problem was solved by the building, under the auspices of Murray Katz, Bob Stoll and Bernie Leff, of Ohav Emeth a new sanctuary, the current main shul.

When Rabbi Kaminetzky decided to retire in 1999, a committee led by Alan Borck, Steve Zeitchik, and Michael Garber led the search for a new Rabbi. Our congregation was very fortunate to have found Rabbi Eliyahu D. Kaufman to serve as our Rabbi, who, along with Rebbetzin Debby, has been leading us since Rosh Hashana 1999.

Today we celebrate this history as well as the renovation and beautification of our shul. These improvements started with the social hall and then in 2012 the bathrooms and the washing area were completely redone. Now as we celebrate our "Chanukat HaBayit" we celebrate the renovation of virtually our entire shul accomplished by a renovation committee co-chaired by

Norman Heyden and Michael Garber. This renovation improved both those elements often taken for granted e.g., A/C, lighting, and seating, along with many cosmetic improvements.

All of these improvements culminated with the centerpiece of our Shul, our newly beautified Aron Hakodesh built around the original Aron Hakodesh lovingly and artistically crafted personally by Mr. Martin Mermelstein of blessed memory, a Holocaust survivor and devoted long time member. His wife Mrs. Regina and children commissioned a new extension and beatification of the Mermelstein Aron Hakodesh with Jerusalem Stone imported from Israel surrounding the Aron Hakodesh. New woodwork and stained glass windows lit from behind depicting the creation of the world enhance and memorialize the original woodwork crafted by Mr. Mermelstein.



**LEFT SIDE:** Starting with the top window and moving down are the creation of:

“Day 8”: Future Shabbos of moshiach,

Day 4: Sun, moon, and stars in the universe,

Day 5: Creation of sea life and birds,

Day 6: Reptiles, animals and man

**RIGHT SIDE:** Starting with the top window and moving down are the creation of:

Day 7: Shabbos,

Day 1: Light and darkness,

Day 2: Arrangements of Rokiah to separate between the heavenly and earthly waters,

Day 3: Vegetation and fruit.

## TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE OF RENEE SILVERSTEIN



The name, Renee Silverstein, were it to be looked up in a thesaurus, would come up with words like “dedicated,” “positive,” and “friend.” Anyone who knew her was touched by her, and since her passing, on October 1, 2014, she has left a gaping hole in her devoted husband Jerry’s life, and in the life of our community.

Long-time residents of Highland Park, and members of OE, know that when Renee took ill with Parkinson’s, she had every right to give herself a big pity party, and to become depressed. But when asked about their memories of Renee, all anyone can come up with is adjectives like “always positive, helpful, and involved.”

Jerry and Renee did not have any children of their own, but they both adopted OE and its members as family and dedicated themselves to our community with every last drop of energy. The children of our community were their children. Renee tutored students at RPRY, and they got the best of the best, because Renee was a teacher in the NYC school system for 36 years! She taught yiddishkeit to Russian Jews in Rabbi Mykoff’s congregation in New Brunswick, and after she and Jerry moved to Lakewood in 2012, she continued doing the same there as well. Renee was always teaching, giving, and davening.

For Renee, davening was not something she did in the morning, and then that was it for the rest of the day. Her tehillim book was well worn, and she was always including herself in tehillim groups as needed. She never missed going to shul to daven on Shabbat and the holidays. She and Jerry were widely respected members of OE. With Renee, “what you see is what you get,” and friends knew that this meant a woman who strictly adhered to halacha and dedicated her life to Torah ideals. The expression “No, I can’t do that,” was seemingly not in her vocabulary, as she was always earnestly seeking for ways to be helpful. As many friends as she had, they all trusted her to never speak a word of lashon hora, a commitment she made and kept all of her adult life. She was involved in Bikur Cholim of Highland Park since its earliest inception, and it seems that there was not one aspect of OE’s multifaceted social calendar that she and Jerry were not a part of.

Her long-time life partner, Jerry, married Renee in 1982, and they enjoyed 32 blessed years together.

*Her legacy and love for all, her friends and most of all the children of OE continues now even after her passing with that most beautiful expression of her eternal love for her Shul, with her most generous bequest that was instrumental making our renewed Beis Hakeneneses a reality.*

We honor Renee, and pay tribute to her dedication to our community, and to express our tremendous gratitude to Jerry for all of the selfless dedication that both of them gave to OE for so many years.

## Charter Members

*Congregation Ohav Emeth proudly recognizes our founders:*

*Nicholas Gross*

*Louis Hartman*

*Moritz Katz*

*Joseph Lefkowitz*

*Eugene Nagy*

*Joseph Lukacs*

*Dr. Harry Berger*

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## Rabbis

*Congregation Chav Emeth Thanks Those Who Have  
Served As Congregation Rabbi Over The Last Century:*

*Rabbi Samuel Baskin*

*Rabbi Anton Klein*

*Rabbi Pesach Raymon*

*Rabbi Irving Greenberg*

*Rabbi Eliezer Kaminetzky*

*Rabbi Eliyahu Kaufman*

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## Sisterhood Presidents

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*Congregation Ohav Emeth Thanks the tireless efforts and dedication of:*

*The Renovation Design Committee:*

*Norman Heyden, co-chair*

*Rabbi Kaufman*

*Eddie Braun*

*Sharon Garber*

*Sharon Heyden*

*Murray Katz*

*Michael Garber, co-chair*

*Sue Kollmar*

*Rafie Miller*

*Moshe Weiss*

*Barbara Weiss*

*Yitzv Weiss*

*The Renovation Fundraising Committee:*

*Michael Garber*

*Norman Heyden*

*Rabbi Kaufman*

*Jack Atkin*

*Alan Borck*

*Rich Kollmar*

*Others helping are our current president Jay Dobin, and our recent past presidents Steve Deutsch and Jeremy Safran. We are also grateful to Israel Fligelman, Micha Ben Haim and Elena Orgel.*

## THE DONORS

*Thank You To The Donors Who Have Made Ohav Emeth's Renovation Possible*

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*Michael Garber*

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## SYMBOLISM OF THE 9 STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

By Ron Henig

### OVERVIEW BY THE ARTIST

I wanted to convey with these windows the power of miracles in our daily lives. To this end, I drew upon miraculous events in Jewish history from the time of Moshe Rabbeinu to the present day and beyond - to the final Redemption of Moshiach.

The overarching idea is to illustrate how Hashem has always been the master of the world who can control nature, as well as human affairs, to bring unexpected results when that suits his will and his intended destiny for the Jewish people. This is meant to give us hope and conviction in the uncertain times of our personal lives. It helps us to recognize, notwithstanding the lack of clearly visible manifestation of G-d, that there is a loving, caring G-d who, will not let his faithful falter and will ultimately redeem us.

I specifically chose not to depict miracles that are associated with the major holidays, such as Passover, etc., as the plan is to eventually have these represented separately in other artistic forms in the main sanctuary.

The following describes what the illustrations in each window represents, starting from the left when facing the windows from inside the sanctuary.

#### WINDOW #1: The Miracle of Chanukah



This window depicts a menorah and an amphora of oil which was used to for eight days, although it had the capacity for only one day's worth of oil! This open miracle occurring outside of biblical times, indicated G-d's seal of approval for the hard-won war the Jews had just fought against Hellenization and for the rededication of the temple.

In fact, the miracle of Chanukah became the example for the principle of "pirsumei nissa", a rabbinic mitzva to propagate and publicize the occurrence of a miraculous happening among the public.

Inscribed in the lower pane are the words *ness gadol hayah sham*, which means "a great miracle happened there". The first letter of each of these words appear on the side the dreidel. Dreidels in Israel replace the letter shin with a letter pey, to represent the phrase *nes gadol hayah po* which means "a great miracle happened here", i.e., in Israel.



#### WINDOW #2: The Miracle With Eliyahu at Mt. Carmel

This is, undoubtedly, the most dramatic moment in the Prophet Eliyahu's life. Eliyahu is surrounded by a throng of Israelites and hundreds of the priests of the then popular false deity Baal, whom Eliyahu challenged to a contest to see whose god answers prayers. While the Baal priests are given all day to beseech their gods to consume their bullock offering, nothing, of course, happens.

At the very last moment of the day, with his life greatly imperiled, Eliyahu issues the simplest of prayers, *aneini, Hashem, aneini*, which means, "Answer me, G-d, answer me!". A flash immediately descends from heaven consuming Eliyahu's sacrifice. At that moment, the people repent from their Baal worship, prostrate themselves and cry out, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God!"

This story, from Kings (*Melachim*) I, Ch. 18, emphasizes the miraculous power of even a simple three word prayer, and Eliyahu's prayer is inscribed in the lower pane.



### WINDOW #3: The Burning Bush

Fire, in the physical world, is necessarily a destructive phenomenon, as it can only exist by virtue of the consumption and conversion of its host matter into energy. Spiritual fire, however, might look the same, but does the opposite. It infuses its host matter with energy, strengthening and bolstering it to greater heights.

There were two miraculous aspects to this event that drew Moses' attention. One was the revelation that spiritual fire can exist and interact within this lower world. The other was that it would manifest within so lowly a host as a bush! This was especially appealing to Moses, the iconoclast, who would forgo the favor of a mighty king to defend the dignity of a lowly slave. Through this event, G-d intimated to Moses that he is, indeed, the protector and restorer of the lowly.

The inscription in the lower pane, which reads, *vehasneh eynenu uchal*, which means, "and the bush was not consumed", is taken from the verse of the biblical text that describes the burning bush.



### WINDOW #4: MIRACLE OF THE REBIRTH OF ISRAEL

For thousands of years, the land of Israel lay largely barren and desolate. With the influx of a significant number of Jews in the 19th Century who began the resettlement, the land began a transformation to being lush and fruitful once again, as in the days of old.

Though it took much exhausting labor and sweat, the success modern Israel is widely acknowledged to have been one of the miracles of our history.

The Montefiore windmill, built in Jerusalem in 1857 to grind flour for the new community, remains a symbol of this success.

The lower pane is inscribed with the verse from Isaiah, 35, *vatageil arava vatifrach* - "and the desert shall rejoice and bloom", which is a prophecy, that, like many others, is finally being fulfilled in our age.



#### WINDOW #5: THE MOSHIACH MIRACLE

The center window, the main stem of the menorah pattern, fittingly, has a messianic theme, symbolizing the culmination of history and the penultimate of all miracles, second only to creation, itself.

The messianic era is here represented by elements from the prophesies in Isaiah 11, about the lion lying down with the lamb, as well as a depiction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. A shofar, representing the, shofar of moshiach, floats in the heaven above, calling out to the world.

The inscription in the lower window is taken from a verse in Isaiah, 11 that reads *nesah neiss lagoyim, ve'asef nidchei yisrael* - meaning "And a symbol shall be raised to the nations, and I shall gather the remnants of Israel".

Ness is commonly translated as "miracle" but can also mean a "symbol". Thus, the verse, as the commentaries translate it in this context, means that a symbol of some type will be raised to the nations and this will prompt the return of the Jewish people to the land. However, what that symbol might actually be is not made clear.

That is why it is posited that this "symbol for the nations" is one that is called in Isaiah, 56, the "house of prayer for all the nations", namely, the Holy Temple. This verse, thus strongly suggests that its rebuilding will be the harbinger for the return of the people.



## WINDOW #6: SPLITTING OF THE SEA

The Talmud recounts that the wonders that were observed by the humblest person at the splitting of the sea far exceeded all of the wondrous revelations of the prophet Ezekiel in his visions of the workings of heaven. In truth, this is not difficult to understand. To the poor Israelites trapped between the sea and the pursuing Egyptian army, the miracles of their salvation were far more relevant and personal and therefore, arguably more inspiring.

This window depicts the Egyptians following the Israelites into the opening between walls of water, with G-d's protective cloud and pillar of smoke separating the two.

The Pasuk in the lower panel is taken from Exodus Ch.15, and reads, *nora tehillot osseh pelleh* which means "the awesome One of prayers, Doer of wonders".



## WINDOW #7: MIRACLE OF ELISHA REVIVING THE DEAD

This event is chronicled in Kings II, Ch. 4, regarding a boy whom G-d granted to a deserving, but hitherto, childless woman in response to a blessing from the prophet Elisha because she showed him kindness and respect. During his adolescence, this boy fell ill in the field, was brought to his mother, and died. The grieving mother desperately rode to find Elisha and have him return. She found Elisha who went back was able to revive the boy.

This story is filled with important lessons about the power of hope, faith and perseverance, as well as the preciousness of life.

The lower panel features the verse, *vayifkach hanaar et einav* which means "and the boy opened his eyes." What a sight that must have been, and continues to be today for those blessed to have their loved ones restored to them.



### WINDOW #8: GIVING OF THE TORAH

This window depicts the greatest event in the annals of human history, the revelation of G-d and the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. This is the seminal event of Jewish history when the entire nation heard G-d speak to them and experienced the wonders of the Almighty revealing himself.

The verse in the lower pane, *hanehiyeh kadavar hagadol hazeh*, which means, "has there ever been anything like this great thing", is taken from Deuteronomy 4:32. It refers to the question in the subsequent verse, namely, has a people ever heard the voice of G-d speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard and survived? Why were we so shown? To know that the Lord is G-D and that there is none besides him.



### WINDOW #9: THE MIRACLE OF PURIM

This window depicts major symbols of the holiday of Purim, in particular, a Scroll of Esther and the drinking of wine. These reflect the instruments that effected the miracle of the saving of the Jews by the turning of King Achashveyrosh's wrath upon his erstwhile co-conspirator, the evil Haman, who had schemed to annihilate the Jews in all of Achashveyrosh's vast kingdom.

The first step in effectuating the miracle was the king's inexplicable urge to have his chronicles read to him one night when he was experiencing insomnia. The reader happened to read the entry detailing how Mordechai the Jew had saved the king's life. The second step was the drinking party organized by Esther during which Haman was exposed and he further made a fatal blunder that severely offended the king.

The verse in the lower panel, taken from Esther, chapter 8, is *Layehudim hayita orah*, which means "for the Jews there was light". This is one of the four verses said out loud by the congregation when the megillah is read on Purim. We also say this verse every week out loud at the conclusion of Shabbat as part of the *havdalah* ceremony.