

PAST AND PRESENT TREASURES

We are proud that Temple Sholom of West Essex is a warm, caring congregation. We also glory in the beauty of our sanctuary, whose dramatic design evokes the traditional style of the wooden synagogues built by Jewish communities in Poland, virtually all of which were destroyed during the Holocaust.

The sanctuary itself is a treasure. Next time you are there, take note of the

- * STAINED GLASS WINDOWS designed by David Wilson
- * TORAH MANTLES, BREASTPLATES, POINTERS AND WIMPLES
- * NER TAMID designed by Newton Malerman, above our beautiful
- * ARK DOORS WITH A TEN-COMMANDMENT DESIGN that likens the commandments to a tree of life, complete with roots and branches; designed by Ismar David
- * SILVER MEZUZAH ON THE SANCTUARY DOOR, designed by Moshe Zabari

How many other of our TSWE treasures can you find in the sanctuary and in other parts of the building?

And, while you are looking, be sure to examine the BURNING BUSH SCULPTURE IN THE MEMORIAL ALCOVE, something you probably haven't looked at in a long time (if ever). The wood and brass sculpture, with ribbons of flame swirling above the stylized Hebrew letters of the biblical phrase *v'ha-sneh einenu ukal* – "Yet the bush was not consumed" (Sh'mot/Exodus 3:2) is a perpetual memorial both to the martyrs of our people and to those of our own loved ones whose memories never die because they live on in our hearts and in our deeds. Designed by Ismar David, the piece was executed by craftsmen in his studio, including at the time the two brilliant artists Ludwig Wolpert and Moshe Zabari, both of whom remember working on this project.

What other elements help make our unique memorial alcove a special, peaceful and reflective place?

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE OBJECTS IN OUR MUSEUM CASE. THESE ARE SOME OF THE CONGREGATION'S "TREASURES" FROM ACROSS THE YEARS



Top shelf, left to right:

“These Dry Bones are the Whole House of Israel” – *Ha-atza-moht ha’eilu kol beit Yisrael*, silkscreen on raw silk, was designed for our Holocaust Torah by Moshe Zabari, an acclaimed Israeli crafter of Jewish ritual art who was artist in residence at the Tobe Pascher Workshop of the Jewish Museum in New York when he created the **MANTLE** displayed here and the other ornaments for this scroll (in the ark). Six broken stars are embroidered around the text, words of consolation spoken by the prophet Ezekiel (37:1-14) foretelling the restoration of our exiled people. It is a prayer for us today and tomorrow as well: “...These bones are the whole House of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone; we are doomed.’ Prophecy, therefore, and say to them: ‘Thus says the Eternal: I am going to open your graves ... and bring you back to the land of Israel... I will put My breath into you and you shall live again, and I will settle you in your own land, set you upon your own soil. Then you will know that I, the Eternal, have spoken and have acted, declares the Eternal One.’”



The Torah crown is displayed now above the scroll in the ark – it, like the original mantle, having become too delicate for regular use. Zabari also designed the *yad*, the “pointer” (literally “hand”) by which the reader can follow the closely written Hebrew of the *parashah* – Torah portion – without touching the scroll itself, thus both honoring and protecting both the sanctity of the scroll and the handwritten letters of the text). The crystal that ornaments the *yad* is an echo of the crystals in the Ner Tamid. The base on which the scroll sits was also designed by Zabari; it bears the Hebrew word “*zahkor*” – REMEMBER! Remember the Holocaust and its victims; remember our commitment to Torah and to Judaism; remember that we are part of a worldwide Jewish community with shared values, a shared past and hopes for a safe and secure Jewish future – here, in Israel and everywhere in the world.

In the museum case are **FIVE TZEDAKAH BOXES** in the shape of famous synagogues in Europe. All, made by Reuven Masel of Miami, Florida, are anonymous gifts to the congregation.

The model below is of the Jubilee Synagogue in Prague, built in 1906 and named in honor of the silver jubilee year of the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. The synagogue is also known as the Jerusalem Synagogue because it is

situated on Jeruzalemska Street. The synagogue, in the Moorish revival style, with art nouveau decorations, was designed by William Stiassny, a noted synagogue architect of that era.



The next synagogue model is that of Tempo Israelitico Synagogue in Florence. Built in 1882, it is one of the finest examples of the Byzantine and Moorish styles of synagogue architecture. The interiors of Central Synagogue, in New York City, and Temple B'nai Abraham, on South 10th Street in Newark (which long ago ceased to be a synagogue) were designed in a similar style.



The third model (left, below) is of the Neue Synagoge, better known as the Oranienburger Synagoge, in Berlin. It was built in the Moorish style in 1866. The largest synagogue in Germany, it reflected Liberal Judaism with organ, choir, and many readings in German rather than Hebrew. The synagogue was severely damaged on Kristallnacht, November 9-10, 1938, and almost destroyed by Allied bombings in 1943. After the war, the façade was restored and the space behind it was transformed into a building that houses the Centrum Judaicum, a museum and information center for the preservation of Jewish memory and tradition.



The fourth model (right, above) is the Dohany Street Synagogue in Budapest, built in the Byzantine-Moorish style, is the largest synagogue in Europe. Built in 1859, its liturgy is that of Neolog Judaism, essentially Eastern Europe's version of Conservatism. An unusual feature of the synagogue is that it has two balconies. Adjacent to the synagogue today a Jewish museum stands on the site of Theodor Herzl's family home. A Holocaust memorial park was created in 1989 on the site of a mass grave between the synagogue and the museum, the only Holocaust memorial of any time until then. Near the garden is a large silver colored aluminum sculpture by Imre Varga called "Tree of Life." Each leaf bears the name of one of the martyrs buried in the garden. Financing for the sculpture was contributed by Estee Lauder and Tony Curtis, both of Hungarian Jewish background.

This **D'VUR KRALOVE TORAH MANTLE** is one of two “replica” mantles designed and woven for Temple Sholom’s Holocaust Torah by our member Peter Layne (z”l), a master textile designer. Peter and his wife Beth participated on one of our congregational trips to visit Jewish sites in Europe. In Prague, we arranged for Peter to visit the textile restoration laboratory of the Jewish Museum, where he saw and was fascinated by the extraordinarily complex design of the original mantle for our Holocaust Torah from D’vur Kralove, which has differently designed fabrics on the exterior and interior. (See the small photo below which shows the ornate Wiener Werkstette design of the lining.) Peter inquired about having the mantle deacquired so that it could be reunited with its Torah scroll, but that was not possible. He then asked if the museum would create a facsimile for us. The museum staff offered to look into it, but ultimately informed us that the project was too complex for them to undertake. Peter saw it as a challenge! He not only succeeded in designing and fabricating a facsimile with his remarkable CAD (computer-assisted design skills) but created separate mantles to display each design. The original remains in the permanent collection of the Jewish Museum in Prague. The two embroidered gold Hebrew letters on both of the mantles – *kaf* and *taf* – are the acronym for the Hebrew words *keter Torah* – the crown of Torah. Both replica mantles were a gift to Temple Sholom of West Essex from the Layne family.



Middle shelf, left to right:

The inscription on the traditional beaded silver **KIDDUSH CUP** below indicates that it is a gift to the congregation from the Confirmation Class 2000/5760.



The congregation's silver **CEREMONIAL WEDDING RING** (above, in a jewelry box) is in the style of the traditional rings used by the brides and grooms in Jewish communities of Europe. The shank band, large enough to fit over the bride's personal wedding ring, is decorated with a cartouche edged in bezel and the Hebrew words *mazal tov*, literally "may you have good luck," which has become a phrase meaning "congratulations!" As is traditional, the top of the ring is in the form of a beautiful edifice, symbolic of the home every bridal couple wishes to build together. A hidden catch allows the top to open so *besamim* (fragrant spices) can be placed within, furthering the wishes for sweetness and harmony and, reminiscent of the spicebox that is part of the Havdalah ritual, helps mark the transition from single life to marriage. Members of our congregation and their families are invited to use this ring in wedding ceremonies conducted by our rabbi and/or cantor.

Gift of Belle and Paul Schwartz in memory of Helen Gruenberg. (Paul Schwartz was the brother of our longtime temple secretary, Dorothy Schept)



This beautiful sterling silver **SPICE BOX** – *kuf'tsat besamim* (Vienna, late 19th century) has a dramatic spray of flowers overlaying the delicately filigreed cylindrical container. Its simple top differs from the traditional form of a castle turret flying a pennant.
Gift of Jule and Ed Maged



This unusual **HAVDALAH SET**, of masterfully carved rosewood, includes a holder for the special *havdalah* braided candle, a *besamim* (spice) box and a kiddush cup and a tray for displaying them. We have no information about the maker or provenance. A plaque on the tray reads: "Presented by the Confirmation class of 2005 Temple Sholom of West Essex." As you can see from the photograph, it has been well-used. We couldn't manage to totally remove blue Havdalah candle wax drippings.

Gift of the 2005 Confirmation Class



This synagogue model shows the Altneushul in Prague. Built in 1290 in the Gothic style, it is the oldest synagogue in Europe – and the oldest still functioning. According to legend, the ashes of the Golem – the mythical kabbalistic giant conjured up from the mud of the Vltava River by Rabbi Loew to protect the Jewish community in the 16th century, whose leader Loew was – are hidden in the Altneushul's attic. But there is no attic in the Altneushul. Check out the story. A Jewish fairy tale of salvation in time of danger. Would that ...



This stunning sterling silver **ETROG HOLDER** for Sukkot was made in Israel. Modeled on an original Bezael style *etrog* holder made in the pre-State era, it has delicate etched designs and filigree trim on both the base and the cover. Gift of Charlotte and Philip Pollack



This **BUD VASE**, which occasionally graces the candle table in the sanctuary, is the third element of a matching set crafted for our congregation by the noted artist Hana Geber. Not in the case because they are in the sanctuary every week for Shabbat, are the CANDELABRA (below) and the KIDDUSH CUP. with its delicate elongated stem. (It broke once, and we were lucky that Hana Geber was still alive to repair it for us—with warnings to treat it more carefully!), that we use every week for singing the *erev* Shabbat candle blessing and chanting the kiddush. All three pieces are sculpted in bronze in the artist's signature modernist style.



Gift of Audrey and Joel Weinstock



This pulpit-size silver **KIDDUSH CUP** has large grape clusters around the bowl. The Hebrew letters spell out the key words of the blessing over the wine – *borei p'ri hagafen*. Its provenance is American, 20th century, designed for the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now, Union for Reform Judaism).
Gift of Leo and Thelma Doobin in honor of their son Donald's confirmation

Bottom shelf, left to right



This **SILVER PITCHER**, with a porcelain heat-retaining liner, recalls for us the formality of earlier decades (not to mention centuries), a time when the ladies of our congregation wore dresses, hats and gloves to pour coffee or tea at Sisterhood meetings and congregational fundraising events. (Somewhere in the TSWE archives we've got photographs to prove it!) Its ornate design – both its shape and the incised pattern on the exterior – date back to the 19th century. On the underside of the pitcher is its patent date, November 3, 1868, and “Maser June 13, 1963” (I have no idea what that means and couldn't find any information online; perhaps you know??). Incised on the side of the pitcher is the inscription “Presented to Sisterhood of Temple Sholom by Ruth and Stanley Sigman June 1963.”

Gift of Ruth and Stanley Sigman

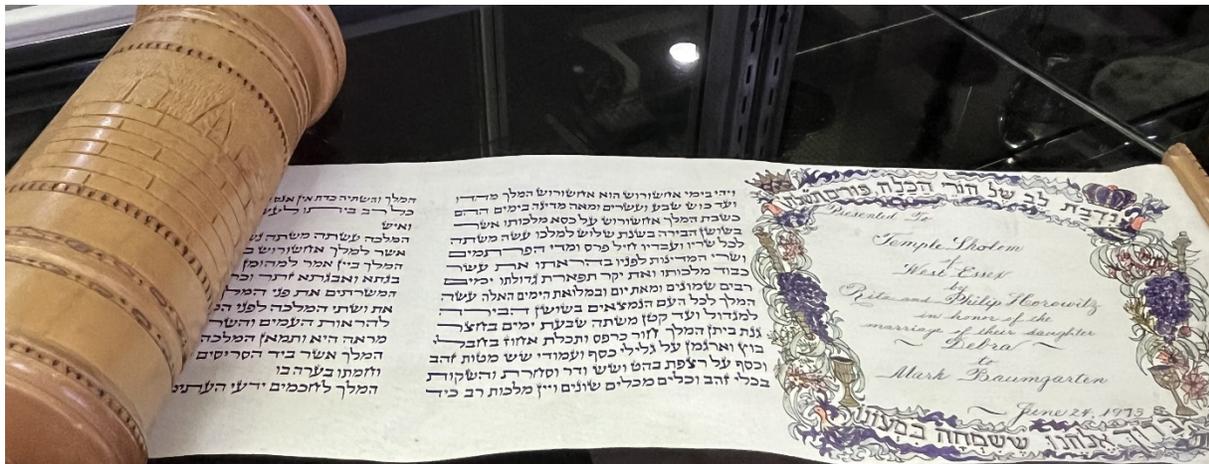
The congregation's **SEDER PLATE** is a rare English porcelain with individual dishes for each of the prescribed ritual items. It was produced by Grindley Royal Cauldron as designed for Sirett, and its illustrations are by Eric Turnstall. Decorating the border of this beautifully detailed plate is a series of representational pictures depicting the Ten Plagues. The Hebrew and English texts of the four questions separate the drawings. The order (*seder*) of the service is written in the center of the main plate. The small dishes each bear a picture of the ritual food they are to hold, and around the rim of all appears in Hebrew the exhortation which serves as the response to the four questions: "Remind your children that on that day we were the slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt." In a way, the plate itself is an entire Passover Haggadah! Gift of Stanley and Arlyn Silverman in memory of Arlyn's father, Alex Marshall



This **SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL CANDELABRA** was crafted by Maxwell M. Chayat, silversmith and designer of Jewish ritual objects. Chayat's intensive study of Jewish tradition and art inform his work. Many of his works can be seen in the sanctuary of Temple Beth Ahm in Springfield, New Jersey. This piece is silver mounted on teak. Its contemporary design features the Hebrew letter *shin* which stands for *Shaddai*, a name for God.
Gift of Ralph and Gloria Rosen in honor of their daughter Sherry's wedding.



The **PURIM MEGILLAH** is a scroll containing the entire biblical Book of Esther. This megillah, made in Israel, is in an olivewood case decorated with traditional folkloristic carvings of Jerusalem scenes. The dedicatory inscription, beautifully illustrated by the well-known calligrapher and illustrator Betsy Platkin Teutsch, reads: Presented to Temple Sholom of West Essex by Rita and Philip Horowitz in honor of the marriage of their daughter Debra to Mark Baumgarten, June 24, 1973. The Hebrew at the top reads: *Nid'vat lev* – “a gift of the heart,” given on Purim, with the Hebrew date. The scroll itself is an unusual *hamelekh* scroll, so called because each column begins with the Hebrew words “the king.”



These small bronze crouching **LIONS** were rescued from a synagogue in Cologne, Germany following Kristallnacht. They had originally served as the “feet” of a Hanukkah menorah that was destroyed during that dreadful “Night of Broken Glass,” November 9-10, 1938. At the moment, they are helping keep each of the megillot open to the beginning of the scroll.
Gift of Carl and Lillian Brunnell





The shiny gold Hebrew letters on the black plastic *megillah* case read **MEGILLAT ESTHER** (scroll of Esther), which contains the text of the Book of Esther in Ketuvim – Writings – the third section of the Hebrew Bible. The plaque attached to the case reads: “To our first temple, Kathy, Ruth, and Barbara Ansell, 1966.” This is an unusual scroll for a number of reasons: the scroll – certainly intended to be read to children/religious school students – is both abridged and in English. The *megillah* is illustrated with woodcuts by Ilya Schor.

Gift of the Ansell Family