

Welcome to

BETH TZEDEC

SYNAGOGUE

1700 BATHURST STREET, TORONTO, CANADA

"My House Shall Be Called A House Of Prayer For All People"

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2026

WELCOME TO BETH TZEDEC!

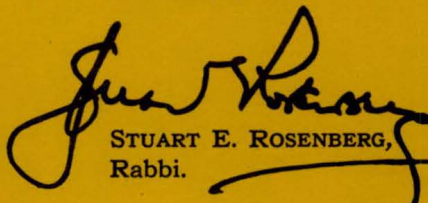
I am privileged, on behalf of all the members of our Congregation, to greet you, to extend the hand of fellowship to you who have come into our midst. We are grateful for your visit.

We hope you will come to feel, through your visit, the power and beauty of the Synagogue and the Jewish Tradition.

The flame kindled by the Torah has lighted our way through the dark periods of our history, warmed our courage and fired our faith. And nowhere did this flame shine more brilliantly than in the Synagogue, the House of Worship, where our people always assembled to study and to pray.

We pray that Beth Tzedec will carry forward the torch of Torah and meet with courage the challenge of our times and the summons of destiny!

Faithfully yours,



STUART E. ROSENBERG,
Rabbi.

SANCTUARY

AVOWEDLY CONTEMPORARY in design, the Sanctuary of Beth Tzedec is a remarkable architectural expression of sacred art, its style an imaginative blend of the aesthetic and the functional.

An effect of startling simplicity was achieved by splaying the ceilings and the walls of exposed brick, erecting a series of 46 foot high vertical wood fins, and installing ceiling-high lateral windows of Thermopane Cathedral glass.

These combine magically with the soft stone of the beautiful sculptured bas-relief panels, the polished bronze of the Ark flanked by beautifully woven drapes on either side, and the clean strength of the Israeli marble above the Ark and around the Bima, communicating a sense of warmth, colour and luminosity and producing an entrancing expression of spiritual splendour.

The Sanctuary normally seats 2600 worshippers. With the removal of the sectional rear wall an additional 900 can be accommodated for the High Holy Days.

CHAPEL

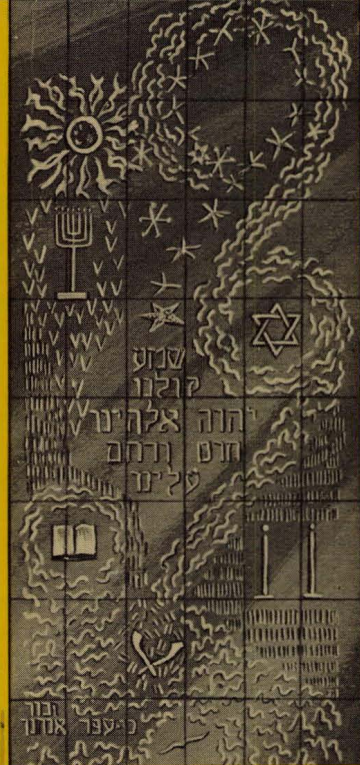
THE CHAPEL is a miniature Sanctuary of serenity and beauty for daily morning and evening worship and for services by the Junior and Youth Congregations on Sabbaths and Festivals.

Octagonal shaped, the Chapel seats 325, has an adjoining Library-Study on the south and the Bima on the east. Along the east wall is the beautiful bronze Ark set in Israeli marble with a sculptured frieze above the carpeted Bima depicting Creation and the theme of Sabbath.

Conceived as the central motif in the architectural composition of the synagogue building, the Chapel, like a brilliant in its setting, was so designed, that all walls of the building are parallel to one of its walls.



NORTH PANEL



SOUTH PANEL

THE EAST WALL

THE SUPERLATIVE ARTISTRY of the two 50 feet high bas-relief panels flanking the Ark executed by sculptor Ernest Raab of Montreal makes a profound impact on the beholder. They are striking evidence of the sculptor's astonishing ability to tell the dramatic tale of a people, without depicting human figures yet instantly inspiring a deep feeling of awe and reverence.

NORTH PANEL

This panel symbolically chronicles the Biblical story of Creation, feelingly describes the birth of the Jewish Nation and its early history from bondage in Egypt to Revelation at Sinai.

Man was created to fulfil God's Will and His Commandments. Only when he lives in accordance with the divine principles and precepts of the Torah does he justify his existence and the world's creation.

SOUTH PANEL

Through a few carefully chosen quotations from the Bible and stark symbols the story of man's suffering and aspirations slowly and graphically unfolds. Human suffering and misery are often the results of sin and wickedness; through faith, prayer, and good works man can break the chains of his physical bondage and achieve serenity and spiritual exaltation.

THE ARK

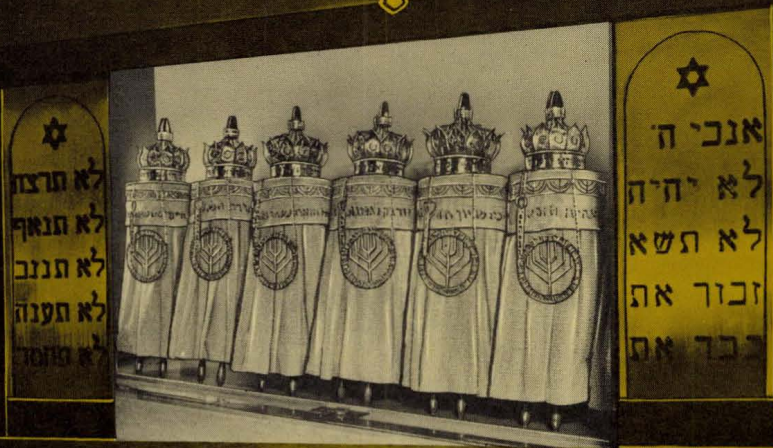
The Synagogue, in Jewish tradition, bears the signature of the Eternal. The heart of the Synagogue is the Ark in which reposes the Torah Scroll — the divine compendium of the principles and rules by which the Jew lives.

Beth Tzedec's Ark of bronze, set in Israeli marble with beautiful woven drapes 45' high on either side, is flanked by sculptured panels.

THE NER TAMID

The beautiful and unique sterling silver Torah crowns, mantles, breastplates and pointers were especially commissioned for our synagogue. They are an exquisite combination of expert craftsmanship and modern design.

The Biblical injunction "to cause the lamp to burn continually" is traditionally observed in the synagogue where the Ner Tamid (Eternal Light) burns perpetually before the Ark.





YOUTH CHAPEL

The Synagogue is a place of study and worship. Our Youth Chapel was designed to accommodate these two traditional purposes in a single room. On Sabbaths and Festivals it is used primarily for prayer and worship by the Youth Congregation. When the Ark tapestry is drawn, however, the room is used for purposes of study, for public forums and lectures. It is here that our youth comes to recite the word, and here too that adults may delight in intellectual adventure and discussion. Symbols used in the Youth Chapel Windows and the East Wall Tapestry are for educational as well as decorative purposes. They depict scenes from the Bible, the Land of Israel, and ritual objects used on Sabbaths, and Festivals.

STAINED GLASS CEILING

In an effort to inspire the youthful worshippers with an atmosphere conducive to spiritual contemplation, the artist, Perli Pelzig, sought to convey a religious message through his two stained glass "Transparent Murals". The motifs are inspired by the Sabbath and Festivals, as well as by the religious symbols and ritual objects used by faithful Jews throughout the year. The leaded stained glass panels add a year-round glow to the Chapel. Sunken lamps permit the light to filter through by night and white natural light penetrates by day to reflect the changing patterns on the cream brick walls.

In these beautiful windows the artist depicts familiar religious articles and objects. Among them are illustrations of Torah Scroll and Torah Pointer, Shofar and Menorah, Sabbath Candlestick and Kiddush Cup, Esrog and Lulav, Tallit, Siddur and Tephillin.

THE ARK

The Ark which houses the Torah Scrolls is recessed into the East Wall and is curtained by a beautifully textured parochet bearing Hebrew verses from the Bible.

Suspended above the Ark is a beautiful bronze and plexiglass Eternal Light. On the side, high above the tapestry, rises a Menorah, fashioned from lengths of polished wood inset with enamel inlay, in tones repeating the tapestry and stained glass colours. Fronting the Ark, is a sculptured oak lectern.

EAST WALL TAPESTRY

Serving as a beautiful background for the Ark is a massive hand-woven Rya Tapestry, resplendent in purples, golds and crimsons that repeat the colours of the stained glass panels. The massive 26' x 8' wool tapestry carries in its design the themes of the Seven Fruits of the Bible — "A land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey."

Behind the tapestry are beige ark curtains bearing a biblical verse from the Shema in stitched velvet Hebrew letters.



MUSEUM

BETH TZEDEC HAS BEEN designated as the Canadian Branch of the Jewish Museum under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, which has loaned us rare and priceless ritual artcrafts. These can be seen in our Museum Showcases in the Main Foyer.

Beth Tzedec Congregation owns and houses the Cecil Roth Collection, one of the world's most outstanding collections. The Museum also displays the beautiful objects from the ancient world which comprise our "Dr. Ludvik Staub Permanent Loan Collection."

In building a Jewish Museum at Beth Tzedec we seek to establish here a treasure house storing the riches of past generations, preserving and exhibiting the beautiful ceremonial antiques of the religious life of our ancestors.

We do not come merely to look at exhibits, but to learn from them and to enrich our own lives by drawing on the accumulated cultural wealth of countless generations before us.

On permanent display are colourful Hanukkah Lamps from many countries, each illustrating rare design and craftsmanship. We also have a notable collection of Sabbath Lamps, one of which is considered the oldest in existence. We have a unique pewter bowl used for the Ceremony of the Redemption for the First Born. It is the only one in the entire world.

We have on exhibit rare seals and medals that cannot be matched anywhere for beauty and uniqueness. We have one of the finest collections of Scrolls of Esther with illumination, all of them beautifully lettered by devoted scribes. We have rare embroideries, Hebrew coins, Torah ornaments and countless other objects.

A great deal of art and craftsmanship was lavished in the past on the manufacture of platters or dishes designed to hold the round cakes of unleavened bread at the Seder service at home. Of these receptacles those known as Majolica Passover Plates excite the greatest enthusiasm among discerning collectors both for their intrinsic merit and their particular association. We are proud to own a Majolica Passover Plate in perfect condition made by Isaac Cohen II in Ancona, Italy, in 1673. The decorations on this beautiful pottery are breathtaking.

Bookplates of Jewish interest have a remarkable value for both their symbolism and their artistry. These ex libris usually bear a decorative motif and fine script and ornamentation. They are often superior examples of the graphic arts and reflect the labours of the artist and the personality of the owner of the books. Some of the finest artists and etchers have designed and executed book plates to mark important events in Jewish history, to express their devotion to Israel and its holy places and lovely landscape.

BETH ALPHA MOSAIC

DURING THE PAST few years there has been an explosion in authentically Jewish Synagogue Art on this continent. The talents of creative artists have been harnessed to embellish Jewish religious life, whether through architecture, murals or art objects. For is it not fitting that the Synagogue should be a place of soaring beauty in its physical structure and of sacred art in its interior so that together they will enhance the beauty of the Synagogue as a place of worship.

In 1928, Israeli farmers digging an irrigation ditch in Beth Alpha at the foot of Mount Gilboa in the Valley of Jezreel, stumbled upon a rich and unexpected discovery, a piece of coloured mosaic bearing an inscription in Hebrew. When Eliezer Sukenik, Professor of Archaeology at the Hebrew University, learned of this, he immediately ordered a scientific dig. After strenuous excavation, the remains of a Synagogue of the sixth century was exposed, with pillars and walls standing five feet high. But the greatest thrill was to literally unearth a mosaic floor in the interior, with its designs practically intact, the sole decoration in the Synagogue.

The entire floor of the nave was found to be covered by mosaic, divided into three panels, the beautiful central panel representing symbols of the months, the signs of the Zodiac, and rich in geometric representation, with explanatory inscription in Hebrew and Greek.

Regrettably, parts of this mosaic had to be repaired and replaced. Fortunately, the Department of Antiquities was able to call upon Mr. Perli Pelzig, who subsequently did so much of the beautiful art work in our Synagogue, to do the restoration. Today, visitors from all over the world come to visit Beth Alpha and marvel at this evidence of great Jewish artistic creativity in the distant past.

The beautiful Beth Alpha Mosaic Floor in our Fellowship Court is an actual copy of the central panel of this ancient mosaic floor in its original size and colour, made in Israel from stones of Israel, each chipped by hand.

In addition to the central panel, there are also four individual mosaics at the entrances of the Fellowship Hall. These are not copies of work found at Beth Alpha. They are replicas of mosaic discoveries in other Synagogue floors that were unearthed.

One is a replica of a mosaic floor found near Hulda of the fifth century bearing a Greek inscription "Praise Unto The People", together with a Menorah and various ritual ornaments. At the second entrance is a copy of a mosaic found in the ancient Synagogue of Gerash dating back to the sixth century. This too bears a Menorah with a Greek inscription. The third mosaic is a replica of that found in the ancient Synagogue of Nirim that stood there 1,400 years ago. This too bears a Menorah and ritual objects, though it has no inscription. The fourth is of the same period and was found in Hebron. It bears the blessing "Shalom" in Hebrew.











THE MURAL









EDUCATION

HEBREW EDUCATION is the foundation of our religious structure, and religious living the aim of the Beth Tzedec educational program. We want to teach our members and our youth the value of Jewish practices and the importance of practising Jewish teachings — here, at home and everywhere.

The Educational Centre houses the afternoon Religious School in permanent, spacious and cheerful classrooms featuring the latest developments in seating and teaching equipment. From 4:30 to 6:30 on alternate days, more than 450 pupils receive their Hebrew education in our four-day-a-week congregational school, and 300 more in the Primary Department. The curriculum is varied yet intensive, consisting of courses in Bible study, Jewish history and literature, and the meaning of prayers. Hebrew is the language of instruction.

An important adjunct to the classrooms is the School Assembly Hall, used periodically for school assemblies where Jewish songs are taught and new films shown, and on Sabbath mornings occasionally by the Junior Congregation for their after services Kiddush (collation), and regularly on Sunday mornings for the Youth Congregation Breakfast. This Assembly Hall can seat 300 at breakfast and 400 for meetings. Three nights weekly it is home ground for the Cub Packs, Boy Scouts, Brownies and Girl Guides.

Beth Tzedec Congregational School is the bridge binding us — Jewish mothers and fathers — to the future of *our* children and *theirs*. A synagogue-trained youth is our guarantee of the survival, both of our youth and the Jewish legacy. We want to steep our Youth in Jewish ideals and steer them to the secure harbours of adult Jewish synagogue life.

In 1957 our Congregation established a Foundation School for the Primary Day School grades which has now blossomed forth into a full school with 8 grades and a Junior High School under the auspices of the United Synagogue. The enrolment is close to 400 with most students being children of Beth Tzedec members.

The school provides a superlative general and religious all-day training, combining under one comprehensive, integrated programme General and Hebrew Studies alike. We are proud to have launched the first Congregational Day School in our City.

LIBRARY

Our Library has a very large Judaic section that numbers almost 10,000 books — a fine example of the cultural creativity of the Jew. A quick glance will show a wide range of subjects running the gamut from archaeology to Zionism, with whole sections devoted to the Bible, theology, Jewish art, customs and ceremonies, and history.

We have a wealth of periodicals and newspapers and a reference section containing important source books for student and scholar.

MURALIST

FOR A LONG TIME, we dreamed of creating a heroic mural on our centre wall which would transfigure the foyer, infusing it with genuine religious feeling and relating it closely to our beautiful Sanctuary and Chapel. After much searching, we discovered a renowned Israeli artist whose creative talent deeply impressed us and we commissioned him to do our mural. His work truly represents architecture wedded to art so that the two are united into a single impressive amalgam.

The Beth Tzedec Mural "Joy of Torah" is of majestic proportions, twenty-eight feet by twenty-three. It is created of glass and stone mosaic, inlaid in wood, and is composed of Venetian glass, Israeli stone, utilizing wood as part of the design. This is an original technique by Mr. Pelzig.

Perli Pelzig of Israel is 43 years old and studied architectural art and design in Germany. In 1928, while engaged in drainage operations, workers of Beth Alpha, situated in the Plain of Jezreel, Palestine, chanced upon the ruins of a Synagogue dating back to the early Christian centuries. The site was excavated by Eleazar Sukenik in 1929 for the Hebrew University. The remains of the Synagogue were mainly the foundations for a basilica, with a vestibule and courtyard. The whole floor of the structure was paved with mosaic. The mosaic of the nave is extraordinarily rich in pictorial representation of the ark, the 12 signs of the zodiac and biblical scenes. It was inferred by Sukenik that the Beth Alpha Synagogue was destroyed by an earthquake some time during the 6th Century.

In 1948, during the time of Israel's war of Independence, Mr. Pelzig was sought out by the Department of Antiquities and placed in charge of restoring the mosaic floor in the Beth Alpha Synagogue — a truly heroic accomplishment. Subsequently, Mr. Pelzig was commissioned to create architectural murals for a number of leading hotels, theatres and Israeli institutions.

For the past few years, he has been residing in the United States where he was commissioned to create murals, stained glass windows and metal sculptures by leading synagogues, medical buildings, schools and other public buildings.

In 1959, he received the annual award of the American Institute of Architects of Southern California for his creative work.

— *By* Jack Orenstein,
Executive Director

THE MURAL

PERLI PELZIG'S CREATION, called "The Joy of Torah" (*Simhat Ha-Torah*), centres its principal theme on the Scriptural verse hallowed by the synagogue tradition: "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:3).

Without Torah — the Law — there can be no Judaism; without Judaism no Jewish people and its unique monotheistic faith. Zion, whence came God's word to the world through the Jewish people, is depicted at the top of the mural — its divine-like emanations going forth in all directions.

Never did the Jew remove his gaze from Zion; never did he turn his back on the past or the future. For him, both past and future would find fulfillment in a recreated Jerusalem — but only if he bore with him, in dignity and majesty, through all the lands of dispersion and persecution, the symbol and the source of his faith — the Torah. Robed in the garments of faith — the prayer shawl — the Jew carries the Torah as his most precious possession. He adorns it and crowns it. When fire and destruction consume it, he can stand above the flames, untouched spiritually, because he will raise the Torah anew.

The giant figure enrobed in the mammoth prayer shawl is a symbol of the Jew in past history: his feet are removed from earth; he stands on tip-toes, yearning to reach beyond his bleak present. But though not always of the world, he is *in* the world; he can never forsake his covenant, for he bears the happy burden of the Law.

For Torah is joy. It is our life and the length of our days. In the Torah dance of the *Hasidim* who, as it were, step right out from within the inner life of those who have not forgotten Jerusalem, the artist has captured the spirit of religious ecstasy — the longing to fulfil the word of God.

Partial fulfillment has indeed come. With the restoration of the Jewish people to its ancestral land, the once-barren hills of Judaea now wear the signs of ample fruitage. The tree grows again in Israel. The joy of recreating the people on its land finds expression in the gay movements of young Israeli farmers dancing on their hard-won soil. Unlike their grandfathers, they are now firmly planted on the green earth. It is again "a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey". (Deut. 8:8). The Biblical plants grow again, the sheep have found their shepherds and the wasteland genders modern miracles — harvests in the desert.

And all this, because the Jew never forsook his Torah, never forgot his Zion, never cast aside the mantles of faith.

— By Dr. Stuart E. Rosenberg,
Rabbi



FOYER

Dramatic centres of interest in the spacious foyer are our shimmering Mural and lovely Museum Showcases beside the striking curved stairway which leads to the upstairs classrooms in the Educational Centre and to the Mezzanine Hall which accommodates up to 300 guests at smaller receptions and dinners quickly served from the adjoining kitchens, and up to 500 for meetings and lectures.

All the more important areas open visually into one another from the foyer — the forecourt and school playground, the Chapel with its brilliant furnishings, the Sanctuary through the gold glass of the louvred walls and finally, the Main Banquet Hall with its softly-lit chandeliers.



HISTORY

DEDICATED on December 9, 1955, Beth Tzedec Congregation is the happy amalgamation, effected in 1952, of two of the first and oldest Jewish pioneer congregations in Toronto — Goel Tzedec and Beth Hamidrash Hagadol.

Formed as a congregation in 1883, Goel Tzedec was first housed for one year in rented quarters on Richmond Street, since transformed from a quiet residential street into one of the busiest thoroughfares in present downtown Toronto. It resided the next 20 years at the corner of University Avenue and Elm Street in a church building bought and remodelled, and dwelt for the next half century in the new permanent home built on University Avenue just below Dundas Street.

Originally founded as an orthodox congregation, Goel Tzedec remained loyal to the principles and observances of traditional Judaism, though it later, in 1925, officially enrolled in the Conservative Synagogue movement and gradually introduced certain changes such as family pews, a revised prayer book, English prayers and the Bat Mitzvah.

Beth Hamidrash Hagadol, popularly known and more commonly called the McCaul Street Synagogue, was born in downtown Toronto in 1887, first opening its eyes on the world in a small but bright room above a blacksmith's shop at the corner of Richmond and York Streets.

In 1904 the enlarged congregation moved into a larger home, the former McCaul Street Methodist Church, which it quickly renovated and remodelled into a beautiful synagogue, where it lived and thrived for the next 50 years.

In order to suitably celebrate the acquisition of larger quarters and a greatly expanded membership, the congregation officially changed its name, or more accurately, enlarged it so that it would henceforth both express deep and lasting reverence for the efforts and aims of the pioneer-founders, and at the same time, proclaim their larger hopes and ambitions. The new name was Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Chevra T'hillim. (The Great House of Prayer of the Congregation of Psalms.)

Beth Tzedec has one goal: to build an affirmative Judaism, to bring the miracle of the Bible into our daily lives, to plant love of our tradition in our hearts, to inspire respect for religious life in our community and promote a religious fellowship among all its citizens.

BETH TZEDEC CONGREGATION

Conservative Synagogue, affiliated with the Jewish Theological Seminary
and the United Synagogue of America

<i>Rabbi</i>	-	-	-	-	-	DR. STUART E. ROSENBERG
<i>Associate Rabbi</i>	-	-	-	-	-	RABBI RICHARD M. MARCOVITZ
<i>Rabbi in Charge of Education and Youth</i>	-	-	-	-	-	RABBI BENJAMIN J. HOLLANDER
<i>Cantor</i>	-	-	-	-	-	JOSEPH COOPER

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<i>Vice-Chairman of Board</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MURRAY L. LEVIN
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<i>Honorary President</i>	-	-	-	-	-	BERT GODFREY

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<i>Mashgiach</i>	-	-	-	-	ANDOR HEISZ
<i>Sexton</i>	-	-	-	-	ALEX CITRON

*DECEASED

Photos courtesy: Al Gilbert, M.P.A., F.R.P.S.

COME AGAIN!

A FEW short years ago, this structure was just a vision, a dream in the hearts of those farsighted enough to see that a synagogue had to be something more than a house of worship alone; that, to endure, it had to be a living communal centre in the great tradition of Jewish history, serving the high purpose of divine worship, religious education and social assembly. Today, that vision, that dream, is a reality, one that imposes grave responsibilities on the religious and lay leadership of our Synagogue.

Under the spiritual leadership of our esteemed Rabbi, Dr. Stuart E. Rosenberg, Beth Tzedec has become a great creative religious force—a magnetic centre for the religious, social and educational activities of our members and their families.

We are confident too that with the continuing labours and devotions of the officers, chairmen, committees and our members, Beth Tzedec will be a strong, dynamic, and viable institution, and a constructive influence in the cultural life of our city.

We hope that through visits such as yours here today, there will come a deeper understanding of the Jewish Faith and wider appreciation of the life of the spirit among men everywhere.

We hope you have enjoyed your visit and will come again!

