



The Treasures of Agudas Israel Congregation



This booklet highlights the treasures displayed in the Sanctuary and Social Hall of Agudas Israel Congregation, Hendersonville, North Carolina.

Rabbi Rachael Jackson
Dr. Linda Perkel, President
Salem Leaman, Ritual Committee Chair

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2016



Shalom and Welcome to Agudas Israel Congregation!



Rabbi Rachael Jackson

We are glad you have chosen to worship with us. Our goal is to create an experience that is uplifting, inspiring, comforting, engaging and participatory. Our worship style honors Jewish tradition and the modern spirit that is the hallmark of Reform Judaism, combining a blend of Hebrew and English, opportunities for contemplative reflection, a variety of music and a thoughtful, inspiring sermon.

Special thanks to Rabbi Rachael Jackson, Senior Scholar Rabbi Philip Bentley, Phyllis Bentley, Sherry Harris, Becky Banadyga, Bonnie Cooper, David Kaplan, Carol Leaman and Susan LaRue for their assistance with this booklet.

—Dr. Judi Berson-Levinson

IN THE SANCTUARY



The Holy Ark (*Aron Kodesh*) which contains the Torah scrolls, was donated in memory of Muriel Fellerman Oxer. (1934-1997)

The curtain on the ark was donated by Susan Bohnen in memory of parents, Arthur & Verna Niremborg and sister, Diane Linda Berkman in 2015.

The design was created by Carol Ann McCollum to represent the "eternal flame" in colors chosen by a congregation committee.

The candelabra on each side of the ark are from the original building on King Street and were donated by the Lewis family.

Suspended from the ceiling in front of the Ark is the Eternal Light (*Ner Tamid*) which burns constantly as a reminder of God's presence.

A new cover for the Pulpit (*Bimah*) shown on the cover was created by Carol Ann McCollum in 2015, thanks to generous donations by Carol and Salem Leaman in loving memory of their parents and Natalie Zitnick in loving memory of her husband Stan.



The eternal light (*Ner Tamid*) from the original King Street building now hangs over the door in the entrance foyer.



The wood *Mezuzah* at the front door was affixed by Phil Mann at the 2002 dedication of the new building. The sterling silver *Mezuzah* on the entrance door to the sanctuary was donated by Barbara Gittleman.



The sterling silver *Kiddish* cup was generously donated by Sherry Harris in memory of her beloved husband E. Burt Harris.

TORAH SCROLLS AND TORAH COVERS

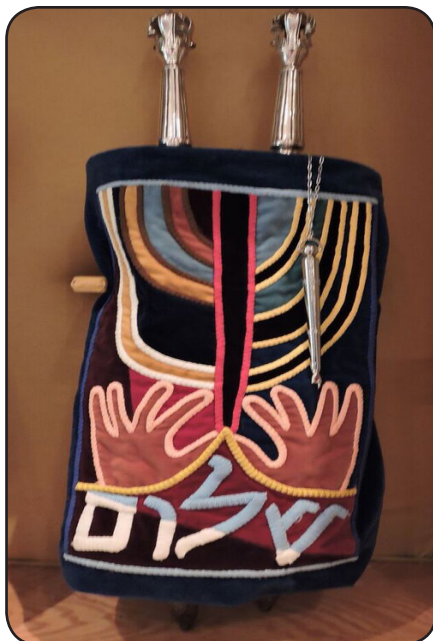
Francee Sherman chaired a committee of members, including our former Rabbi Philip Bentley. They chose the designs for our decorative Torah covers.



LIGHT (*Or*)
This cover represents the burning bush.
(above left)



TRUTH (*Emet*)
The abstract design depicts the Ten Commandments.
(above right)



PEACE (*Shalom*)
This cover features a menorah. The hands symbolize blessing.

TORAH ORNAMENTS

The Torah is considered the word of God and as such is treated with great reverence. The three Torahs are adorned with a covering of embroidered fabric and silver decorative objects, which are only removed from the Torah cabinet when they are read in the synagogue. Torah adornments include the Torah shield (*tas*) and the Torah finials (*rimonim*).

We express our love and commitment to the Torah, our most sacred possession, by dressing the Torah scrolls in royalty. The breastplate (*hoshen mishpat*) is a metal shield placed in front of the mantle of the Torah scroll. Some of them are very beautiful examples of Jewish ceremonial art and often contain precious stones.

Two of ours were donated in memory of Muriel Oser in June of 1997. Muriel's husband Jerry was a past president of the congregation.

Rimonim (literally pomegranates) are the individual covers placed on the roller sticks (*eytzim*) of the Torahs and serve the same purpose as the Torah crowns in that they beautify and glorify the Torahs. Our *rimonim* are from the original King Street building.

Sterling Silver Breast Plates



The breast plate (*hoshen mishpat*) on the left depicts twin pillars at the entrance to Solomon's Temple. The inscription on the center plate says
"It is a tree of life to those who hold fast to it."

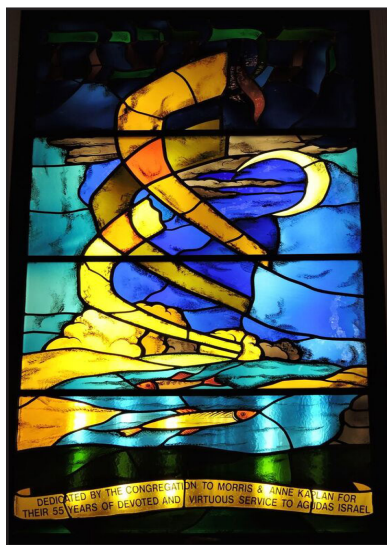
STORY OF THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

Agudas Israel's beautiful stained glass windows have a fascinating history and we are fortunate to have them.

They were originally a centerpiece of the Fur Center Synagogue on West 29th Street in Chelsea, New York City. The Fur District was a vibrant center of the fur trade for many years, but with its decline, the Fur Center Synagogue closed its doors in 1994. Shortly before its closing, one of the members of Agudas Israel, Jerome "Jerry" Singer, was contacted by his New York cousin and asked if there was an interest in obtaining any of the windows to preserve their history and beauty. Based on what we know, there were windows for the Twelve Tribes of Israel and eight windows for the Jewish Holidays. Acquiring windows that represented two of the Tribes as well as the two windows depicting the holidays was a stroke of luck.

According to Synagogue minutes of November 26, 1996, Morris Kaplan initiated a fundraising effort to transport the windows and to construct a framework to display and back light them. He and his brothers, Seymour and Bernard, together with Joseph Gittleman and Jerome Singer, made major contributions to this project. During the planning and construction process, the windows were stored in Morris Kalin's Furniture Store on Main Street (currently where Mezzaluna Restaurant is now located). Upon completion of the project, the framed windows were attached to the Sanctuary walls of the King Street Synagogue, Agudas Israel's former location.

In 2002 the Synagogue moved to Hendersonville, where these magnificent panels can be viewed in the sanctuary.



ROSH HASHANAH: Three *Shofars* (Ram's Horns) - The three sounds are played in groups of three. The Hebrew word is *T'ruah*, the sound of the horn. New moon: the first day of the Hebrew months is always the new moon. The fish swimming remind us of ritual of *Tashlich* (casting). On the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah Jews gather at natural bodies of water and cast breadcrumbs to symbolically cast away their sins. This is based on a Biblical verse, "...hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:19)

*Dedicated by the Congregation to
Morris and Anne Kaplan
for their 55 years of devoted and virtuous
service to Agudas Israel*



THE TRIBE OF ISSACHAR: The image is taken from Jacob's blessings of his sons, each of whom was the namesake of a tribe of Israel. "Issachar is a strong donkey, crouching between the sheepfolds." (Genesis 49:14) Tradition says that this tribe was famous for its teachers and scholars.

*In memory of our parents,
Hyman and Hannah M. Kaplan and
Seymour and Frances L. Herman by
Bernard and Barbara H. Kaplan*



THE TREE OF ZEBULUN: "Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon". (Genesis 49:13)

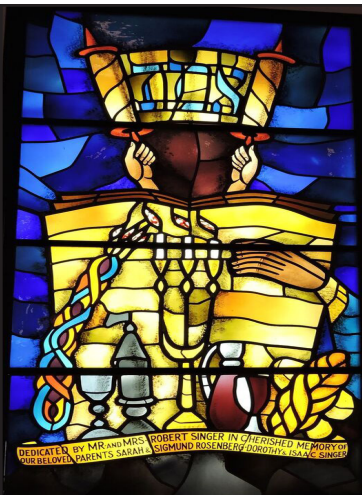
Tradition says that the tribe of Zebulun had a symbiotic relationship with the tribe of Issachar (the Issachar window is directly opposite this one). Zebulun were merchants and their wealth supported the scholarship of the tribe of Issachar.

*Dedicated by the Congregation
in honor of Ruth and Joseph Gittleman
for their generosity and devotion to
Agudas Israel*



SHABBAT: At the center are the lights lit at the beginning of the Sabbath with hands that bless them. At the bottom are the *Kiddush* (Sanctification) wine and the Challah bread. Behind these symbols we see a Siddur (prayerbook) used at Saturday morning services. During that service the Torah (a parchment scroll containing the Five Books of Moses) is read and is shown held aloft with the Hebrew word *Emet* (Truth). At the bottom left are the three symbols of the Havdalah ritual: a braided candle, a wine cup, and a spice box. This ritual marks the transition from holy time (the Sabbath) to ordinary time (the weekdays).

*Dedicated by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Singer
in cherished memory of their beloved parents
Sarah and Sigmund Rosenberg and
Dorothy and Isaac Singer*



MEMORIAL TABLETS

Lining the walls of the Sanctuary are Memorial Yahrzeit Tablets that contain plaques in memory of loved ones. The lights are ignited on the anniversary of their deaths.



The Tablets themselves were generously donated

In Loving Memory or Honor of the following:

Samuel and Anna Schulman

By Their Children



Ray Michalove Kalin

By Her Husband Sam and sons Edward, Sidney and Byron



Samuel W. and Sidney T. Kalin

By Edward and Barry Kalin



Dedicated by The Congregation to

Morris and Anne Kaplan

For their 55 Years of Devoted and Virtuous Service to Agudas Israel



Hyman and Hannah M. Kaplan and Seymour and Frances L. Herman

By their Children

Bernard and Barbara H. Kaplan



Harry Leon Schlosburg

By his wife Anna and their Children



Norton M. Scott and Douglas Segal

By Teddi Segal and Family

(continuation of Memorial Tablets)



Anne Williams Kaplan
By the Anne Williams Kaplan Memorial Tablet Fund



Sarah and Sigmund Rosenberg and Dorothy and Isaac Singer
By their children Mr. and Mrs. Robert Singer



Dedicated by the Congregation
In Honor of Ruth and Joseph Gittleman
For their generosity and devotion to Agudas Israel



Arthur and Verna Nirenberg
Diane Linda Berkman
By Susan Bohnen



*Memory is the bridge that links the living and the deceased.
They are not wholly dead whom we remember,
whose spirit continues to live as an influence in our lives.*

PRESIDENTS OF AGUDAS ISRAEL

The Presidents of Agudas Israel are our real “treasures”. With thirteen presidents in our history, Agudas Israel has never been more vibrant or energized to carry our historic congregation into the future. The Board of Directors are lead by the president. They are responsible for the oversight of the affairs, funds, records, activities, and property of Agudas Israel. The Board meets regularly throughout the year to address such issues.

Harry Patterson*	1922
Louis Williams*	July 1948-June 1951
Sammy Williams*	July 1951-June 1955
Morris Kaplan*	July 1956-June 1992
Lawrence Diamond*	July 1993-June 1995
Morris Kaplan*	July 1995-June 1997
Jerry Ozer*	July 1997-June 1999
Roger Freed	July 1999-January 2001
Donald Michalove	January 2001-December 2002
Burton Greenberg	December 2002-June 2006
Richard Lewis	July 2006-June 2008
Rosalind Harris	July 2008-June 2010
Paul Vanek	July 2010-June 2014
Linda Perkel	July 2014-Present

**of blessed memory*

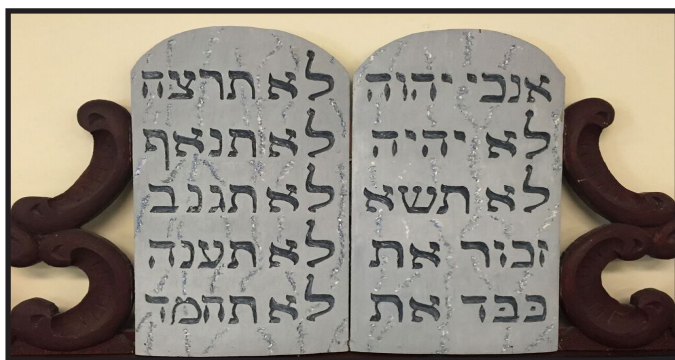
IN THE SOCIAL HALL

The Social Hall was dedicated as the Dori and Burton Greenberg Social Hall.

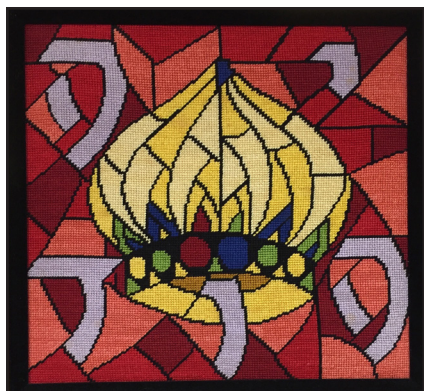


The Tree of Life

Members, family and friends purchase brass leaves to commemorate significant life occasions. The plaque itself was presented to the congregation by Ruth and Joseph Gittleman in 1989. Leaves are still available for purchase.



The Ten Commandments plaque is from the King Street building.



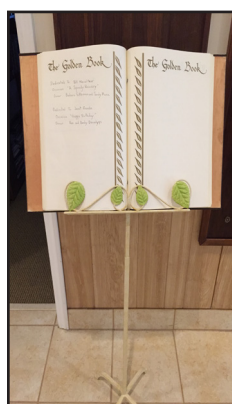
"Crown of Judea" needlepoint donated by Sylvia and Harry Friedson in 1983.



Tzedakah (charity) box made by Ed Lieber and hand-painted by Vicky Lieber was dedicated with love for helping those in need.



Print depicting Ruth and Naomi by Leonard Baskin was donated by Richard Savitt and Sherry Harris in 2009 in honor of Francee Sherman and Flossie Williams for their contributions to the growth of Agudas Israel on the occasion of the 87th anniversary of the congregation.



The Golden Book, (donated in 1996), was and still is a fundraising opportunity to support the synagogue. Donations are made in honor or in memory of a loved one. Francee Sherman received and

acknowledged the donations for many years. Upon her passing, her daughter Becky Sherman Banadyga now handles the responsibilities.

WOMAN OF VALOR



Plaque honoring Sisterhood Women of Valor in recognition of their service and commitment to the programs and mission of Agudas Israel Congregation.

In 2015 our Women of Valor awards went to:
Randye Unsell, Natalie Zitnick, and Carol Leaman, pictured below.



In 2012 on the 90th anniversary of Agudas Israel "All of Israel are Friends" by Marci Fishman Wiesel was presented in honor of the following members of the founding families: Rebecca Sherman Banadyga, Dr. Michael Beckerman, Donald Michalove, Janet Rosenberg Provda, and Sammy Williams. The artist is known for her unique style of Judaic paper cutting. It depicts the prayer recited each month on the Sabbath preceding the new moon *"God gathers in our dispersed from the four corners of the earth...All Israel is united in friendship."*

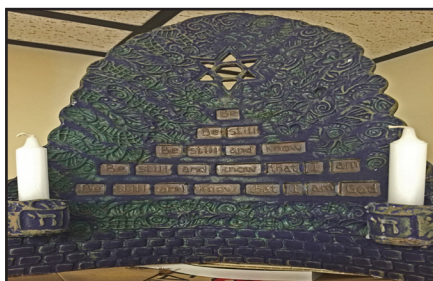


This is a *Chanukiah* made of tree branches that was built by Ed and Vicky Lieber as a gift to the congregation.



On the 75th anniversary of Agudas Israel, Leonard Lewis, Evelyn Dave, Pauline Rome and Elizabeth Glickman donated this plaque in honor of their parents Abraham and Esther Lewis and grandparents Edward and Ida.

Plaque featuring Entwined Shofars was donated in 2013 by Dr. Judi Berson-Levinson and Steven Zvi Levinson in memory of Dudley and Beatrice Berson, who were devoted supporters of Israel and Jewish causes. The plaque was a gift from Stuart Israeli Berson who was born the same year as the State of Israel.



Shabbat candle holder (left) was donated by Edlynn Davis.

ADDITIONAL TREASURES

As you explore the Sanctuary and Social Hall you will notice many additional items of interest:

On the door to the Rabbi's study (right) is a *mezuzah* in the shape of a tree that was donated by Sherry Harris and Marlene Wiener.

An umbrella stand in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Sherman was donated in 1965.

There is a quilt hanging near the Kaplan Room on loan from Rosena Sherman.

There are trees in the Memory Garden behind the Social Hall that are dedicated in honor of and memory of various people.

On the side of the building there is a brick garden wall that leads to the Morris Kaplan Walkway with dedicated paving bricks.

In the lit cabinet there is a knife of Beryl Cohen, ritual slaughterer (*schochet*), who went to member families' homes to ritually slaughter chickens purchased at the market.

Other Judaica items have been given to the synagogue from community friends.



ROOM DEDICATIONS

The Rabbi's Study was dedicated in loving memory of Ray Michalove Kalin (1898-1964) and Sophia Michalove (1889-1982) by Samuel, Edward, Sidney and Barry Kalin



The Joey Learning Center was dedicated in memory of Joseph Michael Rubin, a precious child, by his parents Carole and Stuart



The Morris and Anne Kaplan Parlor was dedicated by their children Elissa and David Kaplan and Eileen and Dr. Michael Stang



The Ruth Gittleman Board Room was dedicated by her loving husband Joseph Gittleman



The library was donated by the Perry N. Rudnick Foundation

This outdoor gazebo in the back of the synagogue was dedicated in memory of Robert Gittelman by his family.



Ed Lieber's hand-crafted wood cabinet displays member's name badges in the entrance foyer.

AGUDAS ISRAEL'S HISTORY

Agudas Israel Congregation has a rich history beginning in 1898 when the first Jewish merchants settled in Hendersonville. For the next 24 years religious services were held in the homes of a growing Jewish population.

On September 24, 1922, our founder, Abraham Lewis, with 27 founding men and women voted to name the synagogue ***Agudas Israel Congregation***. The closest translation is "Community of Israel Congregation."

Less than three years later the founders decided they needed a permanent building where they could pray and provide more room for their growing numbers. In 1925 a building at 328 North King Street was purchased and became the center of Hendersonville's Jewish community until the present building replaced it. In 1927 Louis Williams sent for his brother Chaim Williamowsky (who was a Rabbi in Poland). He became Agudas Israel's first Rabbi.

The synagogue was remodeled in 1964 by AIC member and architect John Kronenfeld. At that time the Holy Ark (*Aron Kodesh*) was replaced. The original one was donated to Camp Judaea where it is still used for daily services alongside their lake.



Original home of Agudas Israel on King Street

As the area became a popular summer "playground" for Jewish campers and their parents, the result was an increase in the number of full-time Jewish residents. The King Street building became busy with Jewish life and education.

On June 9, 1996 Agudas Israel Congregation joined the Union of American Congregations (UAHC), the congregational arm of Reform Judaism in North America. Since 2003, it is now known as the ***URJ-Union for Reform Judaism***.

Soon the congregation outgrew their space, so in 2000 five acres in Hendersonville were purchased to accommodate a new synagogue. Bill Tillman, the general contractor, designed the stained glass Star of David above the ark. Mr. Tillman had never worked with stain glass before but he was committed to creating something meaningful and lasting for our synagogue. It now also serves as our logo.



Agudas Israel moved into their new building in 2002 and opened its doors, its arms and its heart at 505 Glasgow Lane, the current home of the congregation.



The members of Agudas Israel are committed to
"Torah, avodah and gemilut hasadim—
study, worship and deeds of loving-kindness"

—Rabbi Rachael Jackson

Agudas Israel Congregation

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Agudas Israel is a member of The Union for Reform Judaism