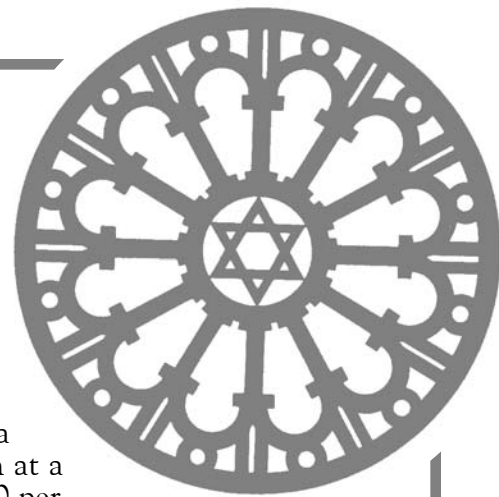


FROM THE ARCHIVES: EMANU-EL AND BETH-EL MERGE



NEARLY 80 years have passed since Emanu-El Congregation (“God is with us”) merged with Temple Beth-El (“House of the Lord”), becoming the Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York that we know today. Once set in motion, amalgamation occurred in a relatively short period of time. The idea of merger was introduced at an Emanu-El Congregation board meeting on April 4, 1927. Members of the board of trustees at Temple Beth-El discussed the idea at a special meeting held five days later on April 9, 1927—although documentation shows that Temple Beth-El had been considering the idea of amalgamation as early as 1915.

The merger proposal was presented to Emanu-El Congregation members on April 25, 1927, with more than two-thirds of the membership voting in favor of merger. Temple Beth-El members voted on May 11, 1927, with 184 in favor and 68 against. The merger also required approval by the State Supreme Court for the County of New York, which ultimately was granted by Justice Edward J. Gavegan.

Legal documentation from the merger stipulated adherence to several conditions. Among them, the chapel of the new structure at 65th Street always should bear the name “Beth-El Chapel.” Rabbi Samuel Schulman of Temple Beth-El would deliver one sermon on Saturday and one on Sunday of each month, as well as one during High Holy Days. He also would receive upon retirement a pension of \$12,000 per year.

Mr. Samuel Berliner, clerk of Temple Beth-El, would be retained in a similar position at a salary of \$3,600 per year because of his “general ability and special knowledge concerning matters affecting Temple Beth-El, its property and property rights and interests, such as Beth-El Cemeteries and membership.” And, an amendment to the original agreement required placement of a tablet or tablets “in the vestibule or other suitable place of the new Temple, which will historically commemorate Emanu-El Congregation and Temple Beth-El, setting forth the dates of their incorporation and the names of the Rabbis who have functioned in each during their respective corporate lives.”

With the merger now complete, worship services were conducted at Temple Beth-El (located at Fifth Avenue and 76th Street) until construction of the new temple and community house at 65th Street was concluded and the building dedication

held in 1930. The Temple Beth-El name would remain affiliated with the structure as long as it was in use. Even after the move to 65th Street, the congregation maintained ownership of the Temple Beth-El structure until 1947—using it as a canteen for troops during World War II, as well as a location for extra services.



A brochure from 1929 entitled “Chronicles of Temple Emanu-El and Temple Beth-El” provided histories and images of each, as well as a description of the new facility to be built at Fifth Avenue and 65th Street.

Inset: *A brochure from 1929 listing memorials available in the new temple and those to which donors already had subscribed.*