

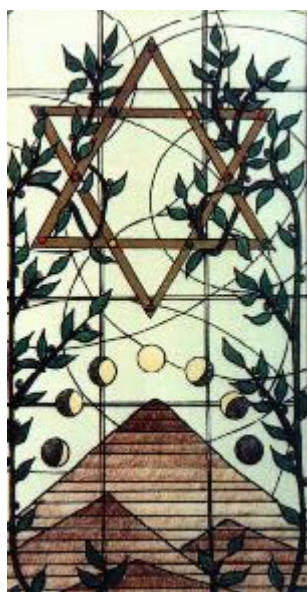
Stained Glass Windows

A previous KM fund-raising project was held to place nine stained glass windows in the building. Our goal was to beautify our sanctuary and administrative offices. At the same time, we raised funds for the annual operating budget and established a long term endowment for future needs and programs.

The project was extremely successful, placing nine windows that reflect the artistry of [David and Michelle Plachte-Zuieback](#). Their work is prominently featured in other local synagogues as well, such as Valley Beth Shalom.

You are invited to view each of the windows below, along with commentary on their symbolism and location.

Star of David



The Star of David decorated with gems of the twelve tribes floats above a mountain, always an important focal point for a wandering people. As Jews, we are always ascending to a higher place. Olive branches symbolize peace and victory. Seven moons allude to the lunar nature of the Jewish calendar and to the seven phases of Jewish life. This window, along with the three that follow, is part of our sanctuary.

Seven-Branched Menorah

The Seven-Branched Menorah, symbol of the State of Israel and of the Jewish people, is studded with the gems of the twelve tribes. Almond blossoms and fruits, one of the "seven species," are a symbol of spring and of the Menorah (arising from God's instructions regarding the construction of the original Menorah). Whereas the Star of David in the previous window floats above hills, the Menorah floats above water. The Hebrew inscription, "*L'dor Va dor,*" or "from generation to generation," alludes to the chain of tradition which began at Sinai and continues to this day. The design reflects the "Star of David" window in design. This window, along with the one above and the two that follow, enhances the beauty of our sanctuary.



Burning Bush



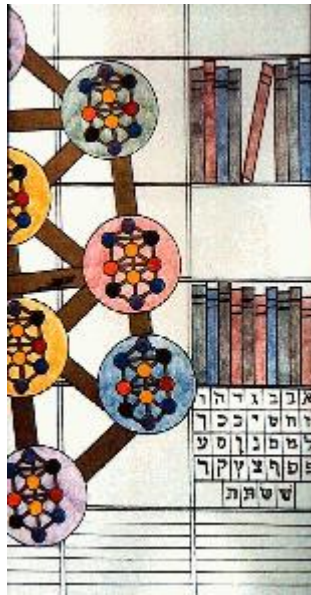
The pomegranate is a symbol of the Torah because it has, according to the Rabbis, 613 seeds, symbolizing the 613 mitzvot in the Torah. The pomegranate, showing the seeds hidden in the earth, spews sparks alluding to the vessel of light, broken at Creation, whose sparks we seek to re-collect. Intellectual light is symbolized by the Hebrew letters, which are the building blocks of Creation. Here, the mysticism of Creation is mixed with the story of Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. The word "*Heneneh*" or "Here I Am" was the first word Moses spoke to God. This window, like the two above and the one below, graces our sanctuary.

Tree of Life

This window features a pomegranate tree with eighteen fruits, the numerical equivalent of "*Chai*," or "Life." The fruits are split open revealing their seeds, which re-emphasize the connection between the pomegranate and the Torah's mitzvot. The soil from which the tree arises is "*Tohu'v'vohu*," the primordial chaotic state of the universe, represented by a mass of undifferentiated letters from which emerges the single word, "*Chaim*," or "Life." The trunk of the tree resembles a human hand raised in priestly blessing. This window, along with the three above, are featured in our sanctuary.



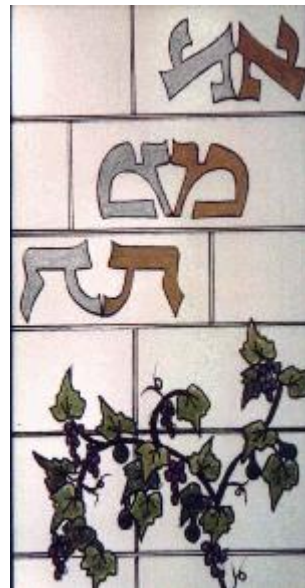
Ten Spherot



The mystical tree of life consists of ten spheres in this specific arrangement. Within each sphere is an image of the whole. This alludes to the fractal nature of the universe - there is a point of view from which the electrons whizzing around the nucleus of an atom and the planets whirling around the sun appear to be the same. This is a panel in the Rabbi's study, an environment of books. The reflection upon the mystical nature of Creation symbolizes the deep intellectual investigation which has always been a fundamental characteristic of Jewish thought. The Hebrew alphabet, showing all 32 characters, stands for the full meaning and mystery of the text.

***Emet* (Truth)**

"*Emet*," or "Truth," is the theme of this second window that is part of our Rabbi's study. Before the creation of man, says an ancient Jewish legend, the angels used the letters of the Hebrew alphabet to do much more than communicate. Every letter was written as a mirror image of itself. Humankind's simple needs required only half of each letter. "*Emet*," written in this way says that truth is the truth, no matter which way you look at it. The word "*Emet*" is a symbol of Torah because the Torah is synonymous with truth. Also, "*Emet*" is made up of the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the middle letter and the last letter. It therefore stands for the whole alphabet, and in turn, the whole palette from which God created the Universe. A vine which bears both grapes and figs is a symbol of peace, as it is written, "each man shall sit beneath his grapevine and his fig and no one shall disturb him."



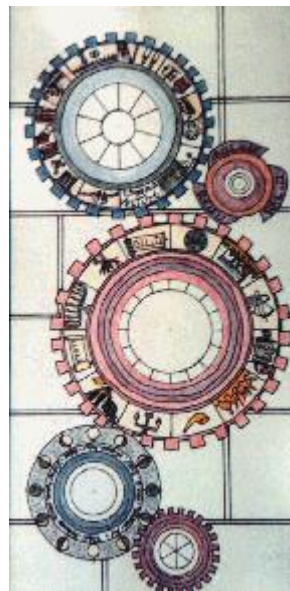
Shabbat Shira



Appropriately, our Hazan's office features "*Shabbat Shira*," or the Sabbath of Song. This portion of the Torah, Moses' Song at the Sea, is written in a visually distinct poetic form. Here we see this recognizable section of the text rising behind the divided waters of the Red Sea. The "*rimonim*" of the Torah are actual pomegranates. The musical staff with the notes of "*Sim Shalom*" frames the letter "*Shin*," a symbol of God.

Cycles

Judiasm is a religion which sanctifies time. The cycles of Jewish life are shown as interlocking gears representing our interconnected existence. The cycle of a single day is represented by the three-pronged wheel containing the names of the three daily prayer services - *Shacharit*, *Mincha* and *Ma'ariv*. The gear with the 54 teeth represents the 54 Shabbats which subsume the full reading of the Torah. Twelve moons correspond to the names of the 12 Jewish months. The largest gear contains the calendar with the symbols of the ten major Jewish



holidays. Another gear illustrates the symbols of the ten Jewish life cycle events. This window and the one illustrated below graces our Executive Director's office.



Peace and Justice

The scale of justice, symbol of balance, is entwined with an olive branch, the universal symbol of peace. The dove holding the smaller olive branch reiterates the idea of peace. The inscription, "Justice, justice, shall thou pursue," reinforces the idea of justice and suggests that the way to peace is through a balance between "*tzadek*," justice and "*tzadek*," charity. This window and the one above adorns the office of our Executive Director.