



*“They shall make a sanctuary for Me
so that I may dwell among them.”*

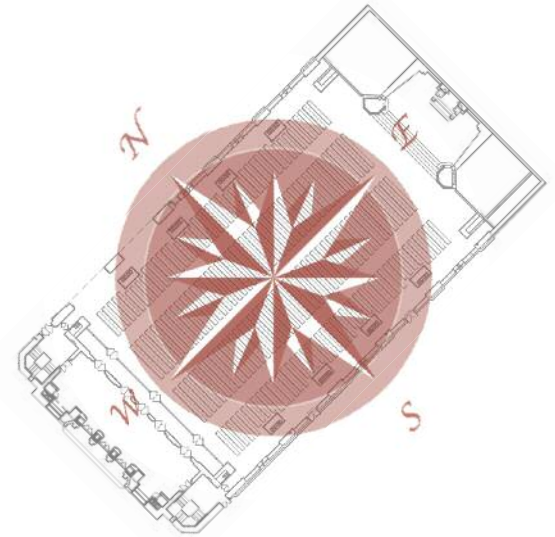
— EXODUS 25:8

LOCATED ALONG NEW YORK’S storied Fifth Avenue, Temple Emanu-El stands as one of the city’s preeminent architectural, cultural and religious landmarks. All who come to us in peace are welcomed with love.

Emanu-El’s history dates back to the founding of the congregation in 1845 by a small group of German-Jewish immigrants who settled in the Lower East Side of New York City. As the congregation increased in size and affluence, its leadership opted to move worship services to larger and grander sites further uptown. In the mid-1920s, Emanu-El Congregation consolidated with Temple Beth-El, and construction of the magnificent site at Fifth Avenue and 65th Street was begun in 1927. Work was completed two years later.

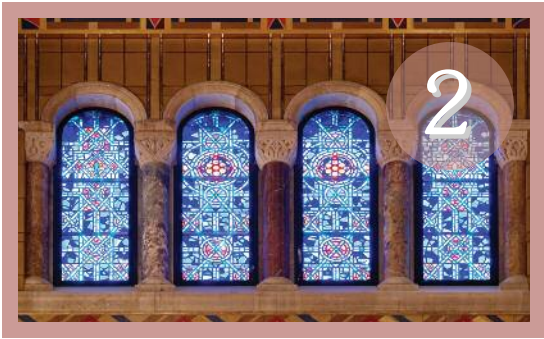
Temple Emanu-El was designed and built by the era’s leading craftspeople—specialists in the implementation of mosaics, marbles, tiles, stained glass, metalwork and woodwork—who used the finest materials from around the world. The architectural firm of Kohn, Butler & Stein—headed by Robert D. Kohn, Charles Butler and Clarence Stein—led the team that also included the firms of Goodhue Associates and Mayers, Murray & Phillip as consultants. From the time that Emanu-El’s doors first opened in 1929, it has been regarded as one of the most majestic synagogues in the world.

1 The main body of the Temple stands 100 feet wide, 175 feet long and 103 feet high. The sanctuary offers one of the very early examples of the use of architectural steel frame, which makes possible the 103-foot interior height without interior supporting pillars. To obtain the multihued ceiling, a layer of plaster was laid over the structural steel, then hand painted and gilded. As part of Emanu-El’s recent restoration, workers addressed water damage to the ceiling and painstakingly renewed the vivid colors to their original form.



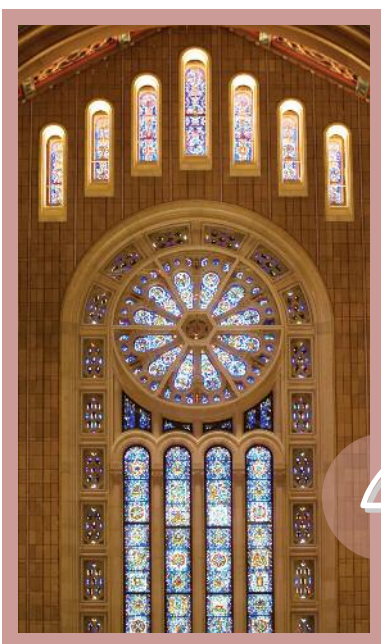
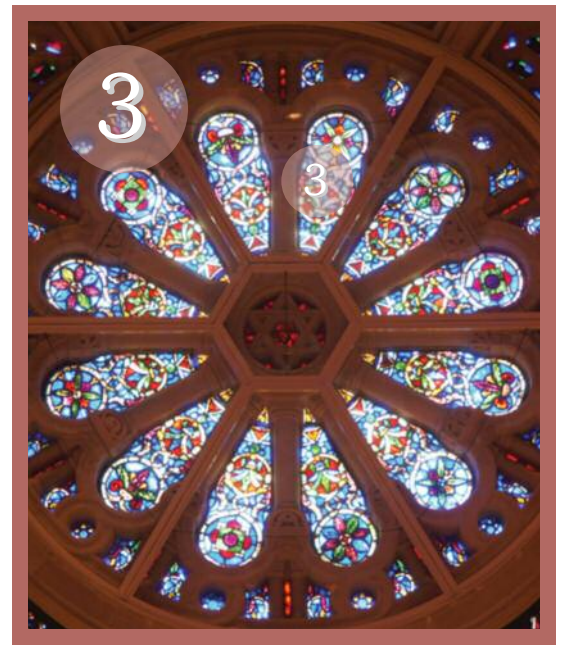
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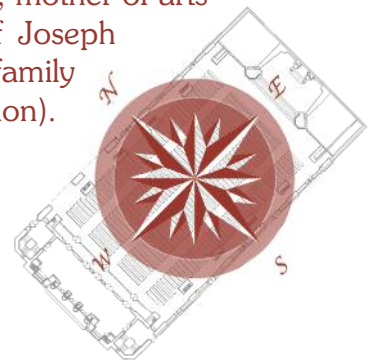


2 When the interior space of Emanu-El's sanctuary was planned, stained glass was selected as the most appropriate material to create an awe-inspiring and meditative atmosphere. The Temple features more than 60 stained-glass windows. Only three of the clerestory windows (shown here) were in place when Emanu-El opened in 1930; the others were installed as simple colored glass. The same pattern was repeated for each window as they were endowed over the years. The last one was replaced in 1984.

3 Most prominent of the stained-glass windows featured on the sanctuary's western façade is Oliver Smith's rose or wheel window, which is replete with numerical strategies that are a subtext of Jewish mysticism. Emanu-El's "signature" window is comprised of 12 panes (symbolic of the tribes of Israel) surrounding a six-pointed Magen David (or Star of David). Circling the rose are 36 small panes—36 being significant because of the Talmudic reference to 36 righteous men in each generation who are responsible for preserving the world; 36 also signifies "double life" in *gematria* (numerology of the Hebrew language and alphabet) because $2 \times 18 = 36$, and 18 is the numerical value of the Hebrew word *chai*, which means "life." The rose window was donated to the congregation in honor of Babette and Mayer Lehman by their children, who included New York Supreme Court Justice Irving Lehman (a former Emanu-El president) and New York Governor Herbert Lehman (the first Jewish governor of New York).



4 *Chai* likewise is symbolized in the 18 marquis-shaped panes that arch around the rose and four lancet windows (each of which have 10 panes). The 18 panes of the arch also may suggest the *Amidah*, our 18-part daily prayer. The seven windows located at the top imitate the seven-branched menorahs on the bimah. The center high window of the seven was donated to the congregation by Florette Guggenheim—widow of Benjamin Guggenheim (who died aboard Titanic), mother of arts patron Peggy Guggenheim and daughter of Joseph Seligman (a member of the Seligman banking family and a long-time vice president of the congregation).

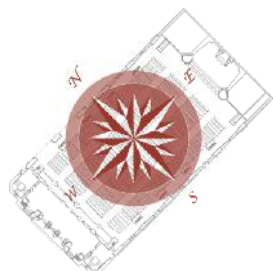
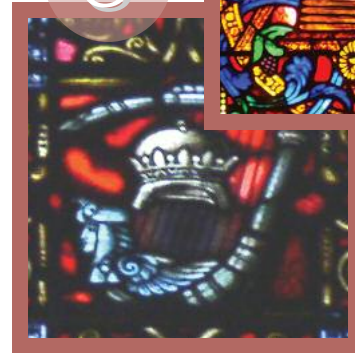
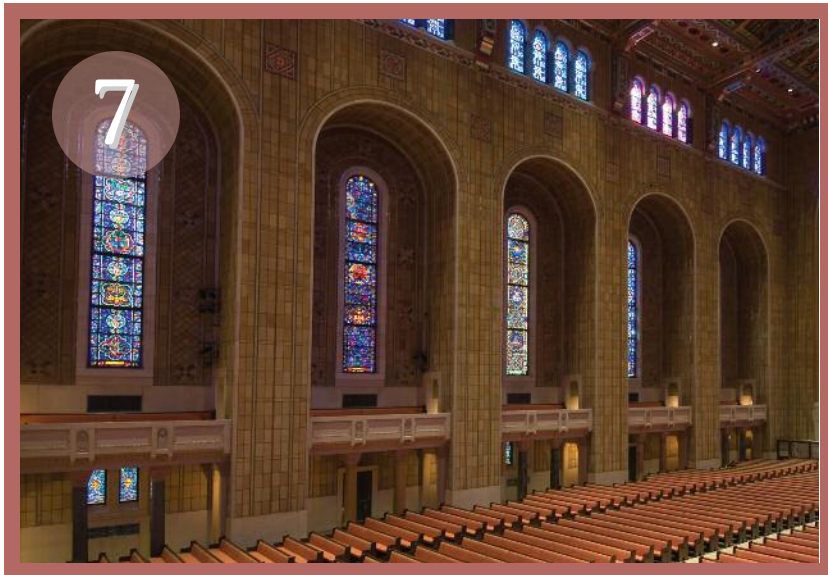
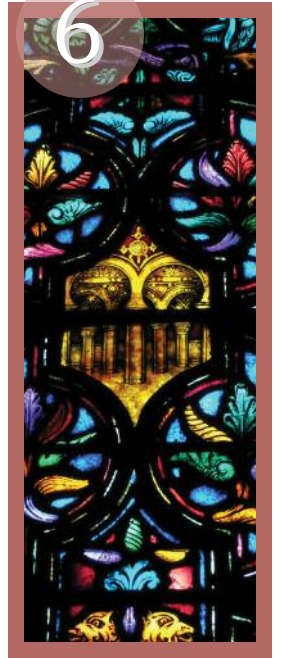
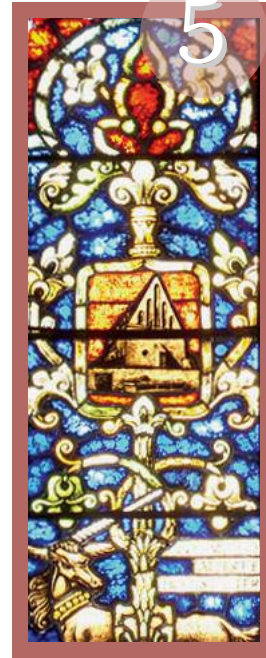




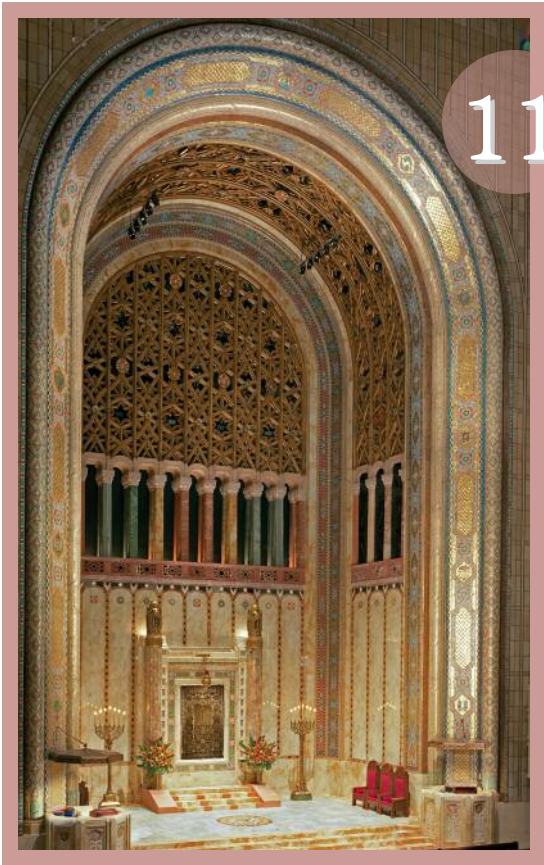
5 6 Located along the street level is a series of smaller stained-glass windows depicting noted synagogues from around the world. Included among these is The Altneuschul (The Old-New Synagogue) of Prague, Czech Republic—the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Europe (Item 5, northeast bay 1)—and the Great Synagogue of Toledo, Spain—a Moorish-style synagogue built in the 12th century (Item 6, southeast bay 1).

7 The stained-glass windows that line the five bays along the north and south sides of the Temple were designed individually by noted studios of the day: G. Owen Bonawit, Montague Castle Studios, Oliver Smith Studios, James Powell & Sons and J. Gordon Guthrie.

8 9 10 The windows are replete with Jewish iconographic symbols and biblical imagery, such as a Harp of David and crown (Item 8, northeast bay 1), two shofars (Item 9, southeast bay 2) and Noah's ark (Item 10, south bay 3, which actually depicts three Bible stories in order: separation of the sun and the sea, Noah's ark and the Tower of Babel).



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11 As is the tradition, Temple Emanu-El's ark is located on the eastern wall of the sanctuary, facing Jerusalem. Emanu-El's ark was designed to depict an open Torah scroll, with the side pillars representing staves (*atzei chayim*) and the finials atop serving as the scroll decorations (*rimonim*). The gates become the open scroll with the depiction of the Tablets of the Law set in the center. Emanu-El's "Torah within a Torah" gives added meaning to the phrase from *Pirkei Avot*, "Turn the Torah and turn it again for everything is in it." The distinctive glass-and-marble mosaic arch that frames the bimah was designed by Hildreth Meière—one of very few women whose achievements gained the recognition of the established art world during the first half of the 20th century. The work was executed by Ravenna Mosaics of Berlin, whose skilled personnel hand laid the millions of tiles that make up Meière's designs.

12 13 One criterion established by Emanu-El's leadership when building the sanctuary was that each of the 2,500 seats was to have an unobstructed view of the ark. Consequently, the architects introduced two octagonal-shaped pulpits at either end of the bimah, rather than the traditional placement of a single reading desk directly in front. On the north side (Item 12) is the pulpit from which the Torah is read and the cantor sings. The rabbi leads prayers and recites their sermons from the south pulpit (Item 13). The massive stone pulpits were executed in Siena marble and feature intricate floral designs carved by Ulysses Ricci and Angelo Zari. Under the pulpit canopies are magnificent multihued, inlaid wood marquetry executed by Eli Berman & Company. For decades, the still-pristine wood had been covered by a fabric installed to augment the clergy's voices before the advent of modern acoustical systems. The marquetry was uncovered during the recent restoration of the sanctuaries.



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14 Using shimmering gold and jewel tones that evoke the palette of Gustav Klimt, mosaicist Meière incorporated both Jewish imagery and stylized elements that eventually would become known as Art Deco. Among the images found in the eight-story-high arch is a pair of Sabbath candles, a date palm, a menorah, a prayer shawl (*tallit*), a perpetual lamp (*ner tamid*) and a Torah scroll. At the top center of the arch is a creation scene from Genesis that depicts the separation of the sky from the sea (pictured).





15 The menorahs that flank the ark are seven-branched lamp stands, representing those that were used in the Tabernacle. The menorahs were produced by Edward F. Caldwell & Company. The enamel embellishments at the base were executed by the master metalworker and artist Oscar Bach.

16 The single most important element within the sanctuary is the ark, which in Emanu-El's case houses seven Torah scrolls (*seferei Torot*). The ark doors are made of cast and hand-finished bronze in a pierced design with the Ten Commandments at the center. The Torah crowns situated on the upper Torahs of the ark are known as the Bloomingdale Crowns and were given to Congregation Beth-El by Lyman Bloomingdale (founder of the department store) in memory of his mother, brother and daughter in 1891 when the members of Beth-El dedicated their former home at 76th Street and Fifth Avenue. The perpetual light (*ner tamid*) suspended over the ark is enclosed in ruby glass set in bronze and was executed by Edward F. Caldwell & Company. The frame of the ark opening is crafted in Siena marble with mosaic inserts. Decorative metalwork at the top of the ark was executed by the General Bronze Corporation. The columns of the ark are made of French Benou Jaume marble, which varies in color from deep purple to orange.



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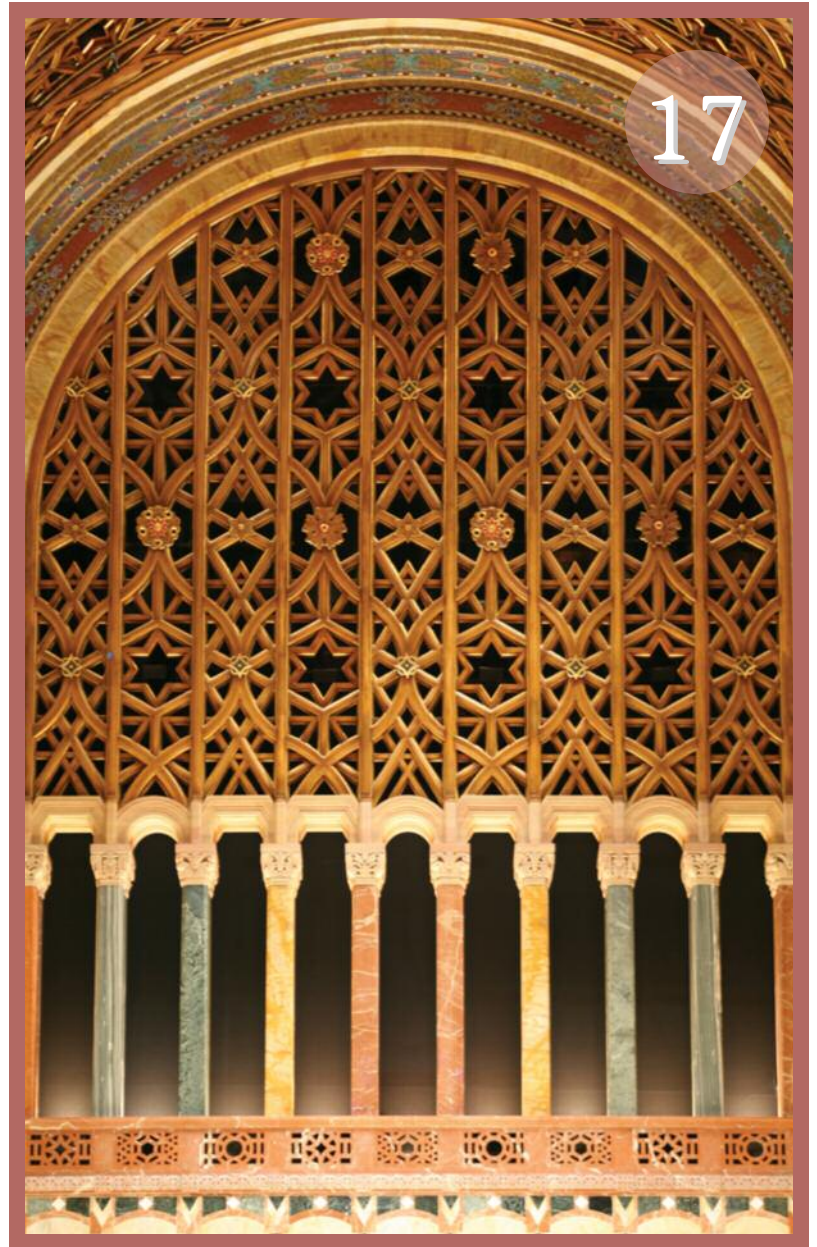
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17 Located about 25 feet above the bimah floor is the choir loft and organ screen. The loft features a pierced marble railing, on top of which is mounted marble columns of various colors that support a varied pattern of small arches. The arches, in turn, support a pierced plaster screen (or ornamental grille) that conceals the organ—part of which is housed above the choir loft and continues beyond the sanctuary vault.

18 As the largest synagogue organ in the world, Emanu-El's organ features 10,000 pipes ranging in size from that of a pencil to nearly 35 feet tall. In the spring of 2000, Emanu-El began a 2½-year restoration of the organ that involved the dismantling of the entire instrument so that each component could be evaluated carefully, repaired or remade as needed. The organ also has a new console built of fine woods and onyx. The restoration was completed by Glück New York.



PHOTOS BY: Sam Calello, Calello Photography; Paul Colliton; Renée Ann Del Percio, Rspline; Laurie Donald, Bernstein Associates; Arthur Femenella, Femenella & Associates, Inc.; Albert Jensen-Moulton, Glück Orgelbau; Brian Rose.

FOR MORE ABOUT THE HISTORY of Congregation Emanu-El, log on to our Web site at www.emanuelnyc.org and view our interactive timeline. Click "About us" → "History" → "Emanu-El: From Past to Present."

MOSAIC PATTERN BANNERS by Jessica Weber Design, Inc., New York City.

BROCHURE DESIGN by Kathryn M. Roberts, Congregation Emanu-El, with the help of Elka Deitsch and Mark H. Heutlinger.

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