

Notes From the Architect

We've all had the opportunity to view the designs for the new building. Did you ever wonder where the ideas came from and the meaning behind them? We took some time to talk to the architect about some of the interesting features of the new building.

“The current design has tall colorful flowing arches that frame the *bimah* from floor to ceiling. The arches are meant to evoke multiple meanings, including a huge *tallit* draped over the shoulders of the synagogue; Joseph's coat of many colors; our prayers flowing up to *Adonai*; and God's grace flowing down to us and the whole world. The arches will be made of the same wood as the ark and other *bimah* furnishings,” explained Don Lewis, Architect.

The new *bimah* and flexible seating arrangement will make the congregation feel more a part of the worship service. It will include easy access to the *bimah* for all congregants. It will bring the Torah and ark closer to the congregation. New energy-efficient lighting and an improved sound system will be installed. A solar-powered, photovoltaic *ner tamid* (eternal light) will be installed and will remain lit at all times.

The large sanctuary space will be divided by an operable wood partition. The front half of the room will be a permanent sanctuary available at all times for worship or individual prayer/meditation. It will seat up to 80. The back half of the room will be a social space for onegs, meetings, coffee and conversation, etc. at all times, except when the partition is opened on high holidays or major events to provide more than 80 seats in the sanctuary.

Some other features of the renovation include making the upstairs bathroom fully accessible, enlarging the kitchen and adding new cabinets and appliances. Two new bathrooms and a meeting room will be added downstairs. New flooring and paint will be installed throughout the building and the heating and ventilating system will be upgraded.

There's Still Time to Donate

If you haven't yet made a pledge to the capital campaign, don't worry, there's still time! The campaign began in Summer, 2006. The goal was \$500,000; and \$600,000 was the stretch goal to include the cost of an elevator. Thus far, the campaign has raised \$372,674 from members and friends. We hope to reach 100 percent of our membership with donations great and small. We haven't yet heard from about 50 families, and we hope to do so soon. Additionally, we hope to sell a piece of land that was donated to us in Rockland and, if we do, we will be that much closer to our goal.

Our theme has been “A Great Miracle Happened Here,” and we continue to believe that Beth El is a great miracle to so many of our congregants. If you would like more information about donating or about the project, call Congregation Beth El at (207) 945-4578, Maxine Harrow at (207) 843-0698, or Mike Pancoe at (207) 942-1919.