



BALTIMORE HEBREW CONGREGATION: HISTORY

(1830-2014)

1830

After a bitter debate and the intervention of Maryland Governor Thomas King Carroll, the Maryland General Assembly passes the Hunt Bill, granting the first charter to a Jewish organization. Nidche Yisrael (The Scattered of Israel) is the first Jewish congregation established in Maryland – and Baltimore Hebrew Congregation is born.

A diverse handful of Jewish men worship in a rented room above a grocery store in East Baltimore.

In 1832, the 29 members pray near what is now Lexington Street.

1834

The congregation of 41 moves to a one-story building on High Street, between Fayette and Gay Streets. Their first Cantor, Rev. I. Moses, officiates at weddings and funerals.

1837

The growing, increasingly prosperous congregation moves into a three-story brick building on Harrison Street.

In 1839, a second congregation is established near the docks of Fells Point for those who find the distance too far to walk on the Sabbath.

1840

Rabbi Abraham Rice becomes BHC's first rabbi. Born in Bavaria, he is the first traditionally trained rabbi to come to America. A learned Talmudist and vigorous defender of Orthodoxy, he is called "chief Rabbi in the United States." However, after a dispute over graveside readings, a dissident group of congregants leaves in 1843 to form Har Sinai Congregation, the nation's oldest Reform Jewish institution.

1845

The 60-member congregation builds its first "real" synagogue. The Lloyd Street Synagogue is designed by Robert Carey Long, Jr. Rabbi Rice establishes one of the first Hebrew schools in the country.

1846

Congregant Leon Dyer, former President of BHC, is elected the first president of the new United Hebrew Assistance Society, which becomes the Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1856, and is now known as The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore. Dyer later moves to San Francisco where he establishes the first synagogue on the West Coast.

1849

Rabbi Rice resigns, succeeded by Dr. Henry Hochheimer, also from Bavaria. Friction develops as some want to change from strict Orthodoxy. In 1853, Temple Oheb Shalom is founded by up-and-coming German immigrants as an alternative to Har Sinai's radical Reform and Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's continued (yet increasingly fractious) Orthodoxy.

1859

The congregation's new leader is Rabbi Bernard Illoway, born in Bohemia to a family of Talmudic scholars and, like Rice, a champion of German Orthodoxy.

1860

The Lloyd Street Synagogue is enlarged and rededicated.

Like Baltimore and the Jewish community as a whole, the congregation is divided in attitude towards the Civil War. Rabbi Illoway's sermons reflect his support of slavery and the secession of the Southern States. BHC congregants deem these views radical and he resigns in 1862.

1862

There is no rabbi at BHC from 1862-1868 as the nominally Orthodox congregation wrestles with the growing preference for reforms.

1865

The congregation grows to 165 families.

1868

Important steps toward reform begin when Rabbi Abraham Hofmann, a third Bavarian native, assumes the pulpit.

1870

Rabbi Hofmann presents a petition to the Board requesting the speedy introduction of moderate reforms conforming to resolutions passed at the 1869 Synod of Leipzig. Reforms include changes in worship and the addition of females to the choir, the latter resulting in a petition filed in the Circuit Court of Baltimore pitting congregant against congregant. An agreement is reached but the majority of dissidents resign to form their own traditional congregation, Chizuk Amuno.

1872

Nathan Schloss, later congregation president, personally loans BHC money to pay bills.

1873

1873-1881 there is no rabbi but additional reforms are instituted, including:

- men and women seated together,
- family pews,
- an organ "to beautify the service,"
- the wearing of tallit made optional,
- the abolition of allyahs,
- the replacement of the traditional prayerbook with one that is more progressive,
- discontinuation of the observance of the second days of festivals, and
- the institution of regular Friday evening services with choir.

1881

Rabbi Maurice Fluegel is installed. He remains only three years, resulting in another two-year hiatus without a rabbi.

1884

Membership dwindles to 48 families.

1886

Rabbi Aaron Siegfried Bettelheim, born in Hungary and extremely well educated, arrives. He has led several congregations – in Philadelphia, Richmond and San Francisco. He has also received a medical degree and established a German newspaper before coming to BHC where he finds our congregation in dire straits.



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1887

A resolution is passed to have stock printed in the amount of \$10 to pay the debts of the congregation.

1888

An appeal is made to move the location of the synagogue from downtown to the northwest area of the city, now the center of the German-Jewish population.

1889

The Lloyd Street Synagogue is sold to the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Church for \$12,000.

A lot is purchased at Madison and Robert Streets for a new synagogue. The cost of the new building is \$150,000. Only 38 names are on the membership roster when the building project is undertaken. Money is raised through subscriptions, the sale of the Lloyd Street building and an auction of "first class, second class and third class" pews.

1889 -1891 BHC worships at a building recently vacated by the First Methodist Church at Charles and Fayette Streets.

1890

The cornerstone for the Madison Avenue Synagogue is laid, but Rabbi Bettelheim does not live to see this impressive ceremony. He dies on board a ship, returning from Hungary where he had attended the funeral of his son, and is buried at sea.

The Ladies Auxiliary – now known as the Sisterhood – is organized.

1891

Rev. Dr. Adolf Guttmacher is named Rabbi just before the completion of the Temple. Born in Germany, Dr. Guttmacher received his Doctor of Divinity degree at Hebrew Union College.

The Madison Avenue Synagogue is dedicated and is praised for its architectural excellence.

1892

Rabbi Guttmacher continues the process of changing BHC from Orthodoxy to Reform. BHC joins the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and becomes a full-fledged Reform Congregation.

- Some prayers shortened, others eliminated,
- Some prayers now recited in English,
- Union Prayer Book used, and
- Wearing of yarmulka's and tallit discontinued.

1905

The congregation celebrates its 75th anniversary with a three-day "Diamond Jubilee!"

1910

For the first time, women are entitled to membership in the congregation.

Under Rabbi Guttmacher's dynamic, dedicated spiritual guidance, BHC grows to 1,000 members and affiliates and is a leading religious force in the community.

Cantor George Castelle comes to BHC and the distinguished choir reaches an even greater level of excellence.

1915

When Dr. Guttmacher unexpectedly dies, the Sisterhood commissions noted sculptor Ephraim Keyser to memorialize the esteemed rabbi with a bas relief – which graces our Park Heights Avenue lobby today.

Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron is the first American-born rabbi to serve at BHC. At 27, he is just one year out of Hebrew Union College; his youthful enthusiasm brings him into conflict with the more conservative congregants.

Rabbi Lazaron inaugurates:

- Sunday lectures,
- Weekly postcard mailings which later become "The Bulletin",
- The "procession of the scrolls" to celebrate Simchat Torah – a custom that is soon imitated throughout the country,
- Boy Scout and Girls Scout troops,
- A Children's Choir,
- A theatre group,
- Evening bible study for men and women,
- Sunday morning discussion groups for 19-25 year olds,
- The Social Service Case Committee to work with Hebrew Benevolent Society,
- Congregational family seder on the second night of Passover,
- A religious school publication "The Shofar,"
- Art exhibits, and
- Dances and various social events.

1917

Many young men from the congregation are among the 1600 Jews from Maryland serving in the military. Older men serve on Draft Boards and War Bond Drives. Women and young people are involved in working with the Red Cross and the Jewish Welfare Board among soldiers in nearby camps. Rabbi Lazaron becomes a Chaplain in the U.S. Army.

1918

The Brotherhood is organized.

1920

Although World War I brings migration from Europe to a standstill, by the end of the war, the Jewish population in Baltimore increases from about 10,000 in 1880 to 65,000. The mass immigration of Jews from Russia and Poland changes the face of the Jewish community.

Louis H. Levin helps to centralize German-Russian Jewish communities by merging the "uptown" Federated Jewish Charities with the "downtown" United Hebrew Charities, creating the Associated Jewish Charities.

Lillie and Aaron Straus are benefactors of "The Synagogue House" on Madison Avenue and launch a twenty-one year period of extraordinary service. The Synagogue House is a religious, educational, social and recreational center for thousands of young people from the general community.

The Synagogue House is home to:

- A Sunday afternoon religious school program for children whose families are "unaffiliated",
- Activities of congregations' ancillary organizations,
- Innumerable communal groups,



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- Americanization classes,
- The Jewish Deaf Society, and
- Child study groups.

Another moving spirit behind The Synagogue House, Moses Rothschild, mentors countless boys and girls, young men and women.

1921

Rabbi Lazon represents the Jewish people of the USA at the Burial of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

The size of the Board is expanded and women are given full suffrage. Mrs. Robert F. Skutch and Mrs. Sydney M. Cone are the first women elected to the BHC Board. Board members' terms are limited to three years, opening the doors for new leaders.

A modified system of unassigned seating results in larger membership at BHC, and double services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are instituted.

Rabbi Lazon goes to Palestine with Dr. Hugh Brickhead of Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church, the first time a rabbi and a minister make such a pilgrimage.

Rabbi Lazon broadcasts a weekly radio program, "The Wheels of Life."

1928

As anti-Semitism grows in Germany, the National Conference of Christians and Jews emerges to foster goodwill between religions and "to oppose anti-Semitism and work toward a better understanding."

1930

BHC's Centennial Celebration includes rabbis from congregations all over the city as well as local Christian clergy and representatives from national Jewish organizations. The piece de resistance is a Dramatic Epic presented at the Lyric Theatre followed by a reception and dance at the Alcazar Hotel.

1931

Cantor George Castelle dies and Abram Moses takes over as choir director. The cantorial position is filled on a part-time basis.

The Great Depression leads to cuts in salaries, operating expenses and dues.

1933

Rabbi Theodore H. Gordon, newly ordained at Hebrew Union College, becomes BHC's first rabbinic associate. He also serves as cantor.

1934

Sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, Rabbi Lazon, along with a minister and a priest, speaks throughout the nation to ease interfaith tension. The three are awarded the Richard Gottheil Medal, an annual honor given for the year's greatest contribution to American Jewry.

1937

Rabbi Morris Lieberman is installed as Associate Rabbi.

Lester Englander commutes from Philadelphia on weekends and High Holy Days to serve as cantor. He continues this until he enters military service in 1942. After discharge from the army, Mr. Englander serves as auxiliary cantor on the High Holy Days until 1967.

1938

"Common Ground: A Plea for an Intelligent Americanism," by Rabbi Lazon, is published. Based on his interfaith experiences, it offers practical ways for Christians and Jews to work together for better human relationships.

1940

The first Labor Day Weekend Institute is held at Camp Louise for the congregation's young people.

1941

Rabbi Lieberman enlists as Chaplain in the Army and is away for four years.

Rabbi Lazon is asked by the State Department and the British Foreign Office to join an interfaith mission to appraise the effect of the war on human relations in England. He conducts Kol Nidre services via telephone from London.

Throughout the war, Rabbi Lazon, with the help of Executive Secretary Rose Greenberg, keeps up monthly round-robin communication with congregants in the service all over the world.

The congregation purchases seven acres and a house at Park Heights and Slade Avenues for \$45,000 (an additional eight acres are purchased later.) The house is adapted for administrative offices and school facilities as well as a 200-seat auditorium where auxiliary services are held on the High Holy Days and is known as the Temple Center.

Aaron Straus purchases The Synagogue House (which had been his gift) from BHC for \$20,000, then pledges to contribute \$1 for every \$2 raised toward the Building Fund. (Mr. Straus later donates The Synagogue House to the YMCA. It still serves as a community center today.)

1945

Cantor Joseph Rosenfeld is hired as full time cantor and, shortly, assumes responsibility for the Religious School. Born in Poland, he had come to the States when he was nine, studied at Yeshiva University and graduated from Brooklyn College with a degree in music and literature.

Rabbi Lieberman returns from the Army, bringing with him a Sefer Torah, rescued from a European synagogue destroyed by the Nazis. In 1954, a velvet mantle embroidered with gold thread is made, symbolizing the decimated European Jewish Community in the form of a cut down tree, from the side of which grows a shoot denoting hope and revival. The mantle is inscribed with the words of a Holocaust survivor "Lamrot hakol Yisroel Chai" – Despite everything, Israel lives.

Henry S. Frank and Helen Dalsheimer chair the Building Fund campaign.

A Building Committee studies the needs of the growing



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congregation. Architect Percival Goodman of New York is hired to design the new facility at Park Heights Avenue.

In the years 1945 -1951 the BHC community is strengthened and expanded:

- The Temple League is instituted as an outreach to young married couples.
- With Irving J. Neuman as president, it becomes a rich reservoir of future congregational leaders.
- Sisterhood begins a program of Bible study courses.
- Brotherhood expands its membership, programs and purpose.
- A Parents' Association is organized.
- Religious School continues progressive and innovative instruction.

1946

Rabbi Lazoni retires as Senior Rabbi and becomes Rabbi Emeritus.

1949

A building contract is awarded to Cogwell Construction Company and BHC's new home is on its way.

Cantor Rosenfeld leads a men's and women's choral group and produces pageants on religious or historic themes.

1950

Aaron and Lillie Straus turn the first spade of earth at the groundbreaking for the new Temple at Park Heights Avenue. Also taking turns with the chrome-plated shovel are:

- Paul C. Wolman, President,
- Adolph D. Cohn and Milton J. Haas, Past Presidents,
- Lee Dopkin, Chair of the Building Committee,
- Henry S. Frank and Helen Dalsheimer, Co-Chairs of fundraising,
- Presidents of each auxiliary, and
- A representative of the Religious School.

Throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s a new generation of Baltimore Jewry continues the geographic move north and west, into upper Park Heights, Pikesville, Reisterstown, and beyond. Block-busting by real estate speculators causes rapid racial turnover in West Baltimore, including Jewish areas such as Eutaw Place and Lower Park Heights. East Baltimore suffers the effects of disinvestment, job loss, poverty, and misguided urban renewal.

1951

The old cornerstone from the Madison Avenue Temple, containing mementos of 1890, is removed and transported to Park Heights Avenue. Twenty-one items pertinent to the past and current history of the congregation are placed in the new cornerstone which also contains "A Message to the Future" written by Rabbi Lieberman.

"A Year of Dedication" begins with High Holy Day services in the partially completed Temple.

The kindling of the Eternal Light with a candle flame taken from the Madison Avenue sanctuary marks the formal dedication of the new Temple. The Torah Scrolls are carried into the Temple and installed in the Ark.

The night culminates in the naming of the Straus Auditorium in

recognition of Aaron and Lillie Straus.

Custom artwork enhances the new building including a mural in the Main Lobby, a striking Ark Tapestry, a unique sculpted Eternal Light, the Sabbath Menorah and a freestanding Chanukah Menorah.

1953

The congregation quickly grows to 1,200 families with a waiting list for the Religious School. Aaron Straus' gift of \$65,000, in memory of his recently deceased wife, funds the Lillie Straus Wing, adding thirteen classrooms and enlarging the school's capacity to 1000 students.

1954

Membership reaches 1500 families. Religious School enrollment of 1400 necessitates a shift of more classes to Saturday morning sessions. Applications for membership are put on a waiting list.

Rabbi Richard Sternberger is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1955

BHC's 125-year anniversary coincides with 300 years of Jewish settlement in America.

A highlight of the celebration is a pulpit dramatization adapted by Cantor Rosenfeld from a script written for the radio series "The Eternal Light." The presentation recalls the personality and spirit of Thomas Kennedy, the man chiefly responsible for the granting of full civil rights to Jews in Maryland in 1826.

1956

Helen Dalsheimer is installed as the first woman President to lead a major American Jewish congregation and serves for four years. In 1962 she is bestowed the honor of Lifetime Honorary president of BHC.

1958

When Aaron Straus dies at age 94, a tribute service is held at BHC citing "Uncle Airy" as a great humanitarian and philanthropist. Two non-profit summer camps for boys and girls in western Maryland, begun in 1922, stand today as living monuments to Aaron and Lillie Straus.

Rabbi Harold L. Rubens is engaged as Assistant Rabbi.

1961

The Social Consciousness Committee is established in response to early struggles for civil rights and is empowered to act in the name of BHC in support of open housing, fair employment, education, equal public accommodations, interracial relations and other areas of social concern.

Rabbi Lieberman leads a group of Jewish, Protestant and Catholic clergy in escorting a distinguished Negro leader into two segregated restaurants. They are turned away; related press coverage leads to the establishment of the Clergyman's Interfaith Committee on Human Rights.

1960

Rabbi Bernard Perlemuter is engaged as Associate Rabbi.



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1963

Rabbi Lieberman is among those arrested for his participation in the massive demonstrations at Gwynn Oak Park. As result of this civil disobedience, the park owners agree to operate on a non-discriminatory basis the following season and the Baltimore County Human Relations Commission is formed.

Rabbi Amiel Wohl is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1965

The Berrymans Lane Cemetery is formally dedicated.

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation families now number 1,700.

Sisterhood celebrates its 75th anniversary.

The planning and labor of many people over several years come to fruition with the beginning of construction to replacement of the Temple Center.

The following major additions are dedicated:

1966

The 1,000-seat Dalsheimer Auditorium

1967

- The Straus School Building
- The Youth Center with adjoining kitchen
- The Fink Assembly Room
- The Hoffberger Chapel with stained glass windows designed by Nissan Engel, a young Israeli-born artist.
- The Hoffberger Gallery
- In addition, The Lillie Straus School Wing is enlarged with additional classrooms, a spacious library and a functional art room: and the Straus Auditorium is remodeled, enlarged and renamed the Straus Social Hall.

1967

The BHC Board votes to make burial rights concomitant with membership.

The Social Justice Committee initiates and implements numerous community programs for inner-city youths and children, partners with a Negro church and supports social legislation. Later, the Social Justice Committee is renamed the Community Involvement Committee.

The Youth Activities Committee works with the rabbis in directing and coordinating programs for junior high school teens, the senior youth group and college students.

A Young Leadership Group is formed to encourage leadership opportunities for young men and women, the future leaders of BHC and the community.

Post confirmation class for 11th and 12th graders is instituted on an informal basis.

Midweek classes for the study of Hebrew, once a joint enterprise with other Reform congregations, are now under the sole aegis of BHC with the introduction of a three-day-a-week integrated program.

The Meditation Service on the Day of Atonement is introduced

in response to many requests for a full day of unbroken worship.

In response to Israel's Six Day War, Irving Blum and LeRoy Hoffberger head the Emergency Fund Campaign. The Board votes to increase the congregation's holding of Israel Bonds and endorses an effort to promote sale of Bonds within the congregation.

1968

Brotherhood celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Rabbis Jeffrey B. Stiffman and David Goldstein are engaged as Associate Rabbis.

1970

Rabbi Herbert N. Brockman is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

Rabbi Lieberman dies suddenly at age 61. Rabbi Goldstein becomes the Senior Rabbi.

The Rabbi Morris A. Lieberman Memorial Lectureship is established to sponsor the annual presentation of an outstanding speaker or program to the congregation and community-at-large.

1973

In response to the sudden Yom Kippur attack on Israel, the congregation demonstrates its support by purchasing \$300,000 in State of Israel Bonds.

The Community Involvement Committee supports vigorous efforts of national agencies to secure the release from Russia thousands of Jews who wish to start new lives in Israel or America.

Quad Temple meetings bring together the four Reform congregations in Greater Baltimore: Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Har Sinai Congregation, Temple Oheb Shalom and Temple Emanuel.

1974

New Haggadah is published by Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Rabbis Goldstein and Brockman introduce the Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew.

Bat Mitzvah is offered to 13-year-old girls.

The rabbis introduce monthly Havdalah services and hold more frequent "Family Services."

Alan E. Waldman, BHC's first professionally trained, full-time educator, is hired as Associate Director of Religious Education to assist Cantor Rosenfeld.

1975

The Gates of Prayer, a new Siddur, is published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Cantor Rosenfeld, on the thirtieth anniversary of his association with BHC, receives the Harry Greenstein Award from Baltimore Hebrew College in recognition of his distinguished leadership in the field of education.



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1978

Rabbi Murray Saltzman is installed as Senior Rabbi. He comes to Baltimore from Indianapolis, where he made a name for himself in social activism. He marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma and was jailed with Dr. King following a demonstration in St. Augustine. Rabbi Saltzman is a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, appointed by President Gerald Ford in 1975.

Rabbi Bradley Bleefeld is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1979

BHC begins celebrating its 150th anniversary. Rabbi Bleefeld writes the Simchat Torah service inaugurating eight months of special events. His photograph of the Torah rescued from the Holocaust becomes the symbol of the congregation's remarkable history: "In spite of everything, Israel lives."

Rabbi Sheila Russian, the first woman Rabbi to serve in Baltimore, is installed as Associate Rabbi at BHC.

The 1980's mark the "Freedom for Soviet Jewry" rallies, support for immigration, and resettlement. BHC adopts Russian families and Vietnam "boat people." In 2005, we celebrate 25 years with the Vietnamese families, now numbering 38 individuals who have successfully and productively integrated into the Baltimore community.

1980

Rabbi Harvey Winokur is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1981

After thirty-six years of service to BHC, Cantor Rosenfeld retires and becomes Cantor Emeritus.

Cantor Gail Hirschenfang is appointed Cantor. Cantor Hirschenfang establishes a congregational choir, Kol Rinnah.

1982

Rabbi James Bleiberg is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1983

Rabbi Aryeh Azriel is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

Cantor Samuel Berman is engaged as Cantor.

1984

Baltimore and BHC hosts the UAHC Biennial.

1987

Rabbi Julie Spitzer is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1989

The "Year of the Torah" is celebrated with a 12-month variety of Torah study, culminating with the dedication of the new Torah commissioned especially for BHC. Due to the congregation's generosity in supporting the Torah Project, there are sufficient funds to purchase Torah commentaries for the pews. The new scroll is dedicated at "The Crown of Torah" service with liturgy compiled by Rabbi Azriel and music by noted synagogue composer, Ben Steinberg.

Rabbi Jonathan Katz is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

The PreSchool and Fox Educational Center are dedicated.

1990

The Chanukiah is dedicated.

1991

Rabbi Daniel Weiner is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1992

The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation opens the first Reform Jewish Day School in Maryland.

Rabbi Andrew Bossov is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1993

Cantor Faith Gurney is installed as Cantor.

1994

The Julius and Doris Myerberg Library and Fox Educational Center are dedicated. These state-of-the-art facilities incorporate computers, interactive learning, large screen projected television, and more.

Israel Bond Committee has its most successful year to date, prompting the purchase of \$112,000 in Israel Bonds.

BHC begins a satellite midweek program in Owings Mills.

Social Action Committee establishes a dialogue with the Hispanic community and revitalizes our link with "sister congregation", Grace Presbyterian Church

Cantor Stephen Richards becomes Interim Cantor.

1995

Rabbi Saltzman retires and becomes Rabbi Emeritus. During his tenure he served as President of the Coalition Opposed to Violence and Extremism, the Baltimore Black Jewish Forum (BLEWS), and the Baltimore Board of Rabbis, as well as Chairman of the Black-Jewish Relations Task Force of the Synagogue Council of America.

Rabbi Angela Grayboys is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

1996

Rabbi Rex D. Perlmeter is installed as Senior Rabbi. Building on his 11 years of experience at Temple Israel of Greater Miami, he brings a commitment to building a strong sense of team among temple clergy and staff, and to the development of a true partnership between synagogue professionals and lay leaders. He brings to BHC a strong background in community work, interfaith and interracial relations and his experience as a national leader in the Reform movement's focus on worship. Deep commitments to social justice and to the intellectual tradition of Reform Judaism are hallmarks of his rabbinate.

Cantor Judith K. Rowland is installed as Cantor. Originally from the New York area, Cantor Rowland was Invested in 1981 at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, School of Sacred Music and served as the President of the American



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Conference of Cantors from 1995-1998 and from 2000-2001.

Rabbis Rosalin Landis (later Mandelberg) and Peter Kessler are engaged as Associate Rabbis.

The new clergy team brings a modern and less formal worship style to BHC, including the abandonment of the miter, in favor of kippot.

A presentation by the President of the congregation on the state of the congregation is added to the Rosh Hashanah erev service.

A Hebrew Language Lab is built in the Religious and Day School wing with the backing of the Herman and Walter Samuelson Foundation.

The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Day school is expanded through the eighth grade.

1997

An Annual Giving Campaign is launched to generate funding for expanding programs and services.

James Galdieri becomes Organist and Choirmaster.

1998

A new center pulpit is installed on the Temple floor and changes are initiated in the timing and content of worship services. The congregation begins to use the new CCAR interim prayerbook, "Gates of Prayer for Shabbat and Weekdays."

1999

A Congregational Kallah was held for congregants to voice their ideas and concerns. This event, which spanned two full days, was facilitated by Linda Klonsky.

2001

BHC joins Synagogue 2000. A team of congregants spends one night per month for two years studying worship and attending retreats. Many worship innovations result from this educational and spiritual endeavor including Shabbat Shelanu, an alternative congregational Shabbat morning service and the Contemporary Ensemble, a congregational instrumental group.

Rabbi Robert A. Nosanchuk is engaged as Associate Rabbi.

2002

The BHC Athletic Complex and the Getzov Soccer Field are dedicated.

2003

A Capital and Endowment Campaign drive is launched for the continuation of our "Sacred Community" that provides inspirational and creative worship experience, life-long learning, and the motivation and opportunities for community involvement.

2004

A Quiet Room is created in the Sanctuary for families with young children.

Rabbi Elissa Sachs-Kohen is engaged as Associate Rabbi

2005

As of May, the clergy includes Rabbi Rex D. Perlmeter, Cantor K. Judith Rowland, Rabbi Rosalin Mandelberg, and Rabbi Elissa Sachs-Kohen.

Celebrating the congregation's 175th anniversary, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's 1,400 families look back over a rich and colorful history and look forward to the illustrious future of this great religious institution. This culminates in the performance of Peter Yarrow of popular folk band "Peter, Paul & Mary" at the Purim celebration in 2006.

2006

Volunteers from BHC travel to New Orleans to help rebuild eventually visiting four times to support post-Hurricane Katrina efforts.

Cantor Joseph Rosenfeld dies.

2007

Rosh Hashanah Under the Stars service at Oregon Ridge is first held and welcomes over 2,000 attendees.

Rabbi Educator Paul Sidlofsky begins at BHC.

Bema Home Connection begins, providing remote access to services for those in need.

Chai Life, BHC's 20s and 30s group, is created, with hundreds attending events in its first year.

Cantor Ann Sacks begins at BHC.

BHC begins hosting First Mount Olive Freewill Baptist Church following their fire. They spend seven years at BHC before moving into a new building. A tradition of Martin Luther King, Jr. interfaith worship celebrations begins.

2008

Rabbi Andrew Busch begins.

Cantor Robbie Solomon begins.

The Goodwin center is renovated, including a custom-made ark for services.

2009

BHC becomes Baltimore's first "green" synagogue.

2010

Rabbi Murray Saltzman dies.

The first "Night of the Stars" is held as an annual fundraiser, honoring Laura Black and Charles Klein, providing a comedy show.

2012

"Summer Nights on Park Heights" adult current events discussion is started.



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2013

Videostreaming of services is created, providing more access for remote connections to services.

BHC begins efforts at bone marrow drives with the Gift of Life Foundation, starting with two years of Yom Kippur drives.

2014

"Tikkun Torah" is held as a Torah restoration campaign.