

History of B'er Chayim Temple

1850 – Congregation B'er Chayim formed

1853 – Chartered by the State of Maryland as “Baair Cheim” The congregation met at 22 Baltimore Street. Congregation was 12 members.

1854 – Congregation moved to upstairs at the corner of Centre and Baltimore Sts. opposite where the old Lutheran Church stood.

1863 – A plot 40' x 100' purchased at corner of South Centre and Union Sts. for \$150.00

1864 - Temple, Federal in design was built at a cost of \$7,427.02 (John B. Walton builder)

1866 – Congregation purchased ground on Baltimore Pike, it became East View Cemetery

1878 – Congregation was 20 members

1882 – First organ purchased (1)

1986 – Congregation was 24 members (1)

1898 – Lot adjoining to rear of temple was purchased for \$150

1900 – Building (Rabbi's House) complete adjacent to Temple building cost of \$2,409.17. Two stained glass windows bricked up and plastered over. (found in 2013)

1905 – Congregation joined Union of American Hebrew Congregations

1908 – Second organ purchased (1)

1913 – Kitchen addition was built (city building permit# 3536

1919 – the bimah was enlarged so that eight students in the confirmation class could sit on the bimah

1920's – Vestry floor lowered and a stage was installed (on school building side), new electric lights installed in sanctuary and new modern pews were installed. The south steps to the second floor were changed from circular to squared off. This allowed the new pews to be installed.

1920's and 1930's Reform Judaism changed. Minimum amt of Hebrew used and hymns sung in English.

1923 – Temple split, Temple Beth El was formed at 28 Washington St. Rabbi's house now turned into The Temple House

1924 – Modern Pipe Organ (1) at a cost of \$3,200 (2) and new electric light fixtures were purchased. in memory of Mr & Mrs Samuel Rosenthal (Plaque)

Women get equal membership (1) Congregation is 75 people (2)

1925 – Centre St. Entrance way was added (city building permit# 7756) (George Stansbury design)

1928 – Congregation was 100 members (1)

1934 – Temple merged and Beth El reunited with B'er Chayim.

1938 – Interior and Exterior of the Temple were beautified.

During WWII Rabbi went to Bedford Springs for services for sailors and took a small case containing a torah. That box is still in the vestry. Temple got new carpet and two new sets of Torah coverings and Bronze plaque in the front of the Temple. New glass doors placed on the ark.

1950's – Windows in the sanctuary were replaced.

1954 – Fire Escapes were added to Sunday School rooms, Sanctuary walls and Ceiling repaired with canvas and repainted. (white), alter platform (bimah) extended to full width

1958-1959 Maccabees won the Church league championship.

1963 – Sunday School and Kitchen remodeled. Vestry remodeled.

1974/1975 Merger with Beth Jacob considered.
1975 – New white Torah covers purchased.
1978 – Original Temple lights given to History House on Washington St. New outside lights donated in honor of Faye Klawan
1978 – Temple listed on the National Register of Historic Places
1978 – Gold torah covers were purchased, Emergency lights and smoke detectors purchased
1978 – New lights placed in front of Temple.
1979 – Organ overhauled
1984 – Roof repaired, Fire door on bimah installed, Exterior of building was repainted. Shrubbery in front of Temple was replaced. Air Conditioner installed. Stained Glass covered with Lexan. Glass doors on ark replaced and glass above the doors with Star of David added. New carpet was placed in the vestry.
1984 – Tree of Life memorial plaque purchased in vestibule.
1986 – Refurbished temple Foyer with cabinets and carpeting in the sanctuary
1997 – New torah covers donated (stained glass emb)
1998 – Beth Jacob and B'er Chayim merged, Torahs, Yahrzeit tablets, and other ritual objects were moved to B'er Chayim
1999 – Two stained glass panels from Beth Jacob installed in Centre St. entry way.
2012 – Outside of Temple stripped of paint, new roof, roof drainage system and rebuild of wood trim around top of building. Bricks were repointed throughout. The Temple spent \$504,000 from a gift given by the Feldstein Ridgeway families.
2013-14 – Vestry, front entry lobby, sanctuary were rebuilt. Stage removed. Elevator and vestry handicapped bathroom installed. Kitchen remodeled and pantry built between kitchen and bathroom. The Temple spent \$622,000 from a gift given by the Feldstein Ridgeway families and Doug Schwab and Betsey Hurwitz-Schwab family and Leonard Schwab.
2013 – Found Stained Glass window in front of Sanctuary that had been covered over in 1900.
2017 – New white Torah covers donated by the Friedland Family

(1) – Diamond Jubilee 1928 booklet

(2) - 1924 The Temple Book