

Beth El Emeth

Congregation Beth El Emeth is one of the oldest in the city, second only to Children of Israel, of which it was once a part. The break between the two groups occurred in 1864, during the trying war years.

B'nai Israel wished to adopt certain more liberal laws—reform in the ritual, the installation of an organ, family pews. And one group of members infinitely preferred the orthodox manner of worship, and objected to innovations of this nature. They seceded, and formed themselves into the Congregation Beth El Emeth.

Beth El Emeth pursued its separate way until 1882, when it again consolidated with Congregation Children of Israel. They had purchased a lot on Second street, but never built there. The congregation had begun to grow smaller, and less powerful; it had little money and property. Hardwig Peres, son of the former Rev. Jacob J. Peres, brought about a consolidation of the two groups, as well as a transfer of all remaining funds and property to the joint account.

These assets were used on the purchase of the lot at Poplar and Second, where the new reform temple was built. For some time, the groups worshipped together, but the reform services were not to the liking of the more orthodox members of the group, and they again seceded.

After the building of the new temple, at Poplar and Montgomery, in 1916, Congregation Beth El Emeth, again become stronger, purchased the old temple, at Poplar and Second, from Congregation Children of Israel, making the purchase in November, 1916. For a time, the group continued the even tenor of its ways; then in 1927, Sam Blaiss was elected to the presidency, the office he still holds.

Since his accession, remarkable forward strides have been made. The temple has been remodeled and redecorated throughout. A social center has been established in the vestry, and many organizations make it their headquarters, both for social and business meetings. The Ladies' Auxiliary, which had become dormant, has been reorganized, with Mrs. Dave Lazarov as the president.

Mrs. Lazarov is assisted in her duties by Mrs. E. Felt, vice-president; Mrs. Simon Lusky, secretary; and Mrs. William Sizeler, treasurer.

Abe Kipper is cantor of the congregation, and he is assisted by a remarkable boys' choir, including David Richman, David Cohn, Sidney Lazarov, Julius Glassman, Joseph Padawer, Meyer Kipper, Bernard Messinger, and Simon Gordon.

Sam Blaiss, president for the sixth term, by election on Jan. 1, 1933, has as his fellow officers William Sizeler, first vice-president; Dave Lazarov, second vice-president; Sam Fortas, treasurer; A. Walter, warden of the cemetery, assisted by a standing committee including Abe Glassman, Morris Joseph, and William Hanover; H. Berger, financial secretary; A. E. Weiner, recording secretary; and the following trustees, A. H. Kaplan, Abe Glassman, B. Milstein, J. B. Braver, H. Friedman, Wolf Hanover, and Morris Joseph.