

Groundbreaking Congregation Beth El of Fairfield

**“Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle?
...he that walks uprightly, and practices righteousness,
And speaks truth from in his heart”**

--FROM PSALM 15

Program

30 Nisan 5721

April 16, 1961

National Anthem Cantor Charles Feld and Assembly

Presiding Norman Hewitt and Robert A. Paul Co-Chairmen, Groundbreaking

Greetings Louis G. Strasser President of the Congregation

Groundbreaking Service Rabbi Jack Bloom and Cantor Charles Feld

Prayer Cantor Feld

The Affirmation of our Dream Rabbi Bloom

***Rabbi:** The original Beth El, 35 centuries ago, was a strip of barren ground. There, with a rock for his pillow, Jacob slept one night. Alone, penniless, facing an unknown future, he dreamed of a ladder, which linked heaven and earth. It is said that God promised him great things...”Behold I am with you and will keep you wherever you go!” This dream and this promise gave greatness to Jacob’s life. Awakening he said, “Surely God is in this place.” and he named that place Beth el—The house of god.*

In the spirit of our fathers’ dream of a link between heaven and earth, and envisioning a great future for our community and our people, we have proudly called our congregation, *Beth El of Fairfield.*

Today, 35 centuries later, on another strip of ground, in another land we are about to break ground for our Beth El, our House of God.

It is altogether fitting that at this time we should reaffirm the dream and the vision of which this groundbreaking is but the beginning.

Let us affirm that this synagogue will be a house of prayer.

***Cong.:** To this place we will come regularly to examine what we are in the light of what we could be. Here we will share the hopes and aspirations of our people. Here we will find new strength and dedication for the many tasks that confront us.*

***Rabbi:** Let us affirm that this synagogue will be a house of Torah.*

Cong: Here we will learn who we are and from whence we come. Here we will seek a glimpse of our destiny. Here our tradition will live and give life because we will be committed to it.

Rabbi: Let us affirm that this synagogue will be *a house of Assembly*.

Cong: Here we will gather to promote all worthy endeavors. Here we will share joys and sorrows, laughter and tears. Here we will transform a congregation of Jews into a Jewish congregation.

Rabbi: Let us affirm that this synagogue will bring to our homes the *fullness of Judaism*.

Cong: *From* this place we will take guidance and instruction to live by. What happens here will be reflected by what happens in our homes,

Rabbi: Let us affirm that this synagogue will *be a place of brotherly concern*.

Cong: Here we will learn that all men are brothers by origin and destiny. Instead of tolerance we will learn to care; instead of “live and let live” we will work together to cultivate the image of God that is in all men.

Rabbi: Let us affirm that this synagogue will be a Beth el, *a House of God*.

Cong: /To this place we shall bring our highest devotion, our noblest hopes and dreams. By our lives we will testify to the presence of this House of god among us.

Rabbi: Let us affirm that today is only the *beginning of the beginning*.

Cong: This building is not in itself the fulfillment of our dreams. It is only the foundation upon which we will build and realize yet greater dreams.

Rabbi: Let us affirm that all these dreams *can* be realized.

Cong: If we will it strongly enough, we shall find the way to realize our dreams. We shall find the way to make our congregation a congregation of commitment. We shall find the way to make this building a Beth El...A House of God.

Rabbi: That all who pass this way may say: “*Surely GOD is in this place.*”

THE GROUNDBREAKING

Mr. Louis G. Strasser

Mr. Strasser: Baruch Atah Adonay, Elohaynu Melech ha-olam, she-hecheyanu, ve-kiyemanu, ve-higiyanu lazman ha-zeh.

Cong: May God ever sustain us. May He give us strength as we go forward to complete what we have this day begun, Amen.

THE GROUNDBREAKING

Families of the Congregation

“HATIKVAH” Cantor Charles Feld and Assembly

(Assembly rises, remains standing for Closing Prayer)

**Kol od ba-lay-vov peni-mah
Ne-fesh Ye-hu-dee-ho-mee-ya
U-l’fa-a ‘tay miz-rach ka-di-mah
A-yin l’Tzee-yon tzo-fi-ya**

**Od lo av-da tik-va-te-nu,
Ha-tik-vah sh-‘not al-pay-yim,
li-h’yot am chof-shee b’ar-tzay-nu,
E-retz Tzee-yon Ye-ru-sha-la-yim.**

CLOSING PRAYER

Rabbi Harry Nelson
Congregation Rodeph Sholom

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