

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why do the Torah scrolls need to be restored?

They all have suffered wear and tear in the normal course of their use over decades. The types of damage that developed over time include cracks in the parchment, chipped letters, and worn stitching. See the pictures on the TBE website for a better understanding of what needs to be repaired.

2. Why do we need to restore four Torahs?

We are stewards of all of our Torahs; it is a sacred responsibility. How would we choose which one of those in active use to leave unrestored? One Torah is a Czech scroll rescued from the Holocaust for which we have the honor of semi-permanent custody. Another is the gift of a congregant in memory of family. The other two are from now-disbanded congregations and given for the benefit of the community, particularly the youth of our congregation. All of these scrolls are in constant use by our community; they are well loved. We have an obligation to do our best for all four.

3. Why are donations going into our Spiritual Life Fund and not directly into a Torah restoration fund?

We learned our lesson with the Prayer Book Fund. Congregants were generous; we bought all the prayer books required, but could not use the remaining money for any other related needs. If gifts exceed what is needed for the Torah restoration effort we will have funds to purchase or repair other items we use in the religious practices of our community. For example, we could commission a Torah table that allows clergy to stand together and read Torah closer to the congregation, purchase additional Torah commentaries for use in services or study, repair the ark doors or the Torah crowns.

4. What other resources could we pay for with donations to our Spiritual Life Fund?

Uses of the fund include "support of religious services." Generally speaking, this includes ritual objects, projects or programs that enhance services, and people who lead us in services. Some examples are mentioned in response to the previous question; another might be the equipment to broadcast weekly services live and pay the technicians to install and operate that equipment. We already do this very successfully at the High Holy Days. The fund is viewed as making seed money available for vetted projects, but not providing money for ongoing programs or salaries.

5. What if we don't raise enough money during The Year of the Torah to pay for the full cost of restoration?

It was clear, even in the early stage, that the campaign would reach our minimum objective; however, the fundraising effort includes more than this one important goal. It is intended to prepare TBE for future needs, not just one immediate concern. We see this as a call to be better custodians and plan for short- and long-term costs of maintaining the objects that are core to who we are as a community.

6. How much will it cost to repair each one?

This varies with each scroll and depends on the nature and extent of the damage. Sofer on Site did an extensive evaluation and estimated costs prior to our contract negotiation. The needed repairs fall into these categories: rips in the parchment; prior cleaning with caustic and therefore damaging solvents; letters which are cracked, peeling and fading. The work includes eye scanning each book of each scroll; hand stitching where required; hand cleaning without chemicals; scraping and re-writing letters. The eitzim (handles) for all four scrolls will be

replaced. The estimated cost for the restoration of all four scrolls is \$40,000.

7. When will the sofer be involved in the restoration work here at the Temple?

We've arranged for the sofer to repair the scrolls at TBE during three sessions: November 13-16, 2011; January 22-25, 2012; and March 25-28, 2012. During that time he also will serve as scholar in residence, to demonstrate and teach as well as renew our Torah scrolls and return them to the desired condition.

8. How can I participate in the restoration of the Torahs when the sofer is on site?

There are many ways. During each of his visits there will be evening demonstrations and open times during the day when congregants can come and watch as he works. Check your TBE bulletin, website and weekly email updates for the exact times. Children in Religious School also will be provided special sessions when they will learn how he works and actually have the chance to write with a quill on parchment.

9. How can I take part in the Year of Torah?

This is an extraordinary chance to learn and to connect with the embodiment of our history as a people and a religion. Join in one of the multiple sessions featuring the sofer at work right here in our building. Enjoy the opening event on Sunday, October 23 and the many other programs happening throughout The **Year of Torah** at TBE that will educate and celebrate: Torah-thon, Beit Cafes, Shabbatonim and more. Volunteer to help those planning the events. We can use more dedicated committee members as well as one-time helpers! Contact Pat McCune (phmccune@gmail.com) or Gretta Spier (gretspier@mac.com) to get involved.

10. How much will it cost to sponsor part of the Torah restoration?

There are many levels of sponsorship from a letter at \$36 to sponsoring an entire scroll at \$25,000. For a fuller description of gifting suggestions and related activities, go to the members-only section of the TBE website at www.templebethemeth.org. Pledge sheets are also available in the Temple office.

