

Tzedakah Box

A gift from Congregation Shomrei Torah to commemorate

Rabbi George Gittleman's Chai Anniversary: 18 years with Shomrei Torah

- In anticipation of the Celebration of Rabbi George's Chai Anniversary, congregant Linda Weiss was invited to design a Tzedakah box which would be the Congregation's gift to Rabbi George in honor of his 18 years of Rabbinical leadership and service to Congregation Shomrei Torah.
- Linda met with congregant Ben Benson and Rabbi George Gittleman for a collaborative brainstorming session, which led to the design concept, and general composition of the Tzedakah box.
- Based on the concepts determined in that meeting, Linda proceeded with design development, planning and oversight of the creation of the Tzedakah Box. Additional artisans involved in the project were Greg Zall and Dr. Charlie Catlett.
- Critical to the design intent was that it inspire the Mitzvah of Tzedakah, as well as being creatively distinctive. The Tzedakah box was designed to be aesthetically compatible with the Heritage Cabinet and other synagogue furnishings.
- The cabinetry of the Tzedakah box is natural cherry wood.
- Argentium Sterling Silver is the alloy used for all the inlaid metal designs. This alloy is less prone to tarnishing.
- In honor of the 18 years of Rabbi George Gittleman's leadership and service to Congregation Shomrei Torah, there are several components of the design that symbolically refer to the number 18:
 - The total height of the Tzedakah box is 18 inches
 - Inlaid on each side of the front central panel there is a Sterling Silver Olive branch
- Each branch has 9 inlaid Argentium Sterling Silver Olive leaves (total: 18 Olive leaves)
- Olive branches and leaves were chosen as a design motif to symbolize peace, to unify the design with the Heritage Cabinet as well as the Olive trees in the entry courtyard of Congregation Shomrei Torah.
- The frontal center panel is Argentium Sterling Silver; with the Hebrew letters for "Tzedakah" cut out of the silver and the wood frame to reveal iridescent blue glass. Initially, consideration was given to having both English as well as Hebrew letters. Rabbi George preferred that only Hebrew lettering be included in the design.
- The center panel has a locking mechanism discretely hidden under the bottom of the panel. There is a hinge at the top of the central panel.
- Once unlocked, the panel opens vertically, articulating at the hinge. When completely open, the top will rest securely on the beveled wood bar adjacent to the hinge, while donations are retrieved from the interior of the Tzedakah
- In reference to the windows adjacent to the Ark, in the sanctuary of Congregation Shomrei Torah, the colors for the individual glass panels on each side of the Tzedakah box represent the gemstones that correlate to the 12 tribes of Israel. There are 6 of these colored glass panels on each side of the box, framed in Argentium Sterling Silver.
- The Tzedakah box has two donation "slots":
 - One positioned below the rectangular glass panels on the right side of the box - so that handicapped, shorter people and children can participate in donating.
 - One located on the top of the box for taller individuals to insert donations.
- The Chai Celebration Logo's are marquetry medallions composed of inlaid Ebony, Maple, and Sycamore
- LED lighting (daylight full spectrum) is used to illuminate the colored glass from the interior of the box.
- The Tzedakah box is secured from the interior of the box with bolts going into the steel beams behind the wall.

• **Designed by:** Linda Weiss

Silversmithing by: Linda Weiss

• **Woodworking and construction:** Greg Zall

Colored Glass work by: Dr. Charlie Catlett