

Community

New stained-glass windows a triumph for Beth Emet

By Phyllis Stenberg
STAFF WRITER

The 700 families in the Temple Beth Emet Reform congregation in Cooper City will be inspired to look upward toward the heavens the next time they attend services in the sanctuary.

Two years in the making, are a series of artistically designed stained-glass windows recently completed and designed by Israeli artist, Shalom Yafet. The windows allow sunlight to filter in and keep hurricanes at bay.

Formerly, Temple Beth Emet's sanctuary was outfitted with large hurricane proof clear glass windows attached by metal beams. The stained glass windows have been affixed to the existing windows, allowing light and a rainbow of colors to shine in the sanctuary.

The sanctuary's western wall, contains a series of stained-glass windows that depict images of the moon, stars, plants and fish visually relating the story of Creation. The Star of David and Zohar signs appear as symbols connecting the mystical and material world. Historical scenes interpreted in colored glass include the stories of Noah's ark, the sacrifice of Isaac, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, slavery in Egypt, Jonah and the whale, and Jerusalem.

The eastern wall tells the story of the Holocaust and the creation of modern state of Israel.

"When I saw the finished panels, I felt elevated, like giving birth," said Yafet. "I cut the glass according to the way I feel, but the artwork takes on a life of its own when it is finished and the light shines through it."

Yafet said, creating the stained-glass windows was a challenge because the design had to be created on separate panels of glass and the panels had to be

connected and to flow from one panel to another.

"I wanted to tell the story of the Jewish people, from creation to the receiving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai," Yafet said. "I also wanted to include the Jewish holidays such as Passover and Rosh Hashana, the Holocaust and the birth of the state of Israel. The windows were my biggest project to date."

Yafet's work can also be seen at B'nai Aviv Congregation in Weston and B'nai Sephardim in Hollywood.

"I designed the ark and the Remembrance Wall at Temple Beth Emet and then they asked me to do the windows," Yafet said. "I have done arks for many synagogues here and in Israel."

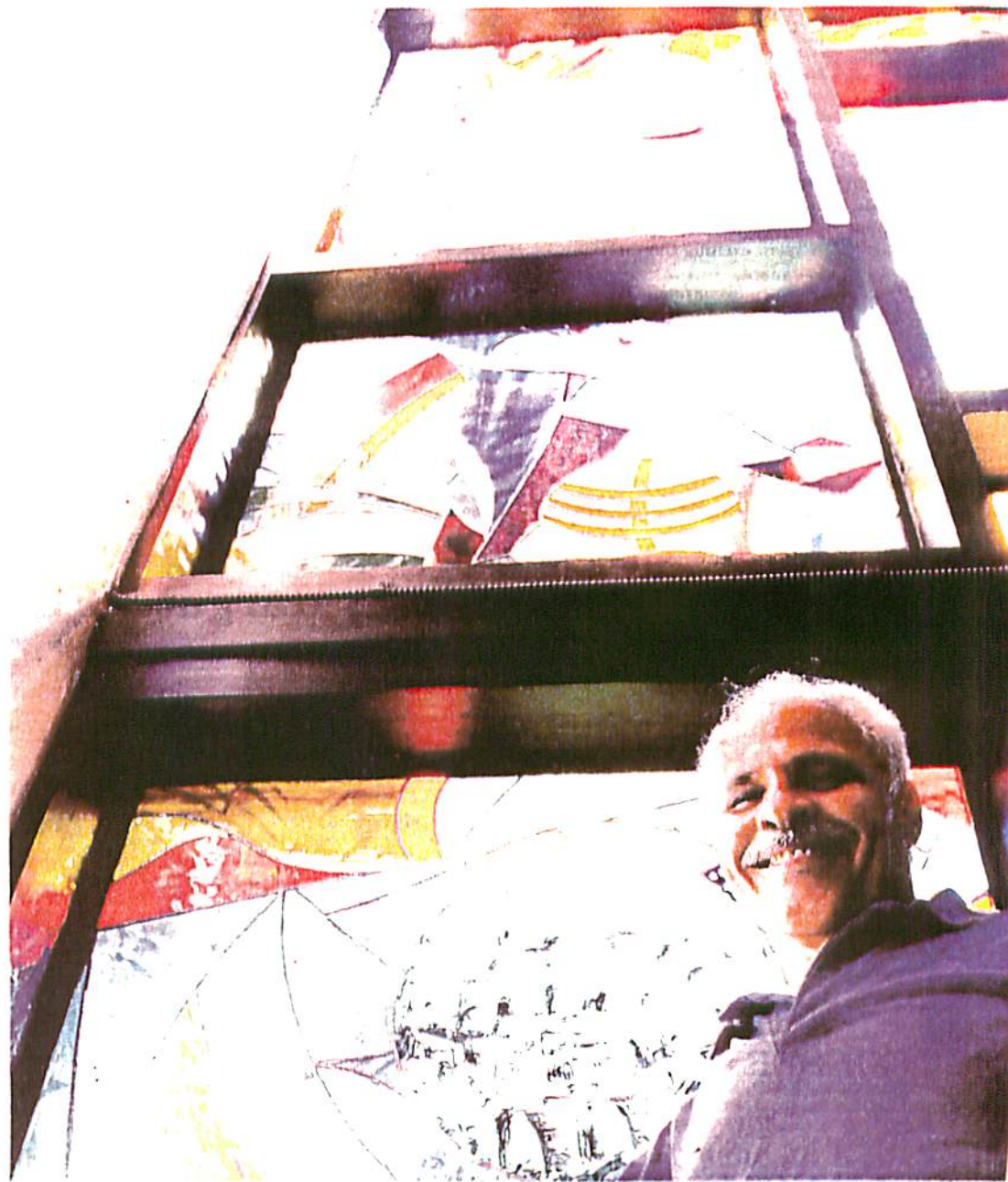
A native of Tel Aviv, Yafet, 61, has lived in Hollywood since 1973. He has three children: Gilahd, 22, Raphael, 18 and Anat, 27. His sons, Gilahd and Raphael are also artistic and assist him in his artwork. His daughter lives in Jerusalem.

"My home is my studio," Yafet said. "My sons helped me with the project. Working on stained glass is not like painting. First, I design it. I also have to paint on the glass and fire it, but I don't know the total effect until the lights shine through."

Jan Milestone, chairwoman of the committee for the stained glass project, said the finished artwork exceeded her expectations.

"When I met with the artist and saw his drawings, I knew the project would be beautiful, but when I saw his finished creation, I thought it was fabulous," Milestone said. "The windows are a great expression of the history and heritage of the Jewish people."

Temple Beth Emet is located at 4807 S. Flamingo Road in Cooper City. For more information about the temple, call 954-680-18882.



Israeli artist Shalom Yafet with the stained glass he created at Temple Beth Emet in Cooper City. Staff Photos/Beth Black