

# Lloyd Street Synagogue

## Glossary

**Ark:** The structure that contains the Torah scrolls placed at the Eastern wall of the synagogue sanctuary so that it is closest to Jerusalem.

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah:** Hebrew term which means “son/daughter of the commandment.” At the age of 13, a child becomes a Bar- or BatMitzvah at a special ceremony where he or she reads from the Torah for the first time and accepts the duties and responsibilities of Jewish law. The plural form of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is B’nai Mitzvah.

**Bimah:** A raised platform with a table that faces the ark. The prayers are led from the bimah and the Rabbi will deliver the sermon from here. The bimah is often located in the center of the synagogue.

**Eternal Light:** In Hebrew, called the **ner tamid**, the eternal light is a lamp that is always lit in the sanctuary, usually by the ark. The lamp recalls the eternal light in King Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. The light is a symbol of God’s eternal presence and protection.

**Hebrew:** The language of many Jewish prayers and texts. Hebrew is an ancient language used in Biblical times and a modern language that is one of the national languages of the modern country of Israel.

**Immigrant:** A person who leaves their country of birth and settles permanently in another country. Immigrate: Permanently moving from one country to a new country.

**Lithuania:** A small country in Eastern Europe just to the west of Russia. Between 1880 and 1920, many Lithuanians of all religious backgrounds immigrated to the United States.

**Mezuzah:** A small case attached to the right doorpost of Jewish homes and businesses. It contains a small parchment with a short passage from Deuteronomy on it that instructs the Israelites to place God's commandments on the doorposts of their homes.

**Mikveh:** A ritual bath whose custom goes back to biblical times. It is used before major life cycle events (weddings, bar/bat mitzvah, etc.). The waters of the mikveh must be "living water," which means from a natural source, such as rain or a spring.

**Shabbat:** The Jewish Sabbath that lasts from sundown on Friday through an hour past sundown on Saturday. This is the Jewish day of rest.

**Rabbi:** from a Hebrew word for teacher, this is the spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation or community. A Rabbi leads the services, teaches classes, and leads life-cycle events like weddings, Bar/BatMitzvahs and funerals.

**Star of David:** A six-pointed star consisting of two superimposed triangles, the Star of David is a universal Jewish symbol connected to Biblical times.

**Synagogue:** From a Greek word meaning "meeting place," this is the name for a Jewish house of worship, sometimes called a shul or temple.

**Torah:** The first five books of the Jewish Bible are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which contain a series of stories from the creation of the universe to the death of Moses. The Torah is read three times a week from a special scroll written in Hebrew on parchment. The Torah scrolls are stored in the ark along the East wall when not in use.