

Memories of Adas Israel Congregation – from Arlis Grossman 9-11-19

As a child until 6th grade when we joined Temple Emanuel in 1947, our family belonged to the Adas Israel Congregation. It was ½ block from my Grandparentø (Israel and Mary Garon) home on 3rd street.

I remember meeting friends and running around outside while the older generation was praying inside. There were mostly boys because there was no education for girls in the Orthodox synagogue. Thatø why my parents joined Temple Emanuel where there were coed classes on Sunday morning and Hebrew classes on Wednesday nights. There was also a 6th grade dance class.

My Grandfather Israel was an early member of the Adas Israel Synagogue and he and his friends used to gather at my Grandfatherø home and øloudlyö discuss synagogue politics. The Adas Israel was referred to as øThe Third Street Synagogueö and there was another Jewish synagogue one block up the hill, øThe Fourth Street Synagogue.ö My other grandfather, Abraham Horwitz, helped lay the cornerstone of that synagogue. I remember that synagogue was more liberal Orthodox and later became the Conservative Synagogue. In more recent history, that synagogue joined with reform Temple Emanuel and moved into the space of the Jewish Community Center on 16th Ave. E. The Temple Emanuel building on 4th Street and 19th Ave E. (where Erv and I were married) was sold.

My Grandfather, Israel, loved to sing and sometimes served as a Cantor for small St. Paul synagogues who didnø have a Cantor. A famous story about my Grandfather Israel is as follows: The opera singer Jan Pierce came to Duluth to perform a concert. He came to the Adas Israel while he was in town and sat next to my Grandfather. My Grandfatherø proud voice sang out loudly and Jan Pierce said to my grandfather, øYou have an excellent singing voice.ö My grandfather, not recognizing who Jan Pierce was, replied, øWith a little training, your voice would be pretty good, too.ö Jan Pierce repeated that story on Johnny Carsonø Tonight Show.

Although the congregation was small in more recent years, I thought of them as being warm and welcoming. My cousin who lives alone in Duluth often came for the herring and food that greeted guests after prayer. I was so happy to hear that synagogue members reached out to him.

Of course I was deeply saddened by tragic fire on Sept 9, 2019 that took away another part of Duluthø rich and unique Jewish History.