



Since May 1992, Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple has been entrusted with a Holocaust Torah scroll. It is on permanent loan from the Memorial Scrolls Trust (MST) of the Westminster Synagogue, in London, England. Our Torah, #404, is originally from Melnik, Czechoslovakia.

For more than a thousand years, Jews had lived and thrived in Czechoslovakia. After the German invasion in 1939, historic synagogues were deserted or destroyed. In 1942, members of Prague's Jewish community gathered 100,000 religious treasures from the synagogues and brought them to the Jewish Museum of Prague. Among the artifacts were about 1,800 Torah scrolls. There the scrolls remained, neglected and decaying, until the early 1960s.

In 1963, the Westminster Synagogue in London took responsibility for 1,564 scrolls. The Torahs were cataloged and repaired. Today, it is the work of MST to send the scrolls to synagogues around the world, like ours. The motto is: "Each Memorial Scroll is a memory of the past and a messenger for the future."

Our scroll #404 comes from a synagogue in Melnik, 32 miles northeast of Prague. Jews first settled in Melnik before 1400. Melnik's Jewish population in 1930 was 94. The Melnik Synagogue stood from 1861-1962, but had not been used since 1940. Our beautiful scroll is said to have been completed in 1850.

The gift of our scroll was made possible through the generosity of Fairmount Temple congregants Sidney and Betty Blumenthal. It was dedicated on May 1, 1992. At the service, Sidney remarked that the scroll "will be ... a constant reminder that we are free to study Torah, and, of course, an honor to the memory of the 6 million Jewish that did not survive. We proudly rededicate this holy scroll to a new and ongoing life. *L'Chayim!*" This irreplaceable, sacred and fragile scroll is kept in an ark in the Arthur J. Lelyveld Center for Jewish Learning.

