

## Rabbis

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The rabbis are involved in many if not most of the activities listed in the various other reports as befits a community of our size. Indeed it is heartening that many regular activities also take place with volunteer- and lay-leadership and organisation, as well as a broader team of professionals beyond the two clergy. In addition to Erev and Morning services for shabbat and festivals downstairs in the main sanctuary of the synagogue, our new (slightly smaller but quieter) Menorah Hall upstairs hosts a second service of one kind or another on almost every Shabbat morning of the month. In addition to Shabbat minchah services and our 'out of Radlett' chavurah we are looking to enhance this provision for our diverse membership, whether in Radlett or beyond, particularly once our clergy team is extended when our Cantor-to-be, Sarah Grabiner, takes up her post following ordination next year.

At our Shabbat services in 2017 we celebrated **4** (12 in 2016) Baby Blessings, with other Brit Milah or Baby Blessing ceremonies taking place in members' homes, **31** (20) B'nei/B'not Mitzvah, **3** (5) Aufrufen and a number of special wedding anniversaries and birthdays. We conducted **3** (12) weddings. Sadly, there were **10** (8) funerals as well as other bereavements, for example of members' parents, where the funeral was conducted under the auspices of another synagogue but in a number of such instances where we facilitated shiva prayers for own bereaved member and their family. We had just **1** (2) adult candidate for conversion who gained Jewish status through the Reform Beit Din, and was subsequently welcomed into our community.

As our community grows, we have observed that there are two polarised areas that require more and more of our attention and pastoral support. On one hand, the number of our families with younger children increases each year, and we are spending more and more time welcoming these families and helping them settle into congregational life and joining our cheder and Bar/Bat-mitzvah programme. On the other hand, our community members are also growing older, and many are experiencing the challenges of supporting their parents or sadly mourning them. This has become a noticeable change in the pastoral work we are doing.

Beyond the rabbinic work immediately within the congregation we both continue with our roles in the wider community, locally or in the Assembly of Reform Rabbis and Cantors UK, Leo Baeck College or even the international Jewish world. Both of us serve regularly on the Reform Beit Din, and attend monthly Assembly meetings.

As always, our thanks are due to the many people who contribute so much of their time and of themselves to the life of our congregation: the staff, the voluntary leadership and all those who participate in creating a community for each other, a community that goes from strength to strength and of which we can all be proud. In particular our thanks this year go Lisa Leighton and Susan Zonneveld who comes to the end of their terms of office as Honorary Secretary and Head of Ritual respectively. Both have been extraordinarily devoted with their time and energy not just within their portfolios but as active members of the Executive, showing real care for the community as a whole and its many activities and concerns on our behalf.

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Also concluding his term as Head Warden is Jack Alvarez. Although he continues to do much beyond the strict remit of this role, we thank him for his care and patience in organising the other wardens, assisting the rabbis and other service-leaders, and generally ensuring that things run smoothly in services, or at least appear to even when they don't.

מי שברך אבותינו ואמותינו הוא יברך את כל מי שעוסקים בצרכי צבור באמונה.

May God who blessed our ancestors bless all those who devote themselves to the needs of the community in a true spirit.

**Rabbi Paul Freedman**

**Rabbi Celia Surget**