

RITUAL REPORT 2017/18

This was my fourth and final year as Head of Ritual. As usual, it was a busy and sometimes challenging year. The small Ritual committee continued to support and work with the Rabbis to ensure that weekly and festival services ran as smoothly and seamlessly as possible. This couldn't happen without the committed team of Wardens - all volunteers who work very hard to make sure that our Community can experience great, well-run services.

I would particularly like to thank our Head Warden, Jack Alvarez for supporting me during the past four years. His fastidious organisation, knowledge and support made the job of Head of Ritual far easier.

I would also like to thank Rabbi Paul and Rabbi Celia for their continued hard work and support. They work tirelessly to provide us with high quality Shabbatot, Festival Services and so much more.

Our Shabbat Services continued with another bumper year of B'nei Mitzvot with many Mincha celebrations on Saturday afternoons.

Our monthly parallel services on the third Shabbat of the month have been well-attended and while offering an option to a Bar mitzvah, some interesting 'alternative' themes and ideas have been explored. We are always open to new ideas and suggestions!

Our regular Chavurah Friday night services in Borehamwood and Welwyn are still going strong, having become fixtures in many peoples' calendars.

In July, we had our Erev Shabbat outdoor picnic. The weather held out and it was a huge success.

The High Holyday services again went pretty smoothly. At the risk of repeating myself, organising the erection of a huge marquee and its contents, as well as running up to five services at once at two different locations is always a great challenge requiring the support of many. It would be impossible without the office staff and a large team of volunteers who work tirelessly to make sure everything runs seamlessly. It is the Synagogue's most high profile event and therefore it is crucial to get all the elements right. Work starts on this around March and continues until October. A huge project.

We had our afternoon Channukah Celebration and much fun was had by all. As usual, we participated in the lighting of the Radlett cross-community Menorah outside the Radlett Centre.

Once again, Rabbi Paul ensured we planted a tree at Tu B'Shvat. This year, Paul also led a Tu B'Shvat trip to Kew Gardens.

Our Erev Purim 'Queen' themed Megillah reading was fabulous. Arranging and participating in 'a show' like this is no mean feat. Thank you to all.

Our Community Seder again took place. Led by Rabbis Paul and Celia, there really was a lovely feeling in the hall. It has become a firm fixture in the Synagogue calendar.

The Yom HaShoah service was deeply moving. Our guest speaker, survivor Harry Spiro spoke about his experiences as a boy. He spoke articulately and although having suffered immensely, his positive outlook and optimism shone through. It was a pleasure to have him speak at our Synagogue.

Yom Ha'atzmaut. We celebrated '70 Years of Israel' with a series of events spanning a whole week; an Israeli themed musical Erev Shabbat Service started the week followed by a special Talmud session, an Israeli film, guest speaker Rabbi Gilad Kariv and of course lots of falafel was eaten!

Our monthly Shiurim continue before the Service on the first Shabbat morning of the month. Led by congregants as well as the Rabbis, they are hugely interesting. Sadly, they are not very well attended.

As I mentioned above, this is my last Ritual Committee report. It has been a pleasure and honour being the Head of Ritual for this wonderful community. Working on the 'inside' has shown me how a Synagogue actually runs and survives. The hard-working Rabbis and the office staff keep the ship sailing magnificently. However, the tireless work of a large group of volunteers ensures that the Synagogues continues to thrive. I thank them all.

Susan Zonneveld
Head of Ritual
May 2018