



A rough road from the Congo



May
2017

Iyar-Sivan
5777

In from the cold: asylum seeker families enjoy the hospitality of The LJS at the monthly Drop-In. But what brings them to St John's Wood? And what have they been through on their journey? Read about one woman's traumatic experiences in Africa and then in London: pages 8-9.

Night of study planned for *Shavu'ot*

On 30 May – on what would have been his 93rd birthday – we will celebrate the life of Rabbi John Rayner by studying his work during an evening of learning.

We will also learn about progress on the John Rayner archive project.

The evening will start at 18.45 with an *Erev Shavu'ot* service, followed by a communal *chavurah* supper and cheesecake competition.

Then, in her keynote address, Rabbi Alexandra Wright will talk about

→p3



INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Why was this night different? p2

Shabbat and festival services p3

News from the LJS Council p4

Balfour – and other anniversaries p5

The Learning Circle p10-11

Community activities p14

Welcome

to **Lysa Schwartz** who has joined The LJS as Interim Executive Director. Lysa, who was raised in America but studied at Nottingham University, previously worked in the voluntary sector, providing services and support to people with communication and learning difficulties, for the last

eight years as Chief Executive Officer of the Makaton Charity.

Bereavements

We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

Jenny Heilbronn, wife of Bill, mother of Judith, Tim and Penny, sister of Lady Elizabeth Lazarus, Susan Lawton and David Atwell

Harold Lever, brother of Lillian Donnelly

Elizabeth Middleburgh, mother of Rabbi Dr Charles Middleburgh

המקום ינחם אתכם
בתוך שאר האבלים

*May God comfort you
and all who mourn*



The big ask...

Simon Bard and Daniel Packowitz pose the crucial four questions that lead on to the retelling of the Passover story at the LJS Communal Seder.

Hear the story of barriers broken down

Mohammed Fahili, founder and director of the Charles Clore Jewish-Arab Community Centre in the northern Israeli city of Akko, will be our guest speaker before the *Shabbat* service on **20 May**.

The Charles Clore Jewish Arab Community Centre's mission is to provide high-quality, low-cost educational, cultural and recreational activities for the residents of Akko who cannot access these services elsewhere for reasons of

language or inability to pay.

The centre is in the heart of the mainly Arab Wolfson neighbourhood of the new city of Akko. It provides low-cost child care to mainly Arab, but also Jewish, children under three, allowing their mothers to work.

Activities for hundreds of children run six days a week after school, and include educational enrichment, cultural and recreational programming. A new youth

programme is being developed to strengthen local Arab youth, with a view to holding joint activities, helping to counter ignorance and build respect, understanding and tolerance for the 'other'.

Women's activities focus on empowerment and education in areas such as nutrition, child-rearing in the 21st century and knowing their rights under the law.

■ **Fahili's talk will begin at 10.00 and everyone is welcome.**

Shabbat and festival services: May

Friday evening services start at 18.45 and *Shabbat* morning services at 11.00.

DATE	RABBI/SPEAKER	NOTES
Friday 28 April	<i>Kabbalat Torah</i> Class	
<i>Shabbat</i> 29 April <i>Tazria-M'tzora</i>	<i>Kabbalat Torah</i> service	Please note: the service starts earlier than usual, at 10.30
Friday 5 May	Rachel Benjamin	Crystal Clear service and dinner All welcome
<i>Shabbat</i> 6 May <i>Acharey-Mot/Kedoshim</i>	Rene Pfertzel	Willie Kessler special birthday
Sunday 7 May 15.00	Memorial Service for the Loss of a Child or the Prospect of a Child	All welcome.
Friday 12 May	Alexandra Wright	Young Adult <i>Chavurah</i> dinner
<i>Shabbat</i> 13 May <i>Emor</i>	Alexandra Wright	Yoni Roodner <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Nosh 'n' Drosh with Pam Fox: see p16
Friday 19 May	Classes <i>Zayin</i> and <i>Chet</i> from Rimon Religion School	<i>Chavurah</i> supper for children from Rimon classes <i>Zayin</i> and <i>Chet</i> and their parents
<i>Shabbat</i> 20 May <i>B'Har-B'Chukkotay</i>	Student Rabbi Nathan Godleman	Before the service, at 10.00, Mohammed Fahili of the Arab-Jewish Centre in Akko will be speaking about his work – see p2
<p>Shabbat morning services are streamed live via the internet. If you would like to follow a service on your computer or tablet, please phone the LJS office to get your user name and password.</p>		<i>Kiddush</i> sponsored by Ann and Bob Kirk to mark their wedding anniversary and Bob's birthday
Friday 26 May	Rachel Benjamin	
<i>Shabbat</i> 27 May <i>B'Midbar</i>	Rachel Benjamin	<i>Aufruf</i> : Alexandra Paget and Alexander Goldsmith
Tuesday 30 May <i>Erev Shavu'ot</i>	The Rabbis	A Celebration of Rabbi John D. Rayner: see more details on page 1
Friday 2 June	Alexandra Wright	
<i>Shabbat</i> 3 June <i>Naso</i>	Alexandra Wright	25th Wedding anniversary: Maggie and William Carver

→ Rabbi Rayner's influential role at The LJS. From 23.00 until midnight there will be two options: 'John Rayner's Ethics' by Rabbi Rachel Benjamin; and 'John Rayner as Historian of Judaism' by Rabbi David Goldberg.

At 00.15 Rabbi René Pfertzel will give a presentation on the first results of the John Rayner Project. Then, at 01.15, those who want to join West London Synagogue for a night of continuing study will be able to leave.

LJS: not just a place to pray

LJS Chairman Sue Head reports on a key appointment, some topics for discussion, cultural events and and a successful initiative to recruit new volunteers

This month we welcome Lysa Schwartz (right) as our Interim Executive Director. She comes to us with a great deal of outstanding experience and expertise. We are looking forward to working with her and hope her time with us will be a great success. You may remember that the Council met together in February for a 'shabbaton', during which we reviewed our Strategic Plan. Following on from the ideas generated on that day, we have had a small working party of Council members drafting a framework to guide our thinking and discussions. The key themes being considered are: spirituality (including such areas as religious observance), services we provide (for example, community events, learning and education), organisational support and financial sustainability. The Council will be discussing these ideas and doing some detailed planning around them.

Council received an interesting and inspiring talk from Cathy Heller-Jones, our Director of Music, on both the music and



Lysa Schwartz - 'outstanding experience and expertise'

the cultural events planned at The LJS. It was noteworthy how the Members' Choir is developing and the Council wish to give their thanks, not only to Cathy, but also to volunteer William Falk for leading this choir. Cathy reported that there are ambitious plans in place for the Members' Choir, with perhaps the chance to perform abroad. Cultural events were discussed, particularly the music and poetry evening, 'The Barbed Lyre: Leaves from the Isle of Man', scheduled for 2 April. Several of us later

attended this performance and it was indeed a fantastic evening. Council are supportive of events such as these, which give another dimension to belonging to a community such as The LJS.

Updates on the renovation works take place at each Council meeting, as does a careful review of what we have done and what we are planning to do next. With that in mind, Council is assessing the work carried out on the Montefiore Hall ceiling, which had the unexpected result of adversely affecting the acoustics. This needs resolving and Council is considering various options for doing this.

A very successful Volunteers Recruitment Evening was held earlier last month, attended by more than 50 people. Council members, committee chairs and leaders of key synagogue activities spoke and encouraged those not yet participating to become involved. We had success! Many people put their names down to volunteer.

If you did not have a chance to attend, and might be interested, please contact the LJS office for an 'A to Z' list of the activities we have and see what you might be interested in doing. The evening was also a very friendly social occasion with good wine and cheese and plenty of conversation. It is exactly what belonging to The LJS is about: not only a place to pray, but also a place to meet and participate in enjoyable community events.

Sue Head

I take pride in my community, the LJS, and in my movement... which is not afraid to remind the world that Liberal views are valid

His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.



This was the letter sent on 2 November 1917 by Arthur Balfour, the UK Foreign Secretary, to the second Baron Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation. Jews were elated by the United Kingdom's official support, and the Zionist movement saw a massive increase in membership. The Arab population of Palestine strongly opposed the declaration and saw it as a betrayal. Some saw the inter-communal unrest in the 1920s as a direct consequence of this declaration.

So where are we today, a century after the declaration? There is indeed a Jewish state, which became 'a national home for the Jewish people'. However, many of the 'existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine' have been forced to move out of the country, and a million Jews living in Arab countries have been forcibly expelled. Jews outside Israel are often targeted as 'agents' of Israel, even if we know that this is just an excuse to hide anti-Semitism.

We have mixed feelings about this celebration. There is a deep sense of joy and pride when one considers the State of Israel, its achievements and its survival against all odds. Anyone who visits the country can only be amazed at how Israel has grown and evolved in recent decades. And yet, peace remains a distant prospect, violence is ever-present; Arabs in the West Bank do not lead a normal life. They live in a small territory split into three zones between which movement is difficult.

Another celebration this year is of the Six Day

War of 1967. Threatened with death, Israel reversed the course of events and emerged victorious. As a result of that, Israel is now present in the West Bank. Some refer to the Occupied Territories, others the Liberated Territories. Personally, I would go for The Territories. Until 1948, this region was part of the British Palestine Mandate. After the Independence War of 1948-49, Jordan occupied and annexed it, recognised only by the British. When Israel occupied it after 1967, it inherited the problem with the land. The 'land for peace' policy that saw the Sinai returned to Egypt did not work in the West Bank, and since then the situation has only got worse.

'Israel has reached its maturity, and we can only hope that the world has come to terms with its existence'

This is a year of celebration: of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, of the Six Day War in 1967, but also the first Zionist Congress in August 1897, the UN's partition vote of November 1947, President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, and the start of the first Intifada in December 1987. Next year we will celebrate 70 years of existence of the State of Israel.

Seven is an auspicious number in the Jewish tradition, and it is generally said that during our lives we go through seven-year cycles. We also know that we have to help ourselves, not →p6

Dear Editor...

Trying to understand the Hebrew is part of our journey

I was struck by the headline above the letter in the April edition of LJS News, 'Learning Hebrew doesn't make us better people'. Of course it won't. But the writer went further, saying 'Hebrew is a distraction'.

I am a student in Rabbi Wright's Tuesday evening Hebrew class and have been keen to learn more classical Hebrew in order to better understand our texts.

On Tuesday evenings during term time at The LJS there are three classes for students of different levels keen to improve their knowledge of classical Hebrew.

Reading Hebrew texts only in translation does not always give a satisfactory meaning. There are many instances where the English translation of words does not adequately reflect the depth of meaning or indeed sometimes the doubtful meaning of the text. This letter is not the place for a detailed analysis but the very first word of Genesis, chapter 1 verse 1, is a good starting point! Also, how do we understand proper names without knowing what they mean in Hebrew? How do we deal with the many names for the Divine?

As progressive Jews we should always attempt to look at our sources, both ancient and modern.

Of course, the study of Hebrew is only a part of that and there is a danger that time dedicated to studying Hebrew may be time that could have been better spent. But the same might be said of going for a walk or watching television.

Trying to understand our text without someone else's translation (perhaps interpretation is sometimes a better word) is just a part of our journey. For an increasing number of us, aided by experienced, qualified and enthusiastic teachers, it is a very important part of it.

Michael Romain

→ and expect a solution to come from somewhere else. Israel has reached its maturity, and we can only hope that the world has come to terms with its existence. The world is certainly not at peace, as the terrorist attack in London in March reminded us. Some human beings with warped minds are incapable of seeking peace, of seeing the beauty in God's creation, and they grant themselves the right to take lives as a political protest.

'More than ever, a Jewish liberal voice is necessary... a voice of care, compassion and respect for all living beings'

Londoners' formidable reaction can be summarised in one word: resilience. It is a lesson that we, as Jews, learnt a long time ago.

More than ever, a Jewish liberal voice is necessary in this world: a voice of care, compassion, and respect for all living beings. I take pride in the accomplishments of my community, The LJS, for its work to help refugees and to tackle one of today's main issues.

I also take pride in my movement, Liberal Judaism, which is not afraid to remind the world that Liberal views are valid, and certainly preferable to the dark forces trying to swallow our world. This will be my cause for celebration.

Rabbi René Pfertzel

MEMORIAL SERVICE

to celebrate the life of
Rabbi Lionel Blue OBE

18.30 to 20.00
on 8 May 2017

West London Synagogue,
34 Upper Berkeley Street,
London W1H 5QE

Including tributes and a short film, 'Encounter with Rabbi Lionel Blue.'

All welcome. Entrance free but by ticket only. For free tickets, please contact RSVP@rjuk.org

Do we really want more Jewish schools?

As Ecclesiastes said: 'There is... a time to keep quiet and a time to speak out...' During my working life in senior educational roles, I felt unable to speak out on the subject of faith schools but now, happily retired, the issue concerns me. So when I was asked to contribute to a new series of *Shabbat* discussions about topics in the news that affect the Jewish community, I knew immediately that the subject would be faith schools and discussion about whether the current national policy of creating new ones is right.

The subject is topical and has regularly featured in the Jewish press in recent months. There are insufficient places in Jewish schools to meet current parental demand and there was also disappointment in some quarters that two applications for new Jewish schools were turned down by the government, because the curriculum time to be dedicated to faith education was judged to be disproportionate.

An article in the Jewish Chronicle on 20 January by Jonathan Boyd, Executive Director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, provides a helpful summary of the current position and the tidal change that has occurred in recent decades. In the mid-1970s there were 12,700 Jewish children studying

in Jewish schools in the UK; 40 years later there were 30,900. Over the past 20 years the number of Jewish schools has increased from 62 to 139.

As the article goes on to show, the growth has been not only in response to the *charedi* community's demographic increase but also in the mainstream sector in which 11 new Jewish schools have opened since the mid-1990s. The changing scenario means, as Jonathan Boyd wrote: 'Increasingly, it has become the parents

who opt to send their children to non-Jewish schools who feel like the anomalies.'

It is understandable why so many Jewish parents are opting for places in Jewish schools. The academic results are very good, young people have increased exposure to learning about Judaism and, in the more open-minded and pluralistic Jewish schools, there are opportunities for learning about other religions and some interaction with people of different faiths and backgrounds. My concerns are not a criticism of Jewish parents who want the best for their children and decide that a Jewish school will provide this; rather, I have a deepening worry about what the national policy may be doing for the cohesion of society, a policy that has also resulted in the opening of separate Muslim, Sikh and Hindu schools.

Instead of focusing on our Jewish standpoint, how might things appear from a different perspective? Hundreds of thousands of children



'I have a deepening worry about what the national policy may be doing for the cohesion of society'

from families of other faiths, or increasingly of no faith, attend schools in London with its significant Jewish population, and yet have little or no educational contact with any Jewish child. Nowadays a Muslim, Hindu or Christian child can even live in an area where there are lots of Jewish families and still go

through primary and secondary education without ever coming across a Jewish child in their schools. They are probably also less likely than in the past to be taught by Jewish teachers, more of whom are now required by Jewish schools.

Of course, visits can be arranged for some children from other backgrounds to synagogues such as our own and curricula developed for schools to teach about Judaism, but is this really as meaningful as the daily interactions that →p8

→ take place between children in the school dining-room, in the PE changing-room, or between parents at the school gate... interactions which illustrate that, alongside our religious differences, we share so much in common?

As Rabbi Jonathan Romain wrote some years ago: 'I sent my children not to a Jewish school, but to one where they would sit next to a Catholic, play football with a Muslim during break, do homework with a Hindu and walk home with an atheist. I wanted my children to know those other ones *and for them to know mine.*' During a period when we are regularly confronted by news stories about racist attacks, anti-semitic incidents and difficulties experienced by Jewish students on some university campuses, surely we should be promoting more contact in our school system between children of different backgrounds, rather than reducing the likelihood of such interaction through an increase in faith schools.

Many of us at The LJS have supported organisations that promote educational initiatives between Jewish and Arab children in the State of Israel, because we believe that such developments foster better understanding and a greater chance of communities living cooperatively together. If we think this is the right approach in Israel, should we not advocate something similar in this country?

■ *Michael Hart is former Chairman of The LJS.*

Inside the LJS Drop-In: the harsh realities of life as an asylum seeker

'If you haven't met someone like me, you just hear about refugees, you don't know their story. But if you are here volunteering, it can make you a better person, it can change you in many ways'

The first thing that strikes you about Roselyne is her warm, beautiful smile, which lifts her whole face and shines through her eyes. The second thing is her gentle, singsong voice, a soothing blend of intelligence and tenderness that makes you want her to keep talking.

Roselyne is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, married with 11-year-old twins. Our paths would never normally have crossed, were it not for the asylum seeker drop-in held at The LJS, on the second Sunday of every month, which changed Roselyne's life and mine.

She tells me that before the troubles which brought her to the UK, life in the Congo was good – until a businessman her husband dealt with became a Chief General in the army. That man told her husband to become a spy: he refused. As Roselyne describes what happened next, tears leak from her eyes. 'Not to worry about this Moya,' she apologises. 'This is a story worth telling. It is sometimes getting me emotional, because of what I went through.'

'The soldiers were sent into our house, and my mum was killed in front of me. We were arrested, me and my husband. For three days we were together, where so many bad things happened, I don't want to go into that, please. Then I was taken away.'

'I thought maybe they've killed him, and I assumed him dead.'

She came to Britain in 2001 and claimed asylum at the airport. After 15 years and

Every month The LJS welcomes scores of asylum seeker families and offers them food, clothing and, not least, moral support. Here Moya Sarnier (right), one of the volunteers who come to help, describes the impact of her encounter with one of the Drop-In's guests.



Photo: Matt Willis

12 court appearances she was granted leave to remain. Two years after arriving in England, Roselyne went to an event held by a Congolese charity. She walked off the escalator at Wood Green station, and there in front of her she saw her husband. 'I nearly fainted. I thought, maybe it just looks like him, or I am seeing a ghost. I collapsed. That's how we met again,' she says.

Roselyne can still remember her first visit to the LJS drop-in. 'It wasn't a very good day for us. We had nothing. We had no transport, nothing in the house to eat. If it is not for this place, I don't know where we would be. The people we met here were very helpful and friendly, we were asked if we had a doctor, if we needed a lawyer. Just seeing that someone was thinking of me as a person, being spoken to with respect, that made me feel good.'

As a volunteer, I have learnt that asylum seekers are not treated as people by the authorities, who assume that whoever is in front of them is lying. It is dehumanising. This is what happened to Roselyne: because she was brought up in Uganda in an English-speaking school, she speaks fluent English. But as far as

UK Visas and Immigration is concerned, Congolese people do not speak English. It was more than a decade before a professor from Oxford University was hired to provide expert evidence, and Roselyne was finally believed: 'He was very kind, asked many questions, then said, "But why do they doubt you?"'

Even then, progress was achingly slow. 'My case went to the High Court in the Royal Courts of Justice; I went to court 12 times. In that time I had my twins, and not being able to work because you have no papers, it's not a nice feeling. I was never brought up thinking that it's OK to sit down.' She volunteered with the Red Cross and they paid for her to study International Relations and International Development at London Metropolitan University.

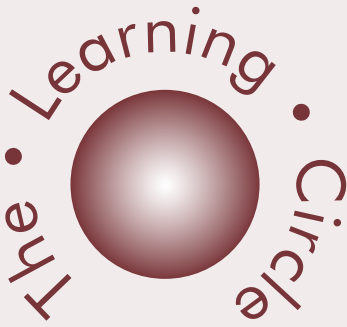
In 2015 Roselyne was finally granted leave to remain, but it took a year for the Home Office just to send her a letter to confirm her status, which meant her family became homeless. But now they have a home and, through a contact at the LJS drop-in, Roselyne was offered an interview for an administrative position. She got the job.

'It's a great feeling. Just seeing that you can provide for your family like everyone else does is the best thing I could hope for. Using my skills and knowledge is breathtaking. Some people think asylum seekers come here to take benefits – no, not all of us. There may be a bad fruit in the basket, but that doesn't mean that the whole basket is bad. I feel happy waking up in the morning now. I'm going to contribute to the country which has welcomed me, nothing is as great as that.'

While Roselyne has been granted leave to remain, her husband is still waiting. But their children are their future: 'When they grow up and can understand better we'll explain to them, that they should look in the mirror, and see how they can be better people.'

I am very moved when Roselyne tells me: 'Back in the Congo, when I was arrested, I was never taken to any court. I was beaten, no one cared about me. That cannot happen to me here. If I am arrested, I will be taken to the court and be judged in terms of what I've done.'

Hearing her words, I am reminded of the stories of Jewish refugees who came to this country to start a better life for their families. The drop-in has changed my life, as well as Roselyne's. She puts it well: 'If you haven't met someone like me, you just hear about refugees, you don't know their story. But if you are here volunteering, it can make you a better person, it can change you in so many ways.'



at the **LJS**

**Classes in Judaism and Hebrew
Shavu'ot term 5777/2017**

Tuesday 19.00-20.00

25 April-11 July

Classical Hebrew

Half-term: 30 May

Beginners with Susannah Alexander

This class is designed for beginners who want to learn to read and decipher the prayer book. No previous knowledge of Hebrew is required. Three-term course.

Next steps in biblical Hebrew with Sally Gold

This class is for those who feel they are able to cope with guided reading, at their own pace, of simple Prayer-Book and Biblical Hebrew, and who now feel ready to gradually build their reading skills and their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar at an unhurried and manageable pace. The class will allow plenty of time to gain, revise and consolidate through the use of texts and some simple exercises which are geared to progressive understanding and confidence. Students will also be introduced to the use of dictionaries and other tools, with a view to being able to try, if they would like to, some independent preparation of simple texts.

Difficult texts of the *Torah* with Alexandra Wright

Now in its third year, this class is looking at some of the more challenging texts of the *Torah*, building on the grammar and vocabulary we have learnt over the past two years.

If you are not sure which level to pursue, please speak to Susannah, Sally or Alexandra.

Tuesday 20.00-21.00

25 April-11 July

Exploring Judaism with Rabbi Rachel Benjamin

Half-term: 30 May

Exploring Judaism is for people who wish they knew more about Judaism or would like to brush up their Jewish knowledge. It is for family members who are not Jewish, who would like to understand more about Judaism. It is also an essential programme for people choosing Judaism, by conversion.

Class members are encouraged to read materials which will be made available online. The course is designed to offer knowledge about aspects of Judaism, to encourage practical experiences of Liberal Judaism and space for personal reflection within the group.

Tuesday 11.15-12.30

25 April–18 July

Tuesday Texts

Half-term: 30 May

This friendly group is led by our Rabbis, Dr Dov Softi and Susannah Alexander as we study biblical texts and commentaries and enjoy sessions on Jewish art. Our discussions are lively and relevant to contemporary issues. New members are most welcome. Biscuits provided.

Shabbat 9.45-10.45

22 April–8 July

Learning from Texts with Bernie Bulkin

Half-term: 27 May and 3 June

This year the class is going to tackle the subject of creation and cosmogony in the Bible and Jewish writings. Our purpose in focusing on this one familiar story is to explore in depth the nature of *Torah* commentary through the centuries. We will look at Talmudic rabbinical comments, Philo, Maimonides, Saadia, and, in most detail, Rashi. Time permitting, we will also look at some more modern writers such as Eliezer Berkovits. We also do some *parashah* study at the beginning of most classes, usually based on commentary of Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg and Nehama Leibowitz. No prior knowledge required, just an inquiring mind, a willingness to read material handed out in advance, and more or less regular attendance and participation.

Shabbat 9.45-10.45

22 April–8 July

Beginners' Hebrew with Naomi Brightwell

Half-term: 27 May and 3 June

Don't know your aleph from your – oh you know, that other letter at the end of the Hebrew alphabet? Naomi Brightwell's class uses Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* to help complete beginners decode the squiggles and start tackling what they've always been afraid of. With a little bit of grammar, a sprinkling of vocabulary and plenty of off-topic conversations on Jewish food, the structure of the liturgy and anything else that helps us have fun while learning. Absolutely no previous knowledge required. Previous students have even gone on to confidently lead *Shabbat* morning services.

Improvers' Hebrew with David Strang

This course follows Naomi Brightwell's class. We will consolidate the knowledge that students have from the beginners' class and will aim to ensure that by the end of the year, they are able to read key prayers from *Siddur Lev Chadash* and passages from the *Torah*.

We will also start to look at the structure of biblical Hebrew, so that students can begin to understand the meaning of the texts they are reading. All adults welcome; basic Hebrew reading required.

Intermediate Hebrew with Nitza Spiro

This is a group that wishes to increase fluency and participate in the service, not only from the congregation, but from the *bimah* as well. If you know your letters and want to keep up your reading, feel free to join this class.

A CRYSTAL CLEAR FRIDAY EVENING SERVICE at 18.45 on Friday 5 May

The service will last about an hour, followed by a light supper. There is level access to the building, and we have ramps, accessible toilets and a loop system. We will also have a Palantypist and a BSL Interpreter.

It will be friendly and informal – we want you to feel at home. There will be a chance to handle the scrolls, and you can get up and walk around if you need to.

If you would like to come, or if you have any questions, please contact Joanne Beaumont by 14 April: email her at rabbispa@ljs.org or phone 020 7432 1283.

Memorial Service for the loss of a child or the loss of the prospect of a child

**Sunday 7 May
15.00 at The LJS**

If you would like to mark the loss of a child, or the loss of the prospect of a child – a recent loss, or one that has stayed with you for many years – please join us in this communal memorial service, under the joint auspices of The LJS and West London Synagogue, with violinist Alan Parmenter.

Friends and family welcome.

For more details, or if you would like a confidential conversation, you can contact:

Rabbi Alexandra Wright – 07976 930112
a.wright@ljs.org

Rabbi Helen Freeman – 07831 755409
helen.freeman@wls.org.uk

Hearing loss

– an evening with the
Jewish Deaf Association

**Wednesday 24 May
19.30 - 21.30 at The LJS**

Do you or a member of your family suffer from hearing loss? Come to a presentation by the Jewish Deaf Association.

The evening will include:

- ◆ The best way to deal with hearing loss
- ◆ What technology is now available
- ◆ How to support people with hearing loss
- ◆ What the Jewish Deaf Association (JDA) does and how it may help you.

There will be an update on the JDA Hearing Outreach Project which was supported by the LJS High Holyday Appeal. You will be able to speak to staff from JDA about individual issues.

Refreshments will be provided.

All points of interest will be displayed on a large screen. There will be a palantypist assisting. The synagogue is proud to have a loop system.

Please let us know if you are coming: call 020 7286 5181 or email communitycare@ljs.org



Communities unite to challenge rising hate crime

Britain's Jewish communities have held a first meeting (right) with representatives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller organisations to discuss common concerns, including the recent rise in hate crime.

Participants, including rabbis, activists and lay leaders, discussed Jewish and GRT relations and explored the challenges the different communities face and the misconceptions and prejudices each community is trying to counter.

The bodies represented included various UK Jewish denominations, the Board of



Deputies, the Jewish human rights charity René Cassin, the Traveller Movement, the London Gypsy Traveller Unit and the Roma Support Group. Marie van der Zyl, Vice-President of the Board of Deputies, said after the meeting: 'This is the first such

high level, cross-communal conversation. It demonstrates the Board of Deputies' solidarity with other minorities and our firm commitment to promote good relations between communities. 'It is crucial that we share our experiences.'

Leo Baeck College Dinner

Tuesday 6 June

If you would like to join an LJS table, please speak to Rabbi Alexandra Wright: a.wright@ljs.org

What have the Bach Passions ever done for Jewish-Christian relations?

An illustrated talk by Rabbi Alexandra Wright and the Rev Laurence Hillel of St Ann's Church, Brondesbury

Monday 19 June at 19.00
at The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

The 2017

Liberal Judaism Day of Celebration

**will take place on Sunday 11 June
at Northwood & Pinner
Liberal Synagogue**

Through a range of sessions and speakers, the day will address the question 'Is Liberal Judaism Political Judaism?'

The Day of Celebration will also see the announcement of the winner of the 2017 LAFTAS competition. The Liberal Academy of Film and Torah Awards (LAFTAS) is an opportunity for Liberal Jewish religion schools to create a short film related to the Day of Celebration theme.

Tickets are now available via Eventbrite or the LJ office. For more information, go to <http://tinyurl.com/l2xnqfo>

DINNER FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Are you between the ages of 25 and 35? Do you have children or grandchildren in that age group? Friday evening dinners for Young Adults are held once a month at The LJS. For more details, please contact Rabbi René

Pfertzel at r.pfertzel@ljs.org



ARCHIVE TUESDAYS

The Archive Team works in the Assembly Hall on Tuesdays. Activities include sorting historical papers, cataloguing, photo preservation and, if you bring a computer, you can help load documents in our web repository. Please contact the Archivist, Cinde Lee at cinde.lee@gmail.com



MONDAY MORNING ART GROUP

Informal art group for both beginners and experienced artists. The class meets at 11.00 every Monday, except during Jewish festivals and Bank Holidays. For more details call Paul Podolsky: 020 8346 2270.



RESTAURANT TUESDAY

Restaurant Tuesday meets on the third Tuesday of every month and is an informal lunch club for the more elderly members of the congregation. Please let the office know if

you are coming for the first time or if you are a regular and cannot come [020 7286 5181]. Lunch starts at 12.30 and now costs £5.



VIDEO AND TEA

From 13.30-16.30 on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Just come along – no need to book. Soup on arrival then a DVD (film classics, musicals, etc) followed by a delicious tea including home-made ice-cream. Donation of £2.

24 May: *That Day We Sang* Victoria Wood wrote and directed this musical drama starring Michael Ball and Imelda Staunton as two lonely Mancunians who find love while preparing for a televised choir reunion.

28 June: *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* Classic American Western with the Wild West outlaws played by Paul Newman and Robert Redford.

26 July: *Florence Foster Jenkins* Stephen Frears' rollicking comedy drama starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant. Based on the real story of the triumph of a tone-deaf heiress.

23 August: *Wildlife of Costa Rica* Documentary.



COMMUNITY CARE

Aviva Shafritz, our Community Care Co-ordinator, is ready to help with difficulties experienced, not only by our older members, such as illness

and provision of care, but also across the spectrum of life. You can contact her at a.shafritz@ljs.org or 020 7286 5181.



BRIDGE CLUB



The Bridge Club meets from 14.00 to 17.00 every Monday in the Assembly Hall

upstairs at The LJS. Anyone with any knowledge of the game is most welcome. This is a social afternoon rather than a competitive one. There is a friendly atmosphere and helpful suggestions.

The cost (including tea or coffee) is £2. New members are welcome: for more details leave a message for Neil Levitt or William Falk at 020 7286 5181.



PLANNING A CELEBRATION?

If you are celebrating a birthday or other special event, have you thought about contributing to the weekly *kiddush* following the *Shabbat* morning service? To find out more, email rabbispa@ljs.org or phone 020 7432 1283.



ART GROUP ABSENT THIS YEAR

The Elliott Art Group is taking a 'sabbatical' this year and returning to The LJS in 2018.

We wish these young members of The LJS a very happy birthday in May:

Benjamin Allen
Zachary Benson
Nora Bielawski
Nina Bluestone
Edie Cohen
Vaughn Conway
Elliott De Winter
Oliver Delew
Lorcan Eisenberg
Amelia Gale
Charles Garbus
Dalia Gelfer
Caio Goldman
Sophia Grade

Grace Hannam
Ella Jackson-Drexler
Sydney Johnson
Roxy Lang
Seth Lefebvre Sell
Ava Meir
Leo Mendelsohn
Olivia Moore
Jonas Morgan
Sam Nash
Daveed Roodner
Eva Ruiz-Daum
Eleanor Sanderson
Xavier Sparks
Adrien Tahar
Marcus Walford
Hector Warner

TINY TOTS at the LJS

Do you have little ones aged between 0 and 4?

Please bring them to The LJS on *Shabbat* mornings

6, 13 and 20 May

for a delightful session of songs, stories, drawing and *kiddush*.



Activities for tiny ones with their parents, grandparents and carers. The nursery is available every *Shabbat* for children to play or read with a parent or carer.

Please email education@ljs.org to be added to the Tiny Tots circulation list.

The Jewish News has a page devoted to opinion pieces and commentary by progressive rabbis and congregants. You can pick up a copy when you are at the synagogue each week.

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

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Executive Director
Caroline Bach

Community Care Co-ordinator
Aviva Shafritz

Director of Music
Cathy Heller-Jones

Organist
Tim Farrell

In case of bereavement:
In office hours, ring 020 7432 1298
At other times, ring 020 8958 2112 (Calo's)

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History of Golders Green's Jews



Don't miss the chance to enjoy an informal lunch after the *Shabbat* service (starting at around 13.00) in the company of an authoritative speaker.

Nosh 'n' Drosh sessions in the coming months include:

- **Shabbat 13 May: Pam Fox** on the Jews of Golders Green
- **Shabbat 10 June: Joan Salter** on Vichy's Children

- **Shabbat 8 July: Rabbi Sybil Sheridan** on Meketa and Ethiopian Jewry
- **Shabbat 9 September: Anthony Steen:** Where the victims of human trafficking end up
- **Shabbat 11 November: Lucy Kaye:** Showing of an award-winning film featuring the LJS's Singing for the Mind
- **Shabbat 9 December:**

Professor Geraldine van Bueren: A special relationship: Jews and human rights

Nosh 'n' Drosh has been one of our most successful activities over the last two years. If you might be interested in sponsoring a session, please ask Martin Slowe or Rabbi Alexandra Wright for details.

Come and support the asylum seekers

The LJS Drop-In for asylum seeker families will be open from 14.00-16.00 on Sunday Sunday 14 May and again on Sunday 11 June. Volunteers are

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needed to help set up from 12.00.

We are especially looking for younger members of the community who can help us with some of the heavier work.

If you are interested in volunteering once a month or a few times a year, please contact Rabbi Alexandra Wright – a.wright@ljs.org – for more details.

Meanwhile, we urgently need these items:

- Shoes
- Maternity clothes (sizes 12-16)
- New baby clothes

Boys clothes for ages 3-14

Girls clothes, especially dresses

Men's T-shirts (small, medium) and trousers (waist 28-32)

Women: nice tops and trousers (sizes 10-16)

Pants for men, women and children aged 2-14

We also need these toiletries:

- Baby wipes
- Sanitary towels (regular + max)
- Safety razors
- Men's deodorant
- (but no more toothbrushes or toothpaste for now).