

December 2019/
January 2020
Kislev/Tevet/Sh'vat 5780

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

LJS
NEWS



Jazz musicians entertain an appreciative audience at the LJS 'All That Jazz' evening

Photograph: Peter Singer

'All That Jazz' took place at the LJS in November with the fabulous Peter Werth and his Jazz Crew. The six members of the band played as if inspired, and soon the sell-out audience was a-buzz with their brilliant jazz-making. They were led by an amazing vocalist, Sarah Dowling, whose voice, along with the instrumentalists, created the atmosphere to make us all feel we were in a jazz club, and not in the Montefiore Hall. Lebanese-style food was provided by Penny Beral, and much enjoyed by everyone...including the band! The musicians commented that the audience was a delight, showing huge appreciation and being great company. Many thanks go to the organising committee for arranging such a lively evening, with everything running seamlessly. It was wonderful fun! There were calls at the end of the evening to make this an annual event in the LJS calendar!

Sue Head

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Shabbat services: December 2019 and January 2020

Friday evening services are at 6.45pm. *Shabbat* morning services are at 11.00am unless otherwise stated.

DATE	RABBI/SPEAKER AND NOTES	
Friday 29 November, 6.45pm Friday 29 November, 8.00pm	Elana Dellal World AIDS Day Service	Service co-led by <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Gideon Putnam Guest speaker Sir Nicholas Hytner Please note that we will be holding two separate services this evening
Shabbat 30 November Tol'dot	Elana Dellal	<i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Gideon Putnam
Friday 6 December	Igor Zinkov	
Shabbat 7 December Vayetzé	<i>L'Dor va-Dor</i> Service Elana Dellal and Igor Zinkov	Co-led with the young people of <i>Rimon</i> Last day of <i>Rimon</i>
Friday 13 December	Alexandra Wright	Service co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Honor Caplan-Higgs
Shabbat 14 December Vayishlach	Alexandra Wright	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Honor Caplan-Higgs Nosh 'n' Drosh with Suzanne Higgott following <i>Kiddush</i> (see page 14)
Sunday 15 December, 3.00pm		Memorial Service for Rabbi Harry Jacobi MBE
Monday 16 December, 4.30pm	Pre- <i>Chanukkah</i> multi-faith celebration	Guest speaker Imam Asim Hafiz OBE (see page 6)
Friday 20 December	Alexandra Wright	
Shabbat 21 December Vayeshev	Alexandra Wright	
Monday 23 December Chanukkah, 3.00pm	LJS Rabbis	3.00pm <i>Chanukkah</i> programme; 4.00pm candle-lighting and tea for the second night of <i>Chanukkah</i> (see page 6)
Friday 27 December Chanukkah	Igor Zinkov	Sixth night of <i>Chanukkah</i> with the lighting of the candles before our <i>Erev Shabbat</i> service
Shabbat 28 December Mikkeitz	Igor Zinkov	
Friday 3 January 2020	Igor Zinkov	Service co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Nina Williams
Shabbat 4 January Va-yiggash	Igor Zinkov	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Nina Williams
Friday 10 January	Alexandra Wright	Service co-led by <i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Gidon Reeve
Shabbat 11 January Va-y'chi	Alexandra Wright	<i>Bar Mitzvah</i> Gidon Reeve
Friday 17 January	Igor Zinkov	
Shabbat 18 January Shemot	Igor Zinkov	Nosh 'n' Drosh with Dr Tony Klug following <i>Kiddush</i> (see page 14)
Sunday 19 January, 5.00pm		Celebration of the Life of Rabbi Dr David J. Goldberg OBE

DATE	RABBI/SPEAKER AND NOTES	
Friday 24 January	Elana Dellal	Service co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Layla Lewis
Shabbat 25 January <i>Va'era</i>	Elana Dellal	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Layla Lewis
Friday 31 January	Elana Dellal and Igor Zinkov	Guitar-led service followed by <i>chavurah</i> supper
Shabbat 1 February <i>Bo</i>	Susan Morris	Mental Health Awareness <i>Shabbat</i> The service will be followed by an informal lunch, question and answer and discussion with Susan Morris (see page 7)

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.

Koleinu services

Koleinu services are held on occasional *Erev Shabbat* and *Shabbat* mornings in the John Rayner Prayer Room and run concurrently with the service in the Sanctuary. They are informal, meditative, musical services which include interactive discussion around the weekly *Torah* portion. All are welcome.

Future *Koleinu* services:

Friday 10 January at 6.45 pm – special Russian *Erev Shabbat* service and supper
Rabbi Igor Zinkov invites all Russian speakers in the congregation and their friends to join him for an *Erev Shabbat* service in the John Rayner Prayer Room followed by a *chavurah* supper (please bring vegetarian or sweet food to share)

Shabbat 11 January at 11.00am
Koleinu service in the John Rayner Prayer Room

Shabbat 15 February at 11.00am
Koleinu service in the John Rayner Prayer Room

Friday 6 March at 6.45pm – *Kulanu* evening
An alternative *Erev Shabbat* service for *Kulanu* (Young Adults group) and *chavurah* supper (please bring vegetarian or sweet food to share)

Shabbat 21 March at 11.00am
Koleinu service in the John Rayner Prayer Room

Guitar-led service on 31 January

The whole congregation is invited to this service in the Sanctuary at 6.45pm followed by a *chavurah* supper. Please bring vegetarian or sweet food to share.

Memorials

Celebration of the life of Rabbi Harry Jacobi 1925 – 2019

**Sunday 15 December at
3.00pm at the LJS**

Everyone is most welcome to attend this celebration of the life of Rabbi Harry Jacobi. Refreshments will be provided after the service.



Celebration of the life of Rabbi Dr David J. Goldberg 1939 – 2019

**Sunday 19 January
at 5.00pm at the LJS**

Following the death in April of our Rabbi Emeritus David Goldberg, a celebration of his life is planned for 19 January 2020 at 5.00pm. There will be tributes, readings and a range of music all specially chosen by David. Refreshments will be served after the service. Everyone is welcome to join Carole and her family. Please RSVP to ljs@ljs.org or call the office on 020 7432 1283.



Bereavements

We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

Louise Golding mother of Paula and Ruth, and member of the LJS for 67 years

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר האבלים
May God comfort you and all who mourn

Council Report

'Do not separate yourself from the community' Mishnah Avot 2:4



The LJS is our community: as members, we can be proud of this synagogue and its achievements. Led by the rabbis and the Council, and supported by staff and an enormous team of volunteers, we provide and take part in many services and activities. It's a huge range, covering religion, education, culture, social care, or just having fun! We try to include the interests and needs of everyone, from the successful series of seminars, *'Deep Calls to Deep'*, earlier in the year, to the recent and fabulous *'All that Jazz'* evening. Alongside this are our regular activities: *shabbat* services and festivals, and life-cycle events. We also speak up for social justice.

Combined with providing for today, we need to plan for the future: the sustainability of the synagogue is a key part of the Council's Strategic Plan; it involves finances, attracting and keeping members, in being there when people need us, and in maintaining the building (the need to replace the boilers and toilets are examples of how expensive this is).

In addition, we are mindful of the need to keep our members safe; paying for security is increasingly costly.

Every member of the LJS has a part to play in this work, particularly through payment of subscriptions. It is a reality that if we do not receive people's membership contributions, then we will not be able to survive financially, and we will therefore not be there at critical points in people's lives. On the page opposite, Lysa Schwartz, our Executive Director, has given details of the membership renewal pack which you will shortly be receiving. Please respond promptly to the request for payment.

I would like to thank everyone who has donated to this year's *Yom Kippur Appeal*, and to remind you of the charities we are supporting; there is still time to donate if you have not yet had an opportunity to do so:

Leket Israel 'rescues food'; in other words, it takes quality, edible food that would otherwise have been discarded and gives it to the poor.

Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, our UK charity, works across north and central London, providing clinical, emotional and practical support for children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions and their families.

Liberal Judaism grants bursaries to students of Leo Baeck College studying for the rabbinate.

We are being asked to support one of these students in whom there is confidence that their future plans are within the Liberal Judaism family.

UJJA: provides education projects which benefit the youth movements of Liberal Judaism, and therefore our own young people at the LJS. Each year we donate to our Jewish future by supporting these youth activities.

So far we have raised £52,938.00. If you have not yet made a donation and would like to do so, please complete and return the form you received at *Yom Kippur*, or contact the LJS office on 020 7286 5181 or email ljs@ljs.org.

Sue Head, Chairman of Council

Membership Renewal 2020

In December we will begin to issue membership renewal notices to every Member and Friend of the LJS. We look forward to welcoming you to another year of LJS membership. Your pack will include:

- Details of your membership fees for 2020.
- A set of the data we hold on you/your household so you can check it. As part of our commitment to the General Data Protection Regulation, it is imperative that you review this on a regular basis.
- A stamped, addressed envelope to make it easy to sign your forms and return them.

If your household includes young adults over the age of 15, then they will receive their own form for completion. If they do not receive a membership form, please contact the LJS office so we can provide one for completion.

Many of our members contribute a reduced membership fee. During 2019, with the assistance of the new database, we were able to review a number of reductions that were fixed many years ago. If your special rate has not been reviewed in the last three years, we will send your form with the full rate. Please be assured that if you cannot afford the full rate, we

will discuss and amend your fees in complete confidence; please call the office to arrange this.

Prompt return of your paperwork and timely payment of the membership fees reduces our costs and ensures that we maintain accurate data to better serve our members.

It is only with your financial support and the continued dedication of all our volunteers and staff that the LJS can provide our range of religious, educational, social and pastoral activities. The LJS needs to be properly financed if it is to enhance the lives of all our members as well as future generations.

Lysa Schwartz, Executive Director



Security

We need your help!

The LJS has long been recognised as having one of the best volunteer-led security teams within the London area, working regularly and tirelessly to protect the congregation and the children of our *Rimon* Religion School week after week. However, many of us working as security volunteers are not as young as we used to be, and we desperately need some help from the congregation.

We are looking for people to join our core team who are committed and enjoy engaging with fellow members of the congregation and visitors. There is some excellent free training at all levels available both here from the LJS as well as from CST (Community Security Trust).

There is great camaraderie within the group of volunteers, and it is incredibly rewarding to know that you are part of a team that protects our congregation, our children and our people in these troubling times.

Please help us to look after you, your loved ones and your community by joining our team. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the office on 020 7286 5181 or email ljs@ljs.org.

Steve Penn, Head of Security & Regional Head Central Region CST

Forthcoming Events

AGM of British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights

Monday 9 December at 6.30pm for 7.00pm at the LJS

All LJS Members and Friends are welcome to attend the AGM of British Friends of Rabbis for Human Rights. We have two special guest speakers from Israel: Rabbi Michael Marmur, Chairman of Rabbis for Human Rights and Associate Professor of Jewish Theology at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem, and Avi Dabush, Executive Director of Rabbis for Human Rights and well-known environmentalist, and social and political activist.

Please feel free to come along – there is no need to book or let us know in advance.

Film Club at the LJS

Israeli films in Hebrew with English subtitles
Wednesday 11 December at 7.00pm for 7.30pm

***Maktub* – Fate (2017)**
directed by Oded Raz

To mark this month's festival of miracles (*Chanukkah*), we screen a story of miracles and redemption featuring a cast of colourful characters. Two small-time crooks survive a terrorist attack – a wake-up call which leads them to turn their lives around. They act as angels to answer the prayers of ordinary people and fulfil their dreams. A moral tale but also a heart-warming story full of wry humour.



Drinks and popcorn served from 7.00pm; screening at 7.30pm; post-film discussion till 9.30pm. There is no charge for admission but a contribution to costs would be much appreciated.

For further information please contact Cristina Galisi at cristina@galisi.com or to register please email rabbispa@ljs.org or call 020 7432 1283.



The Menorah by Frank Meisler which we use during Chanukkah. Photograph: Peter Singer

Chanukkah celebrations at the LJS

Members, Friends and guests are all invited to celebrate the eight-day festival of *Chanukkah* at the LJS on any or all the dates below. Children are especially welcome.

Pre-Chanukkah Multi-Faith Celebration **Monday 16 December at 4.30pm**

Everyone is invited to a special celebration and lighting of candles followed by tea. Our guest speaker is Imam Asim Hafiz OBE who is the Islamic Religious Adviser to the Chief of the Defence Staff at the Ministry of Defence and the first ever Muslim chaplain to the armed forces.

Please note that this celebration will take place before *Chanukkah* so that we can include students from local schools.

Monday 23 December at 3.00pm

At 3.00pm the congregation - all ages, with children especially welcome - is warmly invited to join us for a special programme to mark the first day of *Chanukkah*. The lighting of the *Chanukkiyah* for the second night will be at 4.00pm followed by tea, latkes and doughnuts.

Friday 27 December at 6.45pm

Our *Erev Shabbat* service led by Rabbi Igor Zinkov will be preceded by the lighting of candles for the sixth night of *Chanukkah*.

Mental Health Awareness *Shabbat* 'In Pursuit of Good Health' with guest speaker Susan Morris Saturday 1 February at 11.00am

The service will be followed by an informal lunch, question and answer session, and discussion. You are welcome to attend just the service or just the lunch, or both.

Our guest speaker, Susan Morris, is a member of Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue, and has personal experience of severe mental health issues. Her passion is to work with others to shed more light on mental health issues, to facilitate understanding, remove stigma, and help individuals receive effective treatment.

Please contact the office if you are planning to stay for lunch: rabbispa@ljs.org or 020 7432 1283.

Shabbat 8 February at 11.00am

This is Leo Baeck College *Shabbat* when we will also be celebrating Dr Dov Softi's 50th birthday.

Communal Baby Blessing *Shabbat* 14 March at 12.00pm

It is now ten years since we held our first communal naming and blessing service for children at the LJS. Since then, many of the children who were named in February 2010 have entered *Rimon* and are now contemplating or have even already celebrated *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. We are planning our fourth communal naming and blessing at the *Shabbat* morning service on 14 March. If you missed the opportunity to arrange a naming and blessing specifically for your child, then please contact rabbispa@ljs.org or call 020 7432 1283 to participate in the communal service. You will need a form to register your child and choose a Hebrew name. For more information and a better understanding about this naming and blessing ceremony and/or help with choosing a Hebrew name, please contact one of the rabbis via the contact details above. There is no upper age limit, and all children are eligible to be called up to be blessed and given their Hebrew name.

Key diary dates for 2020

Mon 9 and Tues 10 March	<i>Purim: Erev Purim</i> service and celebrations will be held on Monday evening 9 March
Wed 8 April – Wed 15 April	The first night of <i>Pesach (Seder)</i> is Wednesday 8 April; the Communal <i>Seder</i> at the LJS will take place on Thursday 9 April at 6.30pm
Thurs 28 May, Fri 29 May	<i>Erev Shavuot</i> service is the evening of 28 May; day of <i>Shavuot</i> is 29 May
Fri 18, Sat 19 September	<i>Erev Rosh Hashanah</i> is the evening of Friday 18 September; day of <i>Rosh Hashanah</i> is Saturday 19 September
Sun 27 September, Mon 28 September	<i>Kol Nidrei</i> is the evening of Sunday 27 September; Day of <i>Yom Kippur</i> is Monday 28 September
2 October – 9 October	<i>Erev Sukkot</i> is the evening of Friday 2 October; first day of <i>Sukkot</i> is Saturday 3 October
Fri 9 October, Sat 10 October	<i>Erev Simchat Torah/Shemini Atzeret</i> is the evening of Friday 9 October; day of <i>Simchat Torah</i> is Saturday 10 October

Special announcement – Next LJS Israel Trip 25 Oct– 1 Nov 2020 (UK school half-term)

With Rabbi Alexandra Wright and Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith of Ecopeace

Accompanied children 14+ and young adults welcome.

The LJS is organising a community trip in conjunction with Ecopeace (<http://ecopeaceme.org>). From Amman in Jordan to Tel Aviv, with stays in Ecoparks, Jericho and Ein Gedi, travelling principally in the Jordan Valley, looking at projects involving Israel and her neighbours in water management, desert ecology and peace initiatives, visiting some major historical sites, and celebrating *Shabbat* together. This trip is in the development stage. Bookings from 1 January 2020. Email suebolsom@gmail.com to register your interest and to receive more information as soon as it is available. Numbers will be limited by the available accommodation.

Rabbi Elana Dellal reflects on the spiritual significance of light

During this darkest time of year, Chanukkah, our festival of light, brings joy to our communities and homes. Here are some thoughts and stories on the idea of light and its spiritual significance in Judaism.

There is a Chasidic story of a young student who complained to his rabbi, 'When I am studying *Torah* I feel filled with light and life, but as soon as I cease from study this feeling leaves me.' The rabbi replied, 'You are like someone who walks through a forest on a dark night, accompanied by a companion who carries a lantern. Then their paths divide, and each must go alone. Carry your own lantern; let your light penetrate the darkness until the darkness itself becomes light.'

In Leviticus we learn about the eternal flame which is to burn on the altar: 'The fire on the altar shall be kept burning, not to go out; every morning the priest shall feed wood to it.' Rambam (Maimonides) believed it was a fire that came down from heaven. This heavenly light, the divine flame which must always be kindled, is given to us in varying means and expressions.

This perpetual fire is the fire that God created in *Bereshit*. 'God said, "Let there be light" and there was light.' It is this primal light from which everything else was created.

In Jeremiah we read, 'Are my words not like fire?' In this second interpretation, the eternal flame could also be the words of God, namely the divine gift of *Torah*, our ethical code. The primal fire of creation formed our world, and as a people we were formed by the flame of the divine words of *Torah*.

In Exodus we read of the burning bush of God's presence: 'Moses gazed and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed.' It is through the fire of the burning bush that God showed God's self to Moses. God's presence is revealed through light.



Rabbi Elana lights the *chanukkah* candles with her sons Jonah (left) and Ollie (right)

This light which is kindled on the altar could represent the fires of creation, of *Torah*, and of God's presence. Rambam believed that this fire initially came from God, yet he also claimed that the fire needed to be kept burning by humans. It is only through the priests feeding wood to the flame every morning that the fire could be eternal. In a world without physical sacrifice, the fire which we kindle on the altar today is the fire of *Avodah sh'blev*, the burning flames of our prayer and devotion, the offerings of our hearts. As the Baal Shem Tov said, 'Your heart is the altar. Whatever your work, let a spark of the holy fire remain within you.'

If your house was on fire and you could save only one thing from the blazing home, what would it be? Elie Wiesel tells the story of the poet who answered that he would 'save the fire, for without it life would not be worth living'. Our task is not to ignite the fire but rather to tend to it, fuelling our lanterns with our prayers and our awareness so that our light can illuminate the way for others.

Elana Dellal
Kislev 5780

Please read about the LJS *Chanukkah* celebrations on page 6 under Forthcoming Events.

Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families

The next LJS Drop-Ins for asylum-seeker families will be on Sunday 8 December 2019 and 12 January 2020 from 2.00pm-4.00pm. Volunteers are asked to arrive at 1.00pm to help set up.

A brief guide to lighting your *chanukkiyah* at home

The first candle should be lit on Sunday evening
22 December 2019.

Chanukkah candles and *chanukkiyot* can be bought at the Judaica shop in the foyer of the LJS.

1 On each night of *Chanukkah*, place the *chanukkiyah* where it can be seen clearly, and on the first night place one candle in the holder for the *shammash* ('servant candle') and the candle for the first night in the holder on the far right.

2 Turn to one of the readings in the *Siddur* between pages 393 and 401 OR follow the simple service outlined here.

3 Light the *shammash* and recite this prayer followed by these blessings:
May the heroic example of the Maccabees inspire us always to be loyal to our heritage and valiant for truth. Let the lights we kindle shine forth for the world to see. May the message they proclaim help to dispel the darkness of prejudice and hatred, and spread the light of liberty and love.

i) *Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivvanu l'hadlik ner shel Chanukkah.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the Universe, You sanctify us by Your commandments, and enjoin us to kindle the *Chanukkah* lights.

ii) *Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam, she-asah nissim la'avoteynu ba-yamim ha-hem u'vaz'man ha-zeh.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the Universe, You performed wonders for our ancestors in days of old, at this season.

iii) *First night only: Baruch attah Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyy'manu, v'higgiyanu laz'man ha-zeh.*

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the Universe: You have kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this season.

4 Light the first candle. On subsequent nights insert a new *shammash* and an additional candle for each night starting at the right-hand side, but always light from left to right.



5 While lighting the candles the following is sung or read:

Ha-nerot halalu anachnu madlikin al ha-nissim v'al ha-t'shuot, v'al ha-nifla-ot she-asita la'avoteynu v'chol shemonat y'mei Chanukkah ha-nerot halalu kodesh; v'eyn lanu r'shut l'hishtamesh ba-hem, ella lirotam bilvad, k'dei l'hodot l'shim'cha al nissecha v'al nifl'otecha v'al y'shuotecha.

We kindle these lights in remembrance of the wonderful deliverance You performed for our ancestors. During all the eight days of *Chanukkah* these lights are sacred; we are enjoined not to use them but only to gaze upon them, so that their glow may move us to give thanks for Your wonderful acts of deliverance.

Ma'oz tzur yeshuati, l'cha na'eh l'shabbeach, Tikkon beyt t'fillati, v'sham todah n'zabbeach, L'et tashbit mat'be'ach v'tzar ha-m'nabbeach, Az egmor b'shir mizmor, chanukat ha-miz'be'ach.

*Rock of Ages, let our song
Praise Your wondrous saving power,
You amid the raging foes,
Were our safe and sheltering tower.
Furious, they assailed us,
But your arm availed us,
And Your word
Broke their sword
When our own strength failed us.*

6 Eat latkes and doughnuts to recall the vial of oil that miraculously burned for eight days in the Temple; play the *dreidel* game and bet all your chocolate money away; watch the candles burn down.

7 Give *tz'dakah* (charitable donations) at this time of year when so many are lonely.



The Learning Circle

Adult education classes at the LJS

Sukkot and Purim term classes

Tuesday morning classes run until 17 December and evening classes until 10 December, and both resume in the *Purim* term from 14 January to 31 March with a break for half-term on 18 February.

TUESDAY MORNINGS 11.15am-12.30pm

TUESDAY TEXTS

This friendly group is led by our rabbis. We study biblical and rabbinic texts, modern poetry and short stories, and enjoy sessions on Jewish art and music. The starting point is always a text or painting, whether ancient or modern, but the class is based around discussion on a variety of different topics. New students are always welcome.

TUESDAY EVENINGS 7.00-8.00pm

Classical and Prayer-Book Hebrew for Beginners Tutor: Susannah Alexander

Have you tried to get your head around Hebrew letters for years and never quite achieved success? If so, join this fun and supportive class where we use a tried-and-tested method to get you reading faster than you thought possible. Beginning with Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders*, we move on to a taste of grammar, liturgy and the Bible.

Next Steps in Prayer-Book Hebrew Tutor: Dr Sally Gold

This class will help you to improve your understanding and confidence in prayer-book Hebrew. At the same time we will be learning the Hebrew of the *Tanakh* (Bible). You will be on the path towards greater enjoyment and participation in synagogue services. We practise reading simple Hebrew, building your reading skills and knowledge of vocabulary and grammar at an unhurried pace.

Reading the Psalms in Hebrew Tutor: Rabbi Alexandra Wright

The Psalms are intensely personal songs of praise, lament and yearning. Many are familiar to us – 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...'; 'I will lift up mine eyes to the hills...'. Some are read or sung in our Friday evening, *Shabbat* morning or festival liturgies. But how are they constructed, how do they sound in Hebrew, and what are they really saying? Join a class for Hebrew readers (at any pace that is comfortable for you) which will help you with your reading and understanding, and open up one of the most beautiful books in the Bible in its original language.

TUESDAY EVENINGS 8.00-9.00pm

Exploring Judaism Tutor: Rabbi Igor Zinkov

Exploring Judaism is for people, including non-Jewish family members, who wish to know more about Judaism or who would like to brush up on their Hebrew knowledge. It is also an essential programme of instruction for people choosing Judaism by conversion. Class members are encouraged to read the materials made available online during the year. In addition to offering knowledge of Judaism, the course encourages practical experiences of Liberal Judaism and space for reflection within the group. Resources can be found on: www.ljsexploringjudaism.wordpress.com

Hebrew and Yiddish lessons with Spiro Ark



For details of lesson times and charges, please visit www.spiroark.org/classes or contact Spiro Ark on 020 7794 4655 or at: education@spiroark.org

Exploring Judaism *Sukkot* term 2019

3 December:

Jewish Ethics

10 December:

Exploring *Chanukkah*

Exploring Judaism *Purim* term 2020

14 January:

Life cycle: Early Life Rituals

21 January:

Life Cycle: Education and Coming of Age

28 January:

Life Cycle: Marriage and Mixed Faith Blessings

4 February:

Life Cycle: End of Life, Funeral and Mourning

11 February:

Exploring *Tu Bi'Sh'vat* and *Seder*

18 February:

No session – half term

25 February:

Exploring *Purim*

Note: The evening of Monday 9 March students will attend the *Erev Purim* service. There is no class on Tuesday 10 March.

17 March:

Exploring *Shabbat*

24 March:

Exploring God and Belief

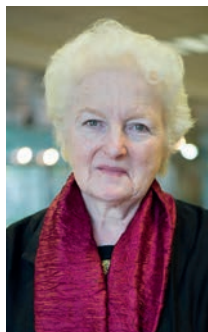
31 March:

Pesach and the Counting of the *Omer*

Calling all *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* parents and grandparents!

How can you best help your son or daughter prepare for their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*? The LJS runs classes on Tuesday evenings and *Shabbat* mornings designed to help you learn how to decode the letters and vowels so that you can listen to your child and ensure they are reading correctly. If you are already a reader, there are classes at a range of levels to help you brush up your Hebrew. Do make the most of the wonderful resources on offer.

Seminar on antisemitism: Lord Grade in conversation with Rabbi Julia Neuberger



Tuesday 21 January 2020

8.00-9.15pm at the LJS

Antisemitism:

What it is. What it isn't. Why it matters.

This seminar on antisemitism is based on Julia Neuberger's recently published book of the same title. The distinguished media executive, Michael Grade, will be in conversation with Rabbi Julia Neuberger, Senior Rabbi of West London Synagogue, to explore the issues raised in her book.

As a child growing up in north London, Baroness Neuberger recalls that antisemitism didn't feature in discussion. She and her family felt safe and unthreatened. Like many, however, she is disturbed by the awakening of antisemitism in recent times. Her book examines attitudes to Jews in the last few years and attempts to understand 'why the music has changed'. Joining us for the second of our two seminars on antisemitism, Rabbi Neuberger in dialogue with Lord Grade will help us to understand what the implications of these changes are, not only for her generation, but more importantly for future generations.

The course is free to LJS Members and Friends; the cost to Non-Members is £10.00.

New Tuesday evening course for Purim Term 2020!

The LJS in conjunction with the London Society for Jews and Christians:

The Gospels and Rabbinic Judaism

a seven-week course

inspired by Rabbi Dr

Michael Hilton and Father

Gordian Marshall's study

guide of the same title

The course will be held on

seven Tuesday evenings

during March and May

from 8.00pm – 9.15pm.

Further details in the next newsletter.



up your vocabulary and there will be five words a week to learn. We will also start learning how to write Hebrew letters using simplified versions of the block letters we use in the *Siddur*.

Intermediate Hebrew

Tutor: Nitza Spiro

The aim of this class is to allow students to explore different Hebrew texts which they will come across in synagogue services on *Shabbatot* and festivals – from the morning blessings of the *Tefillah* to the Books of Ruth and Esther, and much more. The class will work on increasing fluency in reading, but at the same time we will also explore the historical, ethical, philosophical and ideological messages of the texts.

Exploring the Psalms in English

Facilitator: Michael Romain

Note: This course runs during the *Sukkot* term only.

The remaining class is on 7 December 2019.

Addressing the question as to how reading the Psalms can help us in today's world, we will be looking at a number of different Psalms, led by our rabbis and other teachers. No previous knowledge is required. If you would like to know more, please contact Michael Romain on 07818 000849.

SHABBAT MORNINGS 9.45-10.45am

Shabbat morning classes run until 7 December 2019, and resume in the *Purim* term from 11 January to 28 March 2020 with a break for half-term on 15 and 22 February.

Beginners' Hebrew

Tutor: Naomi Brightwell

This class uses Jonathan Romain's *Signs and Wonders* to help absolute beginners decode Hebrew. Classes include a little bit of grammar and vocabulary, the structure of the liturgy, plenty of off-topic conversations on Jewish food, and anything else that helps us have fun while learning. No previous knowledge is required. Former students have even gone on to lead *Shabbat* morning services!

Moving Up in Hebrew

Tutor: Dr Dov Softi

The aim of this class is to allow students to begin to understand the Hebrew prayers and songs used in services. Those joining the class will need basic reading skills, and we will spend some time each week increasing reading fluency. We will look at the basics of Hebrew grammar using the textbook *Prayer Book Hebrew the Easy Way* (available for purchase £27.00). We will build

Torah portion study session on 11 January

This session, led by Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton and Rabbi Daniela Thau, will focus on this week's *parashah*, *Va-y'chi*.

Exploring the Book of Koheleth (Ecclesiastes)

Facilitator: Michael Romain

Note: This course starts on 18 January and runs throughout the *Purim* term.

'To everything there is a season and a time for purpose under heaven... A time to be born, and a time to die.'
In these study sessions we unravel the secrets of the Book of *Koheleth* in the Hebrew Bible. Is this a book by a person of profound faith and realism, or is its author a cynical individual who thinks that all there is to life is to eat, drink and to enjoy oneself, for tomorrow we die? Our rabbis and other teachers will guide us through different aspects of this twelve-chapter book.

Full details of all LJS adult education courses can be found in The Learning Circle brochure: download your copy from www.ljs.org and click on Learning.

Elaine Feinstein

24 October 1930 –

23 September 2019

We remember the poet, novelist and biographer, Elaine Feinstein, who was a member of the LJS for 24 years.

Born in Bootle in Lancashire in 1930 and raised in Leicester, Elaine was the much-loved and only child of Fay and Isidore Cooklin, who was a cabinet-maker. Although her parents were born in England, Elaine was highly aware of her Russian immigrant background, all four of her grandparents having been born in Odessa. The Cooklin household was a traditional one in which dietary laws and the Sabbath were observed. Tradition and faith were to remain important to Elaine – *Pesach* and *Shabbat* dinners, as well as attendance at services. When her mother and father died in 1973 and 1976 respectively, Elaine's work turned towards conscious exploration of Jewish identity and central European tradition.

Educated at Wyggeston Grammar School for Girls, Elaine went on to read English at Newnham College, Cambridge. Although for a while after university Elaine's lifestyle was somewhat bohemian, in certain ways she conformed to the expectations of the age in which she was born – with marriage to Arnold, an immunologist, in 1956 and becoming a mother to Adam, Martin and Joel. But even so, Elaine remained true to her own voice – the voice of a northerner, a woman and a Jew. And throughout her life – including during the long period when she was raising a family and working at Cambridge University Press, and later as a teacher trainer, then as a member of staff at the Department of Comparative Literature at Essex University – Elaine expressed that voice as a writer, or as she said, 'the stubborn daughter earning a livelihood by telling stories'.

Elaine wrote short stories and novels, often centring on women; biographies, notably of Ted Hughes; reviews; radio plays; television



dramas. She was a lifelong advocate of Russian poetry, publishing the first translations into English of works by Marina Tsvetayeva, writing biographies of Russian poets, including Anna Akhmatova, and translations of contemporary Russian women poets. But it was particularly her own poetry that set Elaine apart: poems about family and friends, about growing old; poems about poets and artists; poems that challenge intelligence and emotion, that stretch imagination, that take one on a tender, lyrical journey, but at the same time arrest the romantic, idealised image of nature with a close, damaged vision of something broken or dead; poems that juxtapose something of exquisite and timeless beauty with a contemporary, earthly image, reminding us of the here and now. She transformed her own and the world's conflicts and ambitions, struggles and oscillations into something of unique beauty and harmony.

Elaine will be remembered for the lasting significance of her work and for the range and depth of her literary friendships. And she will be remembered as a warm-hearted and much-loved mother, mother-in-law, and grandmother; a dearly loved friend; a woman who was kind and supportive, honest, independent and courageous, not least in the way she dealt with the challenge of her illness. Now buried next to Arnold, let us reflect on these lines from her poem, *Prayer*, which speak of her faith: 'God', she wrote, 'is the wish to live. Everywhere as carnivores lick their young with/tenderness, in the human struggle/ nothing is stranger than the habit of prayer.'

Community Events

BRIDGE CLUB

The Bridge Club meets at 2.00pm every Monday (except Jewish and Bank Holidays) and finishes at 5.00pm, with a break for refreshments. The standard of Bridge playing is average, but players should know the basics of the game.

This is as much a social afternoon as a competitive one. Cost is £2.00 per person. We welcome new members. For more details please contact the LJS (020 7286 5181).

BRIDGE CLUB



COMMUNITY CARE

Aviva Shafritz, our Community Care Co-ordinator, is ready to help with difficulties experienced not only by our older members, such as with illness and provision of care, but also across the spectrum of life. You can contact Aviva on email: a.shafritz@ljs.org or by telephone on 020 7286 5181.

VIDEO AND TEA

The LJS warmly invites you to this monthly event on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 1.30-4.30pm. Just come along – there's no need to book. Cost is £2.00 for the film and refreshments. Enjoy soup on arrival then a DVD (film classics, musicals, etc) followed by a delicious tea including home-made coffee ice-cream.

We are looking for new volunteer helpers, and would appreciate hearing from you. Please contact the office on 020 7286 5181.

Our next screenings:

22 January: *Stan and Ollie*

26 February: *The 39 Steps*

25 March: *There's No Business Like Show Business*

(Please note there is no film in December 2019.)

SINGING FOR THE MIND

Singing for the Mind is open to anyone with memory problems or in the early stages of dementia. We meet once a week, serving tea and biscuits as people arrive to allow participants and their companions the chance to chat before we start singing. The hour-long singing session is led by a trained music leader, supported by volunteers. A dementia specialist is available for help and advice. For further details and advice on joining the group, please email sfm@ljs.org or phone the LJS on 020 7286 5181.

RESTAURANT TUESDAY

This informal lunch club, successfully relaunched, is for the more elderly members of the congregation. Everyone is welcome! Join us at 12.45pm on the third Tuesday of the month for a chance to meet and chat and have a delicious meal, hosted by our delightful team of volunteers. We suggest a donation of £6.00. Our next three lunches are on **17 December, 21 January** and **18 February**. Please call the office on 020 7286 5181 to let us know if you are coming.

NOSH 'N' DROSH

Shabbat lunchtimes 1.15-2.15pm

14 December 2019: Suzanne Higgott, Curator at the Wallace Collection: '*The most fortunate man of his day*' – Sir Richard Wallace: connoisseur, collector and philanthropist.

18 January 2020: Dr Tony Klug, special adviser on the Middle East to the Oxford Research Group, will talk on 'Israel and Palestine: Would the collapse of the two-state solution be bad for the Jews?'

22 February 2020: William and Maggie Carver will talk about Licoricia of Winchester – the discovery of the life and business interests of one of the most prominent Jewish women of the 13th century.

LOCAL WALKING GROUP

Our next walks will be on **Thursday 12 December** and **Thursday 9 January**, meeting at the LJS at 11.15am. All members and friends are welcome. We walk in Regent's Park for an hour or so and aim to end up at a café for coffee or lunch. To find out more, please contact Jody Graham on awithj@gmail.com / 07765 214867 or contact Michael Romain on romain@netgates.co.uk / 07818 000849.

Rimon Corner

A valuable experience for Rimon students

Danny Lang, who teaches KT1 and 2 students, writes:

Our sincere thanks go to LJS member and Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss. KT1 and 2 students spent time with her on a recent visit to the Swiss Cottage Library exhibition of her beloved brother Heinz's artwork and poetry. As Eva was arrested and deported at a similar age to the students, it was especially poignant to hear her sharing her experiences with them. The students were later each given a copy of Eva's book, *The Promise*, and we had a classroom discussion following a reading of excerpts from the book. Below the students respond to the experience.

Meeting Eva was impactful. Listening to her go through her experiences, she told us just how bad things can actually go, and how we have to cherish what we have now. **Jeremy**

Meeting people in the synagogue with a connection to these events can help it make sense a bit more. It's an insight into how it can be you. **Max**

I thought it was very interesting to meet someone who had seen so much compared to what I've seen at the same age. Before I couldn't really picture it that well, and reading the book will help fill in the blanks. **Gideon**

Eva was complaining that kids today are selfish and they don't take advantage of all the good things they have. She had hardly anything. She was in hiding from the Nazis. And just being able to see her brother was an amazing thing to happen. **Honor**

When she talked about losing her faith in God in the camps – for someone to experience that shows that she was going through a lot. **Hannah**

Eva was upset about what's happening to the Kurds in Syria because she went through a similar thing and she can relate to it. She finds the same oppression is happening several decades later, even after people know the horrors that it causes. **Lorcan**

We need to try and help refugees and people fleeing from war and violence. We've talked about what asylum-seekers go through in the UK now - five pounds a day isn't enough to live on. **Emily**

People are mean about asylum-seekers – they're in need of protection but there are some people who think they should be deported. It's mean because everyone should be treated fairly. **Kurt**



The class with their copies of *The Promise* by Eva Schloss

We wish these young members of the LJS a very happy birthday in December and January

Eva Bielawski
James Blumenthal
Astrid Cohen
Dean Cumerlato
Lyla Cumerlato
Olivia Daals
Jonah Dellal
Oliver Dellal
Valentine Desmond

Zara Gale
Leo Gavshon
Mark Gelfer
Sophie Gold
Arthur Grant
Joshua Haller
Samuel Johnson
Isaac Kane
Jazzy Lang

Layla Lewis
Tara Moran
Bertie Morrison
Alice Osband
Tabitha Penn
Max Phillips
Grace Rogers
James Rogers
Sacha Rosenthal

Jacob Simon
Noah Simon
Ellis Simons
Seve Solomons
Benjamin Tombs
Lauren Warshaw

Sam Cozens reports on a talk about asylum seekers' right to work

Nosh 'n' Drosh on 9 November 2019 welcomed **Edie Friedman** (pictured) from JCORE (Jewish Council for Racial Equality) who explained to us that asylum seekers in the UK are effectively banned from working whilst they wait months, and often years, for a decision on their asylum claim.



Flanked by boxes of clothing for the November Drop-In, a stark reminder of the real human cost of the UK's asylum regime, Edie described the harsh reality of life for asylum seekers.

We heard how, rather than having the opportunity to work, asylum seekers are forced to rely on hand-outs and survive on just £5.39 per day, often squashed into cockroach-infested bed-sits. During this period, which can stretch over several years, skills quickly become out-dated and anxieties rise.

Edie explained that JCORE is part of a campaign entitled 'Lift the Ban' which campaigns for those seeking asylum to have the right to work as a matter of dignity.

As part of the discussion, Anthony Steen, Chair of the Human Trafficking Foundation, was invited to share some of the challenges he faces in his work to provide volunteering opportunities to asylum seekers.

At a challenging time for the Jewish community, Edie reminded us of the need to look outwards and to continue the proud Jewish tradition of speaking out on issues of social justice.

Congratulations to Ann and Bob Kirk!

Many LJS members will know Ann and Bob played a prominent role in the *Kindertransport* exhibition at the Jewish Museum last year. This exhibition team was entered into two competitions – the London Heritage Volunteer Awards and the Marsh Awards for Volunteers in Museum Learning. The competition judges awarded the Jewish Museum's *Kindertransport* exhibition first prize and joint first prize respectively, honouring the Holocaust Education work of Ann and Bob, together with that of four other volunteers.

Final copy date for the February issue of *LJS News* is Monday 6 January
Copy and ideas should be emailed to: newsletter@ljs.org

Printed by Premier Print,
38-40 London Industrial Estate, London E6 6LP

The paper which *LJS News* is printed on comes from a sustainable source.

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The LJS is a constituent synagogue of Liberal Judaism

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

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