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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LIBERAL JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

LJS NEWS



Susan Morris and Annette Lawson at the Mental Health Awareness *Shabbat*

At last month's Mental Health Awareness *Shabbat*, *Kabbalat Torah* students presented the Special Theme in which we learned how there are texts and teachings from our Jewish tradition which align with the five steps recommended by the NHS to improve our mental well-being.

The sermon, 'In Pursuit of Good Mental Health', was given by Susan Morris who spoke most eloquently, movingly and courageously about her personal struggles with mental health issues. She reminded us how seemingly small gestures of kindness and support to everyone go a long way to create care within the community, especially to those with mental health problems. The *Haftarah* from Psalm 139 was beautifully read by LJS member Dr Annette Lawson, whose charity, The Judith Trust, in honour of her late sister, addresses the problems faced by those who have both a learning disability and mental ill health. The service and lunch that followed, with a range of guests who work in the field of mental health, offered us valuable insights.

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Update on the Drop-In for Asylum-Seeker Families at the LJS

On Sunday afternoons once a month we warmly welcome up to 140 asylum-seeker guests and their children. A nursery is provided, and everyone is offered a home-cooked meal, toiletries, nappies, shopping money, clothing and shoes. Our admittance processes do require proof of asylum status. If visitors do not fit our criteria, they are always signposted to alternative services more relevant to them.

Although each Drop-In is for only two hours, and, due to demand, guests only attend every other month, what we do makes such an impact – as this letter recently received from one of our guests testifies:

“...We have been in the asylum process for almost 5 years now, and finally we have got the status of leave to remain in this country. It has been a very difficult time for all these years to go through the asylum process and manage life with low income, specially when you have a small child. We made it Because of your Help!!!

So we just wanted to send a appreciation letter to every single person at your drop-in who has support us! Thank you so much for every single meal, for every piece of clothes, for every single little thing you have gave to us! ... And also, thank you for being there! ...”



We feel we did so little for this family, but clearly it made a difference. Kindness, respect, an understanding that they have each had an appalling journey, and a little practical support from the LJS count for a great deal. The Drop-In does not of course seek thanks, but we want you to know that it lightens an intolerable burden for these individuals, allowing them to walk upright and to know that somewhere they are treated as fellow human beings. Indeed some of our guests, having been given the right to remain, return to become volunteers themselves, reflecting their wish to find their place in an accepting and safe society rather than being the recipients of charity.

Benita Plax

The next Drop-In dates are Sunday 8 March and Sunday 19 April from 2.00-4.00pm

Volunteers are asked to arrive at 1.00pm to help set up. Volunteers are also needed from 5.00pm on the Thursday afternoons prior to the Drop-In dates (**5 March and 16 April**) to sort clothes. We would welcome new volunteers. For further information please contact: asylumproject@ljs.org

Bereavements We extend our sympathy to those who mourn:

Raymon Benedyk, father of Jeffrey

Sam Stevenson husband of Christine, brother of Richard and Christopher

We also extend our sympathy to Valerie Gaynor on the death of her husband **Montague Gaynor**, father of Hilary Harris and the late Alan Gaynor, and step-father of Suzanne Higgott.

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

Many will remember **Raymon Benedyk** as our former Synagogue Secretary. His late-in-life *Bar Mitzvah* took place at the LJS last July when he also spoke at the Nosh ‘n’ Drosh about his service as a Bevin Boy during World War II.

Shabbat and Festival services: March to early April

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

DATE	RABBI/SPEAKER AND NOTES	
Friday 6 March	Igor Zinkov	Service followed by a <i>chavurah</i> supper – all welcome; please bring vegetarian or sweet food to share
Shabbat 7 March T'tzavveh/Zachor	L'Dor va'Dor service led by Rimon students and their families with Rabbis Elana Dellal and Igor Zinkov	A <i>Koleinu</i> service will be held concurrently in the John Rayner Prayer Room with Rabbi Alexandra Wright, an intimate and creative service focusing on the <i>Torah</i> reading and with discussion
Monday 9 March 7.00 pm	<i>Purim</i> event: 'In Pursuit of Justice'	7.00 pm <i>Megillat Ester</i> – the Story of Esther; 7.30 pm supper; 8.00pm guest speakers on their personal narratives in the pursuit of justice (details on page 5)
Friday 13 March	Alexandra Wright	
Shabbat 14 March Ki Tissa	Communal naming and blessing of babies and children with the Rabbis	Our fourth communal naming and blessing service for babies and children who will receive their Hebrew name and a special blessing (details on page 5) <i>Kiddush</i> will be followed by Nosh 'n' Drosh with Geoffrey Pollard (details on page 14)
Friday 20 March	Elana Dellal	Service co-led by <i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Olivia Sinclair
Shabbat 21 March Va-yakhel/Pekudey	Elana Dellal	<i>Bat Mitzvah</i> Olivia Sinclair A guitar-led <i>Koleinu</i> service will be held concurrently in the John Rayner Prayer Room with Rabbi Igor Zinkov, with a discussion of the <i>Torah</i> portion replacing a sermon. 10.00am - 1.30pm <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> Seminar (see page 6)
Friday 27 March	Igor Zinkov	
Shabbat 28 March Vayikra	Igor Zinkov	
Friday 3 April	Igor Zinkov	
Shabbat 4 April Tzav/ Shabbat Ha-Gadol	Vivien Rose	Vivien Rose will be giving the sermon to celebrate her 60th birthday: <i>Legitimacy and power: How do people in positions of influence maintain public trust without 'following a multitude to do evil'?</i>
Wednesday 8 April		Please note there is no <i>Erev Pesach</i> service this evening. If you can offer hospitality at your <i>Seder</i> table or if you require hospitality, please contact Abi Rose: rabbispa@ljs.org (see page 6)
Thursday 9 April Pesach 11.00am	Alexandra Wright	First Day <i>Pesach</i>
Thursday 9 April 6.30pm	The Rabbis	Communal <i>Seder</i> . For details please see page 6 and the loose insert which contains an application form.

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.

Council Report

'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I; send me' (Isaiah 6:8)



Council's meeting in February was the first of this year. It was also the first for Sarah Lasher who has been co-opted as a Trustee with the responsibility of chairing the Education Committee. We very much welcome her!

Our meeting focused on discussing the synagogue's Safeguarding policies and procedures. We are very mindful of our responsibility to care for our members, and consequently, each department of the LJS has in place appropriate documentation for ensuring this. Key people from the Nursery, *Rimon* Religion School, Community Care and the synagogue administration meet regularly to review practice. Recently they have discussed the outbreak of coronavirus and how we should be responding.

Safeguarding includes first aid, and Council was pleased to hear that all caretakers are trained first aiders. They should be called if someone becomes ill in the building and their advice followed. This gives me an opportunity to mention that if someone falls, they should be left where they are until the first aider arrives to assess the situation.

Training in Safeguarding has been undertaken by many key professionals and volunteers of the LJS. As the Safeguarding Lead Officer, I too, have received training.

Council asked questions about the DBS checking of staff working with children and vulnerable adults. DBS is the Disclosure and Barring Service, a non-departmental public body of the Home Office. The DBS checks enable organisations, such as the LJS, to make

safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially involving children or vulnerable adults. It provides wider access to criminal record information through its disclosure service. Council was reassured to hear that all appropriate staff and volunteers, including myself as Chairman, have been given clearance to work.

An interesting subject was raised by a member of Council: this was the RAF's 'Hidden Heroes' project developed to increase awareness about the previously untold story of Jewish pilots in the RAF during the Second World War and the vital role they played. Astonishingly, six per cent of the UK's Jewish population signed up for the RAF during the War. The hope of this project is that it will change the public's perception of the contribution of Jewish people during World War II. Council was enthusiastic about having a presentation of "Hidden Heroes" and Sue Bolsom agreed to look into it. If you have any stories from your families, please do speak to Sue or a member of the Council, or contact the LJS office.

Although it seems months away, Council has begun the preparations for the AGM. This will be held on Wednesday 24 June. We are very pleased that Gillian Merron, Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies, has accepted our invitation to speak at the beginning of the evening. The AGM is the opportunity for those wishing to stand for Council to be elected. We have some vacancies and welcome members to stand. Are you interested? Do you know someone whom you would like to recommend? The only requirement is full membership of the LJS. We like to have a wide range of interests and experiences on Council, so please do consider it. The formal process of nominations has not yet begun; you will be hearing more on this shortly.

Sue Head, Chairman of Council

Forthcoming Events

Purim at the LJS **'In Pursuit of Justice'** Monday 9 March at 7.00pm

We hear from five remarkable speakers on their personal journeys that have led them to pursue justice:



Lord Dubs: Life Peer, former MP, and author of the Dubs Amendment, which requires the UK government to negotiate an agreement with the EU to ensure the reunion of unaccompanied children with a relative in the UK

Dr Eliane Glaser: academic, writer, broadcaster and radio producer, and Reader in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University

Dame Vivien Rose: Judge of the Court of Appeal and Member of the LJS

Graham Carpenter: UK Community Manager at *Olam – Improving the World, Together*, Member of Liberal Judaism's Board of National Officers, and Member of the LJS

Rabbi Jeffrey Newman: Rabbi Emeritus, Finchley Reform Synagogue, and Extinction Rebellion activist and elder

7.00pm Short reading of the Megillah
(Book of Esther)

7.30pm Light supper of vegetarian food by Spice Caravan, a collective of refugee and migrant women

8.00pm Each speaker will tell us about their personal journey in pursuit of justice

Come for the whole evening or just for the story hour. Suggested £7.00 donation for those attending the supper.

For catering purposes, please RSVP by Wednesday 4 March to rabbispa@ljs.org or call 020 7432 1283.

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 have even reached *Bar or Bat Mitzvah*. Our fourth communal naming and blessing will take place at the *Shabbat* morning service on 14 March. As usual, Tiny Tots will start at 11.00am, and the naming and blessing ceremony will take place in the Sanctuary at approximately 12.00pm.

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. For more information 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.

The Stephi Usiskin Memorial Lecture *under the auspices of Yachad: Together for Israel, Together for Peace*

Sunday 15 March at 7.00pm at the LJS
'Speaking Untruth to Power: The political intrigue that saved King David'
Guest speaker: Professor Rabbi Jonathan Magonet

The Book of Samuel is an historical account of a crucial period in Biblical history; but more than that, it also serves as a tragic religious morality tale, and a study of the roles, behaviours and challenges of political leadership which have resonances today.

All are welcome to what promises to be a fascinating lecture. Tickets (£5.00) can be booked via the Yachad UK website: <https://yachad.org.uk>

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Seminar **Shabbat 21 March at 10.00am**

Attendance at this seminar is compulsory for all parents of children having a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony at the LJS together with their children. This year the seminar will be held on *Shabbat* morning 21 March from 10.00am - 1.30pm, concluding with a *chavurah* lunch for participants. Please bring vegetarian or sweet food to share. The seminar is required for all of those in *Kitah Zayin* and optional for students and parents in *Kitah Vav*.

Offering or requesting home hospitality on the First Night of Pesach

The first night of *Pesach* falls on Wednesday 8 April. If you would like home hospitality or can offer hospitality to a guest please contact Abi Rose on 020 7432 1283 or rabbispa@ljs.org, and she will match you with a guest or host.

Communal Seder on the Second Night of Pesach

Thursday 9 April at 6.30pm at the LJS
Led by the Rabbis

The actual service begins at 6.30pm so please arrive in good time. The cost of this event is as follows:

Members and Friends: Adults: £36.00; Children up to 12 years: £16.00; Family of two adults and two or more children: £92.00

Non-members: Adults: £60.00; Children up to 12 years: £28.00; Family of two adults and two or more children: £150.00

Please note that financial assistance towards the cost may be available. Helena Miller will once again be offering her exceptionally tasty *Seder* buffet. Pre-booking is essential for this event and should be made by **Thursday 2 April**. Please contact Abi Rose on 020 7432 1283 or email: rabbispa@ljs.org

Erev Seventh Night of Pesach **Tuesday 14 April at 6.45pm in the John Rayner Prayer Room**

All are welcome to join us for an informal service and discussion.

Seventh Day of Pesach **Wednesday 15 April at 11.00am**

Do join us to mark this occasion, which will include the chanting of Moses' *Song of the Sea*.

Yom Ha-Shoah **(Holocaust Remembrance Day)** **Tuesday 21 April at 6.30pm for 7.00pm**

We are pleased to announce that our guest speaker is Gillian Walnes Perry MBE, lecturer, speaker, educator and adviser, Honorary Vice President of the Anne Frank Trust UK, and author of *The Legacy of Anne Frank*.

Kabbalat Torah service **Shabbat 25 April at 11.00am**

Please join us for what is always a very special service. More details in the April newsletter.

Film Club at the LJS **Israeli films in Hebrew with English subtitles**

Wednesday 29 April at 7.00pm for 7.30pm

***Foxtrot* (2017)**
Directed by Samuel Maoz

To mark *Yom Ha-Zikaron* (Remembrance Day for Fallen Soldiers in Israel) we are screening this award-winning film which is about a couple who are informed that their son, an IDF soldier, was killed in action.

Drinks and popcorn served from 7.00pm; screening 7.30pm - 9.00pm; post-film discussion.
No charge for admission but a contribution towards costs would be 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. Our next film screening is Wednesday 10 June.

Films are presented with the kind support of West London Synagogue.



Marking VE Day

We will mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day at the *Shabbat* morning service on 9 May. Do join us for this significant occasion.

Kirk Family Celebratory *Shabbat*

We will celebrate Bob and Ann Kirk's 70th wedding anniversary and Bob's 95th birthday at the *Shabbat* morning service on 23 May.

Liberal Judaism Biennial Conference

22-24 May at the De Vere Staverton Estate, Daventry

The theme for the event is 'Liberal Judaism: Collaboratory'. The Collaboratory is both an open space and a creative process where partners work together to find solutions to sometimes complex problems. Liberal Judaism is made stronger via its partnerships, be they internal (with our communities) or external (with other organisations and faiths). Our Collaboratory will be the place to see this happen.

For more information and to book please go to: <https://www.liberaljudaism.org/calendar/biennial/>



Sunday 25 October to Sunday 1 November 2020

A Liberal Jewish Synagogue Journey with EcoPeace

Crossing the Jordan River: Water Scarcity and Environmental Peacemaking

with Rabbi Alexandra Wright & Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith

Flying into Amman, journeying down the Jordan valley and returning from Tel Aviv, we will be looking at projects involving Israel and her neighbours in water management, desert ecology and peace initiatives. This community trip is over the UK Autumn school half term and accompanied children post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah (13+) and young adults are very welcome. Now booking, full details from SueBolsom@gmail.com. Numbers are limited by the available accommodation.



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Reflections on *Purim*

– and how we are all superheroes



This spring, a cherished Jewish man known around the world will turn 82 years old. This individual, like so many other Jewish individuals who have come before him, has often felt estranged

from those around him, often wearing a mask to hide his true identity from those he feared would misunderstand him. He chose to make a great difference in his life by using his inner hero to bring justice to the world. This Jewish man was, of course, Superman.

Created by two Jewish men based in Ohio in the USA, Superman is often said to have a Jewish history with a Jewish message. The writer, Jerry Siegel, who created Superman together with the artist, Joe Shuster, shared in an unpublished memoir that he was very influenced by antisemitism, and that the character of Superman was based on the biblical hero Samson.

The Jewish journalist Larry Tye, who wrote a history of Superman, made this observation: ‘Superman had strong cultural ties to the faith of his founders. He started life as the consummate liberal, championing causes from disarmament to the welfare state. He was the ultimate foreigner, escaping to America from his intergalactic *shtetl* and shedding his Jewish name for “Clark Kent”. Clark also had something in common with his boyish creators, Siegel and Shuster: all were classic *nebbishes*. Clark and Superman lived life the way most newly arrived Jews did, torn between their Old and New World identities and their mild exteriors and rock-solid cores. That split personality was the only way Superman could

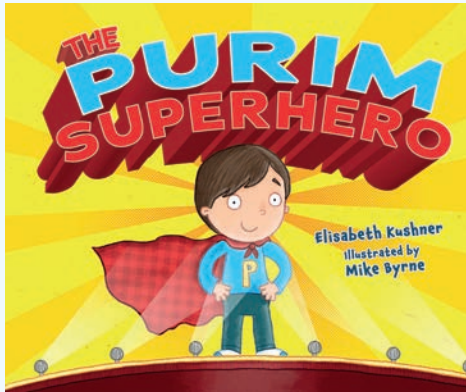
survive, yet it gave him perpetual angst. You can’t get more Jewish than that.’

It is not hard to see a link between Superman and the festival of *Purim* which is now upon us – a festival which commands of us to be happy and to don costumes. We wear costumes on *Purim* as a reminder of how turned around things can be: Haman tried to kill the Jews but instead the Jewish people prevailed. Like Clark Kent being able to use his powers to bring justice, Mordechai and Esther were able to defy the odds and bring security to their people.

Many of our famous superheroes, including Batman and Spider-Man, were created by Jews, perhaps because this idea of a superhero mirrors the Jewish narrative. We are a people who against all odds have managed to prevail and who are committed to bringing greater justice for all. The superhero is an individual who is an outsider, who is assumed to be powerless, but who is able to instigate great change.

Rabbi Rachel Weiss from Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York City explains the connection between superheroes and *Purim*. She writes, ‘Kids instinctively understand these issues. I use the holiday to get them to think about what powers they already have that they could use to be better people.’

A few years ago a new book on *Purim* and superheroes was published. It is a children’s book titled *The Purim Superhero* and is about young Nate and a problem he has. His friends all know how they are going to dress up for *Purim* – they all want to dress as superheroes – but Nate is still struggling with what to wear because his interest is in aliens. Nate is able to have loving conversations with his parents to decide what to do to celebrate *Purim*. What gives the book added interest and makes it different is that Nate’s parents are his two fathers. The message of *The Purim Superhero*



is that sometimes showing who you really are makes you stronger. While not a new message, especially for a book about *Purim*, this book is a very important book in the history of Jewish children's books.

When it was first published, the book was shared at Rabbi Weiss's monthly LGBTQ parenting group. These are some of the reflections from the parents:

"It's so rare to see the reflection of our family in a children's book, let alone a Jewish one."

"I love that it's just presented so casually, as a matter of fact, that the kid has two dads."

"It's not what the story's about, it just is."

Another parent told a story about being horrified by her son's earlier response to the story of *Purim*: He'd said, 'Esther should hide who she is if it makes her safer.' She observed that a book like *The Purim Superhero* is a powerful counterpoint to that perspective.

As an article in the Catholic news weekly *The Tablet* explains, 'Predictably, certain Jews are having conniptions about a children's book that includes gay parents and themes.' 'Disgraceful', wrote a commenter in *The Times of Israel* feature about the book. Another

wrote, 'You may as well have a "Jewish" book about how cheeseburgers and lobster are super kosher.' A third posited, 'Judgement [sic] is coming.'

Yet the Director of Keshet, a grassroots organisation that advocates for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, shared that at the time of publication the book was mostly being met with unbelievably positive feedback. She explained, 'There are a dozen or so book parties happening around the country, in Jewish bookstores and Jewish Community Centres and private homes. If we'd been asked, we would have thought gay and lesbian couples would be doing all the hosting, but it's pretty evenly split between straight couples with kids and gay couples. I think it really signifies a shift in the climate in the Jewish community. The book reflects the Jewish world they live in and want to raise their kids in, one they aspire to keep taking to a place of greater inclusion and equality.'

The Purim Superhero shares the *Purim* message: be proud of who you are; do not hide yourself. Have the courage of Esther who was able to be honest about who she was and in turn save so many. There is an additional message for us to be mindful of: we must not have synagogues and Jewish communities that encourage others to hide who they are. Our community should be a place where it might be that only on *Purim* one must wear a costume. However, our community must continue to strive to be a place where people understand that they can come just as they are, with their unique approach to the world, with their own personal history, with their fears, and with their hopes, and be met by people who will see them for the superhero that they are.

Elana Dellal



The Learning Circle

Adult education classes at the LJS

Purim term classes

Tuesday morning and evening classes run until 31 March. Please note there are no classes the evening of Tuesday 10 March. However, everyone is invited to the *Purim* event at 7.00pm on Monday 9 March (see page 5).

TUESDAY MORNINGS 11.15am-12.30pm

TUESDAY TEXTS

This friendly group is led by our rabbis and other guest tutors. 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

Exploring Judaism Purim term

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*

SHABBAT MORNINGS 9.45-10.45am

Shabbat morning classes run until 28 March.

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 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 Book of Koheleth (Ecclesiastes)

Facilitator: Michael Romain

'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.

If you would like to know more about the content of these classes or are wondering whether it's for you, please contact Michael Romain: romain@netgates.co.uk

New Tuesday evening course for *Purim* Term!

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

The Gospels and Rabbinic Judaism

A six-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 six Tuesday evenings during March and May from 8.00pm – 9.00pm.

This course aims to explore common themes or texts in Judaism and Christianity in order to learn about both faiths and to enhance our understanding of our own faith.

17 March: The Great Commandment & The Golden Rule: *Matthew, Mark* and *Luke*

24 March: Jesus in the Synagogue and the Reading of the Prophets: *Luke, Mark* and *Matthew*

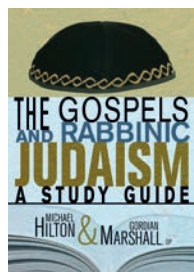
31 March: Parables: *Matthew*

5 May: *Shabbat* Observance: *Matthew, Mark* and *Luke*

12 May: Divorce: *Matthew* and *Mark*

19 May: Who can forgive? *Matthew, Mark* and *Luke*

This course is free to LJS Members and Friends, and to Members of The London Society of Jews and Christians; the cost to Non-Members is £10.00 per session. All participants are required to buy a copy of the book at a cost of £10.00. To register, please email education@ljs.org or call 020 7432 1284.



SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday 28 April at 11.15am:
Visit to The British Library

Hebrew Manuscripts: Journeys of the Written World – Journey beyond the Bible to discover the history, culture and traditions of Jewish people from all corners of the world through the ages.

Everyone is welcome to join the Tuesday Texts group for an outing to this exhibition. More information is available at: <https://www.bl.uk/events/hebrew-manuscripts>. Please register your interest with Abi Rose: rabbispa@ljs.org or 020 7432 1283. Maximum number is 10-15. Please book early.



ANNOUNCEMENT – NEW COURSE FOR NEXT TERM

Looking ahead to the *Shavuot* term which begins on 25 April, Michael Romain announces a new study class which will look at the writings of modern Jewish scholars. Each week one of our rabbis, other scholars and also course members will introduce a Jewish writer from the 20th or 21st century to the class and discuss one or more of their works. More details will be announced in the April newsletter, though please also feel free to contact Michael in the interim: romain@netgates.co.uk

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



JEWISH BOOK WEEK

Jewish Book Week runs 29 February to 8 March principally at King's Place, with some events at JW3. It is an outstanding festival with a wonderful line-up of speakers and performers who inform and entertain us, and who ignite interest in new ideas.

There are a number of Jewish Book Week events with LJS connections, including the following: on Sunday 1 March at 11.00am LJS member Bernie Bulkin is chairing a session on John Browne's book *Make, Think, Imagine: Engineering the Future of Civilisation*; on Tuesday 3 March at 7.00pm LJS member Michael Grade is interviewing the Israeli author and filmmaker, Ori Elon; on Thursday 5 March at 8.30pm, Simon Wallfisch, the wonderful baritone who sings in the LJS choir, is performing in a celebration of the life of Irving Berlin called 'There's no Business like Show Business'; on Sunday 8 March at 2.00pm tribute is paid to the life of Al Alvarez together with the lives of two former LJS members, the late Elaine Feinstein and Clive Sinclair.



The Parisian Novels (The Yellow Books) by Vincent van Gogh
(Image licensed by Bridgeman Education)

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.

A Celebration of the Life of Rabbi Dr David J. Goldberg OBE



On a late afternoon in January, the LJS held a very special event – a celebration of the life of our late Rabbi Emeritus, David Goldberg, who died on 30 April last year.

Following words of welcome to the LJS addressed by Rabbi Alexandra Wright to a packed Sanctuary, the service was introduced by Rabbi Kathleen de Magtige-Middleton, who, together with Rabbi Mark Solomon, led the prayers including the traditional Memorial Prayer and *Kaddish*. Personal prayers and words about David were spoken by Rabbi Danny Rich.

The choice of music, under the direction of Cathy Heller Jones and with the participation of the wonderful Choir of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, was inspired. The plangent Sarabande from Bach's Cello Suite in C major was superbly played by Gemma Rosefield. Following Ralph Vaughan Williams' congregational hymn *All People that on Earth do Dwell*, Ruth Kerr and the choir gave a magnificent rendition of *Avinu Malkenu*. We heard music which conveyed David's love of opera: a chorus from Verdi's *Nabucco* and the 'La ci darem la mano' duet from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, delightfully sung by David's niece, Natasha Goldberg, with Stefan Berkiet. Two hauntingly beautiful unaccompanied solo songs, *Wild Mountain Thyme* by Francis McPeake and *The first time ever I saw your face* by Ewan MacColl, were sung exquisitely by Jane Emmanuel and Natasha Goldberg respectively. A very lovely arrangement of *Ständchen* for mezzo-soprano Morag Boyle and choir represented David's enjoyment of the music of Schubert. The memorial was framed by organ works by Mendelssohn and Karg-Elert, played by our organist and pianist, Tim Farrell.

David, having indicated the music he wanted for his memorial, had also chosen an exceptionally profound text by Primo Levi from *If this is a Man*. Janet Suzman gave a deeply affecting reading about the little three-year-old boy known as Hurbinek, who had a nobility about him in the fierce determination he expressed through his knowing eyes which enabled him, despite his lack of speech and wasted body, to engage with his fellow Auschwitz inmates before they all perished. Janet Suzman's recitation of Shakespeare's glorious Sonnet 138 with its wry and mischievous message of love in old age was delivered with charm and wit.

In the first of three beautifully crafted tributes to David, Tricia Barnes, an old family friend, evoked David's deep love and regard for his wife, Carole, his children, Rupert and Emily, and his grandson, Oscar. Michael Grade expressed David's huge contribution to our community – including the artwork and beauty of our synagogue – as well as to Liberal Judaism more broadly. He spoke of David's commitment to the development of Judaism as a modern, tolerant and inclusive religion, the important interfaith work he initiated, and the integrity of his sometimes controversial views. Martin Woollacott gave us a flavour of the schoolboy David, ready to challenge his teachers. He also spoke of David as a highly skilled writer who throughout his life marshalled his critical thinking into cogently written books and articles examining Judaism and Zionism. Through each tribute we had a vivid sense of David – fiercely intelligent yet approachable, a lucid communicator, and of course very funny. We understood David as a man with diverse and by no means exclusively intellectual interests: he loved the mountains, walking his dogs, and following cricket and football matches. He had a preternatural knowledge of cowboy films, which he adored.

At the reception following the memorial, the general consensus was that we had been part of a fitting tribute to our much loved and highly respected Rabbi.

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 by 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 always welcome new volunteer helpers, and would appreciate hearing from you. Please contact the office on 020 7286 5181.

The next three screenings:

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

22 April: *Sully: Miracle on the Hudson*

27 May: *Pal Joey*

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 lunch is on **Tuesday 17 March**. Please call the office on 020 7286 5181 to let us know if you are coming.

NOSH 'N' DROSH

Shabbat lunchtimes 1.15pm-2.15pm

Talks and discussions over a bagel lunch – all welcome; no charge

14 March 2020: Geoffrey Pollard will give a talk on the Jewish revolutionary, Leon Trotsky.

30 May 2020: the life of LJS member Walter Wolfgang, who died last year, will be celebrated by his close friend, Carol Turner.

LOCAL WALKING GROUP

Our next walks will be on **Thursday 12 March** and **Thursday 16 April**.

We meet 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

Teacher Caroline Hagard describes the activities of *Kittah Gan* on 1 February

Mindful of the fact that the focus for the *Shabbat* was Mental Health Awareness, Rabbi Elana ran an excellent session in *Tefillah* about feelings. After our *Shabbat Shalom* song and our morning song, we talked about things that made us happy, and who we should tell. We then went on to talk about things that might make us sad. Who would we tell in this instance?

The charity Jami, which offers a mental health service for the Jewish community, has a café called the Headroom Café in Golders Green. The picture (above) from their website gave me the idea of making pancakes. As the following week was going to be *Tu Bi'Shvat*, the New Year for Trees, and given that trees bear fruit, I thought making pancakes with fruit might be a fun activity – and I was not wrong! We had small round pancakes, and also crêpes filled with chocolate which could be decorated as they were or opened up and used as a 'canvas'. With choices of sauces including toffee, chocolate, strawberry, maple syrup and squirty cream together with bananas, clementines, blueberries and grapes, much fun ensued. The creations were really beautiful, as you can see in the photo below.

We finished off the morning with our *Kabbalat Shabbat* ceremony and *Kiddush*, during which the children played an active role. What an enjoyable and meaningful *Shabbat* morning we had.



We wish these young members of the LJS a very happy birthday in March

Emma Armstrong	Sacha Laloum
Isaiah Baum Appignanesi	Ellie Matthews
Romilly Blitz	Fanny Mendelsohn
Honor-Ray Caplan-Higgs	Leo Mendelsohn
Lily Chevalier	Quincy Newman
Isobel Dagtoglou	Benno Ratner
Angel Desmond	Max Roeder Wald
Amelia Dubin	Ollie Roeder Wald
Rebecca Forster	Steven Ross
Kitt Frankel	Emily Roth
Albie Gavshon	Jacob Rushbrook
Gabriel Grade	Sasha Sebag-Montefiore
Samuel Grainger	Oralee Sellar
Mirabelle Haddon	Olivia Sinclair
Matilde Hockley Lester	Cy Solomons
Eric Lach Stein	Jonas Wiesenfeld
Sofia Lach Stein	

Tiny Tots

These sessions for little ones between the ages of 0 and 4 with their parents, grandparents or carers are held at 11.00am on Shabbat mornings during term times.

The Nursery is always available for children to play or read on every *Shabbat* with a parent or other carer present.

Email education@ljs.org if you would like to be added to the Tiny Tots email circulation list.

Thank you to Rabbi Danny Rich



After 15 years, Rabbi Danny Rich is standing down at the end of March as Chief Executive and Senior Rabbi of Liberal Judaism, an organisation to which Danny has made an enormous contribution.

Danny has been instrumental in the opening of many new Liberal communities, and ensured a thriving LJY-Netzer. A committed

leader and ambassador for Liberal Jewish values as well as an inspiring speaker and writer, Danny has re-invigorated the movement with social justice messages and campaigns, not least in the field of rights for refugees and equal marriage for same-sex couples. Danny has increased the support given to Jewish students, including appointing the first Progressive Student Chaplain on campus, and has fought for the recognition of all Jews in the wider Jewish community and schooling system, including those of patrilineal descent.

We thank Danny for these and many other initiatives and achievements, and wish him all the very best for the future.

Tony Klug on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict



There is no plausible alternative to the two-state solution as neither people would accept anything less, maintained Dr Tony Klug, special adviser on the Middle East to the Oxford Research Group, discussing the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the first Nosh 'n'

Drosh of 2020. He expressed the view that the founding democratic values of the Israeli state based on Biblical justice are being eroded by the lengthy occupation and spiralling number of settlers on the West Bank. With anti-Jewish feeling growing, adopting the slogan 'Love Israel, hate occupation' might help reclaim Jewish values and reputation whilst awaiting a breakthrough.

Sue Bolsom

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