



European Union for Progressive Judaism

January 2016 Newsletter

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Dr Leo Hepner, 1930 - 2015

In Memoriam

Our past Chairman, Leo Hepner died suddenly and unexpectedly on November 25th. Leo was Chairman of the EUPJ (then called the European Region of the WUPJ) from 1998 to 2004. His colleagues and friends share with his wife Regina and his siblings a profound sense of loss. Leo was a highly distinctive individual whose presence was always keenly felt; sadly now so will his absence.



Leo Hepner z"l

Leo was born in Leipzig into a deeply orthodox family. His parents brought their family to Britain via Switzerland in 1939 - fortuitously his father had established a branch of the family fur business in London, and this provided access to Britain when it became necessary to leave Germany. Leo was educated in London, ending with a PhD in Chemistry from Imperial College. He practiced as a chemical engineer with his own consultancy in the biochemical field. He was a world authority on fermentation processes in the food industry and had clients in many countries. Even when he "retired" he received requests for specialised advice and undertook those projects which he felt to be interesting and challenging.

In my many discussions with Leo, I neglected to ask him what drew him away from his orthodox upbringing to Liberal Judaism. It somehow seemed a *non sequitur*. To Leo, Liberal Judaism was authentic and unapologetic. He could read the Torah scroll and discourse on Jewish teachings and teachers (as a boy he was tutored daily before school in Hebrew and Jewish studies).

He was both President of his congregation, West Central Liberal Synagogue, as well as *shaliach tzibur*, leading services.

In his EUPJ activities Leo was associated with the early development of post-war liberal Judaism in Germany – which was recognised by his receiving the *Israel Jakobsohn Prize*. Leo had a particularly close relationship with the Hanover Liberal Congregation and the Progressive community of Copenhagen, Shir Hatzafon. In recent years Leo was active on behalf of the EUPJ in developmental activities in Spain.

Leo was fluent in half dozen languages and could get by in others. He and Regina, whom he married in 2006, were deeply involved in every form of cultural activity. A visit to their flat is an immersion into art, literature and music. Some years ago Leo decided to search for the picture of his maternal grandfather painted in the early 1920s by the eminent German artist, Lovis Corinth. This painting had disappeared in the Nazi era. Leo found this picture and presented it to his mother for her 100th birthday, just in time, as she died a few weeks later.

Leo played the viola. – that understated instrument, so fitting to his character. He knew his Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, but for Leo this was "pre-music". Real music began with the contemporary composers of the second half of the 20th century. In music, Leo checked in where we check out. He and Regina sponsored a festival of contemporary chamber music every two years, initially in Switzerland, now in Germany.

The term "Renaissance man" is overused and mostly flattery. In Leo's case it was "the real McCoy". Add to that his utterly distinctive personality – a central European intellectual rigour overlaid with British whimsical self-effacement and the occasional sprinkling of schoolboyish mischief – and you have the truly unforgettable character that was Leo Hepner, and whom we will dearly miss. We share our loss with Regina, who was always at his side at EUPJ events, and extend to her our hand of ongoing friendship.

Leslie Bergman, January 2016



**Register now for
early bird rates.**

**14-17 April
in London**

[Click here](#) and see page 3
for more information.

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We want your photos!

Almost every day we receive emails containing the wonderful news stories which you read in this newsletter. We are very grateful, and do our best to include as many stories as possible, and at least to represent every EUPJ community that sends news. We also receive excellent stories from outside our European region, and regrettably it is impossible to include them.

A number of news stories and newsletters arrive without photographs, so this is a special request to please send photos to administrator@eupj.org or newsletter@eupj.org. Many times it is necessary to search the web for pictures of guest rabbis, and we would much prefer photographs of your community events with the rabbi and your members. Anyone can send photos, this is not a leadership function. Whenever your EUPJ community has a newsworthy event, ask whomever is there with a camera or smart phone to mail one or more snapshots. They will be thanked personally and can be mentioned as photographer if desired. Our newsletter and the entire EUPJ community will benefit.

Arthur Buchman, Editor

Letters

Just wanted to say what a great issue this was. Leslie Bergman's report on the award to Angela Merkel by Geiger College was absolutely excellent. Many thanks for all the hard work to produce such an excellent newsletter.

Judy Smith

Good news for Catholics and Jews

A pronouncement against converting Jews came in a major Catholic document released in December 2015 by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. It was issued to mark the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, a declaration promulgated in 1965 by the Second Vatican Council that opened the door to formal Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

A new Vatican document, titled "The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable," discussed at length how Christianity is rooted in Judaism. Because of this, it said, the Church is "obliged to view evangelisation to Jews, who believe in the one God, in a different manner from that to people of other religions and world views." It added, "In concrete terms this means that the Catholic Church neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews."

See the EUPJ website: www.eupj.org.

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Synagogues everywhere

Progressive congregations and Shabbat services can be found nearly everywhere during your travels. Click on a blue link to find a synagogue near your destination: [Europe](#) — [Worldwide](#)



ATID, Barcelona

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in Israel and Europe.
They support us.
www.fpjie.org.uk





European Union for Progressive Judaism Biennial Conference

Less than three months to go and there are just a few days before the early bird rate ends on 31st January. Nearly 200 delegates from over 16 countries have already made the decision to attend the historic first EUPJ Biennial Conference in London and we confidently expect more than 300

This is not a Conference that anyone should miss. We've tasted the food, chosen the menus and settled the venues. We've also selected the workshop titles that you have asked for. Never before have we received so many offers to participate in and talk about subjects that you want to discuss, learn about and debate.

[Click here or on any picture to go to the registration page.](#)



Is Anti-Semitism on the rise and if so, how can we combat this threat? Should we give greater emphasis to interfaith relationships, and how can Christians, Muslims and Jews work together? How do we define our identity, and what unites and divides us? How can we make Judaism attractive to young people and persuade them to engage in Jewish communal life? How important is it to achieve a true lay leader-rabbinic partnership to ensure sustainable communities?

*These are just five of the many topics that we'll be considering during a packed programme which offers something for everyone. **For more of the highlights go to page 4.***

A glittering opening ceremony at the Guildhall with all the pomp and pageantry that is unique to London will launch a weekend which will celebrate the World Union's 90th anniversary in the very city in which it was born as well as the 60th anniversary of Europe's oldest rabbinic college named after one of our most charismatic and inspirational rabbinic leaders, Leo Baeck. On Shabbat afternoon, after our service which will be a celebration of our many nationalities

and traditions, there will be an innovative Lunch and Learn – with food and topics both tasty and easy to digest. Tours to the City of London and its West End as well as the Museum District and to Westminster Synagogue to see the priceless collection of Czech scrolls should guarantee that nobody should be lost for something to do before Havdalah and an evening which promises to be surprisingly entertaining (remember Dresden?)

In response to popular demand we have also added another option to the wide selection of registration choices by offering a combined ticket to attend the opening ceremony and the Kabbalat Shabbat service and dinner for £150, a discount of 25% on the price of attending each event separately. So, there's no time to lose, now is the time to make your decision and come.....





**Join hundreds of progressive Jews from across the world at Building Bridges
14 – 17th April.**

[Click here or on any picture to go to the registration page.](#)



**Enjoy a memorable sparkling opening evening at London's historic
Guildhall where we will mark both the 90 years of WUPJ
and 60 years of Leo Baeck College in London.**

Celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat at the historic West London Synagogue.

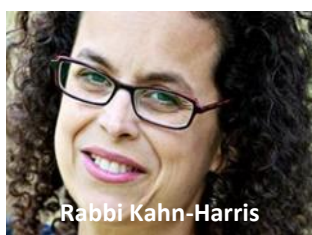


**Join new and old friends at the Shabbat service at the beautiful
Liberal Jewish Synagogue.**

**Drink a birthday l'chaim to the World Union for Progressive Judaism at a special
Friday night dinner as we celebrate 90 years of this remarkable organisation.**

Experience Building Bridges in practice as we explore inter and intra-faith dialogue.

Study with leading rabbis and teachers from across Europe.



**Recharge your Jewish batteries at Building Bridges and make those connections
which will refresh and renew you on your own Jewish Journey and build a stronger
progressive Judaism for Europe.**

Latifa Ibn Ziaten at GIL

Latifa Ibn Ziaten, the founder and president of the association for IMAD Youth and Peace will make a presentation at GIL, the Liberal Jewish Community of Geneva on Friday 22 January. She is the mother of Imad Ibn Ziaten, a soldier murdered by Mohammed Merah in Toulouse. After the talk, we will hold a service followed by a pot-luck Shabbat dinner. Everyone is requested to bring a savoury dish, a sweet dish and a beverage. Kosher at GIL includes poultry, fish (with fins and scales), cheese and any beverage. We begin the presentation at 20:30, and admission is free. Please sign up at info@gil.ch.



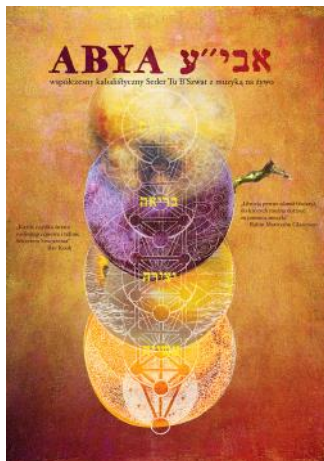
Latifa Ibn Ziaten

Migwan Movie Night: Matchmaker

Saturday, January 23, Havdalah at 6:10 pm. The film starts at 6:30. Jewish female seeks Jewish male with a view to marriage: Experimenting on herself, the 30-year-old female director of "Matchmaker" goes in search of a partner in Zurich. To make things even more difficult she invites the candidates to bake the traditional Sabbath bread with her. By the end of the film there are six loaves of bread on the kitchen table. 70 minutes, language: Swiss German with English subtitles. Refreshments and discussion afterwards, of course.

Kabbalistic Seder at Beit Kraków

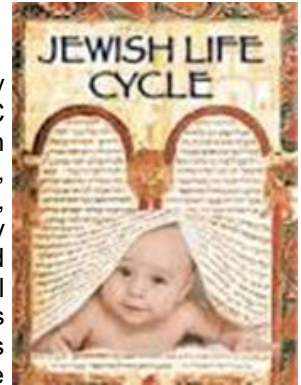
Beit Kraków Jewish Community and The Jewish Theatre in Krakow are honored to invite everyone who is interested in the Jewish past, present and future to a performative, inclusive, interactive ritual, - a musical approach to a Kabbalistic Seder in Poland. As part of the Tu B'Shevat experience we will provide innovative contemporary Jewish music, deep spiritual experiences and a traditional choice of Israeli fruits and wine. Information & reservations: office@beitkrakow.pl. And for those of you who would like to learn more about the symbolism of a Tu B'Shevat Seder (a ritual holiday meal), about sefirot (aspects of God), or the arba olamot (the kabbalistic structure of the spiritual world) come to the open lecture by Rabbi Tanya Segal which will take place on 24 January in the Galicia Jewish Museum at 5 pm. Admission is free.



International Jewish Center Of Belgium

Jewish Learning Encounters at IJC

On Wednesday, 13 January from 7:00-9:00 pm the IJC held a great discussion on Jewish Life Cycle events, the early years: pregnancy, miscarriage, birth, baby naming, Brit Milah and Zeved haBat (covenantal ceremony for girls). As previously, the course was held in central Brussels. We will continue with this series in future months.



IJC Leuven has a new location



Erev Shabbat at IJC Leuven

IJC Leuven settled into its new location this semester, subsidised by the university. The facilities are nicer, more spacious, with a great kitchen and dining area at our disposal and dedicated storage for kitchenware, books, etc. We continue to attract a strong core group of students/staff, but we want to re-extend a welcome to all IJC members. Shabbat in Leuven is also for you, and the students who are only here for a short time really appreciate the presence of permanent members of our community. It's also closer than you think! So come and join us once a month for prayer, food, drinks and schmoozing! Any questions? Contact Brian at leuven@ijc.be.

Shir Hatzaon joins Liberal Judaism

We have an exciting year ahead of us. After deliberations over the past many months – and in fact, over several years – Shir Hatzaon is becoming a member of Liberal Judaism in the UK this January 26th. Membership means that our congregation is part of a larger umbrella organisation of progressive congregations in Britain and also in Holland.

Very importantly, we remain a committed part of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ).

Joining Liberal Judaism includes a

closer working relationship with Danish-born Rabbi Sandra Kviat. This will make Danish a more regular part of our liturgical life, a huge benefit for the children and younger members in our congregation whose everyday language is Danish. In addition, Liberal Judaism has a wealth of experience in progressive Jewish education, both for children and adults, a resource that we will also be able to draw upon as members. Children and young people are in fact, the largest demographic group in Shir Hatzaon. We are very pleased to be able to tailor their Jewish education and social network even more to their needs through our affiliation with Liberal Judaism.

Adrienne Mannov, Chairperson



Rabbi Sandra Kviat

Esch-sur-Alzette installs rabbi

Since July 2015 the Liberal Jewish Community of Luxembourg in Esch-sur-Alzette has had a new rabbi: Alexander Grodensky. Rabbi Alexander was born in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and grew up in the Russian north. In 2015 he graduated from Abraham Geiger College in Berlin-Potsdam with a rabbinic ordination and from the University of Potsdam with a Master of Arts in Jewish Studies. In Berlin he was actively involved in bringing Hillel International to Germany; he is currently the rabbi and a board member of Hillel in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.



Rabbi Alexander Grodensky

In addition to his rabbinic training and Jewish Studies Rabbi Alexander

holds graduate degrees in Public Administration and in Management. He is married to Isak Schneider.

Rabbi Alexander's formal installation took place on January 21 in the presence of Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel and EUPJ chairman Miriam Kramer.

Chanukah in Esch

This year Chanukah celebrations in Esch were enriched by a special Human Rights Shabbat, marking the annual International Human Rights Day on 10 December. The date was originally chosen to commemorate the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the first global enunciation of human rights, on 10 December 1948. The idea to devote a Shabbat to the Jewish reflection on human rights comes from T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

The Human Rights Shabbat which was started in 2007 was celebrated in nearly 200 congregations in North America and Europe in 2015. On that special Shabbat communities come together to discuss contemporary human rights struggles and to celebrate the opportunities of cross-fertilisation between universal human rights and Jewish ethical values.

This year, our Human Rights Shabbat coincided with Chanukah and focused on how human rights are a source of light in our world. After our rabbi's sermon on human rights as a messianic project we gathered for a podium discussion on the current refugee crisis and its implications for Luxembourg. The two panellists, Corinne Cahen, Luxembourg's minister of integration (Democratic Party) and Vera Spautz, mayor of Esch-sur-Alzette (Labour Party) shared their thoughts and experiences with the congregation. Corinne Cahen is not only responsible for the integration of refugees at the national level, she is also the first Jew in the Luxembourg government ever. The vivid discussion was moderated by the prominent Luxembourgish journalist Laurent Moyse.



Corinne Cahen



Laurent Moyse



Vera Spautz

Chanukah Celebrations in Twente



Chanukah lighting at LJC Twente lighting
(photo by LJC Treasurer, Evelien van Gelder)

The 1828 village shul where the LJC Twente resides, was almost too small for Chanukah celebrations this year. Almost 40 people, including a number of children, crowded in to celebrate the seventh night of Chanukah with a short evening service, lighting of the seventh candle, and to sing out the Shabbat by making havdalah in shul together. Prior to this a large number of the congregation had gathered nearby to enjoy the third meal of Shabbat and to socialise. "This was again a wonderful opportunity", said Board president and chazzan Bert Oude Engberink, "as many people travel up to an hour to be here".

The congregation, which spans the border between the Netherlands and Germany, and has members in both countries, enjoyed singing Chanukah songs. Rabbi Albert Ringer, present for the day, shared his thoughts around Chanukah, and wishes for a better world especially on the day that in Paris a climate agreement was reached, ratified by many countries.



Rabbi Albert Ringer

"With a growing number of families now coming to the LJC Twente, there is increasing discussion on how to accommodate everyone, and we may even have to look at multiple options such as special services in another location, or expanding our facility", said Board Clerk Wilhelmina Hein.

With the sharing of Chanukah light in the darkest part of the year, the LJC Twente looks forward to a bright future in 2016.

ATID Sephardic Kabbalat Shabbat



Kabbalat Shabbat buffet at ATID

While on holiday in Barcelona I was fortunate to visit ATID on 18 December for a unique Kabbalat Shabbat. Haim Cassis, a most capable student rabbi from Leo Baeck College, led the fully packed synagogue in a Sephardic service, chanting beautiful melodies new to most of the attendees. When towards the end of the service the tunes became familiar, everyone joined in heartily. For Spanish-born Haim, it was his first time leading a Spanish community, and he was quite happy to be in this natural setting for him.



**L-R: Leo Baeck College student rabbi Haim Cassis,
ATID Executive Director Laura Kolesnicov,
EUPJ Newsletter Editor Arthur Buchman**

After the service there was a Kiddush with socialising and a delicious buffet that included Sephardic delicacies. Many thanks to ATID Community Director Laura Kolesnicov, whose kind emails, warm greeting and enthusiastic hospitality made this Shabbat so memorable.

Arthur Buchman

Beth Hillel Roma news

Beth Hillel Roma is extremely happy to announce the visit of Rabbi Roberto Arbib on January 22 and 23. Rabbi Arbib has been a long time friend of our community, and always follows our news from Tel Aviv.

We will begin at 18:30 on Friday January 22 with a meeting with the younger generation to prepare for the arrival of Tu Bshvat, the trees' new year. Then comes Kabbalat Shabbat and Arvit followed by a community dinner to which everyone is invited to participate by bringing vegetarian dishes and/or kosher wines and desserts.

The dinner will be followed by a conversation with Rabbi Arbib on the theme: "Jewish non-orthodox movements in Israel".

At 10:00 am on Saturday, January 23, Rabbi Arbib leads a Tefilah service, with reading and commentary of Parasha Beshallah, followed by Kiddush.



Rabbi Roberto Arbib

Big weekend at Beth Shalom Milan

At our Shabbat service on December 5 we called to the Torah those converts who were not in Milan in November. In addition to giving us a lovely antique silver yad to commemorate the occasion, one of them hosted a beautiful lunch following services for the congregation and his relatives from Verona. The highlight was Rabbi Robert Gan's sermon in which he recounted his memories of Chanukah when he was a small boy, how at that time after the Shoah it was positive to acknowledge the story about how a band of Jews were victorious over a strong Greek Syrian army. And how today we need Chanukah more than ever "to eliminate the dark corners of increasing poverty and the darkness of torture, the darkness of genocidal acts against the most helpless, the darkness of death from bullets, from bombs, from disease, from indifference, from the maldistribution of our resources. In conclusion, we need it to see the innocence and the wonder in our children's eyes. We need it to see that we have the power to change the world".

On a lighter note, we had a fun party on Sunday to celebrate the first night of Chanukah with quizzes, prizes, delicious food with a great variety of delicious latkes, doughnuts and cakes. Above all, we created and enjoyed a truly happy atmosphere which included Jewish karaoke!



Rabbi Robert Gan

Husband and wife rabbis in Milan



Rabbis Benji Stanley and Leah Jordan

Beth Shalom Milan had our most recent Shabbat service on 16 January following the long Italian holiday period. We were privileged to have two young rabbis, a husband and wife, jointly lead our services. Rabbi Leah Jordan is a rabbi at Norwich Liberal Jewish Community in the UK and is originally from the US Midwest. She was ordained at Leo Baeck College and works with the university and young adults. Her husband, Rabbi Benji Stanley, is a rabbi at the Movement for Reform Judaism, and he works with young adults as well as with the nurturing of informal communities throughout the UK.

Our Shabbat was certainly an unusual one with this dynamic young team. Following lunch we re-grouped and both rabbis led a lively discussion on Liberal and Reform Judaism in Britain.



Apply to Paideia! Fellowships in Jewish Studies 2016-2017

Paideia - The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden is a non-denominational academic framework that was established in 2000 with funding from the Swedish government. Dedicated to the revival of Jewish culture in Europe, Paideia educates leaders for Europe - academicians, artists and community activists - towards fluency in the Jewish textual sources that have served as the wellsprings of Jewish civilisation. The Paideia One Year Jewish Studies Programme offers a unique international Jewish studies experience during eight months in Stockholm with the possibility of a Master in Jewish Civilisations. Grants for tuition and living expenses are available.

For more information visit www.paideia-eu.org.

Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh news



Chanukah at Sukkat Shalom

Now published is [the first issue of Lulav for 2016](#) but also the last under the editorship of Catherine Lyons. This is a matter of deep regret to all of us. When Catherine took on the editorship of what had been called the Newsletter it was a much simpler affair, one of whose principal purposes was to advise people of dates, times and venues of upcoming services and Community events. Catherine is responsible for suggesting the name change to *Lulav* and the transformation in its style, range, depth and width of content. Under her guidance *Lulav* has developed into a magazine of wide-ranging and often thought-provoking interest. Catherine, an enormous vote of thanks from all in the community and beyond.

In addition you can read about the visit of Rabbi Stephen Fuchs, literary works by members and ex-members, and Joe's boxes. Go on; read it and you will find out! See our [Diary](#).

Norman Crane, Chair, Sukkat Shalom
The Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community

Defending the Faiths

Four key leaders spoke to Mosaic Reform in Harrow on 10 January about major problems faced by the Jewish community, how all religious groups in Harrow are protected by the police and the interaction between our community and those around us. The evening was chaired by Michael Reik, Mosaic Reform's representative on the Board of Deputies of British Jews. As a concluding message it was propounded that British Jews have a good life and good future in the UK and that this was certainly true in Harrow, the statistically safest London Borough to live in. Mosaic Community chairman Harry Grant thanked the panel members and presented them with copies of the Mosaic Reform daily prayer book.

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logos for
news of UK
movements



Liberal Judaism – Top 5 Moments in 2015

Whether it was campaigning for refugees, coming together at the Day of Celebration or exploring Judaism in new and innovative ways, 2015 was another year of highs for our national movement, communities and members. Below we look back at five key moments from the past 12 months: Click on the blue numbers for the full stories.

1. Simon Benscher becomes Liberal Judaism chair
2. 300 Liberal Jews gather for Day of Celebration
3. Interfaith Award for Northwood & Pinner
4. Prime Minister writes to Liberal Judaism
5. Liberal Jew part of Israel's first parliamentary transgender consultation

LJY-Netzer Machaneh Kadimah 2015

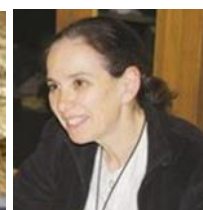


A classic LJY-Netzer whole camp
Kabbalat Shabbat service. See more [here](#).

LJS Jewish Journey to Berlin

Friday 6 - Monday 9 May

The LJS is organising a trip to Berlin and are welcoming members of other communities to join them. The trip will be led by Jeremy Leigh with Rabbi Alexandra Wright. **Cost:** £560 per person (£85 single supplement) *Flights are not included.*



Jeremy Leigh, Rabbi Alexandra Wright

Hotel: Amano Hotel, Alexanderplatz. For more information please [click here](#) or contact [Sue Bolsom](#) or [Karen Newman](#).

About Pro-Zion

Pro-Zion is the UK-based organisation that works to support Progressive Judaism in Israel and to promote Israel in Progressive Jewish Communities in the UK. Click [here](#) to learn more.



Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue reopens



Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah lighting the Chanukiah

The community at Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue are embarking on a new adventure with the opening of their redeveloped, state of the art building. The synagogue has been their home since 1937, but long in need of modernisation.

It was four years ago that the BHPS' Council decided upon a redevelopment - and the community temporarily moved out to allow the work to take place.

The 'new' synagogue offers a large sanctuary, office, library, educational rooms, pastoral care, a social area, kitchen and toilet accommodation over two floors.

The ark was an item of absolute importance during the construction process, and now when entering the sanctuary through a set of double doors the visitor is immediately confronted with an impressive ark at the front creating a vivid focal point.

Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah said: "Our new Aron Hakodesh, Holy Ark, makes a radical statement in its rainbow hues about inclusion and diversity and celebrates our rainbow congregation."

The building was opened to the community on *Shabbat Chanukah* – 30 Kislev 5776 - with a rededication welcoming back the congregation to their new spiritual home, led by Rabbi Sarah.

Liberal Judaism's senior rabbi, Rabbi Danny Rich, attended the service and said: "I was delighted to light the seventh candle of Chanukah in the new and rededicated Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue sanctuary. It is a testament to the dedication and tenacity of all its members. I am pleased that Liberal Judaism in particular, was able to play a role in this achievement."

LJ Lectionary 5776 / 5777

Click [here](#) to download the new Liberal Judaism Lectionary, a guide to recommended Torah and Haftarah readings for Shabbat, Festivals and special Shabbatot in 5776 / 5777, from 19 September 2015 to 16 September 2017.

Sim Shalom Budapest news



Chanukah at Sim Shalom Budapest (in 2011)

Our rabbi, Katalin Kelemen, was honoured twice in November. The first instance was when she gave a lecture on 15 November at the Budapest session of the Global Day of Jewish Learning on Love, Devotion, Desire and Deception. The title of her talk was "JUDAHism, Did we inherit sensual physicality or pure spirituality from our ancestors?", illustrated among other things by the story of Judah and the woman at the crossroads. The second recognition was when her sermon from the 2002 EUPJ conference was published along with those of 46 other women rabbis in the book "Women Rabbis in the Pulpit" by Leo Baeck College.

There were two big celebrations of Chanukah in Sim Shalom this year. The first was a party on Sunday, the first night, purely for fun and games and eating, of course. The second was on the sixth night, combined with our Kabbalat Shabbat service, and again with fun and games and eating. It was very impressive to see our three foot tall menorah lit up with all the other smaller ones around it like a mountain and its foothills.

But along with joy of Hanukah, in December we had to deal with a sad development in our congregational life. Our lease on the very nice flat we have rented for over five years came up for renewal. It suits us very well, having just about the right amount of space for our religious and educational programmes and other activities as well as being well located in the city with good transportation access for everyone, and also being in a very nice building. We managed to negotiate down to a 48% increase, but that is more than we can afford. So we are busy looking for something else.

The year ended with one piece of good news! The new Church Law, which would have made it almost impossible to ever regain our old registration status as a religious institution, and which everyone was sure would pass, did not get the necessary 2/3 majority. Therefore, we are still governed by the old law, and have a chance to improve our status. This which would allow us to again qualify for receiving the donations of 1% of our supporters' income taxes. We hope for more good news in 2016. **Jess Weil**

Germany

Beth Shalom Munich partners with Darchei Noam in Israel

Since November 2015 Beth Shalom has a partner community in Israel – the progressive congregation Darchei Noam in the town of Ramat HaSharon about 15 km north-east of Tel Aviv. I visited Darchei Noam in November and I was received warmly by the chairman of the municipality Ilana Dothan and Rabbi Dr Eli Levin. Ilana speaks German very well as her family is originally from Berlin. Even the rabbi understands much in German, and in the community I was introduced to other German-speaking members. The style and setting of the community reminded me of the beginnings of Beth Shalom, and as I attended Friday Kabbalat Shabbat, this feeling was confirmed. Darchei Noam has had similar struggles, having had to deal with some adversity during its development. However, now there is an active community life with its own synagogue.



Rabbi Dr Eli Levin

Of course, we also discussed how we could fill our newly formed partnership with life. Ilana and Rabbi Levin think it is very important that when Beth Shalom members are in Israel, they always will have a second home community. If someone from our Munich community is to travel in the near future to Israel and visit Darchei Noam, please call + 972-3-5473594.

Read more about Darchei Noam [here](#).
Juri Gewitsch, 2nd chairman

LJG Hamelin news

The year ended with a full sanctuary for our Chanukah service and festivities. The children lit all eight candles of our beautiful silver chanukiah and recited the brachot under Faina's direction. They retold the Chanukah story and led the congregation in the singing of Maoz Tzur. The children received thundering applause and Chanukah gift bags stuffed with sweets, lovingly prepared by Olga Gerr. Thanks to the support of the Central Council of the Jews of Germany's cultural programme, everyone enjoyed a Chanukah gift of a concert of Jewish music from Flora Polnauer - soulful singing, accompanied brilliantly by David Bernhoff on the piano. The evening ended around the Kiddush table, enjoying latkes and sweet sufganiyot with the Chanukah candles burning bright, one for each night, remembering days long ago. Read our full newsletter [here](#). Rachel Dohme



Read the UpJ newsletter

UpJ (Union progressiver Juden in Deutschland, the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany), publishes a newsletter in German, Russian and English. You can subscribe to it at www.liberale-juden.de and download it [here](#).

Introduction to Abraham Geiger College - our new video in English

We have a new video to get to know us [here](#). Hope you like it.
Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka

Shnat Netzer North: UK, US and Germany



Netzer Group starting the "Tikkun Period"

The lovely group of 18 participants in Netzer Olami's (Reform Zionist Youth Movement) Gap Year Programme - "Shnat Netzer" arrived from the UK, US and Germany on the programme in mid-October. They spent the first week in Jerusalem, followed by a month on Kibbutz Lotan- one of the two Progressive Kibbutzim in Israel.

Lotan has had a huge impact on all of them, both as individuals and also as a *kvutza*. They had the opportunity to meet some amazing and inspiring people, and find new interests, giving them a really great start to Shnat.

The transition from Lotan to urban life was made easier through a beautiful sikkum (closing) seminar, which culminated with songs around a bonfire on Saturday evening.

And here are [some photos](#) from Kibbutz Lotan

The group had an exciting, jam packed crazy week at the end of November. They started from Kibbutz Lotan in the desert and travelled to the beautiful green North of the country, to the city of Karmiel, starting the "Tikkun Period" of their year- two and a half months of volunteering programme, in partnership with the UJIA, The Jewish Agency and P2K. The group experienced a warm welcome from the city of Karmiel.

There they met Galit Hoffman, their direct leader in Karmiel, who has been working with Netzer for the past six years. She prepared a packed schedule for our Netzer group, which included three days of volunteering, an educational day, and a weekly day trip.

MJLF news

MJLF was proud to join the IMPJ "Domim-alike" project and to link up with the Yozma community in Modi'in. Successful visits to Israel were arranged for adults and teenagers, an MJLF-Netzer group was formed and Israeli cultural events were organised. MJLF became the headquarters of *Arzenou France*, the religious pluralism and social justice wing of the World Zionist Congress, and gathered the support needed to elect the first *Arzenou France* representative.

MJLF joined the social media celebration A Little Miracle, organised by 92Y in New York to share in the Chanukah experiences of 14 communities around the world. Celebrations began with the musical Zimra Shabbat on 4 December, joined by a dozen young people from various UK student groups who came to Paris for events linked to the climate change conference COP21. The MJLF choir beautifully accompanied the Shabbat community dinner on 11 December, while the eighth day was marked by a special morning service for the Talmud Torah and candle lighting for the community in the evening.



Chanukah at MJLF

On Friday evening January 12th we had a full house (350 people) for a special Zimra (musical) service in honour of those who lost their lives in the attacks of January 2015. The Editorial team of Charlie Hebdo was present as was the family of Elsa Cayat for whom MJLF's Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur pronounced the funeral oration a year ago.



Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur

Inauguration of Keren Or



Keren Or inaugurates its synagogue 29 November 2015

MJLF Surmelin

Thanks to the leadership of Rabbi Floriane Chinsky, the trustees and a committed group of lay members, the young community MJLF established at Surmelin in the 20th arrondissement of Paris is growing day by day. Membership has risen to 170 families (up 30% in two years) and some 200 faithful participated in the Tishri services. Regular activities include a book *oneg*, Sabbath meals, an orchestra and choir, children's services and workshops for Talmud Torah parents. The Rabbi's drachot and short commentaries "on one foot" are available online via [YouTube](#). The community is now looking for new premises, both larger and more accessible.



Rabbi Floriane Chinsky

Kehilat Gesher seeks a new home

The search for a new synagogue home and Liberal cultural community centre in Paris continues. The "Kehilat Gesher future home committee" started looking again at real estate possibilities, having taken a couple months' hiatus in the aftermath of the January attacks. (I guess taking care of the French soldiers stationed to live 24 hours a day, seven days a week in our current place took precedent at the time!).

Several sites have been visited recently, but some were rejected because they did not meet our concerns about legal safety, security norms nor handicap accessibility. Others did not meet our specifications for size or location. And of course, the other challenge is that building prices in the 17th district (where we intend to stay, as it has the largest concentration of Jews in Paris - and is our historic home) are not inexpensive.

Having said that, our spirits are quite high! To paraphrase Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion: "In France, in order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles."

We do believe in miracles, but also in doing the necessary legwork to help create their possibilities!

Rabbi Tom Cohen



Last chance to register for Beutel Seminar for Progressive Jewish Leadership in February



See a video about the Beutel Seminar [here](#).

We still have open spaces for a few more participants in the WUPJ Beutel Seminar for Progressive Jewish Leadership in Israel February 4-14 and want to be sure your community benefits from this wonderful opportunity.

[Read more](#).

The application form and sample schedule are available on the [here](#).



Every week, WUPJ emails *Torah from around the World*, a commentary on the Parashah (Torah portion) of the week by a rabbi from one of its congregations. Please click [here](#) to subscribe.

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IMPJ Newsletter

Click on [this link](#) for the newsletter of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism.

WUPJ 2016 Calendar

February 4-14 - Jerusalem

[Beutel Leadership Seminar](#)

April 7-14 - Berlin and London

[WUPJ Travel Tour](#)

April 14-17 - London

[EUPJ Biennial Conference](#)

May 19-25 - Jerusalem

[Roswell Seminar for Social Justice](#)

BERLIN TO LONDON... CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

A tour led by Rabbi Daniel Freeland

April 7-14

Join us as we celebrate 90 years of the World Union for Progressive Judaism! Established in London in 1926, the WUPJ held its first international convention just two years later in Berlin.

Come follow in the footsteps of history.

Together we will explore the World Union's past, present and future! We invite you to then join the [Biennial Conference of the EUPJ](#), European Union for Progressive Judaism in London (April 14-17).

[Click here for more details & to book online](#)



Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism

התנועה הרפורמית יהדות מתקדמת בישראל



Riding4Reform 2016: 28/2 –3/3

Only seven weeks left until a lucky group of riders will get to journey through the beautiful scenery that is Israel. The ride will begin in the Negev, when it is just beginning to blossom again and end in the magnificent Jerusalem mountains. If you still want to join but have not registered yet, go on the [R4R website](#) for all the details. See you there!