



European Union for Progressive Judaism

January 2017 Newsletter

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So here it is, 2017



Sonja Guentner

Much anticipated, with joy and with some anxiety, too. As America's new president prepares to take office and many European countries are likely to see difficult election results in the coming months, it is critically relevant for all of us to consider the essential requirements of pluralistic societies and without doubt, as progressive Jews, we have meaningful contributions to make.

Over the past weeks, I have had numerous opportunities to ponder over the various meanings of "family". There is the obvious one: our relatives, some near, some far, but close to us in either case. I very much hope that "between the years", to translate a German expression, we were all able to enjoy some rest and precious time with our loved ones, to touch base, to catch up on our busy lives and the many events which surround us every day. I also am thinking about what "family" means in a professional context: Our school is about to open a boarding facility for teenagers from around the world and it was a most fascinating process to find out how to best provide an environment for them which will provide the sense of comfort, safety and confidence which is so essential to any real home.

Most fascinatingly, however, I have been enjoying, together with my wonderful co-chairs Andrew Keene and Yair Lootsteen and the fabulous WUPJ team, the privilege of wondering about our world-wide progressive Jewish family: What are the hottest topics, the most interesting developments, the most urgent needs? What are our worries, our fears? What motivates us, gives us inspiration? Who would we like to get to know, meet again, learn from, discuss ideas with? And, so importantly, what does progressive Jewish life look like these days around the world and where are tomorrow's leaders?

Yes, I am sure you already know what I am talking about: WUPJ CONNECTIONS 2017, the big family reunion of our movement. That, at any rate, is what it feels like to me now. Over the last few months, in programme committee calls and through input of the most interesting nature from so many people in our movement, I have come to realise that this is not just

Abraham Geiger College Ordination



2016 Abraham Geiger College ordination

Another milestone in the strengthening of European Progressive Jewry:

Abraham Geiger College's seventh ordination ceremony was held in the city of Hannover on December 1 and saw two rabbis receiving smichah, or rabbinic ordination, as well as the investiture of one cantor. The ordination was granted by the college's president, Rabbi Walter Jacob, himself the 16th generation of rabbis in his family. The Liberal Jewish Community of Hannover, one of the biggest Jewish communities in German-speaking countries, numbering some 800 members, hosted the ceremonies, and its president, Ingrid Wettberg, had the privilege of welcoming about 250 invited guests to the Etz Chaim synagogue, a strikingly modern and spacious building.

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about a conference, this is about bringing together people who share a set of values, a sense of commitment and an identity. A family. It is our great hope that many of you from Europe will be able to join us. We are looking forward to celebrate with you the vibrancy of progressive Jewish life and the emergence of so many new communities across the continent. See you in Jerusalem!

Sonja Guentner, EUPJ Vice Chairman

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EUPJ Honorary Officers and Staff 2016

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Newsletter Editor

Arthur Buchman newsletter@eupj.org



Community Connections

One of the objectives of the EUPJ is to link communities from one country in the EU with another.

During the last 18 months we have successfully helped to twin EUPJ communities with Progressive communities in Israel under the Domim banner. This work continues on an ongoing basis, with two further EUPJ communities during our executive meeting in Lyon last month confirming their wish and ability to link to an Israeli IMPJ community - which we are now enabling.

In the past a number of UK Reform and Liberal communities have twinned with congregations from the Former Soviet Union (FSU). A number continue to do so, though the needs of the FSU communities have changed, often due to local political and economic circumstances.

We are now considering the twinning/linking of UK communities with other members of the EUPJ as a means of providing the expertise obtained over decades to fledgling communities within Europe who are or have recently started up. We also see the benefit of well grounded congregations in different parts of Europe helping sister communities on a similar basis or through common language. This already exists at certain levels in our French-speaking lands.

I would be delighted to hear from any communities that believe they may wish to be part of this project.

In particular I would welcome an assistant who would wish to be involved in the administration work of the linking of such communities.

Please feel free to contact me by email at jhgroup.t21@btinternet.com or by phone at +447768333864

Michael Reik

Sharing the joy in Lyon



L-R: Rabbi Danny Frelander, WUPJ Chair; Miriam Kramer, EUPJ Chairman; Pamela Vennin, Keren Or President; Celia Naval, VP and Conference Coordinator; Suzette Slama, Treasurer; Keren Or student rabbi Haim Casas

During the EUPJ conference in Lyon the first weekend in December, participants had the pleasure of welcoming a new Torah at host congregation Keren Or during the Shabbat morning service.

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](#)



Beit Tikwa, Bielefeld, Germany

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EUPJ Strategic Plan

At the EUPJ Executive Board Meeting in Lyon on December 4, the EUPJ Strategic Plan for 2017-2018 was presented and discussed. Representatives were present from all but three EUPJ affiliated countries. Gordon Smith (President) chaired the session which was led by Leslie Bergman (Honorary Life President) with Stéphane Beder (Vice Chairman) moderating.

Leslie laid out the background to the planning project. A Strategic Priorities document had been prepared in 2012 by Rabbi Joel Oseran and himself. In September the EUPJ Management Committee (Mancom) reviewed this document, which assessed our successes and failures and where we need to make changes. The broad conclusion by Mancom was that on the whole the EUPJ had followed its priorities and that a high degree of success had been achieved in the present positioning of the EUPJ and its affiliated countries compared to 2012 (in some cases with strong intervention of the EUPJ, in others with comparatively little). We concluded that Progressive Judaism is, on the whole, in a much stronger position in Europe at present than it was four years ago.

Areas were identified and categorised according to:

1. Objectives not met and needing a different approach
2. Existing initiatives which need further progress
3. New initiatives

The draft plan was prepared by Gordon and Leslie and then circulated to Mancom for review and discussion. Each initiative is the responsibility of a team leader, in most cases a Mancom member, supported by additional persons. Once Mancom had given their comments, an updated version was circulated to the Executive Board for review prior to the Lyon meeting. Some feedback was obtained and incorporated in the final version distributed before the meeting. In a few cases comments were received too late for inclusion but they were referred to by Leslie in the presentation and will be taken forward by the team leaders.

The Strategic Plan was presented in five sections, with a pause in between to allow for questions and comments.

1. Countries requiring major developmental work
2. "Mature" countries where the EUPJ need to strengthen its relationship
3. Countries that are satisfactory in terms of self-sufficiency and EUPJ relationship
4. Initiatives that are European wide
5. Internal EUPJ projects

There was a high level of interest and interaction; questions and contributions from the floor were positive and helpful, and some representatives used the occasion to provide country information which fitted in well with the agenda.

The Strategic Plan 2017-2018 was unanimously approved at the Executive Board meeting that followed. In her concluding comments EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer thanked all for their contribution – "now the real work begins".

Leslie Bergman

Diaspora Israel Day celebrated



Diaspora Israel Day at Bet Orim in Budapest

On the 7th of Mar-Cheshvan (November 7), we celebrated Diaspora Israel Day – a new holiday marking connections between Jewish congregations all around the world. See more on [Facebook](#) and at www.DiasporalsraelDay.org

EUPJ website update

We are working hard to build and launch a brand new EUPJ site for the spring of 2017. Our website remains withdrawn after being hacked into in September. We apologise for the inconvenience and assure our members and readers that you will be the first to know when we are on line once more.

European Jewish Research Archive launched

A project of the [Institute for Jewish Policy Research](#), funded by the [Rothschild Foundation \(Hanadiv\) Europe](#).



The European Jewish Research Archive is a free-to-access online repository of social research on European Jewry since 1990. It aims to provide Jewish leaders, academics, policy makers and community members with the research they need to understand contemporary European Jewish life.

As of November 2016, EJRA contains:

- 1635 item records
- 838 downloadable pdfs
- 10,000 items from the [Berman Jewish Policy Archive](#)
- the archive of the Jewish Journal of Sociology

[Browse here](#)

The EUPJ sends condolences

To Judy Smith on the death of her mother

To Rabbi Harry Jacobi on the death of his son

To Rabbi Danny Freeland on the death of his father-in-law

Chanukah

Kindling lights

When clouds of darkness composed of populism, hatred and the rejection of the other obscure our vision of what a human society is supposed to become: one of mutual respect, solidarity, and the protection of the stranger, it becomes ever more urgent that the Jewish people kindle lights of hope, change, and positive transformation.



Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz

Religious confidence in an age of scepticism

We celebrate Chanukah for eight nights. But clearly the most profound miracle occurred on the 25th of the month of Kislev, the first night. Judah the Maccabee had the courage, the faith, and the hope to light the first flame. Miraculously, it continued to burn.



Rabbi Tom Cohen

Needing a week's worth of oil before new oil could be made - but only having found a single can of kosher oil that could last but one night - most people would not have lit the Temple candelabra at all. After all, why light when failure is certain? Why make the effort, if the effort is doomed? The miracle of the first day is that the Maccabees found the inner strength, the inner courage, to light the Menorah in the first place! They did not give up, for nothing is impossible, and in the end they prevailed.

No one is immune from moments of darkness - moments of night in the inner soul. But light can remove the darkness, as day follows night. The message of Chanukah is to kindle the first light: to care, to be concerned and to lift others. In the end, the Vilna HaGaon said it best (and Leonard Cohen z"l immortalised his words): אור קטן יגרש חושך גדול - 'a little bit of light has the power to drive away a lot of darkness.'

In an age of scepticism sometimes it is we who must offer the example of faith. From some inner resource of "emunah" - religious confidence - we must at critical moments find the courage to kindle light.

That's how the world is improved, that's how synagogues are built, that's how we overcome the problems of day to day living. That's how we get up in the morning.

Someone kindles light, against all odds, and miraculously it survives, brings warmth and inspiring others to a flaming passion. Let this be the message of Chanukah that sparks your holidays.

Rabbi Tom Cohen



What is the miracle of Hanukkah?



Against all odds, we are here.

Against all common sense, we have lit these candles.

We see these flames before us now, a miracle.

We stand in community here, a miracle.

We see these flames leaping through space and time, joining us to history, to our people.

Ellen Dannin





Beth Hillel & IJC Shabbat Two parallel services, side by side

The IJC will hold Shabbat services at Beth Hillel on January 27 & 28. Beth Hillel will also hold Shabbat services then. These services - run in parallel by two different congregations in the same building - will be a test run. The IJC has been informed by its landlord that its lease might not extend beyond July 2017. The IJC needs to consider its options, and one option is to share the large space existing in the Beth Hillel building. The Friday and Saturday services are meant to see if parallel services on the technical level can be held to the satisfaction of each congregation. For this test to meet its aim, the IJC and Beth Hillel need your support in the form of large attendance on both January 27 and 28. We ask you to mark your calendar and plan to attend. Precise details on these services will be sent out shortly. The IJC aims to end its services around the same time as Beth Hillel's services so there can be a joint Kiddush and potluck dinner with Beth Hillel on Friday night as well as a joint Kiddush on Saturday.



Presentations by Rabbi Marc Neiger,

One Sunday a month from 18:00 to 20:00, join Rabbi Marc Neiger at Beth Hillel Brussels to discuss or rediscover the great themes of Judaism. Derived from midrashic exploration, these talks offer you a format of a friendly but pointed approach to the main themes of our tradition and are open to all, whatever the level of study. It is not essential to attend sessions in order, although a regular presence allows a better understanding of the concepts discussed.

Free for members, €10 for non-members. Information and registration: info@beth-hillel.org or +32 2.332.25.28.

Coming next on Sunday January 22: "Rashi and the commentators of the Middle Ages, Part I"



IJC celebrates Women in Judaism

Shacharit Services, Parashat Vayechi

Come celebrate Women in Judaism and join us for the Women's Service. Please participate and be part of a joyous event. Join us and show your support by reading a text, lifting the Torah, conducting part of the service, singing a song, giving a d'var, reading from the Torah, being a greeter, taking care of kiddush, or just being present.

All men are welcome!

Join us with the rest of the IJC women and celebrate our own Sisterhood. Please let us know how you would like to participate, ideas or suggestions are very welcome.

Date: Saturday January 14

Time: 10:00 am

Location: IJC

Contact info@ijc.be for the address

IJC Lecture Series

Kafka's world - between fantasy and reality

Sunday January 22 at 7:30 pm



Franz Kafka

Franz Kafka (1883 - 1924) who was Jewish, was a German-language writer of novels and short stories who is widely regarded as one of the major figures of 20th century literature. His work fuses elements of realism and the fantastic. Our speaker, and Kafka fanatic, is Professor Michel Flamée.

Flamée was a practicing lawyer at the Brussels Bar and was given the title of Honorary Advocate of the Bar. He was the head of the Belgian Banking, Finance and Insurance Commission (CBFA) and, due to his work on this commission, he was awarded the title of Commander in the Order of Leopold, the Belgian equivalent of a CBE in the UK. He served for two years as President of the Chamber of the Brussels Court of Appeal and was a professor at the Economic and Financial Law Centre of the Free University of Brussels.



Michel Flamée

We hope that you will turn out in large numbers to hear his fascinating talk.

Please contact info@ijc.be for the address.

Ann Englander

First International Mitzvah Day held in Switzerland



Mitzvah Day 2016 in Zurich: Or Chadasch volunteers and Switzerland asylum seekers

They're so different! Really?

On Sunday November 27, 11 adolescents between the ages of 16 and 25, volunteers from our congregation, donated their precious time and were willing to reach out, meet, encounter and engage with the "others" as equals and spend a day at the Zurich zoo with 30 asylum seekers and refugees from such faraway places as Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. Our volunteers were accompanied by Mitzvah Day co-leaders Roswitha Hennessy and David Feder and a member of the city council.

Right from the very beginning, when we all converged at the refugee centre and were greeted by a shy but friendly group of 30 soon-to-be-new-friends, our young volunteers were able to connect with this group of families with small children, and adolescents, some of whom came unescorted into Switzerland. Our city councilman warmly greeted our very mixed group and explained that he too knew what it's like to be a refugee because his Jewish father when a boy had been a refugee escaping Nazi Germany.

We then all travelled to the zoo and divided up into smaller groups of volunteers and our "guests", including our city councilman, who then spent the day discovering the animals and sharing a common, bonding, experience. Together we laughed and exchanged experiences and when there was insufficient German or English, well than everyone simply used "hands and feet" to communicate.

What did we from Or Chadasch Zurich learn? Are the "others" really so different from us? Didn't we all experience an enriching day together discovering that we're more alike than we could have ever imagined? Our volunteers were able to extend a bridge to those less privileged than ourselves and enable these people to experience Jewish youth in a positive way, laughing and having fun together. Our volunteers have already signed up for next year's Mitzvah Day, and we can hardly wait!

Roswitha Hennessy and David Feder
Jewish Liberal Congregation Or Chadasch Zurich

GIL visits Budapest November 17-20



River cruise with members of the GIL and the Budapest Jewish community

In November the GIL Geneva organised an exciting, moving and beautifully prepared trip to Budapest under the wonderful leadership of Nicolas Lang and our president Alexander Dembitz.

The GIL members were introduced to Hungary with a fascinating presentation on the very rich but also tragic history of the Jews in Hungary by Alexander Dembitz who is from Budapest. The Jews as scapegoats has been a constant theme through Hungarian history. With the rise of fascism and anti-Semitism in the 1950s, many Hungarian Jews opted for exile. This was the case for the family of Alex Dembitz. In an even more moving presentation as he had just lost his mother, our president told how, in 1957, before taking the train to Vienna, his mother had taken them onto the number 2 tram for one last look at the banks of the Danube bridges, the Parliament and the Buda Castle for them to keep in their hearts. Alex was 10 years old.

This talk was followed by a visit to Budapest's historic synagogues. On Shabbat evening we came together with the congregations Bet Orim and Sim Shalom for services with three rabbis, including our François Garaï. It was joyous, fervent and moving, followed by a wonderful Shabbat dinner which was an occasion to sing together and to converse with the Hungarian Jews who spoke freely of their experience.

The next day we had a guided tour of Budapest culminating in a private tour of the Parliament, an enormous neo-Gothic monument on the banks of the Danube, bristling with cupolas, turrets and bell-towers, a copy of that of Westminster. We had the special privilege of a private meeting with Ilan Mor and Peter Burkhard, the Israeli and Swiss ambassadors to Hungary, respectively, in the parliament chambers where they each presented an overview of their relationship and interactions with Hungary.

This was followed by a dinner cruise on the (blue) Danube with wonderful food, conversation with our Hungarian guests and amazing views of Budapest's monuments at night. On our last day, we visited the Holocaust museum which documented the horrific experience endured by the Hungarian Jews during the war. We then had lunch at a wonderful restaurant located in the building in which Alex was born.

David Bernstein

Migwan receives a Ner Tamid

Migwan will inaugurate a Ner Tamid, (sanctuary lamp) which is usually translated as 'eternal flame' or 'eternal light', to hang in front of the ark. In ancient times the Ner Tamid was fuelled by olive oil and it was regarded as a meritorious act (mitzvah) to make donations to support the eternal light. Today the Ner Tamid consists of an electric bulb, but the lamp and the associated chains are often made of precious metal.

The eternal light represents the menorah of the Temple in Jerusalem as well as the continuously burning fire on the altar (Exodus 27:20 and Leviticus 24:2), since the synagogue is regarded as the spiritual equivalent of the Temple ('a small sanctuary', Megillah 29a). Originally the Ner Tamid



Ner Tamid in Budapest's Great Synagogue.....

was located in an alcove on the western wall of the synagogue to commemorate the location of the Menorah in the temple. Later it was placed before the sacred ark. In many east European wooden synagogues the Ner Tamid was placed in an arched brick alcove, since there was a constant risk of fire outbreak.

In the Talmud the Ner Tamid symbolizes God's eternal presence in the people of Israel (Shabbat 22b), or as the spiritual light.

We are pleased to invite you to the inauguration **Saturday, January 14, 5:30pm**. More information is at www.migwan/kalender.ch. Non-members are kindly asked to register with the secretary at esther@migwan.ch.

We are looking forward to your visit!

Commemoration of the Ner Tamid (eternal light) of Migwan with Havdalah led by Esther Rietschi-Berns and a talk by Ruth Herzka Bollinger and prayer led by Orna Ralston, singer and musician. The festivities will end with a reception.

PJLS Steering Committee Meetings



Thirteen years have passed since the creation of the PJLS, Platform of Liberal Jews of Switzerland, and through intense efforts to secure our place, we are now a solid presence in Switzerland, and not only in Jewish circles. At its last meeting,

the Steering Committee addressed the issue of the adaptation of our structures. Concrete proposals concerning these adaptations are being drawn up and will be put to the vote at the next general meeting in May.

Sim Shalom Budapest news



Chanukah 2016 at Sim Shalom Budapest

Two days after my last newsletter, we had a very joyful life cycle event; the naming of the latest addition to the Sim Shalom community, twins born to our President George Guba and his wife Yvette.

A week later a visiting group of 50 members and their Rabbi, François Garaï, from GIL, the very large Progressive Jewish congregation of Geneva, attended a joint Kabbalat service put on by Sim Shalom and Bet Orim congregations. Rabbi Garaï participated in the service by chanting one of the prayers in his beautiful baritone voice. Many of us joined the Genevans for dinner after the service, to get acquainted and compare notes on being Reform/ Liberal minded in Europe. Purely by chance, I sat next to the GIL treasurer, and we could compare notes on holding that office. And again, the musically accomplished Rabbi Garaï led us in spirited singing between the main course and the dessert.

Sim Shalom has become a member of a Budapest Jewish organisation called Mozaik Hub, which was established recently with support from the Joint Distribution Committee to work on building up the many Jewish organisations, both civil and religious, in Hungary. One of the requirements is that all members take part in developing a strategic plan for their own growth and development. This process has been started with the assistance of the director of the Hub. One of the advantages of membership is that there is the possibility to get financial support for projects and activities, based on a grant application. Sim Shalom is also working on that, hoping to fund a person to expand our PR activities to make the congregation and its activities better known in the Budapest Jewish community.

This year there were two official Hanukkah celebrations in Sim Shalom, as well as several smaller unofficial ones among our members. Our first was short and took place before the meeting of the biweekly adult education course on the Faces of God, taught by Rabbi Kati Kelemen. Our rabbi lit the giant menorah at the entrance to Balint Haz, the Budapest JCC where all our programmes are now taking place. The second was on the seventh night, along with a shortened Kabbalat Shabbat service. Twenty menorahs were brought by members and lit to start the evening. A potluck dinner followed the service, and after that came a lively social evening.

Jess Weil

Tefilah education at Beth Hillel Roma



Kabbalat Shabbat at Beth Hillel Roma

We would like to inform you that in response to many requests received at Beth Hillel, from January Rabbi Joel Oseran will conduct a course of study on the prayers of the religious services for Friday night and Saturday morning. The course is aimed at those who would like to learn to lead those religious services and will include the teaching of melodies and prayers. The course of Public Tefillah will take place over five sessions starting January 19 and concluding on June 22. A basic reading knowledge of Hebrew is required.



Rabbi Joel Oseran at Beth Hillel Roma

Beth Hillel upcoming programmes during January:
 Jan 16 Talmud Course
 Jan 19 Tefilah Course
 Jan 20 Kabbalat Shabbat & "The Rabbi meets the Community"
 Jan 21 Shacharit & Mussaf
 Jan 27 Day of Remembrance with "Boats of Yesterday and Today"



Beth Shalom Milan news

It was latke time again, and this year we repeated the success of last year's party. Our pot-luck Chanukah appetivo was held in the rabbi's apartment. Many people joined us for an afternoon of fun and games that children also enjoyed. There were no chanukiah's this year, as the party took place on December 18, before the first night of Chanukah on December 24 (another important holiday). Guests were very helpful in signing up in advance and letting us know what food they were bringing.

Shabbaton at Lev Chadash, Milan December 16 & 17

Lev Chadash celebrated Shabbat Vayishlach starting Friday December 17 at 18:15 with a presentation by Professor Elena Lea Bartolini on 'Woman in the Hebrew Tradition through Biblical Sources', the first part of a cycle to continue through 2017. This will be followed by Kabbalat Shabbat led by Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild and a pot-luck vegetarian dinner.

On Shabbat morning, Rabbi Rothschild will teach a Talmud Torah class at 9:00 followed by Shacharit services at 10:00. Then there will be a pot-luck vegetarian lunch.

Rabbi Rothschild is available for personal consultations while she is in Milan. Please email

info@levchadash.it for more information.



Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild

Day of Remembrance in Rome

On Friday January 27, the Day of Remembrance, organized by Beth Hillel and Institution Rome Libraries, will feature an event entitled "Boats of Yesterday and Today" about Jewish refugees on 'Pentcho' boats with an interesting parallel with today's immigrations. There will be presentations by Pupa Garribba and Navy Captain Filippo Marini of the Italian Coast Guard. There will be also a screening of documentaries "The Ark of Noah" by Daniel Toscano and Valter Vetere taken from television broadcast "Source of Life", and "Time to rescue" by the Office of External Relations of the Italian Coast Guard. This all takes place beginning at 17:00 at La Casa della Memoria e della Storia, Via San Francesco di Sales 5.



Beit Warszawa

Events at Beit Warszawa

Chanukah Dinner Party

Beit Warszawa Synagogue held a Chanukah Dinner Party with lighting of the seventh candle and a Shabbat service on Friday, December 30. During the Shabbat service the Shir Aviv Choir performed. Of course delicious holiday treats included potato latkes and sweet sufganiyot!

On Saturday, December 31 at 3 pm we lit the eighth Chanukah candle, and afterwards there was a pot-luck dinner.

Concert at Beit Warszawa Synagogue

We invite you to a Violin Concert performed by Marcin Król on Friday, January 13 at 6 pm at Beit Warszawa Synagogue. Marcin Król started to play violin at the age of 7. He studied at the Academy of Music in Krakow and later in Cologne. Król is the winner of many competitions and has performed on the stages of such countries as the United States, Germany, South Korea and many more.

Join us, entrance is free!

Shatz Cantorial Course

On the weekend of January 13-15 Beit Warszawa will again host its Shatz cantorial course. As usual, Professor Hanna Zaremska and Mati Kirschenbaum will join us for this occasion.



Marcin Król



Hanna Zaremska



Mati Kirschenbaum

Open Lecture

Saturday, January 14, 1:30 – 3:00

The First Temple Period: The Kingdom of Judah and Israel, Prophecy led by Professor Hanna Zaremska

Sunday Program, January 15

10:00 - 10:45 – *Shacharit* led by Mati Kirschenbaum

10:50 - 11:40 – *Parasha* led by Mati Kirschenbaum

12:00 - 1:00 – *Minor Prophets part II* led by Mati

Read the latest Beit Warszawa newsletter [here](#).

Triple chuppa in Tilburg

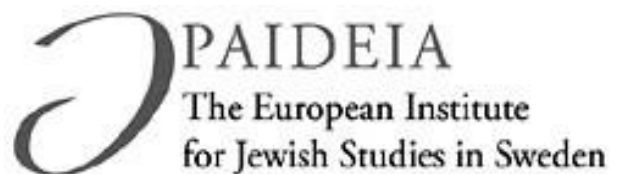


Three chatanim (grooms) break the glass with Rabbi Corrie Ziedler (in red) officiating

On Motsaei Shabbat, November 26, we had a very special occasion at the Aree Hanegev Congregation in Tilburg, the Netherlands (LJG Brabant): three couples stood under the chuppa. Between them they have already been married for 130 years, but each decided to add an extra dimension to their marriage – a Jewish wedding. Since all three couples are members of the congregation, there was no question where to have the ceremony: in our more than 140 years old synagogue.

The preparations for the chuppa were full with discussions and adaptations to a regular ceremony, especially how to give each couple special attention without making a long and tiring event. With creative thinking and good logistics, we came up with a very moving ceremony, where individual and group elements were gracefully intertwined. The synagogue was completely full with family, friends and congregants.

Mazal tov for the couples, may many more years of happiness be added!



Fellowships in Jewish Studies 2017-2018 in Stockholm

Explore the plurality of Jewish Studies at Paideia.

The Paideia One-Year Jewish Studies Programme offers a unique international Jewish studies experience during eight months in Stockholm with the possibility of completing a 120 ECTS Master in Jewish Civilisations at the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg, Germany.

Scholarships are available towards tuition, accommodation and living costs.

Application deadline is January 15.

Apply [here](#) or visit www.paideia-eu.org

Spain

Online Tefilah at Beit Emunáh

It has already been a year since we decided to meet online every day, except Shabbat, to conduct Shacharit Lechol Tefilah in Spanish and Hebrew. Most of us do not reside near Asturias, and we even have people joining us from as far away as Brussels and London. We meet through the internet via a server that allows us to see and hear clearly. Our appointment is every morning at 8:00, except on Sunday when we meet at 8:30 pm.

This idea arose during the weekly classes of online Judaism that we have been following since June 2014, through which we strengthen our knowledge of different aspects of Judaism among our chaverim. We also include people who want to be Jewish by choice, helping them prepare a computer application which allows them to accumulate files, projects, etc.

Given the success of these activities, we have started some online meetings about Jewish culture on Thursdays at 18:00. We have had lessons in Hebrew literature, Jewish art, history and sociology. In addition to these weekly activities, we have also arranged (and will continue to do so) a team of Spanish-speaking rabbis to instruct us on special topics. The internet allows us to have fluid, comfortable communication and, most importantly, helps us to share and train.

Anyone who wishes to join this initiative can write to our mail address kehila.asturias@gmail.com, and we will inform you about the conditions and our scheduled programmes.

Aida Oceransky

Beit Emunáh / בית אמונה

Jewish Community of the Principality of Asturias
Oviedo, Spain

www.sefarad-asturias.org

NB: Oviedo is in the Asturias region of northern Spain, between the mountains (the Cantabria Range) and the sea (the Mar Cantabrico, or the Bay of Biscay).



BetShalom COMUNIDAD JUDÍA PROGRESISTA DE BARCELONA
שים שלום טובה וברכה חן וחסד ורחמים עלינו ועל כל ישראל עמך



Pirke Avot study at Bet Shalom Barcelona

At Bet Shalom in Barcelona. Rabbi Stephen Berkowitz is teaching a course on Pirke Avot, Ethics of the Fathers, a tractate from the Mishna, running from November to June. The latest session was on December 14 at 19:30.



Chanukah at Bet Januká



Chanukah at Bet Januká

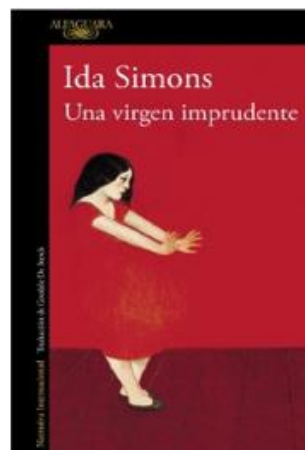
We want to wish everyone and their families a Happy New Year for 2017 and share our experience at Chanukah for the newsletter.

Bet Januká, like many communities within the progressive movement, is composed of families from a variety of backgrounds and includes several interfaith couples with children. Since the first day of Chanukah fell on the 24th of December in the civil calendar, we received a visit from Santa Claus to hand out Chanukah gelt to all the kids (young and old). It turned out to be a fun way to combine traditions and make everyone feel welcome.

Deborah Ríos Rey

Four Spanish communities joined together for online presentation

On Thursday December 15 at 19:30 there was a new reading meeting of the communities Bet Shalom Barcelona, Jewish Reform Community of Madrid, Bet Januká and Bnei Israel of Galicia. This time we shared our impressions about the novel *An Imprudent Virgin* by Ida Simons. Participants attended live in Barcelona and by online computer connection as well as via mobile phone. They wrote to us and we informed them how to can connect and follow us from anywhere in the world. If you have any questions about future programmes or technological issues, please write to the coordinator of the activity at info@javurareformista.org.



Ordination

[continued from page 1](#)

Among the guests of honour were Stephan Weil, Minister-President of Lower Saxony, Bodo Ramelow, Minister-President of Thuringia, Abraham Lehrer, Vice President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Miriam Kramer, Chairman of the European Union for Progressive Judaism (EUPJ), Sonja Guentner, President of the Union for Progressive Jews in Germany, and Dr Alex Kagan, Director of Activities in the Former Soviet Union for the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). About 35 rabbis were also present, including Rabbi Denise L Eger, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), who brought greetings and blessings from the oldest and largest rabbinic organisation in North America.

Since 2006, Abraham Geiger College has ordained 23 rabbis, and eight cantors have been invested. "The aim of this institution, in the vision of its founder and rector Rabbi Walter Homolka, is to produce rabbis for Europe and beyond, and that is precisely what is happening," explained EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer.

This year's graduates reflect the college's mission to grow Reform Judaism across the region. Rabbi Lior Bar-Ami, who comes from a Swiss-German family, will divide his time between France and Austria, taking the pulpits of both the Synagogue Libérale de Toulouse and Vienna's progressive congregation, Or Chadash. Israeli-born cantor Assaf Levitin will continue to work with Hannover's Etz Chaim synagogue, where he is already interning. And Rabbi Ariel Pollák will return home to Budapest where he sees great potential in expanding the Progressive Jewish community there together with the EUPJ. The attendance of Rabbi Eger was also a strong signal of the Central Conference of American Rabbi's interest in strengthening its ties with colleagues abroad.

Hannover's thriving Progressive congregation, which is comprised of members from 18 countries, as well as visitors from all over Europe, Israel, and the United States, underlined the congratulations of the EUPJ and the WUPJ on this important occasion: "Our wish is that Abraham Geiger College and Progressive Judaism continue to go from strength to strength."

A real rabbi 'officials' on TV

Read the whole story [here](#).



Rabbi Walter Rothschild (center) on German TV

A special year for Hameln



Rabbis Dr Ulrike Offenberg (l) and Irit Shillor

This year is a very special one. The Jewish Congregation of Hameln, "Beitenu" will celebrate its 20th anniversary!

Our congregation was established 20 years ago in 1997 with 18 men and women who had a dream and a hope to re-establish Jewish life in Hamelin. The conviction was to create a Jewish space in a country new to us all. It was an awesome task. Who could imagine a stranger scenario - a Jewish American with three small children working with FSU Jews to build a Jewish community in Germany?

We came together, we met, we talked as best we could in a language none of us spoke well, we learned, we got to know each other and a group was formed. The Catholic Church St Elisabeth gave us shelter for the first year. We grew. There were wishes to recreate a religious structure as had been known at home or as been heard about from elders or merely wanting a place to be together culturally. To most readers, this describes just about every congregation in the world.

We saw then and see ourselves now as the religious descendants of the congregation that came before us. We consciously decided to carry on the religious Reform tradition, which was celebrated in Hamelin until it was destroyed in 1938. We tried to emulate our predecessors and eventually in 2011, succeeded in rebuilding a synagogue on the very soil the Hamelin synagogue had stood when dedicated in 1879.

Everything we achieved, we achieved with and through the hands, minds and hearts of so many who were inspired by God. Jews and non-Jews, young and old, rabbis, organisations and people from Germany, the FSU, America, Israel, and Britain all were part of our tapestry. We are indebted and grateful to all those who helped build what we have today. In our 20th year we will celebrate our past, present and future and hope you will all take part.

The past 15 years we have been blessed having the rabbinic support and guidance of Rabbi Irit Shillor. She has decided to pass her pulpit on to Rabbi Dr Ulrike Offenberg. We say "Shalom-Shalom" to two amazing Jewish leaders, treasuring our past and welcoming our future.

Rachel Dohme

Read much more in our [December](#) and [January](#) newsletters

A review and preview from Chawurah Gescher, Freiburg



Yom Kippur at Chawurah Gescher in Sulzburg

NB: This is the first time we have news from this EUPJ member, and it shows how much that is worth reading about is taking place in our less well-known communities

- Editor

Last year Chawurah Gescher celebrated Yom Kippur in Sulzburg, a small town in the Black Forest in southwestern Germany. Once a thriving Jewish community, Sulzburg restored its synagogue in the 1970s. The beautifully renewed synagogue provided an impressive setting for the very moving and memorable services led by Rabbi Stephen L. Fuchs and Cantor Dr. Annette M. Böckler, who travelled from Hartford, Connecticut, and London, respectively.

Diane Tiferet Lakein has been our spiritual leader and Jewish educator for almost four years now, and we are excited to have her stay on as our rabbi. Diane will also be serving the Progressive community Migwan in Basel as a visiting rabbi in 2017.



Rabbi Diane Tiferet Lakein

Before coming to us Diane led family services

in her Liberal synagogue in Cologne, Germany. It was there that she was called up for the first time to recite the blessings for the reading of the Torah, blessings that she had learned as a child but been forbidden to say as a girl. Since embarking on her studies in 2008, Diane has also been trained as a Jewish religion teacher, receiving a master's degree in Jewish education from Hebrew College.

During the past four years, Diane has become a cornerstone of our community. We wish her every success on her rabbinic path and look forward to continuing our spiritual journey together.

Finally, one of the upcoming highlights of this year is our annual workshop, taking place in Freiburg from March 31 to April 2. Entitled *Meine, deine, keine Religion?! (My religion, your religion, no religion?!)*, this seminar is part of our current integration project and will include high-profile speakers. Preparations are in full swing and more details will be announced closer to the time of this event.

Brenda Waffel

A letter from Lisbon



Lisbon's first progressive chuppa with Rabbi Alona Lisitsa

I have just returned from a short visit to Lisbon and congregation Ohel Jacob. My visit was sponsored by a young American couple of Portuguese origin, Rebecca Machado and Sergio Pinto, who invited me to arrange their chuppa and kiddushin. They had contacted Ohel Jacob earlier and joined for the Rosh Hashanah celebrations. It was probably the first progressive chuppa in Lisbon ever and a first for Ohel Jacob. Adriana Souza, treasurer of the congregation, was honoured to be the witness who signed the ketubah.

We benefitted from the visit with Kabbalat Shabbat and Shacharit services, plus a Board meeting. I started working with the Board of Ohel Jacob on creating a congregational vision with objectives, goals and plans when I was there for Rosh Hashanah and we have continued via e-mails.

A day before I arrived, a young couple whom I teach for conversion, members of congregation, held a brit mila for their baby. Adriana went with them to the hospital to say all the blessings. This the first brit mila in Ohel Jacob in many, many years.

I have also met with two new couples who moved to Lisbon and joined the congregation. So, as you see there is more Jewish life in Lisbon now.

Rabbi Alona Lisitsa

Thanks from Ohel Jacob Lisbon

A very special thanks. This is a brief note, a symbolic gesture of thanks to Mr Abel Moinho for the various repair tasks carried out in our synagogue. No one can achieve success with only his or her own talent, this is only possible when you have efficient members who act in a communal and loyal way. So thank you very much, Abel, for your precious help and dedication!



Abel Moinho making repairs at Ohel Jacob

France forms a Progressive union

On Thursday November 24, 2016 the Assembly of Liberal Judaism (AJL) was officially launched in Copernic Synagogue in Paris, and it includes all the Jewish progressive synagogues in France. - [Editor](#)



Assembly of Liberal Judaism inaugural meeting in Paris

By [Nathan Katz, Actualité Juive, 13/12/2016](#)

"Our job is not to please, nor to do wrong". It is judicious to recall this sentence written by the famous journalist Albert London (1884-1932), as the mere evocation of liberal Judaism is sometimes enough to agitate the passions. Whether we rejoice or not, French Progressive Judaism has adopted a structure: the Assembly of Liberal Judaism (AJL, Assemblée du Judaïsme Libérale), which oversees 11 communities, five in Paris and six in other regions. The AJL aims to "carry the voice" of Progressive Judaism, especially to public authorities and liberal streams all over the world. The AJL also aims to facilitate cooperation between its communities (ULIF, MJLF, etc.) in various fields, youth movements, rabbinic development, education, etc. "Our relations with the Consistory are very limited," notes Stéphane Beder, president of the AJL. "We are not represented either in the Consistory or by the Consistory, hence our desire to move towards greater unity." A representative of Kehilat Geshar insists on one point: "We have nothing against orthodoxy, and we are convinced that several ways of conceiving and living Judaism can coexist peacefully". This includes the hallmarks of Progressive Judaism: complete equality between men and women, inclusion of children whose father is the only Jewish parent, full acceptance of LGBT people and roots in modern values.

Two million faithful in the world

Progressive Judaism includes close to two million souls around the world and is the majority in several countries, with the United States in the lead. In France, this trend is growing, but France is one of the countries in the Diaspora which represents only a small minority of Jewish community members. Here, during the festivals of Tichri, about 10,000 people frequent the progressive (liberal or reform) synagogues. That is not enough, but Stéphane Beder and the AJL are convinced "that the majority of the community is actually, in practice, close to Progressive Judaism without even knowing it."

Keren Or hosted EUPJ December 2-4



EUPJ leadership at Keren Or, Lyon

Many thanks to the EUPJ leadership team for having chosen Lyon for the EUPJ meeting. We were honoured and thrilled to have hosted such a talented group of Jewish strategic thinkers and leaders. On a personal note, I was impressed by the scope and depth of your work, and inspired by discussions with fellow community presidents.

Celia Naval gets all the credit for planning and moving her Keren Or team to prepare for your visit. We are lucky to have her with us.

[Pamela Vennin, Keren Or Présidente](#)



A full-house Shabbaton



MJLF Shabbaton November 2016

MJLF's annual winter Shabbaton earned its name "Maison Pleine" (full house) with prayer, singing, study and cultural events from Friday to Sunday, November 18-20. The Sabbath eve was celebrated by our three rabbis – Delphine Horvilleur, Yann Boissière and Floriane Chinsky – with instrumental accompaniment and enthusiastic participation. Parents of bnei mitzvah children shared a communal meal and the hardy stayed for a rewarding study session with Rabbi Delphine.

Saturday morning's service was conducted by the post-bnei mitzvah generation. Afternoon sessions were led by Rabbis Yann and Floriane. We launched a three-lecture series on the treatment of violence in Jewish texts. We ran a "Café Ivrit" and offered a short lesson in shofar blowing. Sunday was *Mitzvah Day* for the Talmud Torah classes and *Book Fair* day for the adults, some 20 authors present to chat with buyers and autograph their works.

[Robert Ley](#)

International relations coordinator, MJLF, Paris

Kehilat Gesher Interfaith Service



Kehilat Gesher Interfaith service for Thanksgiving 2016:
L-R: The Very Reverend Lucinda Laird, unidentified guest, Sheikh Esmail Al-Khaliq, Imam Mustapha, The Reverend Dr Scott Herr, Rabbi Tom Cohen, Bishop Pierre Whalon



Rabbi Tom Cohen with a volunteer serving another amazing lunch cooked by Leslie Charbonnel (I) at the American Cathedral in Paris for the homeless and "mal-logis mal-payé", which Kehilat Gesher helps sponsor.

Travel to Catalonia with CPJL



National Museum of Art of Catalonia, Barcelona

Wednesday May 24 to Saturday May 27

CPJL, Keren Or's cultural branch offers: Girona and its Jewish Museum, Besalu and its mikvah Jewish Barcelona, Shabbat service and meal with the progressive community of Barcelona Transportation is via car-pooling.

The price (including three nights in a double room, transport, visits) about €400

For accommodation just in Barcelona + transport & tours. about €180. Register with Paule Fort: tel. 06 64 03 97 33; email - fort.paule@bbox.fr.



ULIF News

Events at Copernic

**Thursday 15 December
Yiddish Songs**

This was a wonderful afternoon concert by Claude Berger, singing and accompanying himself on the piano, presented by Copernic's Community Activities and in collaboration with the Women's Cooperative.



**Thursday January 12 at 20:00
Jews of France, Why leave?**

Copernic, with the help of the Lamartine bookshop, organised a presentation with Serge Moati to address the questions posed by those wishing to leave. Price was €10 and free for ULIF members and holders of the Lamartine loyalty card



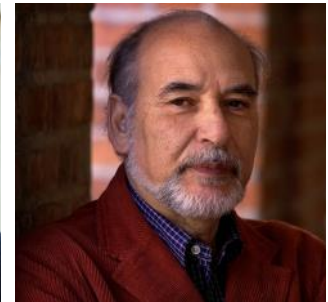
Sunday January 15 at 18:00

France Confronts Multiculturalism

Jean-Francois Bensahel moderates a discussion with Alain Finkielkraut and Tahar Ben Jelhoun



Alain Finkielkraut



Tahar Ben Jelhoun



ALLIANCE POUR UN JUDAÏSME
TRADITIONNEL ET MODERNE

**Beth Yaacov
48 Rue Pelleport
Paris**

Encounter with Gérard Haddad

On the occasion of the publication of his new book *The Cain Complex* (Le Complexe de Cain), Terrorism, Hatred of the Other and Sibling Rivalry, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and essayist Gérard Haddad will give a presentation at Beth Yaakov on Thursday January 19, moderated by journalist Claude Askolovitch. All are welcome.



Gérard Haddad

United Kingdom

Leo Baeck College

Beginning in September 2016, Leo Baeck College formally began marking the 60th anniversary of the College's founding. From its foundation by Rabbi Dr Werner Van der Zyl in 1956 we have ordained more than 180 rabbis, who currently serve in a wide array of EUPJ communities, including currently in the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Denmark, Belgium, and Ireland. Between 1997 and 2016 LBC has also produced 86 graduates in the MA in Jewish Education and Advanced Diploma in Jewish Education, with five students from the UK and France currently studying on our newly revamped MA in Jewish Educational Leadership.

Our first major event to mark the 60th anniversary of Leo Baeck College was the Service of Celebration in November, held at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue. Attended by many friends from the UK and beyond, the service was led by senior faculty with musical support from current students. A moving final blessing saw all alumni present, including Rabbi Lionel Blue, one of LBC's first ordinands, gather at the front of the bimah. At a reception after the Service of Celebration, LBC Fellowships were presented to Rabbi Pauline Bebe and Rabbi Professor Seth Kunin, marking more than 25 years since their ordination. Fellowships in absentia were also awarded to Rabbis Aviva Kipen, Helen Freeman and Pete Tobias.

Finally, Rabbi Drs Edward Van Voolen presented the Abraham Geiger Medal to Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris, recognising her 'vision and leadership for rabbinical training in the 21st century', and Rabbi Oded Mazor, Leo Baeck Educational



Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris

Center Haifa, presented her with the Center's Order of Merit for Tikkun Olam, marking the College's contribution to worldwide Progressive Judaism over the last 60 years.

Moving forward, on March 15 the Inaugural Lionel Blue lecture will be held at Alyth Synagogue. Named to honour our graduate and one of the UK's most loved rabbis, we are delighted that the lecture will be given by the Rt Rev and Rt Honourable John Sentamu, Archbishop of York. On June 6 LBC's Annual Dinner will be held at the Institute of Directors in London. Our guest speaker will be Diane Lees CBE, the Director-General of the Imperial War Museums. And, in autumn 2017, Professor Michael Berkowitz, Professor of Modern Jewish History at University College London, has agreed to give the Van der Zyl lecture.



Beyond the purely celebratory, LBC is delighted to have a large pool of applicants to the rabbinic programme this year. Interviews are held in March, so watch this space for further announcements! We are also beginning to recruit for our new Certificate of Higher Education in Jewish Education, which will commence in autumn 2017. Finally, our LBC Lehrhaus programme continues to go from strength to strength, this year launching online courses for the first time. Participants for the online courses are welcome from across the Europe (and beyond!). If you are interested or want more information on any of our programmes, please have a look at our newly relaunched website, www.lbc.ac.uk

We hope to welcome you to LBC, whether in person or virtually, at some point this year to celebrate not only our 60th anniversary, but also our commitment to the 60 years to come, *ad meah v'esrim!* We hope you will join us. **Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris**

Rabbi Lionel Blue OBE 1930-2016

Lionel was a teacher and a friend at the Leo Baeck College. From him I learned, amongst other things, the value of "how to let yourself be used" for a higher purpose, and also how to run a Beit Din with humanity, humility and - well, the only English word for this is "Menschlichkeit". I also learned a little about using humour to get a point across.



Rabbi Lionel Blue z"l

He was a poet and a writer and a thinker who could write what he thought. He was a true liturgist who could put into words what one wanted oneself to say to God, but better than one could do it oneself. The series of liturgy he produced together with Jonathan Magonet - himself a songwriter, bible scholar and blessed with a sardonic humour and insights into human nature - remain for me a pinnacle, even if some of the terms used no longer match contemporary political correctness. He could reach thousands of people whom he could not even see, before 8am on a cold winter's Monday morning, through a BBC microphone and a transistor or car radio loudspeaker, and he inspired and warmed and informed their lives at this difficult point in their mundane schedules simply by sharing of himself, openly and honestly. Now he has gone "To Heaven with Scribes and Pharisees" (the title of one of his books).

His last years were difficult and lonely, cursed with Parkinson's and the loss of his partner; but whenever two rabbis met in England, almost the first question would be "How is Lionel? Has anyone been to see him recently? How is he getting on?"

Up in Heaven he will undoubtedly be in the kitchen, sharing recipes, anecdotes and jokes both holy and unholy with various monks, nuns, priests, rabbis, beggars and other social outcasts. Expect some new and tasty forms of ecumenical ambrosia.

**In love and sorrow,
Rabbi Walter Rothschild**

Talking sex at The Liberal Jewish Synagogue

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue (LJS) will host 'Judaism and the Sex Question', five sessions to liven up your winter Tuesday evenings. The sessions are open to all and will run at 7.45 pm every Tuesday night until February 7.

Rabbi René Pfertzel said: "The course covers everything you wanted to know about sex and Judaism but were afraid to ask, offering a frank and interactive discussion looking both ways at where we are today."

Sessions will cover sex in the Torah and Talmud, as well as gender and identity, culminating in a panel discussion in the final week. Presenters include Rabbis Alexandra Wright, Elli Tikvah Sarah and René Pfertzel.

For more details please contact Naomi on rabbispa@ljs.org or by calling 020 7432 1283.



Rabbi René Pfertzel

Nottingham welcomes Austerlitz scroll after 50 years



Nottingham Liberal Synagogue members
Displaying their two Czech Torah scrolls

The congregation at Nottingham Liberal Synagogue (NLS) have welcomed a Torah scroll from Austerlitz, in the Czech Republic, finally putting a 50-year mix-up to an end.

The community was founded in 1965 as Nottingham Progressive Jewish Congregation and immediately applied for, and received, a Torah from the Westminster Synagogue Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust, on permanent loan. They were given scroll number 886 – of the 1,564 that survived the Nazis – which was believed to have originated in Austerlitz, now known as Slavkov.

NLS then spent the last quarter of a century visiting Austerlitz and forging links with the town's people.

However, last year the community discovered that their Czech scroll was actually number 887; not from Austerlitz, but the small Moravian town of Kamenice nad Lipou, about 80km to the west.

In 2015 when, with a new management team in place at Westminster, and through the dogged persistence work of our own researcher Debbie Moss, the truth was discovered.

"It emerged that back in 1964, two scrolls were inscribed with the same number, 886, and the number 887 was omitted. We possessed the scroll that should have been inscribed 887 and the true scroll 886 is in the care of Finchley Progressive Synagogue. This came as a rude shock!

"However, we discovered that there was another Austerlitz scroll of undoubted provenance. The efforts of Bev Karp of the Florida synagogue eventually revealed that it had long ago been given to the now-closed theology department at Leeds University. We got in touch and everyone is delighted that the Austerlitz scroll was recovered and now resides safely in our Ark."

The community are planning to visit both Austerlitz and Kamenice nad Lipou in the summer of 2018.

Neil Pike, chair of the NLS Austerlitz group, added: "We will ensure that the memory of the 47 Jewish souls who once used this scroll, and the 93 who formed the Austerlitz community, will never be forgotten and will always be honoured. We will do the same for those from Kamenice nad Lipou."

LJY-Netzer

Israel Tour

THE
BEST
TRIP
OF
YOUR
LIFE

17th July to 8th August*
2017/5777
*subject to change

lly-Netzer

[Click here](#) for more information.

Mitzvah Day: thousands work together



Mitzvah Day volunteers from the Reform synagogue's Nagila Nursery visit resident's at Edgware's Knights

Mitzvah Day is in full swing around the world with 40,000 volunteers, including 25,000 in the UK, engaging in social action projects.

This year's UK event focused on building bridges with interfaith projects throughout London and in Essex, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Birmingham.

Laura Marks, the Mitzvah Day founder, said: "Since the EU Referendum and US Presidential election campaigns, we've seen a rise in racism and hate crimes and a heightened fear of the outsider. The need to bring people together has never been greater. While we are honoured to have high profile guests join us, it's the 40,000 people in our synagogues, churches, mosques and gurdwaras that really drive these amazing acts of kindness and make bonds that will last for years."



Bishop of Edmonton and Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner at JW3 interfaith card making for refugees.
Photo by Yakir Zur

Click the logos for news of our UK movements



Leo Baeck College offers spring on-line courses

We are excited to share with you our wonderful and varied programme for Spring 2017 which includes several live on-line courses enabling more people to study with us. As an incentive, all returning Lehrhaus students will enjoy a 10% discount on any course and a 20% discount if signing up for more than one course at the time of registration. Please click on www.lbc.ac.uk/lehrhaus for all information.

All our courses are taught by our outstanding faculty which we hope will entice you to join us.

You can sign up through our website www.lbc.ac.uk. If you have any questions, please contact Jarek Lodzinski at lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk, 020 8349 5600.

Interfaith guests help celebrate 25 years of Peterborough



Liberal Judaism's Senior Rabbi Danny Rich; Jaspal Singh, Chair of Peterborough Interfaith Council; Di Nicholas, PLJC Communications Co-ordinator; Zahid Akbar

Guests from all of the region's faith groups helped Peterborough Liberal Jewish Community (PLJC) celebrate its 25th anniversary on Saturday, December 13.

Liberal Judaism's senior rabbi, Rabbi Danny Rich, led a specially tailored service – explaining the origin and significance of the various aspects of Shabbat. It was followed by a Kiddush, allowing interfaith guests to sample a range of traditional Jewish foods.

Invited guests from local civic and faith organisations included friends from the Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Christian faiths and PLJC venue hosts, the Quakers. PLJC's communications officer Di Nicholas said: "As a very small community, this Shabbat service was a wonderful opportunity for us to build on our commitment to interfaith partnerships in the city, and strengthen our links with other Liberal Judaism congregations."

"We also plan to take part in, and host more, activities over the coming year as we continue to raise the profile of the PLJC. We hope that anyone locally who identifies as Jewish, but isn't currently connected with a community for whatever reason, will get in touch when they see that there is a friendly, welcoming, modern community here in the area."

Di added: "Our guests had a great time at, what was for many, their first ever Jewish service. They made the most of the opportunity to learn something new and enjoy enquiring conversations."



WUPJ 2017 Calendar

February 16-26 - Jerusalem

[Beutel Leadership Seminar](#)

May 13-17 - Jerusalem

[Pursue Justice: Seminar for Legal Professionals](#)

May 15-21 - Jerusalem [CONNECTIONS 2017](#)

[WUPJ 38th Biennial Conference](#)

July 13-23 - Jerusalem

[The Bergman Seminar for Jewish Educators](#)

Open Call: Beutel Leadership Seminar

The Beutel Leadership Seminar, run by the Saltz International Educational Center of the WUPJ, is opening its application process to nominations of congregational and community leaders to join its prestigious 10-day seminar in Jerusalem, February 16-26. Courses explore Jewish texts, current political and social issues across world Jewry and Israel, spiritual pathways and concepts of Jewish leadership and more, all within an interactive and experiential Progressive Jewish context.

To nominate leadership from your congregation or find out how the Beutel seminar will transform your community, [click here today](#).

Roswell Klal Yisrael 2016-17 Year-Long Young Leadership Program

The Roswell Klal Yisrael Fellowship is a year-long partnership program of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), in collaboration with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), the Global Leadership Institute of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and the Israel Movement for Progressive and Reform Judaism (IMPJ), that aims to cultivate the leadership potential of young adults, ages 20-26, from around the world as they continue to take part in building, strengthening, and determining the character of their Reform and Progressive Jewish communities.

[Read more here](#) and go to the website [here](#) for more information.



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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Like WUPJ on [Facebook](#).

IMPJ Newsletter

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



Join us in Jerusalem
CONNECTIONS opens registration for the May 17-20, 2017 Biennial

The World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) is pleased to invite you to explore, experience and connect with global Reform Judaism.

CONNECTIONS 2017 is the international biennial conference of the WUPJ which brings together Reform, Progressive and Liberal Jews from around

the world for four days of workshops, lectures, prayer, gala events, site visits and more.

[Register here today](#).

Early bird prices end January 15!

Read more about preconference programs [here](#).

Questions? [Start here](#).



Pursuing Justice Seminar

Do you want to dive deeper into Israeli legislation, politics and social action? Our upcoming seminar, [Pursuing Justice](#), on May 13-17, is your backstage pass to the Knesset, Supreme Court and closed-door sessions with the leaders making headlines. [Click here](#) for information and to sign up.

