



# European Union for Progressive Judaism

February 2017 Newsletter

© European Union for Progressive Judaism

## Chairman's Message

The civil year 2017 has begun and already EUPJ is involved in a number of initiatives. Earlier this month I had the pleasure to spend Shabbat with our communities in Budapest at the launch of the West London Synagogue / EUPJ twinning project. With Rabbi Ariel Pollak co-ordinating the various services in conjunction with Rabbi David Mitchell it was a vibrant and moving beginning to the project. The plan is that Rabbi Pollak will visit Budapest approximately every six weeks.



Miriam Kramer

There are, as we all know, many important dates in the Jewish calendar. In the past four weeks we have marked two of them: Holocaust Memorial Day and Tu b'Shvat. One reminds us of the horror of acts that people can do against other people on an unimaginable scale. The other is the new year of trees when we are made aware of the importance of nature and our responsibility for safeguarding it. It is my view that these two particular observances can be seen as counter-balances to each other.

I find it imperative to mention the recent death of Rabbi Lionel Blue. When Leo Baeck College was founded in London in 1956 there were two students: Michael Leigh z'l and Lionel Blue. In their different ways they were pioneers in establishing a British rabbinate which has developed and evolved in the intervening decades. Rabbi Leigh served a large London congregation with distinction and Rabbi Blue's path led to him serving a number of congregations in various countries as well as becoming a well-known teacher, author and broadcaster in the UK.

Looking forward there is Connections 2017 in Jerusalem in May. If you have been before you know what an exciting and stimulating event it is. If you have never been then you really must see what all the fuss is about. The three days offer an unrivalled opportunity to meet Progressive Jews from the seven WUPJ regions and to make connections with them.

Finally many people have been asking about the next EUPJ conference: where and when will it be? We are very close to a decision so please be patient. If the past two or three conferences are any indication you can be certain that 2018 biennial will be fantastic.

Miriam Kramer

## History made in Italy

Italian Federation of Progressive Jewish Communities is launched.



L-R rear: Lenny Robbins, Carlo Riva, Rabbi Joel Oseran, David Pollak, Rabbi Leigh Lerner. Front: Joyce Bigio; Carey Bernitz; Franca Coen; Giorgio Coen

It was as if the Florentine sunshine was giving us a sign. With Tu B'Shvat only two days away and with spring in the air, the four presidents of our Italian communities gathered together on what will go down in history as The Glorious Twelfth. Franca Coen of Beth Hillel, Rome; Carey Bernitz of Beth Shalom, Milan; Carlo Riva of Lev Chadash, Milan and Lenny Robbins of Shir Hadash, Florence were joined by Rabbis Leigh Lerner, Sylvia Rothschild and Joel Oseran. They, together with Giorgio Coen from Rome, Joyce Bigio from Milan and your reporter, David Pollak of the EUPJ, were led by Joel in an appropriate and fitting Shehecheyanu before concentrating on the task of reviewing and finally agreeing on a draft constitution which will lead to the formation of the **Federazione Italiana per l'Ebraismo Progressivo** or **FIEP** for short, our first Italian Federation of Progressive Jewish Communities.

[continued on page 8](#)

## February 2017 Contents

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 1 EUPJ, Italy       | 9 Austria, Hungary                       |
| 2 EUPJ              | 10 Poland, Portugal, Netherlands, Sweden |
| 3 Belgium           | 11 France                                |
| 4 Spain             | 12 France                                |
| 5 Switzerland       | 13 UK                                    |
| 6 Germany           | 14 UK                                    |
| 7 Germany, Scotland | 15 WUPJ, IMPJ                            |
| 8 Italy             |  |

## EUPJ Honorary Officers and Staff 2016

### Honorary Life Presidents

Leslie Bergman

Ruth Cohen

Jeffery Rose

### President

Gordon Smith

### Vice-Presidents

Alex Dembitz

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein

Rabbi Dr Walter Homolka

Rabbi Dr Deborah Kahn-Harris

Jonathan Lewis

### Chairman

Miriam Kramer

### Vice-Chairmen

Stéphane Beder

Sonja Guentner

Michael Reik

### Honorary Secretary

John Cohen

### Honorary Treasurer

David Pollak

### Rabbinic Adviser

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim

### European Rabbinic Association

Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim, Chairman

### European Beit Din

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein, Chairman

### Administrator

Deborah Grabiner [administrator@eupj.org](mailto:administrator@eupj.org)

### Newsletter Editor

Arthur Buchman [newsletter@eupj.org](mailto:newsletter@eupj.org)

### Assistant Newsletter Editor

Sarah Sussman



## Kol Ha-kavod, Italy!

Congratulations on this most important initiative. I have been involved with EUPJ for over 20 years and it has long been a dream to see the various Progressive communities in Italy unite in order to give each other support and to encourage the growth of Progressive Judaism in the country. I do so hope that after your hard work in creating the Italian Federation for Progressive Judaism, each of your communities and the federation will go from strength to strength. Kol Ha-kavod.



Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein

## Sarah Sussman is EUPJ Assistant Editor

Sarah is the newest addition to our team. She holds degrees in Political Science and Law from Salzburg University in Austria. Together with her husband she currently resides in Dublin.

She works in marketing and has substantial experience, both professionally and on a volunteer basis, in editing, proofreading, and translating. Besides English, she is fluent in German, French, and Serbian.

In her free time, Sarah enjoys conducting genealogical research, reading, drawing, and photography.



Sarah Sussman

## 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](#)



Jüdische Gemeinde Kiel, see page 6

## Free online Talmud

A new online library has set the Talmud 'free' with full, no-charge translations. This internet version of Oral Law could revolutionise Torah study, with pop-up commentary to reverse-engineered biblical references — in Aramaic, Hebrew and English.

Read more [here](#).

Download the Talmud [here](#).



## Please support

Friends of  
Progressive Judaism  
in Israel and Europe.  
They support us.  
[www.fpjie.org.uk](http://www.fpjie.org.uk)



## 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 online once more.





### Large turnout for “Side by Side” Shabbat services in Brussels

Warm and welcoming says IJC



**Brussels harmony: L-R: Steve Brummel, IJC President; Miriam Kramer, EUPJ Chairman and Gilbert Lederman, Beth Hillel President**

On January 27-28 Belgium's two progressive communities orchestrated “Side by Side” Shabbat services at the Beth Hillel location. For the IJC community it was a very positive experience. “We wanted to maximise synergies and get to know each other better,” said IJC president Steven Brummel. The physical space was divided into two areas, both on Friday night and Saturday morning, so that each congregation, led by its own rabbi, could hold Kabbalat Shabbat and Shacharit services as per usual. The IJC is an English-speaking congregation, led by Rabbi Ira Goldberg, and Beth Hillel is a French-speaking one, led by Rabbi Marc Neiger and its president, Gilbert Lederman. The weekend's Side-by-Side services, requiring no small measure of logistical planning and concerted efforts, proved enjoyable and fulfilling for all. EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer attended both sets of services.

IJC's Rabbi Goldberg felt the difference immediately. “We were clearly in a shul, a Jewish building, with a mezuzah on the door. Although our services were separate, having both communities in the same location made me feel that we were larger than the sum of our parts. And when we joined together for a potluck dinner on Friday and then for Kiddush on Saturday, the dining area was overflowing.”

Beth Hillel and IJC members worked enthusiastically side-by-side in the kitchen too, to orchestrate (and later clean up) both the lavish potluck spread on Friday night and the generous cakes and sweets

for Kiddush on Saturday morning. Said IJC member Brian Doyle: “As we came together on Friday evening for Kabbalat Shabbat, we were warmly welcomed and settled into the space that had been set up for us - into our sanctuary. Beth Hillel welcomed everyone upon arrival, and graciously directed them to the service they chose to attend. The parallel services did not disturb one another - on the contrary, the sound heard in the background from the 'other' sanctuary was somehow reassuring. It felt good to share this Jewish space, this synagogue. The large turnout enjoyed an animated potluck dinner in a warm atmosphere. The Beth Hillel shul was accommodating from beginning to end.”

Saturday morning saw record IJC attendance, with members of all ages simultaneously committed to making this experimental service as meaningful as possible and curious to mingle with Beth Hillel congregants. To replicate a full Shabbat experience, Hebrew School classes also took place on the premises in comfortable classrooms that Beth Hillel only uses on weekdays. All IJC Hebrew School teachers, and parents contributed to the success of the day's session.

The co-ordination effort and thought invested by both communities' rabbis, boards and administrators yielded a positive and fulfilling outcome, which was further confirmed when the IJC surveyed its members online regarding their feelings and thoughts about the Side-by-Side Shabbat. **Diana Kanter**

### A moving experience

For Gilbert Lederman, chairman of the board at Beth Hillel, “this Shabbat test was a moving experience. Not only because expats were the founders of Beth Hillel 52 years ago, before the birth of their own community IJC, but because sharing the same building with two communities enriching the prayer and strengthens the vivid life of Progressive Judaism in Belgium.

“Now we are working to transform this single success into a permanent condition. This would be a major breakthrough for families and congregants of both communities. Each community will keep their own identity, minhagim and activities. At the same time this change would open opportunities to share special occasions together. This achievement would mean an attractive and strong offer for Belgian Jewish life.

“I would like to really thank Miriam Kramer for EUPJ support, Rabbi Marc Neiger, Rabbi Ira Goldberg and our respective boards for helping to make this dream come true.” **Gilbert Lederman**



## Memory and oblivion in the Holocaust at Bet Shalom, Barcelona



Nora Gaón at Bet Shalom, Barcelona

As part of the activities around the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, Bet Shalom invited Nora Gaón of the Museum of the Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz "Lohamei HaGeta'ot" in Israel to present a photograph exhibition on "Memory and oblivion in the Holocaust". The inauguration of the exhibition was preceded by a presentation where Nora invited us to reflect about the different aspects of our human capacity to remember or forget the Shoah. Nora guided us through a journey of philosophy, psychology and art where her poignant photographs illustrated the subtleties of the sometimes contradictory free will to choose between memory and progressive oblivion of distant recollection.

## Beit Emunáh new Shoah monument in Oviedo

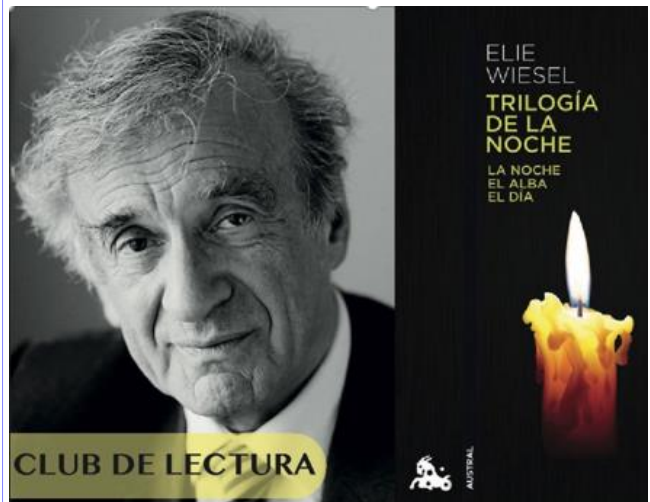
Beit Emunah wishes to express its gratitude for the donations which enabled the establishment of a monument in memory of victims of the Shoah in Oviedo at a cost of over 4000 euros. This result encourages us to continue to show the Spanish people our attachment to tradition and our responsibility for preserving its history.



## Tu b'Shvat at Atid in Barcelona



## Spanish communities hold joint video conference



On Thursday February 2 the Lecture Club of the Reform Jewish Communities of Spain celebrated a new online meeting. On this occasion the video conference presented impressions of the book 'The Trilogy of the Night' by Elie Wiesel. There was live participation on the premises of Bet Shalom in Barcelona while the other communities watched online.



## Photo credit

The photos in last month's story on page 10 by Rabbi Alona Lisitsa were taken by professional photographer Claudia Casal.



## Chanukah lessons in Zurich



**Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim with parents and children of the Or Chadasch Zurich Hebrew School**

On Sunday December 11 the children of our Or Chadasch Zurich Hebrew School spent a wonderful and enriching day together learning about our heritage. Approximately 35 children and more than 20 parents joined with our teaching staff discussing and participating in various activities centred around the topic of Chanukah. There were two very special highlights: the Chanukah theatre presentation by our school children and the creating of our own candles by dripping wax.

During the morning while the children were busily engaged with their teachers including Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim in preparing their theatre presentation, the parents had the opportunity to relax, drink coffee and discuss and exchange views among themselves. The eagerly awaited theatre presentation turned out to be a great success, Praying Jews, yelling Greeks, and very scary Maccabees crowded the stage. Young and old sang Chanukah songs together during the ceremony celebrating the wonder of the oil.

After a light lunch we all left our centre for a different venue for wax dripping. The children and their parents as well as the teaching staff spent a delightful afternoon creating colourful decorative candles. It was even possible to make Havdalah candles!



Special thanks to Sylvia Dym, Michel Holz, Ziv Perry, Rebecca Norton, Chaja Dürschnabel, Rabbi Ruven Bar-Ephraim, Andrea Lippmann and Mägi Guggenheim for making this special event happen!

**Tamar Krieger, School Director**  
Jewish Liberal Congregation Or Chadasch Zurich

## GIL events

### Communauté Juive Libérale de Genève

*February 9, Sharing Abraham's meal*

This event was a hands-on cooking class with Karin Rivollet to experience food from biblical times. This was



a class for a limited number of participants, all of whom felt privileged for this experience.

*February 23, Jewneration excursion*

Bonjour to the Jews! We are waiting for you on Thursday February 23 at 7pm for our next gathering at the Atelier Cocktail Club. Get ready,



their drinks are crazy crazy crazy! We count on you and we look forward to seeing you all and to partying with you.

**Géraldine and Olivia**

*March 10 7:30 pm: Shabbat dinner and concert*

Canadian Shabbat dinner: bring a savoury dish, a sweet dish and a drink - to be followed by a concert by the Nashir Choir. GIL kosher: poultry, fish with fins and scales, cheese and any drink.

Register at [info@gil.ch](mailto:info@gil.ch).

## Basel: Migwan news

As previously announced Diane Lakein will be our consultant rabbi for the year 2017. This means every second month a Shabbat morning or Mincha service with Shiur, certain holidays as well as taking care of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah children.

The board would like some other consultants as well.

Cantor Jaldá Rebling

visited Migwan the week-

end of February 17/18

and led the Kabbalat

Shabbat and Shabbat

morning service. Mrs

Rebling has been a

recognised specialist for

Jewish music for over 30

years. She is an instructor

at the European Academy

for Jewish Liturgy (EAJL)

in London and has designed

programmes for lay

people to be able to lead

services.

Migwan would like to step

up its programme of

Jewish cultural activities in

English. We have some

ideas, but would also like

feedback from our

members and potential

members. For example: a

book group, movie meet-ups

followed by discussion

in a café or bar, Shabbat

at home, pot lucks with

discussion of seasonal

topics, museum visits with

and without a guide. Our

own Renée Levi would

show us the highlights of

Art Basel.

What do you think about

this? Do you have additional

ideas? Anyone interested,

please send suggestions

and comments to [jean@migwan.ch](mailto:jean@migwan.ch).



**Jaldá Rebling**

## A Tu b'Shvat Message



In the middle of February when the earth is still frozen and our gardens are bare, we celebrate the New Year of the Trees. Tu b'Shvat was originally a tax day and was eventually transformed into a ceremony with study, singing and a symbolic meal. The holiday honours the trees that give us fruit to eat, shade in the sun and wood for our homes. The bible tells us that in the middle of the Garden of Eden, stood a Tree of Life and a Tree of Good and Evil. It is no wonder that a tree is often symbolically used to represent life's great mysteries.

A tree grows in two directions - its roots stretch down deep in the earth and its branches reach for the heavens. In biblical and rabbinic literature one finds many comparisons between trees and people. "He shall be like a tree, planted next to a stream of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither and in whatsoever he does he shall prosper." (Psalm 1)

People as well as trees are vulnerable. Well cared for, they can reach old age but if inconsiderately treated, they suffer. They reflect their environment. Trees symbolise the relationship between the generations and remind us of our responsibilities for the future.

In Midrash Tanchuma we read, "God warned Israel: When you reach the land that I am giving you and you see it is bountiful with trees and everything good, do not say, 'We do not need to plant this place.' You should plant and cultivate the land just as those before you planted it for you, so you too shall plant it for your children. No one should say, 'I am old. Why should I trouble myself, I could be dead tomorrow?' We do not have the right to slack, what you have found planted so also you should plant for the next generation."

**Rabbi Dr Ulrike Offenberger**  
Jewish Community of Hamelin

## UpJ Presidents Day



L-R: Beth Shalom Munich Rabbi Tom Kucera, EUPJ Chairman Miriam Kramer, Rabbi Joel Oseran, UpJ Chair Sonja Guentner  
Photo Mathias Hauke

On January 14 Hamelin congregational president Rachel Dohme travelled to Hamburg for the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany (UpJ) annual President's Day. Seventeen leaders from 25 congregations were represented there. The idea of an annual President's Day was the brainchild of Michael Lawton from the Cologne congregation and Rachel Dohme. It was to be a day-long exchange of ideas, brainstorming and problem solving between leaders of our UPJ congregations.

Embedded in this year's meeting was an award ceremony for Rabbi Joel Oseran, Rabbi Emeritus of the WUPJ. Rabbi Oseran, in his function as vice president of the WUPJ, was responsible for congregation development and a loyal and helpful friend and supporter of our congregation. Through our positive communications, the WUPJ put our German Progressive congregations on their radar. The 2018 President's Day will be held in Bad Segeberg and in 2019 in Hamelin.

## Elmshorn's Jewish cemetery project

At the beginning of October 2016, a dedicated team of volunteers from Jüdische Gemeinde Elmshorn, in collaboration with the city and historic monuments authority, managed to clean and restore the Cohen graves. The next step is recording and documenting epitaphs. Alisa Fuhlbrügge, reporting on the progress, hopes the Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute will assist with this project.

Meanwhile, historian Herald Kirschnick's work, "Der alte jüdische Friedhof in Elmshorn", will be published in March/April 2017.

## Pinneberg sports event

In cooperation with FC St Pauli, a German football club, the Progressive Jewish Community in Pinneberg is organising a sports event in March with the focus on helping refugees integrate. The exact date and venue, at this point, are still unknown.





### Sukkat Shalom triumphs!



**Sukkat Shalom Edinburgh quiz team with prizes**

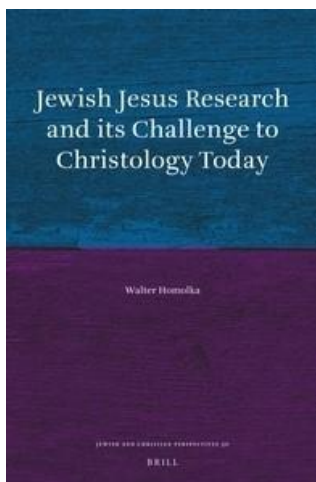
The Sukkat Shalom team upheld the honour of our community at the annual quiz at the Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre on Salisbury Road on January 29. Here the winning team triumphantly brandish their prizes: a bar of soap for each member. We had rabbinical approval too: according to Rabbi Mark Solomon, it was a clean win!

### Two new books by Rabbi Homolka

*Jewish Jesus Research and Its Challenge to Christology Today*

This is the latest book by Rabbi Dr Professor Walter Holmolka.

Historical Jesus research, Jewish or Christian, is marked by the search for origins and authenticity. The various quests for the historical Jesus contributed to a crisis of identity within Western Christianity. The result was a move "back to Jewish roots." For Jewish scholars it was a means to position Jewry within a dominantly Christian culture. As a consequence, Jews now feel more at ease relating to Jesus as a Jew. Read more [here](#).



### Culture First!

by Kenneth Dyson and Walter Homolka

*Culture First!* is a new book that argues that the proper study of culture is normative; and that the proper, and neglected, purpose of cultural studies should be the nurturing of normative argument and judgement. This purpose can be better pursued if we return to the distinction between our 'best self' and our 'ordinary self' when thinking about cultural questions. Read more [here](#).



### Jüdische Gemeinde Kiel news

Over the past few months, the Jewish Community in Kiel participated in multiple events.

During the intercultural week in Kiel last September, the community cooperated with the Stadtmuseum Kiel in providing Jewish walks through the city. A special intercultural event featured the local band "Aletchko" performing under the theme "If Paganini was a Jewish Rockstar". The week-long event was supported by the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the City of Kiel.

From a religious perspective, the community was delighted on several occasions to welcome to Schleswig-Holstein both Abraham Geiger College rabbinical student Isak Asvestad and Rabbi Stephen L Fuchs.



**Isak Asvestad and Rabbi Stephen L Fuchs**

We have held regular theatre projects at the family integration centre "KulturPalette". The last musical produced was "The Snow Queen".

Through the successful participation on the project "Partnership" by the ZWST (Central Jewish Welfare Office Germany), the community offers German language and Creative Design courses.

On December 8 an all-women interfaith event, as part of a project called "Samo.fa" took place in cooperation with the Turkish community. The topic of the event was "Between Self- and Public Image - Muslim life in Germany." The local Jewish and Turkish Communities continuously work closely together.

Since the end of November, the community has been participating in an interfaith youth project with "LAP-Nord" called "Fasting in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam".

The Jewish Community in Kiel was involved with a Bikur Cholim Project for Mitzvah Day.

During the "Cultural Days" in Mettenhof, the Community Choir "Nordlicht" performed at the "Abend der Chöre" (Evening of the Choirs).

The plans for December included "Weihnukka" (Christmanukkah) with the "Leitstelle Älter" in the Police Sports Club (including the choir "Nordlicht", the Children's Group and a young guitar soloist), a Chanukah concert in the Liberal Jewish Community in Lübeck, and a Chanukah Children's Festival with a Cultural Program.

We hold regular literature evenings in Kiel.

Our seniors' club has celebrated a five-year jubilee, and we thank the Karl-Heinz-Howe-Simon-Fiedler-Stiftung for their support.

**NB:** We welcome older news stories from communities where news has been scarce. - **Editor**

## History...

[continued from page 1](#)

In December 2014, Miriam Kramer and I travelled to Florence in order to meet many of the same people who attended our meeting this February. The idea of an Italian Federation of Progressive Communities was floated at that first meeting and now, after more than two years of discussion, debate and drafting, completed and ably put together by Joyce Bigio, we now have a constitution which everyone was able to agree to in principle.

After five hours of debate which was never heated but sometimes warm, interrupted by a suitable interlude for lunch at Ruth's, the only kosher restaurant in Florence where we, by coincidence, bumped into the chief rabbi for Milan, who couldn't fail to be impressed by this collection of Reform Jews from across the country and beyond, **FIEP** was born. A Letter of Intent was rapidly drafted by Joyce which was then signed by all the participants to the meeting. Everyone made a commitment to ensure that the constitution, as amended at the meeting, would be presented to each community and, we all hoped, would receive the necessary approval in sufficient time to be ratified at the Annual Assembly of the EUPJ in Jerusalem on May 19.

Rabbi Rothschild needed to leave early, but everyone who was left after the conclusion of business and the inevitable photo shoot in the gardens of Rabbi Lerner's apartment wore a broad smile. We all left for home able to reflect on a job well done.

**David Pollak, EUPJ Treasurer**

## A Sunday School for Beth Hillel

Beth Hillel Roma is organising a bi-weekly Sunday school programme for children aged 7-12.

Under the overall supervision of our rabbi, Joel Oseran, the programme will provide a solid grounding in the principles and practices of liberal/progressive Judaism and will strengthen the Jewish identity of our children.

The curriculum will include: Shabbat and Jewish Holidays, Hebrew language instruction, appreciation of Torah and Bible stories, ethics and mitzvot, and age-appropriate discussion of Jewish history and the State of Israel. The lessons will also help older children prepare for their Bar/Bat mitzvah. We have identified an experienced, enthusiastic, and highly successful teacher who will be working with us. The language of instruction will be Italian.

The classes will take place at our regular meeting venue, Via dei Salumi 51, and will begin at approximately 10:30 a.m. A preliminary schedule is as follows: February 26, March 12 and 26, April 9 and 30, May 14 and 28. The cost of the lessons will depend upon the number of children participating.

A minimum number of participants will be required in order for lessons to begin. Therefore, we have encouraged parents to support this important Beth Hillel Roma programme and give the gift of Jewish education to their children.



## Beth Shalom Milan news



**Carey Bernitz, Rabbi David Whiman and Mirko Butkovic**

After the long Italian holiday season, Beth Shalom began with Shabbat services on Saturday, January 14. Rabbi David Whiman (retired from the Syosset, NY Jewish Centre) gave a wonderful sermon on *Promises, Promises, The Importance of Following Through on Commitments*, using the analogy of Jacob and Joseph's promise to return the Jews to Israel with keeping promises today. We also celebrated Mirko Butkovic's recent conversion by the Bet Din in London in December. He was called to the Torah and offered an Oneg Shabbat to the Congregation.

On Sunday, the Torah study group met. We spent the whole session asking and discussing why Jews continue to study the Torah every year.

We are planning a challah making class, Purim party and a Seder on the first night of Passover.

We held another warm and festive Kabbalat Shabbat in the rabbi's apartment on February 17. Although he will not be with us again until April, we will continue our Kabbalat Shabbats and holiday celebrations without him until he returns. This Kabbalat Shabbat was a potluck, and people coordinated the food they brought with Carey Bernitz and Carol Ross. We had the usual 20-25 people.

Sunday March 12 will be our Purim service and party. Purim is a time to rejoice with family and friends, and it's considered a mitzvah to drink wine and generally eat drink and be merry. Rabbi Leigh Lerner and his wife Lauren will be with us for Purim. We will have a service with reading part of the Megillah Esther. This, as always, will be followed by a party with lots of treats and games for both adults and kids. This party will be a truly special occasion.



### Holocaust Remembrance Day in Vienna



**Or Chadasch representatives at the UN in Vienna for Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017**

International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27 commemorates the genocide of an estimated six million Jewish, 200,000 Romani, 250,000 mentally and physically disabled people, and 9,000 homosexual men by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. The day was designated by the UN General Assembly in 2005. On January 27, 1945 Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration and death camp, was liberated by the Red Army.

Again this year the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) in cooperation with the Israeli Embassy organised an event at UN Headquarters in Vienna, attended by several hundred people, including representatives from Vienna's Liberal Jewish Community, Or Chadasch. Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Yury Fedotov, opened the ceremony and Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, Ambassador Talya Lador-Fresher underlined the importance of remembering the victims of the Holocaust. It was very moving to hear personal observations from her own family history.

The ceremony included musical performances as well as the singing of El Malei Rachamim and reciting Kaddish. After the commemoration was a screening of the documentary film "Shalom Italia."

The newly appointed UN Secretary General, António Guterres reminded us on this day that "it is our duty to remember." View the full speech [here](#).

**John Clark, Or Chadasch Vienna**

### A new rabbi for Or Chadasch



**Rabbi Lior Bar-Ami**

The Jewish Liberal Community Or Chadasch is honoured to invite you on Sunday March 26 at 15:00 at Or Chadasch Synagogue, Robertgasse 2, Vienna to Rabbi Lior Bar-Ami's inauguration. The occasion will be celebrated with a ceremony and Mincha worship. Please register by email at [reservierung@orchadasch.at](mailto:reservierung@orchadasch.at).

**Dr Theodor Much President, Or Chadasch**



### Sim Shalom Budapest news

On January 27, the two Budapest Progressive congregations hosted a delegation of about 20 US Reform rabbis and their spouses at a joint Friday night service. The rabbis came from all over the US to learn something about the state of Judaism in Central Europe, with the hope that they will soon start to lead delegations from their own congregations to visit this region where so many of their congregants have their roots. Sim Shalom's Cantor Flora Polnauer led the lively service in her own inimitable and spiritual way.

The following night the rabbinical group met with representatives of Sim Shalom, a Hungarian Jewish leadership training organisation, and a Neolog congregation to ask many penetrating questions about the Jewish community here. It was clear that the rabbis had really done their homework on European Judaism, and it was a great pleasure to be able to fill in some of the gaps in their knowledge.

Since early December half the Board of Sim Shalom has been involved in the Leadership Training programme put on by Mozaik Hub. This local organisation is funded by the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) for the purpose of providing leadership training and some financial assistance to Jewish religious and secular organisations in Hungary. We meet every two weeks with the Mozaik Hub director, Mircea Cernov, who has much experience with small organisations run by the JDC. We are learning new ways of looking at our budget and funding sources and many other new ideas about how to organise our efforts to meet our short and long term goals.

Recently we did a SWOT analysis, to articulate our internal Strengths and Weaknesses, and external Opportunities and Threats. Soon we'll put together a Mission Statement on long term goals. Next is planning some specific steps to take toward meeting those goals. The Mozaik Hub is going to provide funding to hire and guide a person to help with PR and development tasks. Sim Shalom will advertise the position very soon, since we are eager to get on with this whole process. We are hopeful that it will have the effect of improving our financial situation, as well as our image in Budapest.

Over the past months three of our Board members have had to resign for personal reasons. This has left us shorthanded at a critical time. So we are very happy that Peter Arvai has just agreed to join the Board, and especially because he has much experience in local government, having served for several years in one of the main district offices in the Budapest City administration. He already has come up with a new idea for finding us premises, and he is also taking part in the Mozaik Hub leadership training programme. It's quite energising to have an infusion of new blood with new ideas.

**Jess Weil**



## Events at Beit Warszawa

**Shatz Cantorial Course.** On the weekend of February 18-19, we again hosted the participants of our Shatz Cantorial Course. As usual, we welcomed all those interested to join the open lectures. All events were free.

### Saturday February 18

**Parasha** with Mati Kirschenbaum

*The prophet Elijah and his presence in Jewish folklore and liturgy* with Mati Kirschenbaum

*The Second Temple Period: Jews in Jerusalem, Babylon and Egypt* with Professor Hanna Zaremska

**Havdalah**

This was a wonderful Shabbat day!

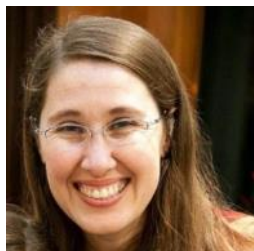


Hanna Zaremska

## Ohel Jacob Lisbon bestows honorary memberships



Dr Annette M Boeckler



Rabbi Alona Lisitsa

We recently bestowed three honorary member certificates to Dr Annette M Boeckler, Rabbi Alona Lisitsa and Aida Oceransky in recognition to their tireless work in helping Ohel Jacob develop into the community that it is today. We are extremely grateful to have these women on our side, and this was a small, but meaningful way to pay homage to them. Our reasons:

Aida Oceransky, President of the Jewish Community of Asturias, for the support she has given to our community since the beginning of our approach to the European Union for Progressive Judaism.

Rabbi Alona Lisitsa for being responsible for our conversion and return processes.

Dr Annette Boeckler, who has dedicated herself to organising the books of Ohel Jacob Synagogue, travelling to Lisbon, and performing the service of Shaliach Tzibur on several festivals at no charge to the community.

Ana Scherer, Board Member



Aida Oceransky

## Tu b'Shvat at LJG Twente



### Tu b'Shvat Seder at LJG Twente, Netherlands

The LJG Twente held a wonderful Tue b'Shvat Seder at the home of their chazzanim Daan Daniël and Bert Oude Engberink. Over 20 people attended this joyful celebration - some of the kehillah can be seen in the photo at the festive table. As part of this celebration the LJG Twente held a fundraiser and was able to donate over 350 euros to the National Fund in Israel to plant more trees near a play area for disabled children. Money is still coming in for this wonderful enterprise, and to date we have raised over 520 euros! We're all just over the moon with this wonderful result.

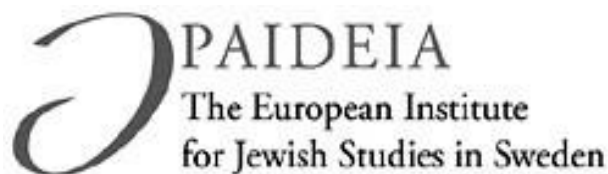
Wilhelmina Hein, Board Clerk, LJG Twente

## Sweden opens Jewish Learning

JEU's very own Paideia is opening doors for a new educational initiative, a Jewish 'Cultural College', the first of its kind. JEU magazine interviewed Noa Hermele, rector of Paideia Folkhögskola. Read more [here](#).



Abdulkader Habib, rector of Kista Folkhögskola with Noa Hermele, credit: Jonatan Agami



## 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 March 1**

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





## Marc Konczaty passes baton to Danielle Cohen

On 9 January, Marc Konczaty concluded his term as MJLF President and handed over to Danielle Cohen, his former Vice President. In the MJLF newsletter, Marc described the six years of his presidency as a whirlwind, a roller coaster and an exciting challenge. Marc observed that many projects had been launched and not all had come to



Marc Konczaty

fruition. The key to success was project leadership. Positive examples abound: diversification of religious services, research on societal questions like euthanasia, reorganising the Talmud Torah, strengthening cultural activities, new programmes for young people, development of the Surmelin community, rebirth of the magazine Tenou'a, renovation of the synagogue and financial consolidation.

An important feature of Marc's tenure was MJLF's participation in launching the Assembly of Liberal Judaism, outreach to the wider Jewish community and institutions in France and abroad, interfaith dialogue and inter-convictional actions.

In concluding, Marc paid tribute to the Board members, the staff and volunteers and to MJLF's three exceptional rabbis -- Delphine Horvilleur, Yann Boissiere et Floriane Chinsky -- whose influence reached beyond the community to the entire nation.

Robert Ley

International relations coordinator, MJLF, Paris

## MJLF donates trees

Right after the horrendous fires that ravaged so many parts of Israel, including the young city of Modi'in midway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the Reform community of Yozma planted ten saplings at the entrance to their nearly-new synagogue. The young trees were a gift from MJLF, Yozma's *Domim-Alike* partner in Paris, which is honouring its b'nei mitzvah by planting trees in Israel.



## Tu b'Shvat at Keren Or



Tu b'Shvat at Keren Or, Lyon

During the Tu b'Shvat Seder led by our student rabbi Haim Casas and the planting of a tree by the students of the Talmud class, we celebrated a life in harmony with the earth but also with those who inhabit it. This is the meaning of our presence at the commemoration of the WW2 raid on Jews on St Catherine Street last Sunday February 12, a historical event that also calls for a responsibility to testify and act against any form of discrimination or obscurantism.

In troubled times, it would be easy to take refuge in hatred and fear or in populist discourse. The history of humanity shows us: in the darkest hours, light has always come from the demands of humanism, and never from retrogression and compromises. Keren Or brings to our children a message of tolerance, peace and equal respect for human dignity.

## AJL Israel youth trip July 11-25

The Assembly of Liberal Judaism (AJL) offers its famous trip to Israel for adolescents aged 14 to 17 from all AJL communities. This is a unique opportunity for your child to discover the State of Israel, meet the Israeli population, see historical places and share this experience with a group for 14 days.

Application deadline is Monday, March 27. Do not delay sending us the registration form with your deposit cheque to MJLF Jeunesse, 11 rue Gaston de Caillavet, 75015 Paris because the number of places is limited.

We sincerely hope that your child will have this wonderful experience with us!

Please send inquiries to: Oren Giorno, [o.giorno@mjlfr.org](mailto:o.giorno@mjlfr.org), 01 44 37 48 44.

[Registration form](#)





## Sunday Funday at Kehilat Gesher



On Sunday January 22 we had our bilingual group for kids between the ages of 3 and 6, who learn about Jewish holidays and traditions through arts, crafts and song. Moms and/or dads stay for the fun! The theme was Mezuzahs and the Shema. Rabbi Tom Cohen was helped by Mivsam and Crystal.

## Travel to Catalonia with CPJL Wednesday May 24 to Saturday May 27



Gaudi architecture in Barcelona

CPJL, Keren Or's cultural branch offers: Girona and its Jewish Museum, Besalu and its mikvah, Jewish Barcelona, a 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 and tours. about €180. Register with Paule Fort: tel. 06 64 03 97 33; email - [fort.paule@bbox.fr](mailto:fort.paule@bbox.fr).



ULIF News

## Events at Copernic, Paris

On February 8 a special cooking class honouring Tu b'Shvat took place at Copernic. It was supervised by Jérémy Ankri, kosher chef of *Une Cuisine pour Tous*. Eager students learned how to prepare a delicious veal tajine with dried fruit and a soy-based lemon meringue verrine.

**Cantors and Tenors**  
On February 22 Cantor Shmuel Barzilai of Vienna's *Stadttempel*

gave a concert together with one of the best cantors from Strasbourg, Jonathan Blum. In addition, we



Cantors Barzilai and Blum

heard the Copernic Choir singing liturgical chants and traditional melodies under the direction of Itai Daniel.



## An exceptional day at AJTM Beth Jacob, Paris

January 29 was an exceptional Sunday at Beth Jakob, a day full of emotion and special events.

**A Brit Milah:** As early as 9:00 am, we found ourselves in our synagogue for the briss of little Yaacov (his civil name Egon-Rand), the son of our friends Virginie and Bruno and grandchild of Eveline.



At 11:00, two related and very touching events:

**Inauguration of a Torah Scroll:** Our fifth Sefer Torah was dedicated to the memory of the Kollender and Treitel families.



**A Bar Mitzvah:** Next, Zaccharie, grandson of André Kollender, became Bar Mitzvah. A great Mazel Tov to Zaccharie and his family.

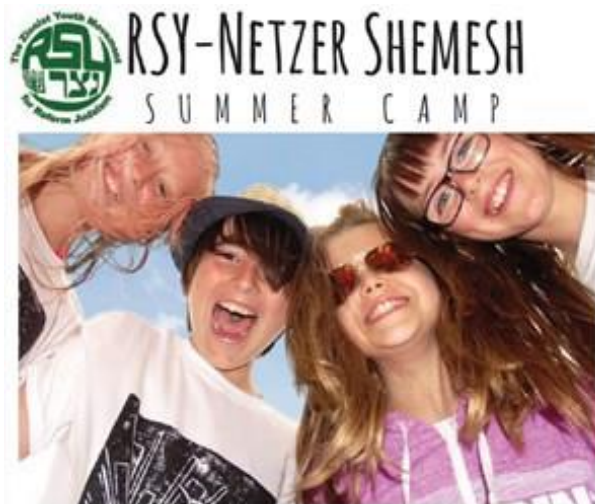
And to end this beautiful day, we heard a choral performance led by choir-master Rosy Farhat to commemorate the Shoah.





## United Kingdom

### UK Jewish summer programs



Recruitment for RSY-Netzer's famous Shemesh summer camp is in full swing! Shemesh is a wonderful experience for young people to spend an extended period of time in a nurturing, friendly, Reform community, so don't miss out!

[Find out more.](#)

### London stands as one

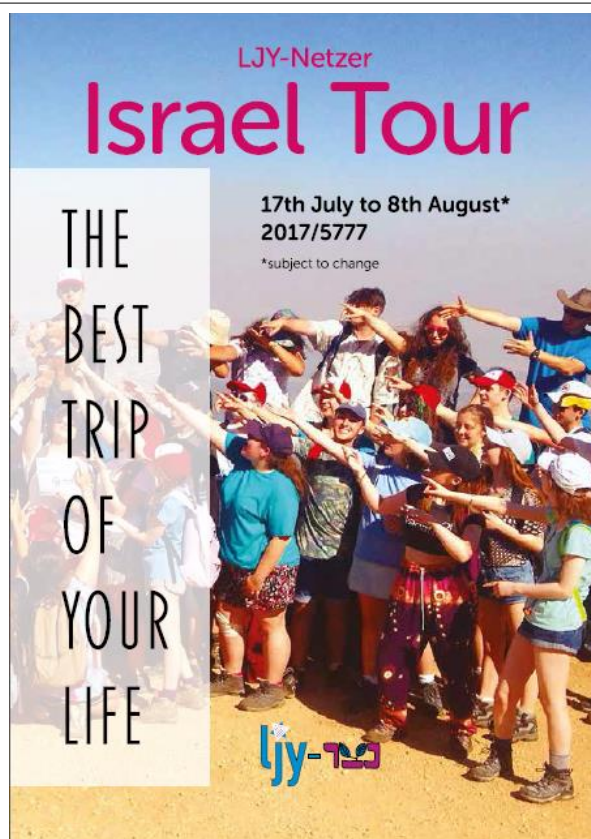


Londoners of all faiths and beliefs formed a human circle of solidarity around the Wightman Road Mosque during Friday prayers on 3 February. Read more in [the Jewish News](#) and [the Evening Standard](#). The event was supported by Reform Judaism, [the Islamic Society of Britain](#), [the Christian Muslim Forum](#), [the Faiths Forum for London](#) and [Hope not Hate](#).

Following a week that saw murderous violence against Muslims in Quebec it was a demonstration of solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters at this time of international turbulence. We believe that 'London stands as one', and are determined to work peacefully and constructively to ensure Britain follows an open and diverse path.

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, Senior Rabbi to Reform Judaism said: "This week started with President Trump's executive order, and is ending with news that anti-Semitism is at record levels in the UK. Tomorrow, we will show our determination, as minorities and people of different religions, to stand together and protect one another."

Ajmal Masroor, Chair of Islamic Society of Britain: "After recent events in the US and Canada, we received calls from leaders of many faiths and beliefs wanting to show solidarity with British Muslims. I feel these leaders wanted to relay the message that we are all equal citizens of this great country and that we must stand as one when any of us feels isolated or scared. We are deeply touched by this real show of support".



[Click here](#) for more information.

Click the logos  
for news of our  
UK movements



### Shirei Chagigah

Reform Judaism's Biennial Music Conference

6-9th July 2017

Open to all!

@Radlett Reform Synagogue

Whether you lead music or prayer in a synagogue, at a cheder, on camp, or are part of a choir, join us for community, singing, time out and an inspirational few days of beautiful music.

### Rabbi Lionel Blue material requested

I am arranging an 'In Memoriam' section about Rabbi Lionel Blue for a forthcoming issue of *European Judaism* (autumn 2017 or spring 2018 depending on how much material I receive). I would welcome any anecdotes, memoirs or sermons you might have given about him, or come across from others, that you would like to offer. We can take articles between 500 to 2000 words, and shorter pieces as well. It would be most helpful to have material by the end of February as we need a long lead-in time until publication.



**Rabbi Lionel Blue**

**Jonathan Magonet**  
Editor, *European Judaism*  
[jonathan.magonet@gmail.com](mailto:jonathan.magonet@gmail.com)

### Do you need an Ark?

Eastbourne Liberal Jewish Community are no longer able to store their specially-built portable ark. Therefore, they are offering the ark to another community in exchange for a reasonable donation. Eastbourne is 100 miles south of London. Please click [here](#) for exact details. **Contact:** Angela Jay on 01323 725 650



### Reform rabbis in the media

**Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers**, Reform Judaism's Community Educator, joined Muslim and Christian clergy on BBC Radio Scotland on Sunday discussing the changing reality of global politics. How are three of the world's major global faiths navigating their way through this new reality, and how do they respond? [You can listen here](#) at 1 hour 20 into the programme.

**Rabbi James Baaden of Sha'arei Tzedek** shared his reflections on comfort and consolation in The Jewish Views podcast from The Jewish News. [Listen here](#) at 54 minutes into the programme.

**Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain of Maidenhead Synagogue** writes on the ways people are changing how they engage with organised religion in this piece for *The Times* and reflects on the film 'Denial' in the *Huffington Post*.

**Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers** gave an address at the Greater London Assembly Holocaust Memorial service with the Mayor of London on Holocaust Memorial Day.

### Leo Baeck College offers spring on-line courses

We have been running the Lehrhaus – the Leo Baeck College Jewish Adult learning programme in London for three years now, and the feedback we received was that people outside London and the UK wanted on-line courses to be able to study with us. So, we listened and are delighted to list our three remaining on-line courses for this spring semester. All courses are at GMT time, but all sessions are recorded and available for participants to access for seven days after the session takes place. There is also email support from a teacher, a great way to ask questions and receive help with the subject.

Our on-line courses for Spring 2017 are:

**9 Mar to 30 Mar 7.30–9.00pm**

**Jews and popular music - Dr Keith Kahn-Harris**

4 weeks, Thursday evenings

**26 Apr to 17 May 7.30–9.00pm**

**The mystical retelling of the Bible - Dr Alinda Damsma**

4 weeks, Wednesday evenings

**2 May to 23 May 7.30–9.00pm**

**Is Antisemitism a real threat in contemporary Europe? - Dr Joanna Michlic**

4 weeks, Tuesday evenings

For full descriptions and prices click [here](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Jarek Lodzinski at [lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk](mailto:lehrhaus@lbc.ac.uk) or 020 8349 5600.

### MRJ Rabbi to run in Paris Marathon

Radlett Synagogue's Associate Rabbi and Director of Youth, Rabbi Celia Surget, is training to run the Paris marathon on April 9 to support and honour the work of the Leo Baeck College. She is aiming to raise £60,000.



**Rabbi Celia Surget**

Spending her time between Radlett and LBC, Celia tutors both British and French students, runs Radlett's busy Cheder and serves as the treasurer of the newly constituted ERA (the European Progressive Rabbinical Association).

Celia said: "It is my belief that Leo Baeck offers the best and strongest education to rabbinic students on this continent, and that is why I have chosen to raise money for it. I firmly believe that as a graduate, I have a responsibility to ensure that my alma mater is still able to fulfil its commitment to providing excellent training and allowing the Progressive rabbinate worldwide to be the best it can be."

In addition, recent events in the UK and perhaps more specifically in the US, have opened Celia's eyes to the role that Progressive clergy can play in providing pastoral support to those who are struggling with a rapidly changing world, raising their voices because of the privileged positions they find themselves in where people will listen to them, and upholding values of openness and inclusivity that are so unique to our movements.





## WUPJ 2017 Calendar

**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**  
**July 19-30** - Europe  
**WUPJ/Netzer Summer Youth Camp Mission**

## IMPJ Fire relief in action



IMPJ volunteer relief in action

Thanks to the generous donation campaigns run by the URJ, ARZA and ARZA Canada, WUPJ, and the Fund for Progressive Judaism - UK, Keren B'kavod - the IMPJ Fund for Humanitarian Assistance and Social Responsibility was able to help the victims of the fires that swept through northern Israel a month and a half ago. Their assistance has included accommodation, equipment, food and help in restoring personal items remaining in the burned homes. The families continue to cope with difficulties and Keren B'kavod, with the help of volunteers, will carry on accompanying them in these difficult times, making an effort to aid them in returning to their normal lives.

[Read more 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.

## Subscribe to WUPJnews

[Sign up for WUPJnews](#) to receive on-going updates about our communities around the world.  
 Like WUPJ on [Facebook](#).

## IMPJ Newsletter

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

## CONNECTIONS 2017 Join us in Jerusalem Register now for the May 17-20 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.](#)

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



## Mercaz Shimshon gets new entrance

The World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) is proud to announce the opening of the main lobby entrance of Mercaz Shimshon - Beit Shmuel. Built in 1986, Mercaz Shimshon and Beit Shmuel, together with Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), serve as a vibrant campus for Progressive Judaism in the heart of Jerusalem. Offices for the World Union and the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) are situated atop picturesque courtyards, gardens, meeting spaces, classrooms, catering halls, a theatre. [Read more...](#)

## 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.



The Knesset