

June / July /  
August 2011

Number 44

# NLPJC Newsletter

North London Progressive Jewish Community



## NLPJC events....

- **Singing Course** with Rebekka Wedell. This 4 week course will run on Thursdays from 16<sup>th</sup> June to 7<sup>th</sup> July, and is for everyone who would like to improve their ability to sing at Shabbat services. We will focus on learning the Shabbat *nusach* (tunes), and we will use transliteration, so knowledge of Hebrew is not required.

**Venue:** The Community Rooms

**Cost:** Members £40 / £20 concs

Non-Members: £60 / £30 concs.

**Please sign up in advance**, by 10<sup>th</sup> June latest, at [nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org) or by phone at 020 7403 3779

- **SHAVUOT evening**

Join us on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm** for a special evening of live music, singing, study & listening. Please bring vegetarian food, cheesecake, fruit & wine to share. Cost to non-members: £5 / £3 concs

- **NEW ~ Erev Shabbats**

Can't face making Friday night dinner? Want to spend Friday night with friends but can't face a Shabbat service? Want your kids to have a proper Friday night but haven't got the energy after a working week? Then come along for **Friday night dinner** ~ June 10<sup>th</sup> & July 8<sup>th</sup> ~ Arrival from 5.30pm for a 6pm start. Candle lighting, food, games and maybe some songs. Please bring vegetarian food to share

- **Special Shabbat Services**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June** – Special Babies & Children's Welcoming Service. The cheder children will lead part of the service.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July** – Family & Community Service followed by lunch. Please bring vegetarian food to share.

- **COOKERY WORKSHOP**

Fantastic fundraiser on 24<sup>th</sup> June with Rabbi Shulamit ~ see page 3

## Thinking of joining us?

Why not do it now? We offer a pro-rata system for anyone joining throughout the year. You can contact our administrator, Julia Chalfen, at [nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org) for a membership pack or phone Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779 to discuss membership options.

See our website at [www.nlpjc.org.uk](http://www.nlpjc.org.uk)

## Ba'alei Tefillah

Community members leading services at NLPJC



NLPJC Members Joanna Ryam (front row 2<sup>nd</sup> from left), Claire Helman (front row 3<sup>rd</sup> from left) and Robin Samson (middle row, 3<sup>rd</sup> from left) at the Liberal Judaism Ba'alei Tefillah graduation ceremony (more photos page 4).

On 21<sup>st</sup> May, three NLPJC members, Claire Helman, Robin Samson and I, led the entire Shabbat Morning Service, "flying solo" for the first time in Rabbi Shulamit's absence. As over the past several months, each of us led one section of the service. With huge support from everyone in the service, the response was really positive. For the past eight months, we have been part of the first cohort of students in the new Liberal Judaism Ba'alei Tefillah programme which trains members of, mainly small, communities to lead services. Primarily a distance learning programme, the modules took us through the history, construction and content of services, deepening our understanding of Liberal Judaism's approach to prayer. With Rabbi Shulamit we learnt both practical skills for leading worship and those of us (like myself) who needed to improve their Hebrew reading did so! At the residential weekend – a transformatory experience for me, and I think others – we each gave our first dvar torah!

This course has been an extraordinary and inspiring experience for us all, as was acknowledged at the graduation ceremony at the LJ Day of Celebration on 22 May. Alice Wilcock from Woodford Liberal Synagogue (who has been part of our NLPJC core study group) perfectly summed up this experience in her address, as this edited extract shows:

"When we met at the launch event last October, although nervous, we all shared a common wish to build our expertise as lay leaders, to be able to serve our communities by providing good and prayerful experiences in a way that they and we would enjoy. Since that time we have been on an amazing learning experience. We have all, to various degrees, enjoyed the modules we have studied, and we have certainly enjoyed putting our newfound skills to the test through our practical experiences of leading services. Most importantly we came together to give each

other support, encouragement and challenge. We have become friends and colleagues in a very special and connected way which has powerfully enriched our practice and our learning experience."

Thank you to the leaders, authors and administrator of our course - Rabbis Richard Jacobi and Monique Mayer, Beverly Taylor and Alex Wakely, who made this all happen and worked so hard supporting us. We thank Liberal Judaism, the NLPS Trust and NLPJC for their support – both with funds and personnel. Most of all, we thank Rabbi Shulamit for sharing her always-inspiring teaching and direction – and you, our community, for your patience (certainly in early days!), your encouragement and your ever-growing enthusiastic participation in services. Our Shabbat morning chanting raises the roof these days!

Alice ended her address with a prayer from Rabbi Eleazar, which I share here with you all:

*May it be your will Eternal One, our God, that in our communities there dwell love and support, peace and friendship.*

*May you make our communities abundant in disciples.*

*To the very ends of our lives may you endow us with hope and expectation, may you sustain us in our world with good friends and a good impulse. Amen.*

Joanna Ryam

liberal judaism

NLPJC is a constituent congregation of Liberal Judaism

# We Will Do and We Will Hear

Once in a while I find myself telling someone I have had a life changing experience. This spring I feel it's happened to me twice. I'll write about one of those instances here, and perhaps about the other one in the next edition of the newsletter.

I was lucky enough to take part in a two day introductory training course for members of organisations who have joined the newly founded North London Citizens. It was an extraordinary experience. Challenging and tough at times. But it really made me think, and got me thinking in a way that seemed to be at the same time new, and also in a sort of a language for something I think I have always inherently believed. We have joined a kind of federation of schools, churches, mosques and synagogues, who in coming together will find areas of common concern that affect us as citizens. We will then work together to tackle some of these problems, getting more involved, and having more of an impact in the society around us.

This 'broad based community organising' works through the very simple process of developing relationships, being committed to spend time listening to each other to, first of all, work out what our worries really are. During the two day training we looked at the theory and the practise, and had quite an intensive go at practising negotiation skills. But the

thinking I took away was the centrality of listening.

We began our listening campaign formally this year at Pesach, with every single person, young, medium and old, spending time listening to each other and noting down the things that really worried us.

It was great to make the link between our liberation at Pesach and our commitment to the development of our freedom and the liberty and safety of people we live alongside. We also learned a lot about the things that really matter. How some of us are quite isolated, and the simple things we can do to break down this isolation.

On a personal level, Pesach was the beginning of a journey for me, during the 49 days, leading up to the festival of Shavuot.

This year, at our late night Shavuot study session, we will focus on our lived spiritual experience, through the core idea of how the Israelites accepted the covenant at Sinai. Once Moses had come down from the mountain and read to our ancestors the substance of our covenantal book, the people are said to have answered as one, 'We will do and we will hear'. Centuries of thinkers have wondered at this. How can Doing precede Hearing? Some would say that this is proof that you must fulfil the commandments before you can understand

them. They see this as a sign of a desirable and unquestioning obedience. On Shavuot we will explore this. What is the deeper connection between Doing and Hearing? How can we bring ourselves to the point when we really do listen? And how might listening change us, and our actions? I hope we will move away from a focus on just sitting and thinking, with live music from our own community musicians, food, singing, and learning.

And while I am talking about doing and experience, I wanted to let you know that our first Friday night dinner was a lovely evening and a real success. Totally informal, this is a chance to be together with others on Friday night, with an early start. We lit candles, recited Kiddush, hung out together, ate, and had an impromptu Sephardi singing workshop from Rebekka. There was a good mix of people, including those who came on their own, with partners and with children. The kids sat together at their own mini table, and entertained themselves. Our next Friday night is on June the 10<sup>th</sup>, do come along.

Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu



On March 30th a team of our members represented NLPJC at the founding assembly of North London Citizens, at Friends Meeting House in Euston. We even sparked a new tradition, as the only bringers of our own community banner. Next time every group will be asked to bring one!

## Har-El Newsletter extract, Jerusalem

"The Kiddush on April 2<sup>nd</sup> was sponsored by the North London Progressive Jewish Community in England, following the visit there by Rabbi Ada. Many thanks to the NLPJC's rabbi, **Shulamit Ambalu**, and to Har-El member **Peter Bergamin** for hosting Rabbi Ada and for the donation to Har-El."

## Hackney Night Shelter

Jewish tradition has always emphasised the importance of welcoming foreigners and disadvantaged people in society: "You shall not aggrieve a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exodus 22:20) and Maimonides quotes the Torah "and you shall love the stranger".

So North London Progressive Jewish Community, which was one of the founders of North London Action for the Homeless, has been very happy to support and volunteer with Hackney Winter Night Shelter for the last few years. We have enjoyed having the opportunity to listen and learn from guests we met, and be there to help.

We recognise that we all have strengths and talents and sometimes life does not go how we expect. At these times anyone appreciates having someone to talk to and be there for each other, and we have enjoyed welcoming the guests and cooking for them - and even the clearing up, as part of the team!

With a multi-national clientele, it is important to have helpers from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds, and we are very pleased to be involved with the community in Hackney to provide this service.

Michael Ellman & Jackie Richards

*The night shelter will be operating again next winter, and any volunteers (greeting, helping with supper or breakfast, or staying over, once a month) will be welcome and should let Jackie or Michael know at [nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org)*



North London Progressive Jewish Community

# Cookery Workshop

Summer fund-raising evening led by  
**Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu**

**Come & Cook**  
or just come and eat.....

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June**  
**at 6pm**

followed by Erev Shabbat vegetarian supper & service at 7.30pm



**Cost £10 per person / £5 concs**  
**Please bring a bottle**

*Please book in advance ~ by 20<sup>th</sup> June latest*  
[nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org) / 020 7403 3779

**At: The Community Rooms adjacent to St. Mary's Church,  
Spensley Walk, off Stoke Newington Church St,  
London N16 9ES**

**NLPJC, PO Box 42702, London N19 5WR**  
[nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org) [www.nlpjc.org.uk](http://www.nlpjc.org.uk) **Registered Charity 1097713**  
*NLPJC is a constituent congregation of Liberal Judaism*

# Junior Cheder

Hello to all the Junior Cheder parents, and other members of the community. As we draw to the end of a year studying ritual, I would like to reflect on some of the achievements of the children.

Firstly, the children all showed great enthusiasm for the various activities and many parents are now in the possession of beautiful hand-crafted artefacts associated with the rituals studied, such as Tallit bags, Mezuzot and Tefillin.

Discussions were highly thoughtful, engendering such questions as 'Do you have to believe in God to pray?' (They felt not, on the whole). The 'Ask the Rabbi' book was created and used to record particularly thorny questions that arose.

The class were polite and insightful when interviewing Rabbi Shulamit and the Rev. Lucy Ann regarding comparative rituals, drawing the conclusion that while they have better outfits, we do have better food: a succinct but fair assessment of the difference between Christianity and Judaism.

Their understanding of the concepts of Tzedekah was impressive and the children raised almost £10 for their selected charity, 'The Wood Green Animal Rescue Centre'. Thank you to everyone who donated and we hope you enjoyed the parsley and horseradish.

The children remain very eager to develop their marketing skills and there may be further fundraising opportunities in the future.

Lastly, I have been keen for the children to extend their experience

of service and really feel part of their community and I appreciate the patience shown by all regarding the class coming in and out of service. The interest that the community shows in their learning means a lot to them. I look forward to working with our children in the coming year.

Rachel Epsom  
Junior Cheder teacher

## Fun & games at our Lag B'Omer picnic in May



## NLPJC Members News

### A warm welcome to new members:

- ❖ Andrea Silberman
- ❖ Henry Stewart, Dawn Austwick and their children Rebecca, Miriam & Gabriel

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**Mazel Tov** to Vicky Millan who we now welcome as a full member, following her success at the Liberal Beit Din (Rabbinic Board) on 10th May

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### Our 100 club winners

- ❖ Huong & Simon Falush (March)
- ❖ Liz Reiner & Anna Sklair (April)
- ❖ Davina Good (May)

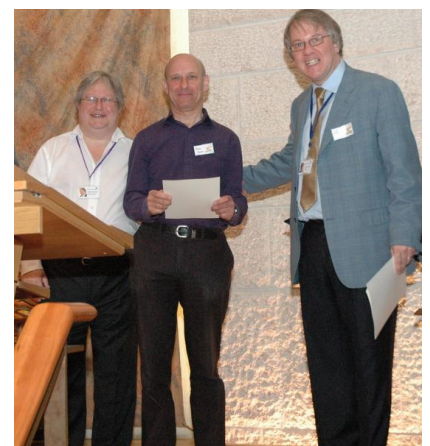
With more members now taking part in this draw this year, the winning total each month is now £52 – it's not too late to join ~ please ask Julia for more details [nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org)

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*In the event of the death of an NLPJC member, please contact the Funeral Directors M.M. Broad & Son on 020 8445 2797 and Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779.*

## Ba'alei Tefillah Graduation

Claire Helman, Joanna Ryam and Robin Samson are presented with their Ba'alei Tefillah (lay prayer leaders) certificates by Rabbi Danny Rich (Chief Executive) and Lucian J. Hudson (Chairman) of Liberal Judaism on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. *Pictures by John Bernard*



# Cheder Corner

## The Year in Review

Request to any adults reading this: the Senior Cheder has been asked to decide on and write up a (short!) ritual for some aspect of life where there is no Jewish ritual yet. Suggestions made included the death of a pet, the "retirement" of a teddy or doll, before taking an exam etc. The students were told that the ritual should be no more than 5 minutes, and could include music, poetry, dance, a piece of artwork – anything that would make this memorable for them.

It occurred to me that perhaps adults would have some ideas for rituals as well: e.g. for being made redundant, for instance, for giving up an elderly but well loved car (I wrote an obituary when I had to get rid of my first car, I was that sad), for breaking an ancient piece of crockery, before cutting out a pattern to be sewn or, in my case, before starting a piece of knitting. If you have an idea, please let me know, or if you want to write one up – so much the better. The students' rituals are due the first Cheder of June.

This year has been a challenging one for the Cheder. We have had two classes, and for a time we were not exactly sure how we were going to fit everyone in. But it has seemed to work out – the Junior Cheder, under the expert guidance of Rachel Epton, is in the room over the flower room, and the Senior Cheder

meets (quietly!) in the corridor. Both have their drawbacks – the Junior Cheder room ideally needs more lighting (desk lamps maybe?) while the corridor can be open to interruptions from people moving back and forth. However, we have had a good year with respect to our themes.

The Junior Cheder students have shown us some wonderful artwork (If the Shabbat box is still available, see it. It is lovely. The challah, in particular, is brilliantly done) and have asked the Rabbi some penetrating questions.

The Senior Cheder has had discussions about how Liberal Judaism differs from other forms of Judaism in terms of practice and thought. We have also looked at rituals which are not practiced by Liberal Jews but may be by other Jews, and have discussed why. A baby naming in June will also be conducted mainly by the Senior Cheder.

So far the consensus is that our year has been very fruitful, and we look forward to next year.

In addition we have three candidates for bnei mitzvot, who are meeting after Cheder to discuss the social and personal growth questions in the bnei mitzvot book. If any parent who is

interested in their child possibly having a bar or bat mitzvah and would like to see it, please ask me. It is for candidates and families to discuss together the changes which might be expected (or might not!) after the bnei mitzvot.



I think we should have an award night for NLPJC. I would call our awards "Miriams" – for the woman who kept our people afloat by finding water during the flight from Egypt. I would give Rabbi Shulamit and Sue Lukes a "Miriam" each, and I do want to thank them for their patience, forbearance and kindness. Ever since I began this post, I have been able to rely on them totally, and I do think all of our members should know how much they give to the Cheder during the year. Julia Chalfen, who so carefully organises the budget, would receive a "Miriam" for dealing with our silly questions, forgotten dates and general incompetence in times of stress. Rachel Epton definitely deserves one for how happy and focussed the Junior Cheder has been all year and the excellent questions the students have come up with for the Rabbi.

The photo above is of a sign I saw in the garden of a Kibbutz in Israel. The children of the kibbutz made the signs (there were many of them) and I did appreciate them.

Please let me know if anyone has questions or comments about the year, or if you have any ideas for us to try. We are always in search of the contents of other people's brains.

Laura Miller

## The Kadimah Centre for Wellbeing

is a mental health service run by Jewish Care.

We provide care, support and advice for Jewish adults experiencing mental health problems.

We are a team of mental health specialists based in Stamford Hill. We provide services in a friendly and informal environment.

The team offer an extensive range of mental health support, including therapeutic and holistic groups, advocacy work and one-to-one support.

We run creative groups and I.T access is also available.

We will also work with people in the community – our services are not necessarily centre-based.

Services are flexible and are designed to suit the individual's needs.

People are welcome to come along to relax and socialize, read, drink tea or just to have some 'quiet time'.

The centre caters for the individual's cultural needs.

We run Jewish-related activities and events and observe the Jewish yearly calendar.

Within the building there is a canteen offering Kedassiah-supervised meals.

If you would like some more information about our service or are interested to come along to speak to one of our team, please contact us on 020 8809 1875 or [nallon@jcare.org](mailto:nallon@jcare.org) and ask for Nimrod or Suzy.

## NLPJC 'Who's Who'

All officers and chair can be contacted at [nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org) or by post to PO Box 42702 London N19 5WR

**Rabbi** : Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu  
**Chair** : Claire Helman  
**Hon. Secretary** : Liz Reiner  
**Treasurer** : Hannah Forbes  
**Education Chair** : Sue Lukes  
**Head & Cheder Teacher** : Dr Laura Miller  
**Cheder / Jewish Studies Teacher**: Rachel Epton  
**Hebrew Teacher** : Jak Codd  
**Volunteer Creche Worker** : Anna Sklair  
**Parent Representative**: Leila Baker  
**Prayers & Spirituality Co-ordinator**: Maria Egan  
**Senior Warden**: Joanna Ryam  
**Administrator** : Julia Chalfen  
**Fund-raising Coordinator**: Joanna Ryam  
**Membership Secretary** : Jackie Richards  
**Marketing & Promotion**: Claire Helman  
**Social Action Co-ordinator**: Dan Ozarow  
**Befriending Co-ordinator**: Sheila Melzak

### Vacant Posts:

Youth; Intergenerational

If you are a member of NLPJC and are interested in joining one of the groups, or would like to fill one of the vacant roles, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Advertisements contained in the NLPJC Newsletter are the sole responsibility of the persons that post the advertisement. NLPJC does not make any guarantee as to the accuracy, completeness, truthfulness or reliability of such advertisements.

NLPJC Newsletter is edited by Julia Chalfen. The deadline for the Sept/Oct/Nov issue is 15<sup>th</sup> August. Please send articles for publication to Julia at: [nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org)

# NLPJC events calendar

## June – August 2011

Most events are held at **the Community Rooms adjacent to St. Mary's Church, Spensley Walk, Stoke Newington Church Street, London N16 9ES**, unless otherwise stated

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Venue</u>
<u>Thursdays in June</u> 16 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 30 <sup>th</sup>	8pm	Singing Course with Rebekka Wedell ( <i>see front page</i> )	
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> June	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / Cheder ( <i>no crèche / toys available</i> ) Shabbat Service with special welcome to Vicky Millan	
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> June	7.30pm	SHAVUOT ~ live music, singing, study, listening ( <i>see front page</i> )	
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	5.30pm for 6pm	Early Erev Shabbat supper, candle lighting & games ( <i>see front page</i> )	
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> June	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / Cheder ( <i>no crèche / toys available</i> ) Shabbat Service with SPECIAL CHILDREN'S WELCOMING SERVICE ( <i>see front page</i> )	
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> June	6pm / 7.30pm	COOKERY WORKSHOP / Erev Shabbat Service & Supper ( <i>see page 3</i> )	
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<u>Thursdays in July</u> 7 <sup>th</sup>	8pm	Singing Course with Rebekka Wedell ( <i>see front page</i> ) ( <i>this week in member's home</i> )	
Saturday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July	10am / 10am 10.40am / 10.50am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew Kol b'yachad service for children / Cheder & crèche Shabbat Service	
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> July	5.30pm for 6pm	Early Erev Shabbat supper, candle lighting & games ( <i>see front page</i> )	
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> July	10am / 10am 11am	Torah Breakfast / Children's Hebrew FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICE followed by pot-luck lunch ( <i>see front page</i> )	
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	7.15pm / 8pm	Erev Shabbat Service / Supper & Event tba	
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Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> August	10am 10.40am 11am	Torah Breakfast Kol b'yachad service for children Shabbat Service	
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> August	10am 10.40am 11am	Torah Breakfast Kol b'yachad service for children Shabbat Service	

Dates for your diary.....

EREV ROSH HASHANAH Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September ..... ROSH HASHANAH Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September  
 KOL NIDRE Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October ..... YOM KIPPUR Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October  
 SUKKOT SERVICE & SUPPER Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October  
 SIMCHAT TORAH SERVICE & SUPPER Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October

**Contact us at:**

**North London Progressive Jewish Community, PO Box 42702, London N19 5WR.**

**Call Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu on 020 7403 3779**

**email [nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org](mailto:nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org) or visit our website [www.nlpjc.org.uk](http://www.nlpjc.org.uk)**