



Kehillah Events

Unless otherwise noted, events take place at St. Mary's

Shabbat Morning Services

All Shabbat services begin at 11am, with a Torah breakfast beforehand at 10am.

4 Jan; 18 Jan; 1 Feb; 15 Feb; 1 March; 15 March

Cheder takes place on all these dates with Hebrew at 10 and Jewish studies at 11.

Creche for all children from birth onwards takes place at 11 on 18 Jan, 1 Feb, 1 March.

18 Jan – a community discussion takes place before the service at 10am: Growth From Tragedy – anticipating Holocaust Memorial Day.

Shabbat Meditative Services
8 March, 11 am

Erev Shabbat Services

Services begin at 7:30 pm followed by a potluck dinner.

24 January, 21 February, 21 March

Tsedakkah Activity

Thursday, 20 March – A team from Kehillah will cook a meal for around 50 homeless guests of the local Hackney Winter night Shelter at St Paul's Church, Stoke Newington High Street. Cooking begins at around 5:30 pm.

Tu B'Shevat

Wednesday, 15 January – Sponsored Night Walk, meet at 7:00 pm (see details to right)

Purim Party

Sunday, 16 March
2:00 – 5:00

Rabbi's Letter

It is good to be back. Back here in the pages of this newsletter (which was absent for some time following our change in administrator) and back too after my sabbatical. Eight weeks away from our Kehillah over this autumn gave me the space to dive into a world of learning. I feel enriched and ready to share my thinking. It seems very significant that this time of reflections comes after ten years of our life as a community. There is no doubt in my mind that we are a success. There is a liveliness and passion, openness to new people and new ideas, as well as strong and talented leadership. So, looking back and looking forward, it is a good time to consider what should come next. We could keep on doing all of this so well. But we are also in a position to really address the question faced by every synagogue community at this point in history. What is it we should really be doing? How do we become more truly relevant, especially to people who would describe themselves as atheist, or who dislike the cycle of religious services.

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Coming up: Tu B'Shevat

This year Tu B'Shevat begins on the evening of 15 January 2014 and ends at sunset on 16 January 2014. Here's a fun Tu B'Shevat activity for kids to do at home.

Parsley for Passover

You will need:

- parsley seeds, flat-leaf or curly
- planting tray with holes in the bottom for drainage
- potting soil

1. Plant the parsley seeds in the planting tray according to package directions.
2. Place tray on a sunny windowsill.
3. Water regularly so that soil is moist but not soggy.
4. A few sprigs of your parsley may be ready in time to use them on the seder plate at Passover.

[Adapted from "Jewish Holidays All Year Round" by Ilene Cooper in Association with The Jewish Museum]

Kehillah Tu B'Shevat Night Walk – Get in touch with the elements. Meet at 7:00 pm at the New Community Rooms for a night walk seeing trees and local green spaces. We will bring the fruits that represent the journey of the earth through the seasons and tell stories of Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for Trees, and nature.

See our website at www.nlpjc.org.uk


liberal judaism

Kehillah North London (NLPJC) is a constituent
congregation of Liberal Judaism

Why I chose Kehillah [Interview with member Suzanne Crouch]

So Suz, tell us a bit about yourself

I've just turned 31 and live in Archway with my fiancé, Doron. We just got engaged a couple of months ago. The feeling of being proposed to is amazing, if I could only bottle it up and sell it, I'd be a very rich lady! I work for an Innovation Consultancy, which is definitely one of those jobs you can only get in London. I grew up in Manchester and moved to London 7 years ago. Being a northerner is my USP!

And what brought you to Kehillah North London?

When Doron and I were talking about the future, it was important for both of us that I knew more about his culture and heritage and that any children we have are brought up in a Jewish home, so we started looking into joining a community and starting the conversion process. We went to a number of different synagogues and the minute we met Shulamit and came to a service at Kehillah, we knew this was the right place for us. Everyone was so friendly, open and most importantly non-judgemental.

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Members Stacey Bhaerman, Adam Shapiro, and Yitzy enjoyed a midweek lunch in our sukkah.

Holidays in Review

The High Holy days we held at our usual Shabbat venue, the Community Rooms of St Mary's church. Our rabbi, Shulamit, joined us from her two-month sabbatical and we were ably assisted by *ba'alei tefillah*, our service leaders, the wardens and various members, all of whom did their bit to provide a warm welcome to attendees. Our sukkah was beautifully decorated with greenery provided by members and lots of us took the opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah by eating under the canopy. Our very popular Chanukah party was organised this year by new members Amy and Justin and fun was had by all - the doughnut eating competition being a particular highlight!

Rabbi's letter, continued from first page

Tackling the modern plague of social isolation and loneliness. Making education for all ages come alive outside of the classroom model. Building community and exploring spirituality. These are just some parts of our future direction, for 2014. The planning stage is beginning now, for a Year of Innovation.

My eight weeks of study helped me to focus on the bigger picture. Funnily enough, my long term view seemed to develop the more I focussed my mind on quite a small set of ideas. Instead of dealing with lots of emails and the pressures of the everyday, I could think about the infinite impact of what was truly important. Ultimately, this leads to thinking about how to live one's life. How to focus, beyond distraction, on the influence we each have on our corners of reality. I am really grateful for that time, and for being part of such a warm, enthusiastic and inclusive community. I am looking forward to 2014 being a year of longer deeper conversations, creativity, learning, seriousness, and fun, and wish you a happy start to the year.

Thinking of joining us?

Why not do it now ~ our new membership year starts in February. Please contact our administrator, Melanie on 020 8123 5752 or by email at kehillah.northlondon@yahoo.co.uk for a new member pack or phone Rabbi Shulamit on 020 7403 3779 to discuss membership options.

Interview with member Suzanne Crouch, continued

How would you describe your Jewish journey so far?

Enlightening. I have learnt so much, from being able to read Hebrew, to history (a personal passion of mine) to understanding why we celebrate all the holidays.

What has been the best bit?

Feeling part of something bigger and connected to other people. I was recently in Central America and there are lots of Israelis travelling after the army, when I told them I was converting it felt like we had a bond.

Have there been any surprises/challenges along the way?

The biggest surprise for me was the variety of what I've learnt and that it's not all religious focused. The second surprise was just how many other people are in our situation. This has been a real source of comfort, as when I started out, my perception was I'd always be the odd one out. This is so far from the truth.

The biggest challenge for me has been time. My work keeps me very busy, and converting requires you to really commit and dedicate time to the process.

If you were describing Kehillah North London to a friend what would you say?

An open, warm and accepting place.

Cheder Corner

This term the Cheder has started on the topic Between Heaven and Earth. We started on Sukkot and what wandering means to us, how we can go from one place to another without losing our identity.

We also covered Noah and the relationship people have with each other in terms of self and group identity. If we were Noah or his neighbours, how would we have acted in those circumstances? Each of us built our own modern day 'Ark' and everyone came up with fabulous designs and reasons for building it.

We look forward to covering Jacob's ladder this week and further ideas that identify us to each other and to our purpose.

Adult Education

This winter, we're having a variety of Adult Education Classes on Tuesdays in January and March.

Intermediate Hebrew Grammar will be offered on the 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th of January and the 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th of March from 6-7 pm. If you wish to attend this class, you will need to be able to read Hebrew.

7 January

7-9:30 pm **Tsedakkah**: special double session on the duties and complexities of tzedakkah to tie in with cooking for the Winter Night shelter on Thursday 20th March.

14 January

7-8 **Prayer**: the Core (Understanding the key prayers every Jew need to know)

8-9:30 **Mystical Torah Commentary**: studying the thoughts of one famous mystic, in honour of Tu B'Shevat

21 January

7-8 God and Us: **Torah and Kiddush**

8-9:30 **Midrash**: the imagination and creativity of the Midrash

28 January

7-8 Transitions: **Havdalah and Kaddish**

8-9:30 **Aggadah**: strange stories from the Talmud

4 March

7-8 Hands on Judaism: **mezuzah and tallit**

8-9:30 **Purim** and its hinterland in the Talmud

11 March

7-8 **Purim**: conflict, survival, celebration

8-9:30 **Esther and Mordechai**: history and mythology

18 March

7-8 We were slaves: the 2000 year journey of the **Haggadah**

8-9:30 **Pesach in the Midrash**

25 March

7-8 **Jewish journeys**: stories and reflection

8-9:30 **Mystical aspects of Pesach**