



new london
synagogue



A Microcosm of New London

My weekend ahead serves as a microcosm for the leadership I try to provide for the community and my vision for what Judaism and should always strive to be.

It's Pride Shabbat. We'll celebrate with a Kabbalat Shabbat service, led by Yoav (open to all) and a dinner (booking now closed). We'll take the opportunity to re-iterate our delight in celebrating with members of the LGBT+ community; a delight which is one part of our delight in celebrating all our members; each of us carrying our individuality as unique distillations of the image of God instilled differently in each of us. The music will be glorious, drawing from sources both inside and beyond the Jewish tradition – as has always been the way with Jewish music. We'll eat together for eating together has been at the heart of how Jews have marked the Sabbath since Sinai.

On Saturday we mark Refugee Shabbat. It's an honour to partner with HIAS-JCORE who do such remarkable work supporting refugees, led by Jewish values. We are collecting toiletries – please see below. And I warmly recommend a wander through their web site - <https://hiasjcore.org/what/refugee-shabbat/>. Our guest and preacher is Senior Rabbi of Masorti Judaism, a child of New London, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg; himself a second-generation refugee – as indeed are so many of us. I'm reading Torah – spending hours preparing the technical challenge of ensuring our most precious inheritance can be read publicly, fluently and confidently in the hearing of all who come to Shul.

Sunday opens with the Cheder, our youth will be in, in number and voice and energy. I'm teaching the BM Programme, we are on a whistlestop tour of Jewish history – a thousand years a week. It's a response to 'History' coming remarkably high on a values clarification exercise we worked on last week. I asked our 11- and 12-year-olds, what are the top ten values that ensure a strong healthy Jewish future. History scored high, as did reading Torah, coming to Shul, feeling proud about being Jewish, lighting Shabbat candles – it was moving, I believe them. I believe in our future.

From Cheder I'm heading to the Nova Music Festival exhibition (it's not too late to book for the 1:30pm entry on Sunday 21st - <https://www.eventim.co.uk/event/the-nova-exhibition-london-the-nova-exhibition-30-curtain-rd-london-ec2a-3nz-21633842/?affiliate=N2V>). The rip of October 7th remains raw and painful. The obligation to bear witness remains, frankly, even more important.

And there, between the pride, the celebration, the responsibility to support those on the margins, the commitment to Torah and ritual, the education of future generations and in relationship with Israel is my weekend. And our community. And if you see me, out having a picnic on Sunday evening with friends, do feel free to pop over and say hi, but I won't looking to engage on communal business on Sunday evening. I read somewhere that taking a break is a holy thing to do too.

Shabbat Shalom

Rabbi Jeremy