

Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue

Senior Rabbi
Rabbi Dov Kaplan

Associate Rabbi
Rabbi Anthony Knopf
MA (Cantab)

Youth and Community Rabbi
Rabbi Marc Levene
BA(Hons)

Chazan
Avromi Freilich
BSc MRCSLT

HAPPY 2012

I want to take this opportunity after the seasonal break to update all of you on some of the things that have been going on in the community over the last few months and to look forward to some very important events which are taking place in the next few weeks.

Simchas

It is wonderful that we get to kick off the secular New Year with two wonderful Simchas for the whole community to enjoy. On Shabbat, 7 January, we celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of Dovi Freilich, son of our beloved Chazan, Avromi and Rochelle. It is incredible to believe that Avromi and Rochelle have been serving our community for two decades and we are all looking forward to celebrating along with them next Shabbat.

A few weeks later on Shabbat, 4 February, we will celebrate the Bar Mitzvah of Sariel Kaplan, son of Rabbi Dov and Freda Kaplan. The Kaplans have already made a huge impact on the community since their arrival at the end of the summer and it has been really gratifying to receive so many lovely comments from members as to the favourable impression that the whole family have made. To have these two celebrations so close together will provide us with a wonderful period of communal celebration in which I hope as many members as possible will participate.

Induction of Rabbi Kaplan

This mailing includes an invitation for you to attend the induction of Rabbi Kaplan as Senior Rabbi of our Shul by the Chief Rabbi on Wednesday 8 February. We have planned, what we hope will be a memorable evening as Rabbi Kaplan is inducted into office by Chief Rabbi Sacks with the participation of our Rabbinical team. The service will include contributions from children, youth and senior members and is intended as a major communal celebration with which I am sure all members will wish to be associated. As mentioned on the invitation, please do give an indication of your intended attendance so that we can anticipate numbers.

Services

Regular attenders will see that our Rabbinical team have made a number of innovations into our regular Shabbat services over the last few months but for those who have not spotted them, I thought it worth highlighting a number of these. Our Friday night services have been enlivened by more singing, creating wonderful ru'ach and atmosphere with more than 250 people attending regularly throughout the winter. The Friday night atmosphere has been further enhanced by the introduction of occasional onegei Shabbat at Rabbi Kaplan's home and for the youth at the home of Rabbi Levene. These are wonderful, warm and inspiring evenings and well worth braving a cold night for. If you are not already a regular attender, come along, you will be pleasantly surprised. In addition, we have introduced more explanations of prayers and assistance with page numbers in an attempt to make the service more accessible to all. Starting the Shabbat morning service at 9:30 has proved, overall, to be a success and this now will be maintained on a permanent basis throughout the year.

New Gates

Members will have noted building work at the front of the Synagogue. We are having new gates installed to provide better security both for the community and for the children who attend Kerem School. We are also installing upgraded CCTV protection. Together with our security team, we aim to ensure that we have high standard security protection for everybody who uses our building balanced with the need to allow communal lives to continue in as uninhibited a manner as possible.

The community is buzzing with activities too numerous to mention in the space of a brief, overview letter. During the next few weeks, you will see the educational programme that Rabbi Knopf has been working on being publicised, you will also see the launch of a new brand initiative for our community. The ministerial team, the HO's, the Board and everybody associated with the Shul are all working very hard to ensure that HGSS is in good shape to serve the community, dedicated to caring, learning and living Judaism.

With very best wishes.

Keith Barnett
Chairman