

Around Alyth

January 2025 Review



Welcome!



We are starting 2025 with some changes here at Alyth and are delighted to welcome you to the first Around Alyth Monthly Review. As you know from the weekly email, so much happens at Alyth and we wanted to let you know what your Alyth community has been up to and to give greater insight into everything which has happened. We hope you enjoy!

Alyth Winter Concert Sunday 19 January



The roof of our Beit Tefillah was definitely raised at the Alyth Winter Concert. Featuring the voices of four of our choirs - Singing For Pleasure; the Synagogue Choir; the newly-formed SMG Choir and the Alyth Choral Society, alongside the talents of Rabbi Hannah (with baby Lior) and Musical Director, Katie - there wasn't a spare seat and everyone left feeling uplifted and humming a few tunes too! Guests also brought in much needed supplies for All Saints Childs Hill Food Bank, continuing our support for Mitzvah Day.



We're Back

Following the winter break, our youth education programme is back for the new term. Ruach is our pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah programme delivered by our wonderful team of madrichim and SMG (Sunday Morning Galim) is our Jewish education provision for Reception to Year 6.

On A Screen Near You



Rabbi Hannah lit up TV screens over Chanukah with an appearance on Sky News Breakfast, alongside Imam and friend of Alyth, Sabah Ahmedi, to talk about the rise in hate crimes towards faith communities. They spoke of the need for real, meaningful dialogue and building friendships. You can watch the full interview by [clicking here](#).

We Need To Talk About Israel

We Need To Talk About ... is a new series of evenings where we come together to discuss issues facing our community with experts in the field.

Our first event could not have been more timely. Hours after the current ceasefire agreement came into effect, to have a conversation around how we respond to events in Israel through our liturgy.

We were delighted that friends of the community, Rabbi Galit Cohen-Kedem and Cantor Sarah Grabiner were able to join us online direct from Israel for this evening, sharing their first hand experiences with us. The evening was well attended, with some lively discussions and thought-provoking chat.

We Need To Talk About ...Tech will be held on Monday 24 February at 19:30.



Broadcasting To Alyth ... And Beyond



ALL ELSE IS COMMENTARY

Produced in association with 

This month, Alyth launched All Else is Commentary, a new podcast about Jewish ideas, hosted by Rabbi Elliott. So far, nine episodes have been downloaded over 500 times by listeners mostly in the UK, but also from around the world. We started with an interview with author Toby Lloyd, who has written a new novel, *Fervour* and this was followed by conversations with Rabbi Kath Vardi about power dynamics in the Talmud and Student Rabbi Yael Tischler about women from the Hebrew Bible you might not have heard of. Coming up soon:

- An interview with the lawyer and writer Anthony Julius on his new book, *Abraham: The First Jew*
 - A conversation with Rabbi Daniel Lichman about the Jewish Messiah
 - Progressive Sermons of the last 50 years, featuring one of Rabbi Colin's sermons from the time of the Falklands Crisis
 - Keith Kahn-Harris on his new book, *Everyday Jews*
 - A Purim special with Dr Sherry Ashworth on Esther in Victorian literature
- Listen to All Else is Commentary on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), or on the [Alyth website](#), and you can join the conversation about Jewish ideas on [Facebook](#), [Bluesky](#), or by contacting alleaseis@alyth.org.uk

Let's Get Social



Alyth Social returned in January. A real mix of music, singing and talks by people from all walks of life, we have enjoyed a quiz, piano recitals and a fascinating talk from record company legend, Rick Blaskey. In February, Alyth Social takes us around the world with the return of journalist and broadcaster, Alan Dein giving us an audio tour of London's Royal Parks; professional photographer, Stan Hill taking us on a tour of Europe; dancer, singer, performer and author, Lynne Bradley talks about West Side Story and our very own Head of Music and Arts, Katie, along with Maya to entertain us with songs from musicals, opera and films.

Holocaust Memorial Day



Monday, January 27 was International Holocaust Memorial Day and on Tuesday 28 January Alyth hosted a book event as part of our Holocaust Memorial Day programme. Speaking to a packed room, with even more joining online, Alyth member Leslie Michaels and Dr Toby Simpson, Director of The Wiener Holocaust Library, told us about the life of Margrit Hochschild Stern (1921 - 1998), who came to Britain as an unaccompanied child refugee, as well as that of Jews in Germany before the Second World War. Leslie has written a book about Margrit and her family which was sold out on the night.

Rabbi Hannah attended the Barnet Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony where Katie and our youth choir represented Alyth and sung some beautiful pieces.



Rabbi Nicola attended Music in Auschwitz: Commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day concert at Wigmore Hall. She also gave the D'Var Torah at the Erev Shabbat Service on Friday 24 January. The D'var Torah can be read by [clicking here](#).

Rabbi Hannah commented; "As the last generation which will hear first hand testimony from survivors, it's essential that we not only listen, but also act to continue to honour their legacy."

Starting The B'nei Mitzvah Journey

Mid-January is usually very quiet, but that wasn't the case at Alyth when 70 people came together for our Year 6 B'nei Mitzvah information meeting, Erev Shabbat Service and Chavurah Supper. A great opportunity for everyone to catch up with old friends and meet new ones

as they start their B'nei Mitzvah journey together in a meaningful way. It was an evening full of laughter, lively discussions and excitement for the journey ahead—and there wasn't a crumb of food left at the end!

If you are interested in our B'nei Mitzvah programme or Youth and Education in general, please email Head of Member Engagement Sam Heller: sam@alyth.org.uk



Havdalah with Moshe Lavee at Alyth

Alyth member Judy Smith wrote "On December 14, I attended a Havdalah run by our Rabbis during the winter months. It was a lovely opportunity to share this very special time at the end of Shabbat with other Alyth members, to nosh on lovely tidbits (trademark of any Jewish event) and to hear from a most remarkable teacher and poet – Dr Moshe Lavee. Dr Lavee is a lecturer in Talmud and Midrash at Haifa University who was visiting London. We were privileged to hear him talk about Israel post October 7 and his quest for hope and a peaceful outcome during these darkest days"

If you have attended an event at Alyth and would like to write something about it, please email your quotes and pictures to communications@alyth.org.uk