

ECO SYNAGOGUE

EcoShabbat 2022 Round Up

What happened this EcoShabbat?

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ECO SHABBAT

Parshat Vayera
11th-12th November 2022

EcoShabbat is an opportunity to engage your community in the climate emergency conversation during COP27.

Learn. Discuss. Commit. Take Action
Choose the way your community will make positive changes using our website resources to support and inspire.
Email: Team@ecosynagogue.org



BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF BRITISH JEWS
ADVOCACY | DEMOCRACY | COMMUNITY

"It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you free to neglect it."
PIRKEI AVOT 2:16
Let's do this together.



What happened this EcoShabbat?

This EcoShabbat saw many communities come together to engage in conversations arising out of COP27 and the Climate Emergency. Shuls, Jewish Organisations and individuals decided to learn, discuss and make commitments to improve our sustainability as a UK Jewish community. *(Many of these commitments were listed on our website: <https://ecosynagogue.org/challenges-commitments/>)*

We also shared other interesting bits of information, such as recipes for an EcoShabbat dinner shared by best-selling cookbook author Jamie Geller and daily Rabbinic Inspiration videos from our Rabbinic Team at EcoSynagogue.

As with COP26, EcoSynagogue's Rabbinic Team wrote an Open Letter to world leaders for COP27, calling on them to find a pathway from which we can hope for a brighter future.



An open letter to world leaders at the start of COP27

We pray that our leaders have the vision and courage to make the decisions which will bring us, and future generations, justice, hope and life.

We call on everyone to use whatever influence possible to work together for the wellbeing of our planet and all life. We understand this to be God's will and God's commandment.

At COP 27 the world again has the opportunity, and the capacity, to act to save tens of millions of lives and the future of countless species, perhaps of humanity itself.

We have been warned repeatedly by the world's leading scientists to take the actions which will save our planet, and to do so urgently. According to the current Sustainable Development Goals Report we have lost ground since Covid. There is no time to waste.

We pray that strong, far-reaching and legally enforceable decisions on cutting emissions, preserving biodiversity, and redressing the grave injustices caused by climate change will be made.

The rabbis of the Talmud understood the harmful impact of long-distance consequences; they knew that careless words in Jerusalem cost lives in Rome. Today it's not words but deeds; the actions of certain, especially wealthier, countries have caused disaster elsewhere in the world. We call on our leaders to give generous financial help to enable the poorest nations to mitigate the effects of this damage and adapt to climate change.

We appreciate that this requires courageous and visionary decision-making. The reward is the knowledge that we have done our best to bequeath to the world's children a viable, sustainable and beautiful planet, filled with all the richness of life.

Signed by

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg Rabbi David Mason Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich Rabbi Jeff Berger Rabbi Mark Goldsmith
EcoSynagogue Rabbinic Team



(Read it in better quality here: <https://ecosynagogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Open-Letter-to-World-Leaders-COP27.pdf?fbclid=IwAR32qqEPzYW4IIVN7Cui-dIB202GJb7KIA25TKMIsIVMDxPeT8c7XSe33iw>)

Roundup of Activities

We are thrilled to have seen so many communities and shuls take part in EcoShabbat, holding events to encourage environmental sustainability. These are just a few of the events and commitments we were aware of this year and hope to see more of in the future.

Barnet United Synagogue

- Eco Lead presented on The Jewish Love affair with Food and How to End Food Waste.
- Pledged that plastic bottles and Tetra Pak are permanently banned from shul.
- Community took part in production of online recipe book “Love Your Leftovers”, which will be rolled out for inclusion to other registered EcoSynagogue’s.

Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue



Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue

13 Nov · 🌐

Our erev eco-Shabbat supper was a great success. Plants were donated, delicious food shared and we discussed the value of even insignificant people such as ourselves joining a global movement seeking to create change.



- Friday night dedicated to the planet followed by vegan supper.
- Vegan recipes shared and circulated.
- “Share Plants for Shul” event where community members brought indoor plants to enhance inside space and make it as green as possible.
- Cheder children are looking after plants going forward.

Crouch End Chavurah

- Hosted a vegan Friday night Shabbat, International sustainability professional, Monica Kruglianskas PhD, spoke on COP27, some of the real action coming out of the conference, as well as the work she has done in Brazil with governors of the rainforest.

Edgware & Hendon Reform Synagogue

- EHRS Eco team highlighted all of the foods and choices that we make in our kiddush and the environmental implications of those choices.
- Sermon during AJEX Shabbat on how war contributes to environmental devastation.

Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation & Sukkat Shalom Reform, Edinburgh

- Joined together by combining their Mitzvah Day and EcoShabbat to work on the Water of Leith Conservation Project cleaning up the river.

Finchley Progressive Synagogue

- Collected and emptied enormous Terracycle bins, which focuses on recycling things that can otherwise not be recycled and helps save packaging from landfill.

Golders Green United Synagogue

- Shul-sponsored vegetarian lunch catered by environmental charity Sadeh Farm.
- Special COP27 sermon by Rabbi Harvey Belovski.

Kol Chai

- Held a Study session before Shabbat service looking at Jewish approaches to ecology and how we as humans, acknowledge our interdependence with other species.
- Showcased the work of KC Green Team such as how to make a bird-box and members being invited to measure carbon profile with various suggestions to reduce energy usage.

Kol Nefesh Masorti.

- Served vegan green lunch made from organic local ingredients and completely plastic free.

Magen Avot United Synagogue

EcoShabbat

Egypt is hosting the 27th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh from 6th to 18th November 2022. The aim will be to build on the outcomes of COP26 to deliver action on several issues critical to tackling the climate emergency – from urgently reducing greenhouse gas emissions, building resilience and adapting to the inevitable impacts of climate change, to delivering on the commitments to finance climate action in developing countries. EcoShabbat is the opportunity for our shul community to be a part of these conversations and to act in ways to improve our sustainability.



At Magen Avot we are making the following commitments this year for EcoShabbat:

- Learning and discussion about the environment, climate change and sustainability, led by the youth in Y@MA
- Shiur by Rabbi Yoni Golker between Mincha and Ma'ariv on:- "Torah and the Environment; How to Raise Kids Who Care about the Planet"
- We aim to share a weekly eco-tip in the newsletter
- We are committing to recycling all bottles from kiddush by volunteers taking them home in re-usable bags after Shabbat
- We have bought jugs for water so that we can save plastic and buy less bottles
- We are working on phasing out biodegradable disposables from our Kiddushim and events, moving towards using glasses and crockery whenever possible.

Please join the discussion! Ideas and contributions are very welcome!

Happy EcoShabbat,
Tammy Beider, Fiona Taylor, Aliza Spizzichino and Eliana Adler
Eco-committee, Magen Avot



Yoni and Dina Golker

11 November at 13:06 · 🌐

Excited for a great Shabbat at Magen Avot.

We are honoured to be hosting Gila Sacks, as our guest speaker tomorrow after Mussaf. This is a real privilege especially in anticipation of Rabbi Sacks second Yortzeit this coming week.

Also in honour of Eco Shabbat please join me tomorrow PM for my Shiur!

Good Shabbos 🙌



- Youth special discussion on the importance of environment engagement.
- Rabbi gave environment and ecology shiur, following vegetarian shiur he gave on Parshat Noach.
- Commitment for EcoShabbat to publish an eco-tip every week in the shul newsletter e.g. how to shop more sustainably.
- Further commitment for EcoShabbat to set goal to use crockery and glass instead of disposables going forward.
- Rota installed for recycling by members taking home/to skip as there are no facilities at shul premises.

Muswell Hill United Synagogue

- Rabbi featured EcoShabbat in sermon with MP's Catherine West and David Lammy, Council leaders, faith leaders and civil society reps present.

New North London Masorti Synagogue

- Put a survey on Facebook asking people to respond when they saw certain wildlife and held a competition inviting people to submit photos, engaging facts and descriptions of certain aspects of nature with a winner for the best post each week, to inspire passion for the environment
- On Shabbat, had an exhibition of photos and facts about birds, trees and mammals.
- Served a vegetarian Kiddush, including swapping out fish products for vegetarian bites and making their own dips to save on plastics.
- Speaker gave each of the minyanim a 3 minute talk on small changes individuals can make in the areas of food, fashion and transport.

New Essex Masorti Synagogue



- Served an eco-friendly vegan Kiddush after their EcoShabbat service.

St Albans Masorti Synagogue

- Joint head of the Eco Team at SAMS is gave the sermon on Shabbat.
- A recruitment drive for new members of their Eco team.
- Held a community Kiddushim adhering to guidelines to make them more environmentally friendly.

St Albans United Synagogue

- Bought only UK grown produce for Kiddush.
- Community made a pledge to buy only UK grown fruit and vegetables for 1 week to prove how easy this is to adhere to on a longer term.
- Rabbi's sermon on environmental issues and how they are relevant to us as Jews.

Wembley Sephardi S&P

- Served meatless Hamin (cholent).
- Held sermon on how religious faith demands protecting the environment.

Woodside Park United Synagogue

- Held a vegetarian and eco-friendly Shabbat Sedah.
- Rabbi did a presentation on "What we can learn from Shabbat to improve our everyday lives to help protect the planet".
- Had EcoSynagogue Project Manager Andrea Passe as a speaker on "Understanding why the "little" carbon savings are as important as the "big" ones".

Awards

Mazel tov to the new recipients of the EcoSynagogue Awards for November 2022!

Silver Award Winners

Garnethill Synagogue



<https://ecosynagogue.org/garnethill-synagogue/>

Nottingham Liberal Synagogue



<https://ecosynagogue.org/nottingham-liberal-synagogue/>

Bronze Award Winners

Harlow Jewish Community



<https://ecosynagogue.org/harlow-jewish-community/>

Woodside Park United Synagogue



<https://ecosynagogue.org/woodside-park-united-synagogue/>

London Faith & Belief Community Award

EcoSynagogue are delighted to share the news that we have received a certificate of recognition for being one of the recognised projects at the London Faith & Belief Community Awards 2022 held in Westminster Abbey.

“The London Faith & Belief Community Awards celebrate the vital work of London’s faith and belief communities by bringing together local heroes and shining a light on their inspirational work, demonstrating how Londoners from all faiths and beliefs can work together for a fairer and more inclusive city.”

This certificate comes just after EcoShabbat and acts as a good motivator for us to keep moving forward and promote environmental sustainability and engagement across the Jewish community.



With Rabbi Jeff Berger (EcoSynagogue Rabbinic Team)



With Dr David Dangoor CBE DL, Chair of His Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London’s Council on Faith

EcoShabbat was able to gain some publicity in the news with its name appearing multiple times, both physical and online.

Synagogues are getting greener for EcoShabbat

► AS WORLD leaders grapple with the response to the climate emergency at COP27, EcoShabbat will focus minds at synagogues throughout the UK this weekend.

Communities of all denominations are taking part with services and events focusing on ways to improve sustainability.

At St Albans United, the community has pledged to buy only UK-grown fruit and vegetables for a week as a template for the future. Barnet United has pledged that plastic bottles and Tetra Paks will now be banned from its premises.

Brighton and Hove Progressive members are bringing plants to make the shul interior greener.

Golders Green US will offer a shul-sponsored vegetarian lunch catered by environmental charity Sadeh. Hendon-based Magen Avot United has committed to publishing a weekly eco-tip in its newsletter and to avoid using disposables going forward.



Edgware and Hendon Reform Synagogue is highlighting the environmental implications of kiddush food choices and Edinburgh's Orthodox and Reform shuls are joining forces to work on the Water of Leith conservation project.

Kol Nefesh Masorti (Edgware) will be offering a vegan lunch featuring members' recipes and made from organic local ingredients.

Muswell Hill United Synagogue will also be bringing an eco theme to its civic Shabbat, which MPs David Lammy and Catherine West are expected to attend.

EcoSynagogue project manager Andrea Passe said: "The work done by our rabbinic team and our communities for EcoShabbat, and all year round, is inspiring.

"It shows that the UK Jewish community is working hard to slow down the climate crisis."

Golders Green has a lunch catered by an environmental charity

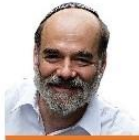
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"It shows that the UK Jewish community is working hard to slow down the climate crisis."

The EcoSynagogue Rabbinic team have also had their own columns published in various newspapers about COP27, climate change, and EcoShabbat.



Use your Jewish voice to help Cop27 succeed

RABBI JONATHAN WITTENBERG
SENIOR RABBI, MASORTI JUDAISM

Climate change isn't just about the weather. It's about the viability of life on the earth within the lifetimes of our children. That's why the current Cop27 United Nations climate change conference is so critically important.

Opening the event with words that could not be stronger, the UN secretary-general, Antonio Guterres, said: "We're on a highway to climate hell."

Timed to coincide with Cop27, this weekend is EcoShabbat, coordinated by EcoSynagogue. There are three reasons we must take part and why we must care.

The first is nature itself. The Bible says even the king is subject to the field. We are dependent on the unfathomably complex interrelationships of all life. What happens to the bees is an indicator for us. Drought, wildfires, and floods are not inconveniences but profound warnings. The enduring health of the natural world

is essential for our physical, economic, mental and spiritual survival.

The second reason is Judaism's foremost value: tzedek, justice.

The issue is not just climate change, but climate justice. How we live here affects livelihoods thousands of miles away.

The world's poorest are already paying the unaffordable price for the lifestyles of the richest.

The biggest issue at Cop27 is loss and damage: the duty of wealthy nations to help the most impoverished to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

The third is our children, the world's children and grandchildren. Judaism regards us as trustees, not owners, of God's world. We have a duty to bequeath our children a viable and sustainable planet, rich in every form of life. How can we allow ourselves to rob them of their future?

For all these reasons we are duty-bound to act individually, communally, collaboratively across society, and in public squares.

On a personal level, we need to reconsider our consumption, what we eat and wear, how we heat our homes and travel. The world can't afford throwaway cultures. We are not

entitled to say: "I don't care if my way of life costs the earth."

I admire young people I know who, increasingly, buy most of their clothes in charity shops or preloved. We need to ask more often: "Do I need this?" We must ensure we aren't investing in fossil fuels, directly or indirectly, and move our money to where it supports climate solutions.

Environmental work, from protecting livelihoods and landscapes to restoring biodiversity, clean water and forests, should be high among our charitable priorities.

Communally, we need to work through our synagogues, schools, communities, workplaces and professional bodies to curb our collective carbon footprints.

More than 55 congregations already belong to EcoSynagogue, which helps us examine every aspect of our utilities, teaching, preaching and outreach. At our awards ceremony last year, congregants and rabbis of every denomination sat side by side learning from each other's achievements. It was intensely moving. We want to increase that number substantially by next summer.

We need to make our values heard in the public square. When Abraham pleaded

for Sodom to be saved, God agreed to spare the city if there were as few as 10 righteous people "within the city". That means, said the great Bible scholar Nehama Leibowitz, people prepared not just to do the right thing in private, but with the courage and determination to play a prominent part and exert their influence in public life.

Our voice as Jews is strongest when we work together with others. Eighty percent of the world's population belong to a faith. Religion can motivate and mobilise; religious communities have intergenerational and international reach. We need to use it.

Our personal and communal actions give us the moral authority to address business and political leaders. In democracies, what people show they care about has an impact. We need to challenge our governments to make the difficult, long-term decisions on which keeping climate change to 1.5 or even 2 percent critically depends. Then we have to hold them to account. The time to act is now.

◆ Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg is a member of the EcoSynagogue rabbinic team. For full information, visit ecosynagogue.org

EcoShabbat



OPINION PIECE
BY RABBI DAVID MASON

'Kol Yisrael Areivin Zeh BaZeh'. All Israel are guarantors for each other. These are well known words in our religion from the Talmud. They are powerful words too.

The word for guarantorship here, 'arvut', appears in the Torah when Jacob's son Judah intends to go and take the place of his brother Benjamin, who is being requested by the disguised Joseph to be brought up to Egypt and placed in prison.

Judah clearly states "I will be a guarantor for him". In other words, I will stand in his place and take the suffering that will be dealt to my brother. This requires a great deal of empathy, a feeling which is natural for family and also for brethren of religion or nation.

Of course, there is a down side to empathy. As Rutger Bregman says in his fascinating book 'Humankind', empathy can be exclusive and directed. I will show empathy to some, and not in any way to others. Those of my people may deserve empathy. Others not.

The developing damage to our climate is going to stretch us, and our empathy, beyond the bounds of our nationhood.

We are seeing the effects locally through extreme weather, fires and floods. But rising temperatures and rising sea levels are having devastating consequences across the world at the moment, bidding us to consider how what we do here, can help or drastically hinder the wellbeing of people in other parts of the world, let alone our own country.

As the COP27 climate summit is underway, I've had a chance to reflect on attending COP26 last year in Glasgow as part of a delegation from EcoSynagogue – of which more than 55 communities are now signed up – and the Board of Deputies who partners with us.

At COP26, after a full day at the EcoSynagogue stall, I went to take a selfie picture at the big sign at the entrance to the centre. As I was doing this, I noticed a large entourage come my way and clearly someone important was at the heart of it. I found out that this was the elected President of the UN, Abdullah Shahid, who had recently been Foreign Minister of the Maldives. He had been on TV the night before, explaining that his country was

We are all, in this world, part of the problem and equally part of the solution.

becoming inundated with rising sea levels and may in the future sink underwater. The Maldives has a population of about half a million.

So should I as a Jew care about the Maldives?

Well firstly, we know that it will not only be hotter climates that will suffer. We are seeing extreme weather already blight our own country. This is a crisis that we all across the world are facing. But this also made me think of the metaphor given to us by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the Midrash. He understands the concept of 'guarantorship' like a boat where one passenger is drilling a hole underneath

his seat. Others reprimand him for this, whereupon he retorts that it is his seat, so he can do what he wants with it.

This metaphor helps us understand our responsibility for each other as a Jewish nation. But it is impossible not to extend this beyond our people, in the context of our present, unfolding climate crisis. We cannot say – leave us alone to do our thing, and you, the nations of the world, get on with the policies you think will protect Hashem's world. We are all, in this world, part of the problem and equally part of the solution.

This Shabbat is EcoShabbat across the United Kingdom. Let us take this time to consider our role as individuals and communities. One starting place could be the EcoSynagogue audit tool, that all communities can use join the journey to make their synagogue a more sustainable one.

Now is the perfect time to reflect on whether what we do helps our world, or is destructive for it. Because, in this world, we are all guarantors for each other.

Rabbi David Mason is a member of the EcoSynagogue Rabbinic Team. For more info, resources and ideas please visit www.ecosynagogue.org.

the Schmooze *Voices from the community*

Support COP27 with EcoShabbat commitments



By Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich

To COP or not to COP is no longer a question for Rishi Sunak. Thank God for that. It is not because his presence will make the ultimate difference to the decision making process at the climate change conference. It's because our leaders showing support for the issues that matter is very important.

The COP conference is the voice of our collective conscience. Only a united response from all countries can address the mess we have made in our shared home—and only with a united response from all the people in those countries can we make a real difference.

At the moment, we are like that man in the boat in the Midrash Leviticus-Rabbah 4:6, who was drilling the hole under his seat, not realising that by doing so he will sink not only himself but everyone on that boat. Each country, but also each of us as individuals, are drilling small or big holes. In fact, not only is each of us drilling some sort of hole. Some of us are making it bigger. That is because we are all both beneficiaries and victims of the Industrial Revolution and technological advances.

All the joys of our progress—door-to-door deliveries, flying abroad, driving our cars or simply watching TV with a takeaway in a plastic container in our warm home—brings us com-

fort yet creates pollution. Oil, gas and coal emit the highest amount of carbon into our atmosphere, exacerbating global warming. Production of any goods (meat, clothes, medicine, toys) requires a lot of energy.

With a global population of almost eight billion people, it comes as no surprise that the energy industry is the biggest polluter. Then transport, agriculture, fashion and food retail come in. It takes a lot of energy and a high cost to keep all eight billion of us going.

And people in poor countries suffering the results of socio-economic injustice are now facing eco injustice too. When one barely has access to water or food, it is hard to see the bigger picture and care about our shared home.

But the eight billion is also the biggest power we have. Our collective consumerism, campaigning and responsibility is our power. It is time for us to start using it.

This summer, for the first time, I was able to see a difference I made. For three of the driest weeks, I watered four tiny silver birch trees outside my block of flats. Each tree received two litres of water daily. I didn't know whether my effort would make any difference until I saw new tiny green leaves coming through on those thin, seemingly half-dead but lovely trees. I hope now they will bring as much joy to the children on my estate as the silver birch

outside of my bedroom window did for me when I was growing up. It really showed me what a difference we all can make as individuals if we exercise our collective power to make our home a healthy and clean place again.

EcoSynagogue has acknowledged this important moment for humanity—or at least the 190-plus countries participating in COP27—with EcoShabbat this weekend.

We as individuals and as communities can add our Jewish voice in support of this crucial conference by marking EcoShabbat in many different ways. These could include raising awareness of pollution and its effect on the planet and our health; promoting cycling; or committing to 100 per cent renewable energy and a no plastic environment within our buildings and joining EcoSynagogue's eco-audit programme.

Our political leaders supporting the issues that matter is important. But we are the collective power behind them.

This is the time when our commitment to our shared future matters and our individual actions, joined together, can really make a difference.

Let's show our support for COP27 by making a commitment to eco and sustainable living this weekend.

Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich is a member of the EcoSynagogue rabbinic team (ecosynagogue.org)

Progressive Judaism

LEAP OF FAITH



BY RABBI MARK GOLDSMITH
RABBI, EDGWARE AND HENDON REFORM SYNAGOGUE

What would our planet say about Cop27?

The first verse of the Torah, Genesis 1:1, introduces Earth as the place where everything else that matters is going to happen. All life, love, joy, care, satisfaction and beauty is dependent on the proper functioning of the earth.

The first mitzvah, commandment, addressed to Adam, the first human being, is in Hebrew: *pr'u u'r'vu*, "Increase and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

This is the Jewish duty, to develop, to grow, to build for the future. Those words, though, are only the first half of the verse. The verse continues *v'ishubah u'r'vu*, dominate and rule over the earth.

This is a tough verse to interpret. Does it mean that we can be irresponsible in the way that humankind uses the earth for

our immediate benefit, or does it mean that we need to have a God-like eternal perspective, a sustaining perspective, on how the earth develops? The direction of Jewish teaching has taken the latter path. If we are given the Earth on which and by which to live, we must do so in a sustainable manner, so it can be given on from generation to generation.

A midrash pictures God showing Adam around the Garden of Eden and saying, "Look at My works! See how beautiful they are—how excellent! For your sake, I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it" (Kohélet Rabbah 7:13).

Antonio Guterres, secretary-general of the United Nations, painted a bleak picture of how Adam is treating Earth in 2022. At the latest Cop, the annual attempt by nations and NGOs to inspire the changes that will preserve the earth, he said: "Emissions of greenhouse gasses continue

to grow. We are on a highway to climate hell but our foot is still on the accelerator."

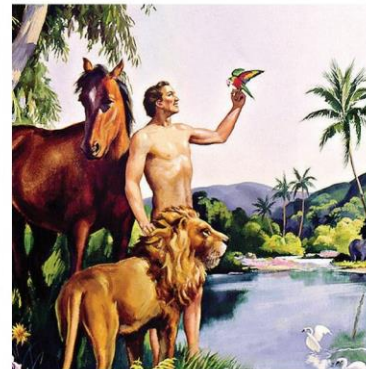
If Earth could be asked to respond to Cop27, surely it would be pleased that such a gathering takes place every year so that the message of caring remains heard, but also it would be devastated that so little action takes place as a result.

Adam is each one of us as well as humanity as a collective. To fulfil the first mitzvah of the Torah we must make major and permanent changes in how we behave towards the earth, individually, communally, nationally and internationally.

Last weekend saw EcoShabbat take place, organised by EcoSynagogue to coincide with Cop27. Communities of all denominations and across the UK took part, putting their focus on the climate emergency. It reminded us that to be a Jew is to care for the earth if we are to care to our people, our families and ourselves.

• Rabbi Mark Goldsmith is a member of the EcoSynagogue Rabbinic Team

A stimulating series where our progressive rabbis consider how Biblical figures might act when faced with 21st-century issues



If we are given the Earth to live by, we must look after it

(See more at <https://ecosynagogue.org/press-2022/>)

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg from our Rabbinic Team also appeared on BBC Radio 4's 'Thought for the Day' in which he reflected on hope amid the climate crisis.

Listen here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0df79cv>