

## ***'Es Brent — It's burning' — Terror in The House of Prayer***

The Council's commemoration of the 84<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kristallnacht was held at Perth Hebrew Congregation Synagogue on Sunday 6 November, commencing at 2:30pm.

The liturgy framed the occasional address delivered by Judith Lawrence, Operations Manager, Holocaust Institute of WA — her presentation taking the Yiddish song *S'Brent* as its theme (paraphrased: "do not stand by, watching the flames"). Enhancing the call to remember what this night augured — a reign of violence and loss — and to resolve to act against such, were 'cellist James Maley, the Carmel Choir, and John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School students.

Rabbi Lieberman of Perth Hebrew Congregation welcomed all present, and *The Prayer for Our Country* was led by Fr Michael Moore SM. James Maley and accompanist David Hicks then set a meditative tone with an excerpt from Bloch's evocative *Prayer*, and JSRACS students Piper Gage, Erin Tuckwell, and Glory Iloh, read eyewitness testimonies to Kristallnacht: from Hanne Hirsch Liebmann, Johanna Gerechter Neumann, and a fireman.

Judith Lawrence delivered her address, a visual presentation, with clarity and strength. "How does one destabilise the Jews? By destroying their house of prayer." Pointing to critical moments of deteriorating conditions for Jews under the strengthening Nazi regime, Ms Lawrence played a recording of Ken Arkwright OAM z"l, Shoah survivor, long-time CCJWA member, and author of *Beyond Survival*. In it, Ken recalled events of Kristallnacht that affected him: the burning of the Breslau Synagogue (which had functioned as the heart of his community, "a refuge"), and the deaths of its Rabbi, Dr Reinhold Lewin, his wife, and their son Ulli, Ken's school friend. The recording was especially moving with Ken Arkwright's recent passing, and Judith, his wife, in attendance.

Ms Lawrence concluded with noting we should not focus on a particular time or circumstance as leading to the Shoah, but, rather, the failure to be on guard against injustices, no matter how small. We should not think that it cannot happen again, or that it cannot happen here in Australia.

Memorial candles were then lit, and James Maley played haunting excerpts from Ravel's *Kaddish*. As a symbol of reconciliation, Ari Jacobsen (Carmel School) and Piper Gage (JSRACS) lit a Candle of Hope in duet. *The Exhortation* was given by Bishop Jeremy James tssf, and Rabbi Kim Ettlinger of Temple David Congregation then recited the *Kaddish*.

Perhaps most compelling was Carmel students' heartfelt rendition of *Ani ma'amin*, *Esa enai*, and *Oseh Shalom* (accompanied by Michele Galanti). With the JSRACS students, they carry the past forward, guarding against forgetfulness, and have the potential to inspire future move to action.

*Judith Schneider*  
Vice-Chairperson, CCJWA