**January**

**Celebrating the Word of God:**

***Bereshit & In the Beginning***

In the beginning there was the word. Every Shabbat the Bible is read, every Sunday, too. In Judaism and Christianity there are different interpretations. They amaze, sometimes they contradict one another and produce a polyphony of meaning. A common treasure!

**A Jewish voice**

**short version:**

In Judaism, the Torah is the foundational text of God's revelation. The Five Books of Moses are divided into 54 sections, so that each week about three to five chapters are read (a double section on some Shabbatot). These weekly portions take their title from a distinctive word in the opening verse of that reading, which also gives that particular Shabbat its name. This way, during one year, the entire Torah is read, leaving no verse, word, or letter out of the recital – however uncomfortable or meaningless some stories may seem today. This forces us to deal even with difficult texts.

Every year in fall, Jews celebrate the holiday rejoicing in the Torah, Simchat Torah. This is when the annual cycle of reading the Torah ends and immediately begins anew. This service is celebrated in the synagogue with great cheerfulness: All Torah scrolls are taken out of the Torah Ark *(aron hakodesh)* and carried through the synagogue in seven processions. The last passage of Deuteronomy 33-34 is recited, and then reading immediately begins again with the first chapter of Genesis 1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth".