**April**

**The joy of growing up:**

***Bar/ Bat Mitzvah & Confirmation***

Taking responsibility, becoming an adult. Filling old traditions with new life, celebrating faith, making a choice: in the synagogue with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, in the church with Confirmation. A celebration for all generations!

**A Jewish voice**

**short version:**

In Judaism, traditionally, girls are considered religiously mature at age 12 and boys at age 13, meaning they are able to take responsibility for their own religious lives and for fulfilling the commandments before God and the community. From that point on, they are considered "*Bar Mitzvah*" or "*Bat Mitzvah*," "son/daughter of obligation," (or in gender neutral terms: “member of the covenantal community”) and are responsible for keeping the commandments themselves and they are counted as part of the minyan, the quorum of ten persons required for certain public prayers and rituals. As in the case of civil maturity, religious maturity begins automatically by reaching a certain age; no ritual is indispensable. Since the Middle Ages, boys have started celebrating the beginning of this new phase of life with a ceremony that includes the recitation of the Torah in the service, a speech, and putting on tefillin (prayer straps). For girls, different forms of celebrating the Bat Mitzvah emerged only in the course of the late 19th and early 20th century.

For children, preparations for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah extend from one to three years, depending on prior knowledge and congregational practice. In the service, they put on their tallit for the first time and recite all or part of the weekly Torah portion, usually in the traditional musical recitation style. In addition, there is the haftarah, the reading of the prophets, in Hebrew or in the local language. The young person gives a short sermon, and sometimes they lead a part of the prayer. This is followed by the Kiddush, festive refreshments, in the congregation, and then the celebration continues in private with family and friends.