



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

January 2016 • Tevet–Shevat 5776

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2016!

Please remember to pay your annual membership dues. The congregation depends on everyone to pay promptly in order to enable us to continue our work. Please note our new bank information:

Sparkasse Weserbergland

IBAN: DE47 2545 0110 0031 030380 BIC: NOLADE21SWB



also enjoyed a film about Shalom Aleichem’s work. A lecture about Rosa Ausländer was fascinating. Polina wishes to thank Inna Lubich and Valerij Bogachyck for their presentations.

“Mitzvah Day” was celebrated in our congregation with the seniors baking for members who are ill or housebound. Olga Gerr was her able assistant. Polina, in her own words writes:

“Our group met in order to take part in ‘Mitzvah Day,’ centrally organized by the Central Council of Jewish Congregations in Germany. Our group of seniors wanted to do a mitzvah for others, who because of illness can rarely attend synagogue services or activities. We visited twenty housebound members, bringing them sweet, homemade ‘Rogaliki.’ All were grateful and many were moved to tears by this act of loving kindness. We wish to thank the synagogue board and all participants of Mitzvah Day. Our congregation will stay strong and grow as long as we stand together.”

In preparation for our 20th anniversary, we met to discuss and plan a congregational brochure on November 16th. Project leaders are Boris Utchitel and Polina Pelts. The first meeting was very productive, and further meetings throughout the year are planned. The planning committee welcomes new and active members.

November and December presented us with special days of reflection and seriousness as well as days of joy.

The 9th of November, “Pogromnacht,” is a date whose intensity is felt stronger in Germany than anywhere else in the world. After laying wreaths in front of our synagogue and reciting prayers and psalms, we invited the more than 100 participants into our synagogue for a concert of meditation music, performed with sensitivity by Lauren Welliehausen and Lars Karrasch. The following afternoon, Natalia Gonochova offered a second concert of Hebrew and Russian music. Both concerts were made possible through a grant from the Amadeu Antonio Foundation.

With the beginning of a new year, we look forward to celebrating the fifth year in our beautiful synagogue. As we look with excitement toward a new year, it’s good to pause and reflect on how last year ended.

We shared many lovely Shabbat and holiday services in November and December, led by our Rabbi Shillor and our members. We are proud that our members have grown spiritually and are willing and able to lead one another in prayer. If you are interested in leading services, contact Rachel.

Polina Pelts and team have done an excellent job of providing thought-provoking and interesting programs, thanks to a grant from “Aktion Mensch.” Senior Breakfast Club and Sunday Café are well received and well attended. Highlights included a documentary film about Efim Aleksandrov. We



We look back and forward to our continuing work with our children's group, Netzer Hamelin. In November Ioulia took the children to Wolfsburg and to a children's production in the Ha-melin Theater. Faina worked with the children on their Hanukkah program.

The year ended with a full sanctuary for our congregational Hanukka service and festivities. The children lit all eight candles of our beautiful silver Hanukkia and recited the Brachot under Faina's direction. They retold the Hanukkah story and led the congregation in the singing of Maoz Tzur. The children received thundering applause and Hanukkah gift bags, stuffed with sweets, lovingly prepared by Olga Gerr. Thanks to the support of the Central Council of the Jews of Germany's cultural program, everyone enjoyed a Hanukkah gift of a concert of Jewish music from Flora Polnauer. Her bright personality was matched by her soulful singing, accompanied brilliantly by David Bernhoff on the piano.

The evening ended around the Kiddush table, enjoying Latkes and sweet sufganiyot with the Hanukkah candles burning bright, one for each night, remembering days long ago.

Youth Activities

Our wonderful Madricha, Patrizia Berhovski, is spending a year in Israel in the Netzer Olami Schnat program. She is still shy of the funds needed. If anyone can contribute to her year, please contact Rachel Dohme at racheldohme@jghreform.org.

We and the children miss her and are thrilled that she is participating in this program. Her lively, happy personality is certainly an asset to the World Union of Progressive Judaism's Schnat Israel program.

Faina is offering our youngsters an afternoon of Jewish learning fun each month, and Ioulia is offering regular family outings. We ask parents and grandparents to instill in their children the importance of their Jewish identity and take part in these activities.

Specials Dates

Please come to a very special Senior Club Breakfast on January 5th. We will honor our congregation's oldest and founding member, Suya Varschavskaja, on her 90th birthday. Suya helped establish our congregation with 19 others in 1997 and served as treasurer during those early years. We wish our dear friend Suya health and happiness. Mazel Tov Suya—may you live to be 120!

Our synagogue choir "Shalom" will give a concert Sunday afternoon, January 17th. It's always a pleasure hearing our choir under the direction of Petr Chrastina.

Both events are sponsored by a grant from "Aktion Mensch."

New Year's Reception

Our annual New Year's reception will be held on Thursday, January 7th. The cost is 8€. Valerij has a fabulous program and buffet planned. Spend an afternoon with friends and neighbors and ring in the new year.

Our Internet Presence

Those of you reading this newsletter in English are reading the internet version. The newsletter is also available in print form in [German](#) and [Russian](#) for members and supporters here in Germany. Many hours and many hands and heads go into producing this monthly informational newsletter. Keeping us online is no small expense for our small community of 90 percent Russian Jewish immigrants. We recognize the importance of this media tool in connecting and informing others of our congregational efforts and developments. And this newsletter has been the most efficient and successful outreach tool in our attempts to network internationally. Many new relationships have been established and built as a result of this newsletter and we are grateful to all involved. If you would like to help us stay online, please contact Rachel Dohme at racheldohme@jghreform.org. We appreciate any and all support!

Jewish January

We are looking forward to Rabbi Alexander Lyskovoy's two weekend visits to our congregation in the new year. Rabbi Sascha will lead us through Shabbat services, teach Torah and offer a family seminar during each visit. The weekends of January 8th and 22nd are sure to be very special.

Rabbi Lyskovoy will extend his stay at the end of the month in order to celebrate Tu BiShevat with us.

We look forward to celebrating the "New Year of the Trees" together, sampling the fruits, nuts, wines and juices symbolizing the first fruits and blossoms in Eretz Yisrael. This joyous family festival is a good reason to come to the synagogue and spend an afternoon with friends and neighbors.

We will end the month of January with Shabbat services and Torah study, led by Rachel Dohme.

January "Save the Date"

As in past years, the Russian Consulate General is sending an emissary to Hamelin for all citizens holding Russian passports. Our synagogue will host him on January 7th and 29th while he meets with each person and renews passports. Although most of our members are Ukrainian, we are pleased to offer this service to our friends and neighbors.

Our social worker, Faina Pelts, will offer an informational meeting on January 11th. She will inform and discuss Jewish organizations in Germany, explaining their structures and services.



New Members

We are pleased to welcome two new families to our congregation. Please join us in making the Kravtsova and Kagan families feel at home with us.

With the more than 1,000 new Syrian refugees in Hamelin, suitable apartments have become harder to find. If you know of an available apartment, please inform us in the synagogue office.

Refu'ah shlemah

We pray for the complete recovery of all who are ill and everyone who is going through difficult times. We will recite Misheberach for them during services.



Donations — Tzedakah

We thank all those who donated to either the congregation, for the Youth Fund or the synagogue foundation:

We acknowledge and thank Mr. John Smith, Mr. Adolf Späth, the Jewish Congregation of Hamelin, Mrs. Ute Kubiak-Stange, Mrs. Elisabeth Pfeiffer, Mrs. Eva Schkolnikova, The Adult Education Center in Ith, Mrs. Ute Gibas and the Dohme family.

We thank Dr. Ivo and Kirsten Schwartzkopff for their generous contribution to our Youth Fund. May you all be blessed for your generosity.

Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to our member, Suya Varschavskaia, on her 90th birthday! Join us as we honor Suya on January 5th.

Mazel tov to Mr. and Mrs. Bachmatschnikov on their golden anniversary!

Thank you — Todah Rabah

We thank everyone who help in making our holiday and cultural events very special. Our thanks go to everyone who plan and organize activities in our community.

Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Winter has arrived and even with our surprising mild temperatures our tree will sprout a new leaf or two. The tree offers our members, friends and supporters the opportunity for two mitzvot (good deeds) at once. One can commemorate special occasions, such as births, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, weddings, Yahrzeits and special honors and also support the maintenance of our synagogue.

Newly ordered: The Jewish Congregation of Hamelin: "In honor of Dr. Leo Hepner"

Our Condolences

We extend our deepest condolences to Mrs. Regina Hepner on the loss of her beloved husband and our dear friend, Dr. Leo Hepner, of beloved memory.

Leo's contribution to Reform Judaism's establishment and development in Europe and specifically in Germany cannot be measured highly enough. We will always hold his memory in the highest regard with love and admiration.

We extend our condolences to Mrs. Rimma Kopirovska on the death of her husband, Michail Tomonin, of beloved memory.

We extend our condolences to the Judelsohn family on the death of Jakovs Judelsohns, of beloved memory.

Rachel Dohme and Wladymr Pesok conducted the funeral services. Internment took place at the Jewish cemetery.



Yahrzeit in January

Chaja-Rachel Kruchkovitch January 1, 2003 / 26th Shevat 5763

Larissa Shapiro January 4, 2013 / 22nd Tevet 5773

May the memory of our loved ones be for a blessing. Please join family members during Sabbath services as we recite Kaddish. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office.

We wish all our members and friends a happy and healthy 2016!
—The Congregation Board

Program for January 2016 • Tevet–Shevat 5776

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; Tuesday & Thursday: 10.00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 5	11:00 a.m.	Senior Club Breakfast led by Polina Pelts and with support from “Aktion Mensch” — Join us to celebrate Suva’s 90 th birthday!
Thursday, January 7	11:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.	Informational meeting: “Russian Pensions” New Year’s Reception

Rabbi Alexander Lyskovoy

Friday, January 8	4:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.	Rabbi’s Table—Open learning session Friday night services with Rabbi Lyskovoy
Saturday, January 9	10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Lyskovoy Family Seminar with Rabbi Lyskovoy
Monday, January 11	11:00 a.m.	Social worker Faina Pelts: “Jewish organizations in Germany — Structures and Services”
Fri–Sat, January 15–16		Board Retreat: Developing a 5-Year Plan
Sunday, January 17	3:00 p.m.	Senior’s Café: led by Polina Pelts and with support from “Aktion Mensch” — Concert: Synagogue Choir “Schalom”

Rabbi Alexander Lyskovoy

Friday, January 22	4:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.	Rabbi’s Table — Open learning session Friday night services with Rabbi Lyskovoy
Saturday, January 23	10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Lyskovoy Family Seminar with Rabbi Lyskovoy
Sunday, January 24	5:00 p.m.	Tu B’Shevat Seder with Rabbi Lyskovoy
Friday, January 29	12 noon	Russian Consulate visits our congregation
Saturday, January 30	10.00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rachel Dohme

[Newsletter Archives](#)

Jewish Community of Hamelin

Member of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany, the World Union of Progressive Judaism, and the Central Council of Jews of Germany

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