



Dear members of the community, friends and supporters,

Membership fees: Please do not forget to pay your 2019 membership fees. We also kindly ask members of the Circle of Friends to transfer their contribution. Thank you very much!

We wish all members, friends and supporters a Happy New Year 2019!

Why do we wish each other a “Happy New Year”? In Germany, people wish each other “Ein guten Rutsch!” (slip well into the new year) One possible explanation is provided by the Hebrew word “Rosh,” which means “head, head, beginning.” Thus, a “good slip” would be a “good start” of the New Year. Hebrew has influenced many other languages in the world through the Jewish Diaspora—many Hebrew and Yiddish word sprinkles exist in the German language. Over time, the “Rosh” could have become a “Rutsch.” In any case, we wish you blessings, happiness and good health for the New Year!



It was nice to celebrate Hanukkah with everyone. The mood was festive and exuberant at the same time. We thank all who participated, making our holiday so joyous. The children added a special touch, as usual. Here you can read the newspaper article written by our foundation member Dr. Ms. Gesa Snell:

“On December 2, Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, began. In the Reform Jewish Synagogue of Hamelin, this was celebrated with a happy celebration. More than 90 guests, including 14 children, celebrated together in the modern, bright synagogue. They belong to the very lively youth group that Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg has created. Called up to the Bimah, the children were now allowed to light the first candle on the Hanukkia and recite the blessings. To thank them, they were presented with small, colorful bags of sweets.

“The second highlight of the Hanukkah celebration was a concert of the group “The Klezmer Tunes” from Cologne. With great enthusiasm and always ready for a joke, they carried the audience away on a trip to the Balkans, to Hungary, to Odessa and to the USA. These multi-talented musicians treated their Hamelin audience to an unforgettable first Hanukkah night to remember. The audience applauded with the same enthusiasm as the musicians played. Musicians and members then enjoyed the freshly prepared, traditional food that is simply part of the Hanukkah festival.”

The last Aktion Mensch meeting were held in December. Our series, “Healthy Nutrition for Seniors” breakfast, was held on December 11, concluding the nutrition lectures, which Faina Pelts has given for a year. Our members participated in these lectures with great interest. In a feedback discussion, our seniors agreed they received excellent and helpful new information. We hope that everyone has benefited from it. We thank Faina and all those who participated in the organization and preparation of these meals. We thank the Aktion Mensch for their friendly support. We are looking forward to new projects.

Funded by the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the project “Integration of Jewish and Mixed Religious Families into Synagogue Life” was held February to December 2018. The target group of the project consisted of Jewish and mixed religious families with underage children who are members of our Reform congregation or belong to our Circle of Friends. Olga Triskunov, project leader reports:

In summary, the project “Integrating Jewish and mixed religious families into Synagogue Life” was very successful and well attended. Planned activities were supported and enriched through the rabbi’s educational programs and the interreligious families could find their place in the community. The Children’s Kehillah was an integral element, one aspect being reading and writing Hebrew letters and learning about the Jewish holidays and Shabbat. The parents were able to talk to each other, exchange ideas and support the children in making crafts for Jewish festivals. Furthermore, the joint activities and excursions led to the strengthening of group cohesion. As a result of this project, a very warm and inclusive atmosphere between the children and the adults has been established. The fact that young Jewish and mixed religious families are happy to come to the synagogue to celebrate Jewish festivals together, to learn something new about Judaism, and to spend time together can be seen as the success of the project.”

We thank the Central Council of Jews in Germany for the friendly support.

We were deeply saddened by the senseless destruction of the House of World Religions in Steinbergen. Our president, Rachel Dohme, was involved in this project from the beginning. Especially painful was the vandalism of the sandstone monuments displaying the symbols of the world’s major religions. One of the vandals defiled our Magen David in an unspeakable way. Haters will hate, but they will not defeat us.



Jewish in January

Tu BiShvat

On the 15th day of the Jewish month of Shvat (Hebrew: Tu BiShvat) we celebrate the New Year of Trees, which is actually just a deadline for the tithing of the fruit trees. Today we honor all trees and celebrate this day to raise awareness of nature conservation and ecology. Here, we experience the deepest winter weather but in Israel, the almond trees are already in full bloom. A holiday custom is that the children plant tree seedlings. Our Tu BiShvat Seder offers us an opportunity to taste and eat various fruits, nuts and seeds, reminiscent of Israel, to donate money for tree plantings and address issues of environmental protection.



We look forward to our Tu-BiShvat Seder, which we will celebrate on Friday, the 26th of January, following the Kabbalah-Shabbat service with our Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg. “Seder” is a Hebrew word meaning “order.” Similar to Passover, we will follow a fixed ritual of text readings, songs and symbolic food. We will eat different kinds of fruits, seeds and nuts, drink four glasses of wine and celebrate the awakening of nature anew.

International Holocaust Memorial Day

On January 27, 1945, Red Army soldiers released the survivors of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, the largest extermination camp of the Nazi regime. An international day of remembrance was introduced by proclamation by the German Chancellor Roman Herzog in 1996 and set annually on January 27th.

This year, the Schiller-Gymnasium will open an exhibition, "Children of Auschwitz". The opening will take place on January 28 at 5:00 pm in the auditorium of the high school.

Rabbinic Word

In our Mishnah course on Friday evenings we are reading the “The Ethics of the Fathers,” and we encountered a peculiar statement of the famous scholar Hillel (1st century BCE):

If I'm not for myself, who will be for me?

If I'm just for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?

This triad of concise questions is about the relationship of the individual to society. Nobody will argue for me and my interests if I do not do it myself. I am responsible for my life and should not rely on others when designing it. At the same time, it is not my autonomous search for meaning that gives my life fulfillment, but only what I focus on beyond myself. When I can experience myself as part of a community, that extends my ego. It's not that I give myself up and my only aspiration is to please others. Rather, I get an answer in my search for confirmation by experiencing limits. It is my fellow man who redeems me from loneliness and testifies that my life has meaning. Calendar events like the New Year invite us to look back and make course corrections. And then Hillel tells us, “When, if not now?”

I wish all members and companions of our community that the year 2019 be blessed with health, security and peace.

—Your rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

New Year's reception

The congregation welcomes the New Year 2019 with a community celebration on Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at 4:00 pm.

Many members are involved in the preparation, which makes us very happy. We thank all who contribute to the celebration of the beginning of the New Year. There is a colorful entertainment program and plentifully set tables, so you will go home satisfied in every way. Come and celebrate with us. There will be a wonderful evening with lots of good music, good food and good entertainment.

Annual General Meeting in February

The annual general meeting will take place on February 3, 2019. Unfortunately, after many years of excellent work on the synagogue board, Polina Pelts has resigned from her post as the vice president of the community for health reasons. Consider running for office. Please send your questions and suggestions in writing by January 25, 2019, either directly to the chairperson or to the office.

Get well wishes

We wish all members and friends of our community who are ill at home, in the hospital or in care facilities, a complete recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Donations — Zedakah

We sincerely thank the members and friends who have supported our congregational life and synagogue building with donations. Thank you, we say to: Mrs. Schwigon, Mrs. Zischkale-Henßen (Education Center Ith), Dr. Mrs. Loewe, Mrs. Niedert and Mrs. Dohme.

Donations can be earmarked for the rabbi, children's group, building fund or general fund. Donations can be made by check or PayPal online. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Tree of Life — Etz Chaim

It is possible to commemorate by commission of a new leaf for our Tree of Life, special occasions, e.g. Birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, wedding, thanks, Yahrzeit, memories or honors, and in this way also donate to the synagogue fund. Forms are in the office or online. Many Thanks!

Thank you — Todah Rabah

We thank the “Klezmer Tunes” and the Central Council of Jews for our Hannukah concert as well as Faina Pelts for the organization.

We thank all those who help us to make our festivals and many cultural events so beautiful. There are a number of regular activities that are volunteered by members and benefit so many members. We thank everyone and appreciate their commitment.

Farewell to Borys Uchitel

After a serious illness, our beloved member, Borys Uchitel, died. Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg as well as Aron Kaplan, Valery Bogachik and Arkady Ziriyanov gave eulogies in honor of Borys. They spoke of his courage, his kindness and his dedication to the congregation. He was an active member of the choir, Chewra Kadisha, and every time help was needed, he was there. Within a short time, he managed to win the love and respect of us all. We are indebted to him for the publication of the history of our congregation, in honor of our twentieth anniversary in 2017. Granddaughter Masha, who had come from Odessa to say goodbye to her grandfather, thanked the community for their support and attention. She brought the funeral urn to her home, where Borys was buried in the cemetery next to his wife.

We will keep the memory of this wonderful man, Borys Uchitel, alive in our memories.

Condolence

We express our deep condolences to Eva, Olga, Sascha and Stella Gerr on the death of their husband, father and grandfather, Michael Gerr. He died December 12th after a long and serious illness. Olga Gerr and her family would like to thank everyone who supported them during this difficult time:

“Dear members of our community, dear friends! On behalf of our entire family, I would like to thank everyone for the sympathy and empathy we felt during these difficult days. Without your support to cope with our loss, it would be even harder. Many Thanks! God give you all health and a long life. —In love, Olga Gerr”

Olga and her sister carried the urn home to Kiev, where it was buried. We will keep the memory of Michael Gerr in our hearts. Our thoughts are with the grieving family.

Sadly, at the year's end, we also lost Mr. Genrikh and Mrs. Nechama Jeger. These two quiet people spent their lives together, married 60 years. Until his death, Mr. Jeger was working on a new volume of poems. As they shared their lives, so they shared their deaths. The funeral will take place in January. We will hold them in our memories.

Yahrzeit in January

Chaja-Rahel Kruchkovitch 29. 01. 2003 / 26. Shevat 5763
Larissa Shapiro 4. 01. 2013 / 22. Tewet 5773

May the memory of the dead be a blessing to us. Kadish is spoken during the Erev and Shabbat services with the family members. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office.



Shalom!

Your board

Program for January 2019 • Tevet–Shvat 5779

Office hours: Monday–Friday: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 8	3:00 p.m.	Monthly board meeting
	4:00 p.m.	New Year's reception, €10,00 per person
Thursday, January 10	11:00 a.m.	Informational Meeting for Russian citizens
Friday, January 12	2:00 p.m.	Bar/Bat Mitzvah class
	4:00 p.m.	Giyur class
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services followed by Oneg Shabbat
	8:00 p.m.	Mishnah study
Saturday, January 13	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services, Kiddush and Torah study
	1:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah I
	2:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah II
Friday, January 26	5.30 p.m.	Friday night services, Kiddush and Tu BiShvat Seder
Saturday, January 27	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services, Kiddush and Torah study
	1:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah I
	2:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah II
Thursday, January 31	11:00 a.m.	Emissary from the Russian Consulate, Hamburg
Outside the community		
Monday, January 28	5:00 p.m.	International Holocaust Memorial Day Exhibit opening: "The Children of Auschwitz" Auditorium, Schiller Gymnasium, Hameln

[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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