



We wish all members, friends and supporters a healthy and happy 2023!

Rabbinic word

During these past weeks we read the last chapters of the first book of Moses/Genesis in the Torah and begin the second book of Moses/Exodus. It is the transition from the family history of the house of Jacob to the national history of the people of Israel. Shortly before his death, Jacob summons his twelve sons to bid them farewell and to bless them. Joseph comes with his sons Menasheh and Ephraim, receives his blessing — and Jacob symbolically adopts the grandchildren as his own sons. But afterwards it says: “Israel [=Jacob] saw the sons of Joseph and said: Who are these?” (Gen 46:8).



That’s strange: Jacob just adopted them as his own children, and now this foreignness! Why doesn’t he recognize them? Of course, they didn’t grow up near their grandfather, but at the Pharaoh’s court while Joseph was still living in Canaan. Later, he settled with the rest of the family in the Egyptian provinces. They will very rarely, if ever, have met. Suddenly Jacob sees these teenagers, in fine Egyptian court clothes, probably also with the beard and hair style of the latest fashion. They stand face to face with this old man who has been a herdsman and nomad all his life. Their worlds couldn’t be further apart. Do they even speak the same language or do they need an interpreter to communicate? But Jacob “kissed them and embraced them” (Gen 46:10). Despite all outward differences, he recognized them as his own.

This scene of acceptance and blessing became the starting point for a ritual that is still practiced today. Before the start of Shabbat and holidays, Jewish parents bless their children, even if they are teenagers or adults. They lay hands on them and say to the children: “May God make you like Ephraim and Menasheh.” “May God make you like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah.” Then the priestly blessing “The Eternal bless you and protect you...” is recited and perhaps special personal blessings are said.

What are we actually doing when we bless our children like this? What expectations do we give them? Should they really become like these biblical examples? As parents, can we determine who they want to become? No, they choose their own way of life, but with this we place them in a millennia-old tradition of the people of Israel. The ritual of the weekly blessing — if necessary also by telephone, e-mail or messenger — maintains closeness, even if our own children sometimes seem strange to us and live in a world far away from us. The blessing is good for the children, but also strengthens the ability in parents to relate to them and to be able to accept them for who they are. And as an additional wish, I like the blessing formulated by the American poet Marcia Falk:

“Be who or what you want to be. And be blessed in who or what you choose to be.”

With all good blessings for 2023
–Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Review of the month of December

Hanukkah celebration

We celebrated the kindling of the first light of Hanukkah with a big feast. Candle lighting, Sand Artist, Latkes and Sufganiyot in abundance! The children received Hanukkah gift bags from Rabbi Ulrike.

Members joined Rabbi Offenberg in lighting the candles on five Hanukkiot. Afterwards we enjoyed a special Hanukkah presentation. Natalia Moro, who was born in Odessa and now lives in Düsseldorf, created the Hanukkah story with sand on a glass table. These artistically drawn live images were projected via camera. It was ever changing and kept everyone glued to their seats. She also created the story of “Chagall and Bella,” with motifs by Marc Chagall. We thank the Central Council of Jews for supporting this performance.



Annual meeting of the interreligious women's meeting

The final meeting of women of different religions took place on December 1st in a warm and friendly atmosphere. The results of the year 2022 were summarized, which took place in the Evangelical Reformed Church, in the mosque in Hunoldstraße and in the synagogue. Women of different religious backgrounds shared their rituals, holidays, food, clothing and traditions. We continue to reach out and to nurture understanding, be it with teaching school classes or groups like these.

Jewish January

New Year's Concert, January 8th

Join your friends and neighbors for a New Year's Concert in our synagogue. Soprano Kristine Gordadze and pianist Sergej Kolmanovskj will perform "Songs from around the World."

New Year Get Together, January 15th

Everyone is invited to a light Brunch a week later. Please register in the office by January 10th.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

January 27th has been observed as a nationwide day of remembrance since 1996. On this day in 1945, Red Army soldiers liberated the last survivors of the Auschwitz Birkenau concentration camp, the Nazi regimes largest death camp. The United Nations has since declared this day International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On January 27, various state events will commemorate the murdered of our People.

Informational events

We invite all community members to the information event with social worker, Margarita Suslovich on Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. in the synagogue.

Board member Eva Shkolnikova is offering an information session on vaccinations on Friday, January 13 at 4:00 p.m. (before the Shabbat service). She will explain which vaccinations (Covid, pneumonia, flu) are generally recommended and why.

ZWST Senior Camp in Bad Kissingen

In 2023 there will also be the opportunity to take part in a ZWST camp for seniors. The annual dates and program can be viewed in the office so please inform yourself and register.

Please note: Our synagogue has no influence on the decision as to who may participate. This lies solely with the ZWST.

Get well soon

Who blessed our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and our mothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, may also send blessings and healing to all our sick. May they be blessed with patience and strength of heart, and may they be granted full recovery in body and spirit.



Donations – Zedakah

We sincerely thank the members and friends who have supported our community life and the upkeep of the synagogue with donations. We thank: Ms. Hölcher (IGS, 11th grade), Mr. Reinhard Hampel, Ms. Olga Gerr and the Dohme family. Special thanks to the Hameln-Pyrmont County Board for the annual support.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

Yahrzeit in January

Chaja-Rahel Kruchkovitch January 29, 2003 / 26 Shvat 5763
Larissa Shapiro January 4, 2013 / 22 Tevet 5773
Suya Varshavska January 13, 2021 / 29 Tevet 5781



May their memory be a blessing to us. Kaddish is spoken with family members during services. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office.

Please don't forget to pay your membership fees. We also remind members of the Circle of Friends to transfer their contribution. Thank you very much!

Shalom,
Your synagogue board

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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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Program for January 2023 • Tevet–Shvat 5783

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, January 4	6:00 p.m.	Weekly Shiur “Wajechi,” via Zoom
Sunday, January 8	3:00 p.m.	New Year's Concert
Wednesday, January 11	11:00 a.m.	Information New social legislation regulations, Speaker: Margarita Suslovich
	6:00 p.m.	Weekly Schiur “Schemot,” via Zoom
Friday, January 13	4:00 p.m.	Info: “Vaccinations” Speaker: Eva Shkolnikova
	5:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Saturday, January 14	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
	1:00 p.m.	Children's Kehillah
Sunday, January 15	1:00 p.m.	Seniors' New Year Brunch
Wednesday, January 18	6:00 p.m.	Weekly Shiur “Wa’era,” via Zoom
Wednesday, January 25	6:00 p.m.	Weekly Schiur “Bo,” via Zoom
Friday, January 27	5:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Saturday, January 28	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
	1:00 p.m.	The children's kehillah is going to Berlin!
Outside the community		
Thursday, January 19	6:00 p.m.	Digital Bible Dialogue, Encounter Christians and Jews, Pastor Prof. Dr. Ursula Rudnick and Rabbi Offenberg. The Fifth Book of Moses, Deuteronomy/Devarim