



Dear members of the community, friends and supporters,

We look forward to an active and eventful year. Realistically, it depends to a great degree on our finances. We would like to remind and request that all congregation members and friends pay their membership fees. We work as modestly as we can but depend on your support to continue our important work and activities. Special thanks to everyone who has already paid their membership fee and especially those who topped it off with an extra donation. Thank you.



In January members celebrated the beginning of the New Year together in our synagogue, congratulating each other with wishes for good health and happiness in 2019. Faina Pelts welcomed and congratulated everyone present on behalf of the synagogue board. The evening was filled with wonderful music. The plentitude of culinary delights pleased body and soul. Russian and Ukrainian music, dancing and nice conversation brightened the evening's sundown. Teamwork brings people closer together, so we would like to thank everyone who participated in the organization of this event.

Our annual Tu BiSchwat Seder was especially lovely. Outside, the wind whistled and a light dusting of snow could be seen through the synagogue windows. We thank once again the artistic abilities of Liubow, who created a long and festive table, which resembled a spring meadow. Together, we enjoyed the 15 types of fruit described in the Seder and drank the four glasses of wine or juice, all symbolic of the awakening of the earth from its hibernation. Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg guided us through the Seder. The mood was cheerful, we enjoyed celebrating the holiday together as it should be.

An important event was the visit of the Russian emissary in January. We open our doors and offer special services for people of Russian origin in Hamelin—even those who are not members of our community. Questions and advice are in the foreground and important information is shared. All this helps people with a Russian passport and affords people unfamiliar with our building to see who we are.

On January 27, 1945, the Red Army liberated Auschwitz concentration camp. This international memorial day for honoring the victims of the Shoah is vital for us, as is Yom HaShoah, the 9th of May and the 9th of November. In cooperation with the city of Hamelin, an exhibition opened entitled “The Children of Auschwitz” in the auditorium of the Schiller-Gymnasium with its author, Alwin Meyer. We, the Jewish community of Hamelin, say loud and clear: we will remember this date, we will remind, and we call to actively oppose any form of antisemitism and Holocaust denials.

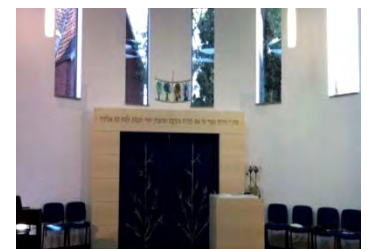
Jewish life in February

Annual General Meeting in February

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on February 3, 2019. It is necessary to hold an election for vice-president. Our beloved vice-president of 22 years, Polina Pelts, has stepped down due to health problems. If you are unable to attend, please give a power of attorney to a voting member so that your vote can be counted.

It's our 22nd birthday!

February 17, 1997 was the day on which Judaism in Hamelin was reborn. With this momentous and courageous act, Judaism—Reform Judaism—was once again visible and viable alongside the other faith communities in Hamelin. In view of the traumatic history of the Jews in Hamelin, that itself was a miracle. Our congregation, which includes all age groups, from seniors to newborns, today has more than 200 members, and the community itself is an active element of the Hamelin religious and cultural landscape.



We will celebrate this historical day on the 17th of February for the 22nd time. Making this day particularly poignant, we as a congregation, would like to honor our vice-president, Mrs. Polina Pelts. Polina emigrated from Odessa to Germany with her family 25 years ago and from the beginning stood side by side with Rachel Dohme helping to bring Judaism to her fellow immigrants. With the establishment of a “Jewish Group” and then a congregation, she was and is the heart of our community. Polina was always helpful, polite, and tactful, offering wise advice to all in need. Unfortunately, due to her severe illness she is unable to continue her work. We would like to thank Polina for her commitment and long-term community work. Without her dedication to Judaism, our congregation would not be where it is today.



Furthermore, we would like to honor Mr. Hans-Georg Spangenberg. We have been blessed with this man's support. Mr. Spangenberg was the deacon of the Catholic Church in Hamelin. Our first rooms in the St. Elisabeth church were provided by Mr. Spangenberg. In cooperation with the Christian-Jewish Society, of which he was vice-president, he offered countless cooperative activities with us. There were lectures on Chagall, outings to other cities in Germany with a Jewish history, and help in establishing our synagogue Foundation. This joint work has enriched our congregational life in many ways. With a tear and a smile, we have to say goodbye to Mr. Spangenberg, because he and his wife have moved to be with their children, near Frankfurt. We will miss him but wish him all the best and that he will be a frequent visitor.

Study Group

After each service on Shabbat morning we enjoy a shiur (a common study hour) based on the weekly Torah reading. It is open to all members of the congregation, regardless of their participation in the previous service. There are always lively conversations and discussions with unexpected insights, for which questions and stories from the Bible and the Talmud form the starting point. In the future we want to expand our circle and devote the Shiur once a month to a specific topic in order to address members who have not yet experienced a session. At 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 2, Rabbi Offenbergl will present the famous story "The Furnace of Achnai" from the Talmud, which deals with miracles, passionate quarrels and God's laughter. All are cordially invited!

Women of the Wall — What is this about?

Initiated some thirty years ago, there has been a women's group in Israel that meets monthly at the Jerusalem Wailing Wall (Kotel) to hold a service. But from the beginning they met with fierce resistance: ultra-Orthodox insults and curses. Some of these men also used violence to prevent women from praying and singing there, from wearing a tallit and from reading from the Torah. But who is allowed to determine who may pray at the Kotel and above all: how? The battles over it seem strange to us, but they are the heart of the inner Israeli struggle for pluralism, religion and democracy, directly in confrontation with the relationship between the state of Israel and the Jewish community in the Diaspora.

Rabbi Offenbergl was and is very committed to the "Women of the Wall" and will introduce us to this topic with the help of her own photos. Members of the community and the Circle of Friends as well as the general public are cordially invited to the lecture and conversation with Rabbi Offenbergl on Saturday, 16 February 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the synagogue.



Rabbinic word

We live in a time when it is sometimes difficult for politically interested people to follow the news; dull pessimism seems to be everywhere and taking hold. Although we live in one of the richest countries in the world and are blessed with a long period of peace, there is great uncertainty. The Internet and social media flood us with messages, and the cacophony is so great that it is hard to tell what is fact and what is manipulation. What should we orient ourselves to?

It is not surprising that simple explanations of the world are well received. Complex processes in the world are reduced to short answers and policy is reduced to tweets with a maximum of 280 characters (that's about the size of these two sentences). Security seems to be guaranteed only by isolation, by a retreat to religious or ethnic identities, by adherence to national sovereignty rather than international cooperation, by delineation according to the question "We or them?" World views narrow to tunnel vision and perceives reality as seemingly without alternative.

But our world is not black and white, and we should not let ourselves be kidnapped by such threat scenarios. Judaism is based on the experience of liberation from bondage and the beginning of responsible freedom. Judaism is a religion and a culture of hope, not in the sense of idle waiting, but hope as a way of life, because this is the only way to tackle difficult times and find alternatives.

The Ukrainian-Jewish poet Saul Tchernichovsky (1875–1943) experienced no less gloomy times during his life. He was a physician in Kharkov and Kiev during the First World War and a military doctor in Minsk and Saint Petersburg. Still he published his poems written in Hebrew in Odessa and immigrated to Israel in 1931. There he continued to work as a school physician; but above all he became one of the most important Hebrew national poets. I know of no Israeli city without a Tchernichovsky Street and his likeness adorns the 50-shekel bill. In his poem "Just laugh," which begins our Sabbath-morning liturgy, it says:



Just laugh, because I believe in people.
My soul still strives for freedom;
I have not sold myself to the Golden Calf.
I still believe in mankind,
In its soul and its strong intellect.
I also believe in the future,
No matter how far away it is, the day will come,
When all will strive for peace,
and one nation will bless the other.

May these words of hope encourage us when everything seems desperate and hopeless.

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Judaism 101

Beginning in 1997 in our first rented rooms, our synagogue has offered school classes, church groups and other institutions, and an introduction to Judaism, taught by Rachel Dohme. Many representatives of other religions and organizations as well as school children of the city of Hamelin visit the synagogue to familiarize themselves with the teachings of the Jewish religion. We are pleased that our community is of such great interest. This contributes to a closer acquaintance and the elimination of prejudices and is one of the ways to combat anti-Semitism. Here is a response from one such lesson with Dr. Anja Schmidt's 11th grade:

“Dear Mrs. Dohme,

Thank you for taking the time to teach our students, presenting your synagogue and Judaism to them on an informative and personal level. This is a very valuable addition to their lessons.”

Get well — Refuah Shlamah

We wish all our members who are currently experiencing illness a speedy and complete recovery. As we recite the prayer “Mi Scheberach” at services, our prayers and thoughts are with them. Remember, visiting the ill is a Mitzvah!

Donations — Zedakah

We sincerely thank the members and friends who have supported our synagogue with generous donations. We would like to thank Wolfgang Schultner, Erika Frederking, Sabine Demuth, Uwe Wolandowitsch, Karl-Heinz Hesse, Ute Gibas, Wolfgang Albat, Emma and Wlad Lebedynskyi, Ursula Niedert, Olga Gerr, Doris and Werner Taube, Mrs. Dr. Anja Schmidt with the 11th grade of the Elisabeth-Selbert-Schule Hameln, Mrs. Zischkale-Henßen with two groups from the Bildungszentrum Ith, Mrs. Klein with her Confirmation class, the Mima family and Mrs. Rachel Dohme.

We thank Mrs. Nani and Mr. Austin Beutel, Canada for their most generous donation.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Thank you — Todah Rabah

We thank all those who always help to make our festivals and many cultural events so beautiful. There are so many regular groups, volunteered by members for members that benefit so many. We thank everyone and appreciate their commitment.



Tree of Life — Etz Chaim

It's cold outside and the trees are bare. But in our synagogue it is light and warm and our tree has room for many more leaves. By ordering a new “leaf,” you can commemorate special occasions, e.g., Birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, wedding, thanks, Yahrzeit, memories or honors and thus also make a synagogue donation. Forms are in the office. Many Thanks!

Deepest Sympathy

We express our deep condolences to the relatives and friends of our dear friend, Mr. Adolf Späth. Adolf Späth was a longtime and faithful member of the Circle of Friends of our community. He will not be forgotten.

Yahrzeit in February

Anna Raik	12/2/2000 / 6. Adar I 5760
Vladimir Legkov	7/2/2003 / 6. Adar I 5763
David Saks	6/2/2008 / 30. Shvat 5768
Michael Lazer	5/2/2012 / 12. Shvat 5772

May the memory of our loved ones be a blessing to us. Kaddish is spoken with family members during Shabbat services. Yahrzeit candles are available in the community office.



**Shalom,
Your Synagogue Board**

Program for February 2019 • Shevat–Adar I 5779

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

Friday, February 1	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, Pirke Avot
Saturday, February 2	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services, Kiddush and Talmud study
	1:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah I
	2:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah II
Sunday, February 3	3:00 p.m.	Annual Membership meeting
Monday, February 4	7:00 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews Film and discussion: “The Last Step” Biography of Theologian and Resistance Fighter Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Friday, February 15	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, Pirke Avot
Saturday, February 16	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services, Kiddush and Torah study
	1:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah I
	2:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah II
	6:00 p.m.	“Women of the Wall” — Fighting for Equal Rights at the Kotel, photo presentation and discussion with Rabbi Offenberg
Sunday, February 17	4:00 p.m.	Our Congregation’s 22 nd Birthday, honoring Polina Pelts and Hans- Georg Spangenberg
Thursday, February 28	3:00– 6:00 p.m.	In cooperation with Professor Dr. Ursula Rudnick, Hannover, “What do Jewish communities want churches to do to help against anti-Semitism”
Outside the community		
Sunday, February 10	10:00 a.m.	State Board of Jewish Congregations, Annual Membership Meeting, Hannover

[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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