



## Dear members, friends and supporters,

“Happy are those who live in your house” — This line from Psalm 84:5 is said several times a day in our prayers, and of course it refers to the “House of God,” the Jerusalem Temple before its destruction. But in the two thousand years since the Temple’s destruction, Jews have not ceased from reciting this verse. Why? Which house is meant? On the one hand, this longing expresses our need for protection



— there are so many areas of our life over which we have no control. Disasters, illnesses and death befall us without our being able to do much to prevent them. We have a deep desire to be in a place where we are safe from all these painful experiences. To be near God was a literal thought associated with the Temple in Jerusalem. But even then it was a wishful thinking, a projection onto this specific place, a cry to be freed from the uncertainty of existence. And so we keep searching — for places and times where we can be free from all our worries. In religious language this longing is called “Ge’ulah” (salvation or redemption); in secular language we would express it as “security” and “freedom from suffering.”

But where can we find this, especially in times of a pandemic, where a virus threatens our health and our very existence like an invisible enemy? The Israeli songwriter and musician Idan Raichel (born 1977) sings about the security of one’s own four walls.

### “In My Four Walls” by Idan Raichel

Here between all the walls of my house  
Everything is closed  
And nobody bothers me  
The silence of the walls of my house is not penetrated by any sound  
There is no stumbling stone here between the corners of my house  
On the paths of the rooms  
There is no scorching sun  
And no darkening shadow.

### עידן רייכל: בין קירות ביתי

כאן בין כל קירות ביתי  
הכול סגור  
ואין איש מפריע  
אל מול שתיקת קירות ביתי ואין רחש שייכנס  
כאן בין כל הקצוות ביתי אין כל מכשול  
בכל שבילי החדר  
אין שמש שישרוף  
ואין גם צל אשר יחשיך

The image of the protective four walls that the singer creates here is tempting. It describes a place where everything finally seems to be under our control! The song seems like a modern version of the line from the psalm “happy are those who live in your house.” Of course, we know that we cannot seal ourselves off in our apartments, making them into a bunker; the idea of absolute security is an illusion. We are social beings and we need to interact with our environment, especially with other people. The lack of it is what makes us suffer during this necessary lockdown! Still, we understand that our home is actually the safest place at the moment. To add to existing in the middle of the pandemic, more contagious variants of the SarsCov2 virus are trying to spread and vaccination has only just begun. I would therefore like to ask all of you to truly appreciate your homes as the place that affords the most control and protection. And as soon as you have the opportunity to be vaccinated, please do so. All of these measures are not only about protecting your own life, but also the lives of others. Whether we appeal to God or to secular-humanistic values: the “Holiness of Life” is a central concept for all of us. We want to try to stay healthy and to take care of each other.

With best regards and Shalom — Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

### Holocaust Remembrance Day

On January 27, 1945, the Auschwitz concentration camp was liberated by the Red Army. This day is marked by gratitude for the end of so much suffering, but also with deep grieving for the unimaginable horror, revealed by the survivors. We, the Jewish Congregation of Hamelin, will always remember this date, which reminds and urges us to fight against those whom, in whatever form, deny the Holocaust and embrace fascist ideology.



## Tu BiShwat

Unfortunately, we couldn't celebrate our beloved Tu-BiShwat-Seder this year due to the Corona Pandemic. This holiday makes us feel like we are approaching spring when the first buds, blossoms and the first fruits appear. In the middle of winter we are full of optimism and hope for what is to come. We are in awe of Nature and all that God created for us. Like the branches of trees, we stretch towards the sky, looking for connection and meaning. Our life should bear fruit. We long to bring about something good in our life, our actions should reach fruition. We hope that we will celebrate this beautiful festival in our synagogue next year and sit once again around the table together.

## Jewish February

### Online offers via ZOOM

At this time when we have to forego personal encounters, we still want to see each other. That's why we use ZOOM to stay in touch with each other. If you have problems installing ZOOM on your Smartphone, Tablet or computer, we will help. In order to send information and invitations to our digital community events by e-mail, we need your current e-mail address. We will therefore call you in the coming days.

Every Wednesday at 6 p.m. Rabbi Offenberg offers a study lesson on the Torah reading of the week. Usually there are over 40 participants. On Fridays at 5:30 p.m. we celebrate Kabbalath Shabbat together. We light our Sabbath candles, sing Shabbat melodies and share a poem, song, story or work of art that a member introduces to us as a group. All languages are welcome. In the past few weeks we have discovered very interesting texts, writers and poets that were unknown to many of us. It's an opportunity to share the richness of our languages and cultures with one another. Join in too; all you have to do is click on the link in the invitation email.

Meetings on other topics are also possible; we look forward to your ideas and suggestions. We can do so much together despite Corona!



## Purim

Our congregation will celebrate the Purim festival on February 26 at 5.30 p.m. with Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg via Zoom. Olga Gerr and her helpers will prepare Purim bags with many delicious and lovely surprises, and our BFD staff and Mr. Moos will help distribute them with this newsletter. It would help us out if you can pick up your bag or help with distribution.

## Our congregation's 24th birthday and our synagogue's 10th anniversary

In February 1997 our congregation was founded. For the first time since the Shoah, a Jewish community was re-established in Hamelin. Today, our congregation is present in the religious, cultural and social landscape of our city. Over the past 24 years, with patience, respect and a true and abiding love of Judaism, we have succeeded in firmly re-establishing Reform Jewish life. The Jewish community of Hamelin thanks everyone who contributed to its establishment and development for their solidarity. Our congregation and our synagogue was a vital piece of Hamelin. Still, we longed for our own house—Beitenu.

The years of hard work by a group of Jews and non-Jews bore fruit. In February 2011 we were able to dedicate our newly constructed and beautiful synagogue, built upon the same ground where the 1879 Synagogue had stood until its brutal destruction on November 9–10, 1938. It was as if the "Finger of God" willed it so. In this first decade we have filled our walls with Jewish life. We have enjoyed wonderful services, lectures and concerts and opened our doors to guests. We have hosted exhibitions, taught Judaism and fought against antisemitism through guided tours for school classes and adult church groups. The Hamelin synagogue has become a living Jewish center and a meeting place for interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

Please join us on Zoom to mark these two significant events on Friday, February 12, during our weekly Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg. All we need is your email address.



### Get well soon — Refuah Shlema

We wish all members who are ill at home or in the hospital a quick and complete recovery. Our thoughts and hearts are with you. We strive to keep in touch, but please don't hesitate to call the office if you need any assistance or are feeling lonely.

### Thank you — Todah Rabbah

We thank everyone who supports our community life with donations. This month we would like to highlight the Taube family, Dr. Brigitte Lowe, the Ovsievyeh family, Mrs. Heidi Braun, Frau Feana Engler, Ms. Niedert, Ms. Gibas, the Kaplan family, the Dvortsis family and the Dohme family. We would particularly like to pay tribute to the Ovsievyeh family who donate monthly to the congregation. We also acknowledge Mrs. Heidi Braun for her generous donation. A special Todah Rabah to Nani and Austin Beutel for their most generous contribution.

May all donors be blessed for their gifts!

### Membership fees

We would like to thank all members who have already paid their 2021 membership fees and ask everyone who has not yet done so to do so as soon as possible.

### Tree of Life

You can dedicate a new "leaf" on our Tree of Life to commemorate special occasions: a birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, wedding, thanks, Yahrzeits or honors. In this way, a lasting memory of these events is preserved and the maintenance of the synagogue is also supported with your donation. You can order a leaf through the our office. Many Thanks!



New orders were:

Kaplan family: In memory of S. Varschavska

Dohme family: Suja Varschavska — We love you!

Mrs. Feana Engler: In memory of S. Varschavska with love, Feana



### Condolences

It is with deep sorrow to have lost one of our founding members, Dr. Suja Varschavska. Suja was highly respected and deeply loved in our congregation. We remember well how happy she was when we celebrated her 90th birthday in the synagogue five years ago. During Shabbat on services, we all shared stories about her.

On January 19th we buried Suja next to her beloved husband, Samson. Rabbi Offenbergl led the funeral service. It was a testimony to Suja's memory that so many members were in attendance, showering her memory in love and respect.

### February Yahrzeit

Anna Raik	February 12, 2000 / 6th Adar I 5760
Vladimir Legkov	February 7, 2003 / 6th Adar I 5763
David Zaks	February 3, 2008 / 27th Shvat 5768
Michael Lazer	February 5, 2012 / 12th Schwat 5772
Adel Gurevich	February 4, 2019 / 30th Schwat 5779



May the memory of our deceased be a blessing to us. Kaddish is spoken with family members during services. Yahrzeit candles are available in our office for a small price.

Shalom,  
Your board

## Program for February 2021 • Shevat–Adar 5781

The synagogue will be closed until February 14, 2021

Wednesday, 2/3	6:00 pm	Weekly Parashah study with Rabbi Ulrike, “Yitro” on ZOOM
Friday, 2/5	5:30 pm	Friday night services with Rabbi Ulrike on ZOOM. Have wine and bread ready for Kiddush!
Sunday, 2/7		AGM is cancelled due to the Lockdown. A new date will be set and we will inform everyone in a timely manner.
Wednesday, 2/10	6:00 pm	Weekly Parashah study with Rabbi Ulrike “Mishpatim” on ZOOM
Friday, 2/12	5:30 pm	Friday night services honoring our 24th anniversary and 10th year in our new synagogue with Rabbi Ulrike on ZOOM. Have wine and bread ready for Kiddush!
Saturday, 2/13	6:00 pm	Religious school on ZOOM
Wednesday, 2/17	6:00 pm	Weekly Parashah study with Rabbi Ulrike, “Terumah” on ZOOM
Friday, 2/19	5:30 pm	Friday night services with Rabbi Ulrike on ZOOM. Have wine and bread ready for Kiddush! Wednesday, 2/24 6:00 pm Weekly Parashah study with Rabbi Ulrike “Tezaveh” on ZOOM
Wednesday, 2/24	6:00 pm	Weekly Parashah study with Rabbi Ulrike, “Yitro” on ZOOM
Friday, 2/26	5:30 pm	Friday night services, Purim celebration, with Rabbi Ulrike on ZOOM
Saturday, 2/27	6.00 pm	Religious school on ZOOM

### [Newsletter Archive](#)

### **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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