



Dear community members, friends and supporters!

Rabbinic word

משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה — “Joy is increased for all who enter the month of Adar!” The Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Ta’anit 29a) tells us to be joyful at the beginning of the month of Adar. We should enter this month with a light heart and wrestle ourselves into a positive mood even if we may not feel like it at all. This year 5782 even has a double Adar — the First Adar and the Second Adar — because we are in a leap year. Because the months of the Jewish year follow the lunar cycle, they last from the new moon to the new moon, they have a duration of 29 or 30 days. Such a lunar year has 354 days, a difference of eleven days to the solar year with its 365 days. That is why, on average, an additional day is added every three years to even out the differences and insure that the spring festival of Passover does not move into winter, autumn or summer at some point. This extra month is the first of Adar (Adar Rishon), which is almost congruent with February (starting on February 3/4).



So does that mean that we are supposed to be happy for two months? That's a real challenge, because the world around us doesn't look good at all: Ukraine is threatened with war, in Germany we haven't even reached the peak of the omicron wave, and the hostage-taking in the Beth Israel synagogue during of the Shabbat service on January 15 in Colleyville, Texas adds the specific threat of anti-Semitism to our fears on a political and societal level. It is very easy to be depressed, especially when the general gloom is compounded by personal worries: illness, family grief and other personal afflictions. So how can we manage to achieve an optimistic mood?

Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav (1772–1810) was the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism in the 18th century, and with his own profound teachings, became the *starting point* of the Bratzlav Hasidim. He was preoccupied with sadness and despair, in retrospect, thought to have suffered from depression. Cheerfulness and lightness were by no means a matter of course for him, and perhaps that's why he emphasized:

“It is a great commandment to always be joyful and to push away sadness and bitterness with all one’s strength. It is human nature to be drawn to such emotions because of the pain that time inflicts. Every human being is full of suffering, so one must force oneself with great strength to always find joy. One must set aside a certain hour in the day to pour out one's heart before God, the Blessed One, but the rest of the day one should be joyful.”

It is important not to get lost in oppressive thoughts and fears. Rabbi Nachman suggests not to avoid them or deny them, but to give them space in a conversation with God. An overflowing heart needs a place to voice its sorrows. This spiritual strength has been our path as Jews for thousands of years. We have the strength to master the complex demands of life, as it grows out of hope. May we always remain hopeful.

Wishing you a month of joy and hope,
—Rabbi Ulrike Offenbergl

Review of the month of January

Due to the Corona-related cancellation of our religious services and community events since Hanukkah, the first reunion in January was a great joy. The first Kabbalat Shabbat service after such a long interruption was well attended. We try to meet the request for home visits as prudently as possible, while keeping the risk of infection low. With the current Omicron surge, we will continue to hold services in February for those fully vaccinated, but not yet offer communal Kiddush meals. We had to do without the Tu-BiShvat Seder in its usual form, but Olga Gerr and Lioubov Pesin had lovingly packed bags that the service participants could take home and to neighbors and friends. All the ingredients for an at home Tu Bishvat celebration were gifted; small bottles of white and red wine for the four glasses of wine, fruits and nuts, a small challah baked by Lioubov and a booklet with blessings and readings in Russian. Thank you Lioubov, Olga and Rabbi Ulrike!

Jewish life in February

JGH is 25!

The Shoah had destroyed religious Jewish life in Hamelin on November 9, 1938, but on February 18, 1997, the first Jewish community, our Jewish Congregation of Hamelin, was re-established. With this founding, the line of Jewish life in Hamelin was resumed. As the successor congregation, we reclaimed our place in the city's religious, cultural, and social landscape. A small group of Jewish people grew into a community with more than



200 members from seven nations. The diversity then and now is reflected in the age structure, which includes all age groups from seniors to newborns. Our beautiful new synagogue is a vital part of our members' lives, who are committed to Reform Judaism in the land of its birth. School classes, church groups and public lectures add to our cultural life. At the beginning of our history twenty-five years ago, people who were strangers, who came from different countries and cultures, met — today they have become one big family.

Preview of Passover

Due to Corona regulations, many of us have felt a great sadness at not being able to sit together for Pesach Seder. Pesach evening with the reading of the Haggadah, enriched with songs and biographical stories about our own exodus to freedom, the festive meal meant so much to us all. The synagogue board has weighed the pros and cons this year once again. Following the example of many other congregations, we have decided to offer two Seders, but we must limit sanctuary occupancy. Both evenings will be identical, and both will be led by Rabbi Offenberg. However, in order to be able to assess the need and carry out the logistical planning, we ask for your feedback on the following questions by the end of February :

- I would like to attend the First Seder, Friday, April 15, 2022, with ____ persons.
- I would like to attend the Second Seder, Saturday, April 16, 2022 with ____ persons.
- I would like to attend the Seder with ____ persons and have no preference for the first or second evening.

Thank you for your cooperation.



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 Nani and Austin Beutel for their most generous donation, Ioulia Berhovski, the Evangelical Reformed Church, the Ovsievitsch family for their monthly donation, Ute Niedert and the Dohme family. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

Get well soon

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

February Yahrzeits

Anna Raik	2.12.2000 / 6. Adar I 5760
Vladimir Legkov	2/07/2003 / 6. Adar I 5763
David Zaks	2/03/2008 / 27 Schwat 5768
Michael Lazer	2.5.2012 / 12th Schwat 5772
Adel Gurevich	2.4.2019 / 30th Schwat 5779

May the memory of our departed be a blessing to us. Kaddish is recited with family members during services. Yahrzeit candles are available at the synagogue office.



Shalom,
Your synagogue board

Program for February 2022 • Shvat–Adar 5782

Daily Office Hours: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 2	6:00 p.m.	Haftarah for the Torah chapter “Truma,” via Zoom
Monday, February 7	6:00 p.m.	“Chaim & Chaya.” Life cycle in Judaism and Islam with Rabbi Offenberg and Iman A.Reimann, via Zoom
Wednesday, February 9	6:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Haftarah for the Torah chapter “Tezawa,” via Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat
Saturday, February 12	10:00 a.m. 12:30 p.m.	Shacharit Children's group classes
Wednesday, February 16	18:00 p.m.	Haftarah to the Torah chapter “Ki Tissa,” via Zoom
Wednesday, February 23	6:00 p.m.	Haftarah to the Torah chapter “Schabbat Sch’kalim,” via Zoom
Friday, February 25	5:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Schabbat
Saturday, February 26	10:00 a.m. 12:30 p.m.	Shacharit Children's group classes

Activities outside the community

Thursday, February 3	6:00 p.m.	Journey through the Jewish year. Rabbi Offenberg talks about the Jewish calendar and the month of Adar I, in collaboration with the Christian and Jewish Encounter Group in Lower Saxony, via Zoom
Thursday, February 17	6:00 p.m.	Bible dialogue, Book of “Shemot” (Exodus), with Rabbi Offenberg and Dr. Katrin Grossmann, with the Christian and Jewish Encounter Group in Lower Saxony, via Zoom

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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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