



Dear community members, friends and supporters!

Rabbinic word

In the middle of winter, when it's still cold and gray outside, we celebrate Tu BiShvat, the New Year of the Trees. We gather for a special Seder, where we eat different fruit and nuts, drink four glasses of different colored wine or grape juice, and recite texts and sing songs about trees. Over the past few decades, this custom has evolved into an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with nature and the environment. Actually, every Shabbat is a reason to do so, because our weekly day of rest celebrates Creation and encourages us to care for our world. Due to the historical development of Diaspora Judaism, precisely as landless people, meant that the close connection with nature gradually distanced itself from the center of Jewish thought. Central to Jewish self-image were questions of ethics and human dignity, history and remembrance. And yet the daily news about the consequences of climate change, which are also being felt here in Germany in the form of drought, floods and dying forests, do not allow us to regard ecological issues as secondary.



I recently read an article (“The Other Climate Protection,” *Die Zeit*, December 22, 2022) that gave me a whole new perspective on the topic of carbon dioxide emissions, which sounds so technical. The structure of the atmosphere was explained there, the lowest layer of which, the troposphere, consisting of water vapor and gases, forms a protective shield around the earth. The gas molecules ensure that the heat radiated from the earth is contained and does not escape into space — otherwise we would have a life-destroying ice age on earth. Part of this protective gas mixture was always a small amount of carbon dioxide. But where did it come from? It originated from the exhalation of bacteria, animals and humans. The British environmental scientist James Lovelock therefore said: “We live in the breath of our ancestors.” Earlier generations are still present in this protective layer of the atmosphere that allows us to live. This proportion may not be measurable from a material point of view, but I like the idea that the people who are no longer with us are not just in our memories, but are actually present with their life breath. These tiny trace elements surround us, and we too contribute to the progress of life.

But what does that have to do with Tu BiShvat? The concentration of carbon dioxide in this protective layer of the atmosphere has increased because fossil fuels such as coal, gas and oil are burned to generate energy. This creates the greenhouse effect, which leads to a rise in temperature on earth. Apart from reducing these emissions, what helps to reduce these amounts? Trees! They absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. They are therefore an indispensable part of our life cycle. Without them, human life would not be possible. Dedicating a special holiday to the trees with Tu BiShvat is actually a life-affirming way to honor them. And for me, this resulted in the realization of how closely linked nature and history are and how together they form our Jewish life-breath.

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Review of the month of January

New Year reception

For many years, our congregation has marked the beginning of the new secular year with a New Year's celebration. This year, we enjoyed a concert with Kristina Gordadze (Potsdam) and Sergei Kolmanovsky (Hannover). A large part of the program “Songs of Different Nations” was dedicated to the 100th birthday of the composer Eduard Kolmanovsky. It was a “hamisch” event enjoyed by all. Mrs. Gordadze's radiant soprano voice and Sergei Kolmanovsky as accompanist complimented each other perfectly. Thanks to the organizers, especially the Friedman family, the Dvortsis family, Faina Pelts, Valerij Bogachyk and the musicians! Thank you to the community for financial support.

Information events

We were enriched with new useful information on the new social legislation in 2023 and on the prevention of corona and flu through two information events. We would like to thank presenters, Margarita Suslovich and our board member Eva Shkolnikova.

Jewish life in February

Tu BiShvat

On the occasion of the “New Year of the Trees” we will have a Tu BiShvat Seder on Friday, February 3, following our Kabbalat Shabbat service. This Jewish custom dates back to the 16th century. Texts, songs, wine, and eating fruit and nuts also symbolize our connection to the land of Israel, where the trees are beginning to blossom at this time.



Donations — Zedakah

We sincerely thank the members and friends who have supported our community life and the upkeep of the synagogue with donations. We say thank you: Mr. Reinhard Richard Hampel, Heide Braun, Sabine Demuth and Rachel Dohme. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

Get well soon

Who blessed our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and our mothers Sarah, Rebecca, 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.

February Yahrzeit

Anna Raik	February 12, 2000 / 6 Adar I 5760
Vladimir Legkov	February 7, 2003 / 6 Adar I 5763
David Zaks	February 3, 2008 / 27 Shvat 5768
Michael Lazer	February 5, 2012 / 12 Shvat 5772
Adel Gurevich	February 4, 2019 / 30 Shvat 5779
Janna Vainberg	February 13, 2022 / 1 Adar I 5782



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

Please remember to submit your synagogue or Circle of Friends membership dues!

**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 February 2023 • Shvat–Adar 5783

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

Please note! Faina Pelts is on vacation from 2/7 to 2/21/2023

Wednesday, February 1	6:00 p.m.	Shiur about the weekly portion “Beshallach,” via Zoom
Friday, February 3	5:00 p.m.	Kabbalath Shabbat, followed by Tu-BiShvat Seder
Saturday, February 4	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Wednesday, February 8	6:00 p.m.	Shiur about the weekly portion “Yitro,” via Zoom
Wednesday, February 15	6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly portion “Mishpatim,” via Zoom
Friday, February 17	5:00 p.m.	Kabbalath Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Saturday, February 18	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Shacharit Shabbat, followed by Kiddush Children's Kehillah
Wednesday, February 22	6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly portion “Trumah,” via Zoom
Wednesday, February 29	6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly portion “Tezaveh,” via Zoom

Outside the community

Thursday, February 16	6:00 p.m.	Digital Bible Dialogue sponsored by Christian and Jewish Encounter, Pastor Prof. Dr. Ursula Rudnick and Rabbi Dr Ulrike Offenberg speaking about the Fifth Book of Moses/ Deuteronomy/Devarim
Friday, February 17	8:35 p.m.	“Shabbat Shalom” NDR Info Radio, Hamelin VHF 99.9 MHz Torah sermon by Rabbi Offenberg. Recording available: www.ndr.de/nachrichten/info/sendungen/schabbat_schalom