



Dear members, friends and supporters,

This February was the warmest in the last 130 years! Now the month of March and the Spring season wait to greet us. We hope for mild air and blue skies but not summer temperatures yet. We all need to become more aware of how much we humans affect nature, how much we disregard resources and the consequences we, our children and grandchildren will have to bear. In Torah, Genesis 15, “and then God will remember the promise that He has given you and all living beings... never again will a flood destroy all life.” God keeps His promise—and we?

The festival Tu BiShvat helps us with this.

On February 2nd, we held our annual general meeting. Although there were no elections, the meeting was well attended. Chairwoman Rachel Dohme only briefly presented the annual report of synagogue activities, emphasizing instead several upcoming important issues and security information as well as the importance and setting up guardianships for our older members. Treasurer Olga Gerr gave an in-depth financial report. The auditors praised her work and granted acceptance unanimously. A round of applause and flowering plants for the volunteer work of the board convened the meeting. The minutes of the annual general meeting are available in German and Russian in the office.

On February 11th, a Senior Years meeting took place. Svitlana Hladchenko set up refreshments and a concert of lyrical pieces were sung by Svetlana Banchukova with Valery Fridman on the piano. Their performances always touch the soul and this time was no different. Thank you Svetlana and Valery! Many thanks to Svitlana Hladchenko! We also thank Aktion Mensch for their kind support.

Many members commented and complimented our Tu BiShvat Seder with Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg, saying it was especially meaningful this year. Before we gathered at the Seder table, which thanks to Liubow was beautifully decorated with flowers, fresh greens and the first fruits of spring, we heard a fascinating lecture “Our Forest” from Hamelin city forest ranger Ottmar Heise. Mr. Heise spoke about the trees found in the Hamelin city and forests, emphasizing the local ecological situation; very suitable for our festival of Tu BiShvat. His speech was very informative and interesting, evidenced by the thoughtful questions posed, especially from our youngsters. We thank Mr. Heise for his visit.

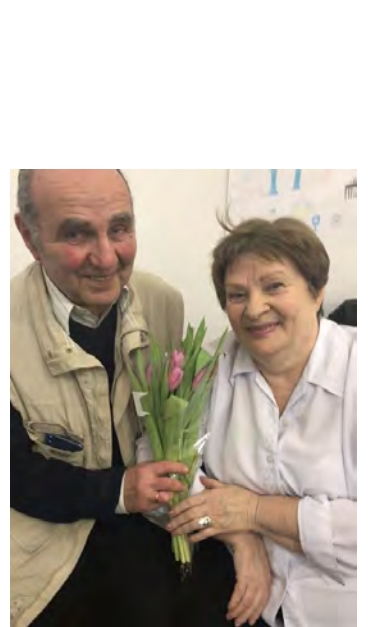
Afterwards we enjoyed together the fifteen kinds of fruit provided in the Seder and drank the four glasses of wine or juice, all symbolic of the awakening of the earth from its hibernation. We read prayers, psalms, poems, and sang songs as we ate and drank. Rabbi Offenberg spoke about the origin and meaning of this festival during the Seder. Listen again to her words.

“Tu BiShvat connects us to the land of Israel, where at this time of year the trees bloom and the first fruits are harvested. Israel is always a bit of home for all of us. In human society, each of us lives in the presence of the other. Like trees, congregations benefit from the support and stability of a strong community in which people work together for the common good. In good times as well as bad, helping each other grow in turn helps our own development - be it spiritually, mentally or physically. When communities grow together, it serves everyone for the good.”

On February 17th, Chairwoman Rachel Dohme welcomed a full synagogue for our synagogue’s 23rd birthday. We reminisced, looking lovingly back over the past two decades since our founding as the first Reform synagogue in post-war Hamelin and of course ahead. We are filled with joy and gratitude we were able to achieve, with God and many friends helping us along the way. Jewish life in Hamelin is thriving once again!

Many members and guests enjoyed the beautiful celebration. The performance of our original choir “Shalom,” featuring Faina Pelts, Nadja Pesok and Mark Ovsievich under the direction of Valery Fridman was a musical treat. Old photos of the choir were shown and Valery Friedmann talked about the choir’s creation, recalling numerous appearances in the community and beyond. Josef Pelts, of blessed memory, gave the choir its very fitting name. While the singers have changed over the twenty years of its existence, it is a vital aspect of our Jewish community in Hameln. Many thanks to all members of the group and those who created it!

A bountiful buffet of culinary delights provided by our members themselves added to the festivities. The Jewish Community of Hamelin would like to thank everyone who has repeatedly shown us their support. Our community and our synagogue belong to Hamelin and Hamelin belongs to us.



Jewish in March

Hamantaschen bakery

On Thursday, March 5th the sweet aroma of poppy seed pastries will fill the air. During the last twenty years our Purim Hamantaschen have been baked under the watchful eye of Polina Pelts, of beloved memory, according to her mother, Betya's recipe. Olga Gerr has taken over the job and we invite everyone who likes to bake (and nosh) to come and help. Baking, kibitzing, singing and noshing are included.



International Women's Day — March 8th

On the eve of the eve of Purim, March 8th, we will celebrate International Women's Day with music, flowers, sparkling wine and sweets in and the importance of women in public life. A gift for our wonderful women on this day is a concert by Ms. Gordadze, soprano and Mr. Kolmanovsky on piano. The program will take us on an international musical journey, sure to be enjoyed by one and all.

Purim

On Erev Purim our Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg we will recite the biblical “Megilla Esther” (the story of Esther) for all to hear. It is a mitzvah for every Jew to hear the Megilla. After the reading we will eat the delicious Hamantaschen, drink sweet wine and fruit juices and celebrate our rescue.

Purim is a very happy festival and it is customary to hold costume parties on this day. We look forward to celebrating the holiday with our members and friends, young and old, and hope that many will come in costumes and masks. Valerij Bogachyck and his theater group rehearsed a Purim play for us to enjoy. Many hours of preparation were invested in making the evening a pleasure for everyone. The play will be performed in Russian, but we assure even those who do not speak Russian, that they will still be able to understand and enjoy it!



Of course, our thoughts are also with those who are ill or homebound. As every year, Schlachmones will be taken personally to them with wishes of Chag Purim Sameach.

Rabbi's Word

The calendar proximity of Purim and International Women's Day invites you to ask whether it is pure coincidence or whether there are threads that run back and forth between these two holidays.

How fitting for our community that the roots of Women's Day are in the United States, Germany and Russia! In 1908, a National Women's Committee had been set up in the United States to prepare a day for women's suffrage and observed it for the first time the following year. Today it is difficult to imagine that women in the United States were completely excluded from political life and were not even allowed to vote until 1918. The idea migrated from the USA to Europe- in 1911, the first Women's Day was held in Germany, initiated by social democrats, and the focus of the demands was also on the granting of voting rights for women. This first Women's Day was a great success- the number of female SPD members rose by more than a quarter within a year, as did the number of subscribers to the socialist women's newspaper “Die Gleichheit.” After that, Women's Day was held annually, albeit on different dates. During the First World War, the struggle for peace joined free, equal and suffrage as a political goal. It only got its fixed date through an anti-war demonstration by the women of Vyborg, a poor district of Petrograd, on March 8, 1917 (according to the Julian calendar, February 23), which triggered the Russian February Revolution. Women's Day on March 8 was long a matter in socialist and communist circles, but in 1977 the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling on all member states to declare a “United Nations Day for Women's Rights and World Peace.” Originally, no specific date was set for this, but now March 8 has become common. In recent years, there has been increasing discussion in Germany about declaring Women's Day on 8 March a public holiday. Berlin is currently the only federal state where this will be celebrated for the first time in 2019.

And Purim? The women we meet in the Megillah are strong and in a dominant position- two of them are queens, one is the grand vizier's wife. Esther overcomes her doubts and limitations to fight for the lives of her people. Her predecessor, Queen Vashti, also shows her true character when she refuses to dance in front of the drunken men and be seen as a sex object. Prominent women include Seresch, Haman's wife, who unfortunately uses her power and leadership to incite her husband to do even worse. From today's perspective, Esther's story shows that women were totally dependent on the whims and arbitrariness of their husbands. The only way to act actively was to act on the men. They didn't even have rights that they could invoke as queens. Esther had to use a ruse to put forward her request. However, one of the Torah's central demands is for law and justice, which is why International Women's Day clearly adopted Jewish content. The socialists had flatly rejected the fact that their struggle had something to do with religious values. But perhaps the hidden work of God is not only evident in the story of Esther, but in women's continual struggle for their rights through all times.

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

New BFD Volunteer

We say goodbye to our BFD volunteer Ms. Svitlana Hladchenko and Mr. Vladymir Pesok. We thank them sincerely for their work and help and wish them all the best for the future.

Beginning March 1st, new BFD volunteers Ms. Zoja Pupiseva and Mr. Petr Schurupov will be working in the community. We would like to welcome them and look forward to having their help and assistance.

New member

We welcome a new member to our community, Ms. Maria Mezheryska.

Get well wishes — Refuah Shlama

We wish everyone in our community who is going through difficult times a speedy recovery. Our thoughts, prayers and hearts are with them. All members are invited to say the prayer “Mi Sheberach” for loved ones during Shabbat services.

Donations — Zedakah

We thank the members and friends who have supported our community life with generous donations. We would like to thank the following: Ms. Berchovska, Russian pension group, Ms. Zischkale – Henßen, Kirchenkreis Stadthagen, Ms. Mezheryska, Mr. Kapul, Ms. Niedert, Ms. Gibas, anonymous donors and Rachel Dohme. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Tree of Life — Etz Chayim

One can commission a new leaf on our tree for special occasions such as a birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, a wedding, thanks, a Yahrzeit or other memories or honors and in this way also make a donation to the synagogue building and maintenance fund. Forms are available in the office. Thank you!

Newly ordered: “In memory of my mother Feiga Mescheritska 24.05.1909 / 01.01.1986” from Maria Mescheritska.

Thank you — Todah Rabah

We would particularly like to thank Rachel Dohme and the employees of her company, Aron Kaplan, Vladymir Pesok, Matvey Dvortsis, Valery Bogachyk and Heinrich Moos for helping our eldest member Zoja Varshavska in her time of need. Doing good deeds (Mitzvot) is what makes our congregation stand out.

Thanks to everyone who helped shape our celebrations and activities and made many members happy. There are so many regular groups volunteered by members for members that benefit so many. Thank you!

Chevra Kaddisha

Accompanying a person on the last path is one of the greatest Mitzvot in Judaism. A Chevra Kaddisha, the Holy Funeral Society, has been working in our community for many years. A group of men and women perform the ritual washing of the deceased. We are currently looking for volunteers for these groups. Please contact the office.

March Yahrzeit

Riva Slavinska	3/18/2005 / 8th AdarII 5765
Gersch Kogan	3/19/2009 / 23rd Adar 5769
Polina Khazanova	3/19/2011 / 13th Adar II 5771
Elena Grabovska	3/28/2012 / 5th Nissan 5772
Alla Drejzer	2.03.2013 / 20th Adar 5773
Oksana Kozlova	11.03.2013 / 29th Adar 5773
Alexandra Konstantinova	20.03.2019 / 19th Adar II 5779

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



Shalom, Your Community Board

Program for March 2020 • Adar–Nisan 5780

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

Thursday, March 5	10:00 a.m.	Hamantaschen Bakery with Olga Gerr. We're looking for a few good bakers! Bring your aprons!
Sunday, March 8	3:00 p.m.	International Women's Day: Concert in honor of Women, C. Gordadze & S. Kolmanovsky. Sweet table and bubbly afterwards
Monday, March 9	5:00 p.m.	EREV PURIM — Megillah reading with Rabbi Ulrike, Purim play with our theater group, Director V. Bogachyk
Friday, March 13	4:00 p.m.	Giyur group
	5:30 p.m.	Kabbalath Shabbat , followed by Kiddush
	8:00 p.m.	Mishnah Study group Tractate Pirkei Avot
Saturday, March 14	10:00 p.m.	Shacharith Shabbat , followed by Kiddush lunch
	12:00 p.m.	Shiur for Parshah Ki Tissa
	1:30 p.m.	Children's Kehillah
Friday, March 27	4:00 p.m.	Giyur group
	5:30 p.m.	Kabbalath Shabbat , followed by Kiddush
	8:00 p.m.	Mishnah Study group Tractate Pirkei Avot
Saturday, March 28	10:00 p.m.	Shacharith Shabbat , followed by Kiddush lunch
	12:00 p.m.	Shiur for Parshah Terumah
	1:30 p.m.	Children's Kehillah

Interesting programs outside our synagogue

Tuesday, March 10	8:00 p.m.	Annual Membership Meeting , Society of Christians and Jews. St. Augustinus Social Hall, Lohstrasse, Hamelin
Sunday, March 15	11:15 a.m.	Lecture , Glueckel of Hamelin, Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg. Hamelin Public Library, Sudetenstrasse 1, Hamelin

[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

Bürenstrasse, Synagogenplatz 1, 31785 Hameln • Tel/Fax: 05151/925625

Web site: www.ighreform.org • Email: igh@ighreform.org

Office: Neue Heerstraße 35, 31840 Hess. Oldendorf

Tel.: 05152/8374 • Fax: 05152/962915

Email: racheldohme@ighreform.org