



Dear members, friends and supporters,

We read in the Talmud, “Whoever enters the month of Adar increases joy!” Our members have received a Purim package which contains various “ingredients” to insure a happy Purim festival- sweet and delicious Hamantaschen, the story of Esther, graggers and confetti. Thanks to Olga Gerr for the act of loving kindness.

We have four Mitzvot on Purim:

1. The reading of the Megillah,
2. A festive meal and plenty of alcohol, so that we can no longer distinguish between Haman and Mordechai,
3. Gifts for those in need and
4. Gifts for friends and neighbors.

The Purim gift bags should help us to fulfill at least the first two Mitzvot. We hope they spread some Purim joy! We will have read the Megillah on Purim together on Zoom, trying to make the holiday as happy as possible. We toasted LeChajim to Esther, Mordechai and on our own ability to stay positive. The most difficult commandment this year will be to spread joy. Actually, the Purim days are meant to be a time of reversals (“Nahafoch hu”), when the world is turned upside down. That it certainly is! We have spent the last year under these strange circumstances. Masquerade ball every day, and the children, who otherwise can hardly wait for the school bell to ring, long for school to finally start again.

Last year we were together in the synagogue and after the reading of the Megillah we watched a refreshing Purimshpil with a wonderful Valerij B. as Achaschwerosch, a self-confident Doroti as Vashti, a long-bearded Volodymyr as Mordechai, a graceful Faina as Esther, a terrifying Matvej as Haman — and with all the other enchanting actors, singers and dancers who took part. We were all carried away to Shushan by Valerij F.’s lively accompaniment on the piano. We couldn’t have imagined then, that it would be the last festival that we would celebrate together in the synagogue.

Since then, our community life has been determined by the conditions of a pandemic. We had to cancel our beloved Pesach Seder last year. A short re-opening allowed us to meet for Shabbat again but with very many restrictions. No singing, no Kiddush, even seating was limited and was needed. Hanukkah was celebrated, but we have not been able to be together in our sanctuary since then. This year too, we will not be able to celebrate Pesach with a community Seder.

Holidays are usually an occasion to look back, almost impossible now because this “upside-down world” is not over yet.

It can be said that it has been a year of learning: trying out technological possibilities, using digital media for teaching and socializing, but also deepening the knowledge of what is really important in our lives. Proximity, personal encounters, responsibility for one another, singing and eating together and spending time together are sadly missed by all. The joy in the month of Adar mentioned at the beginning is not something to be taken for granted, but to be worked for. We are called upon to bring joy, for ourselves and for others. How can we put a smile on others’ faces? And how can we activate sources of joy in ourselves? Purim and Passover are holidays of Jewish resilience — as depressing as the times may be, we will muster our communal courage and look forward together!

—With best regards and Shalom, Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Community events in February

Shabbat

Necessity is the mother of invention and if we cannot meet in the synagogue due to Corona, it does not mean that we cannot see each other. We now meet by Zoom and even if we have to forego Lioubov’s delicious food, we are not dependent on the weather, bus times, colds or masks, and even for people with walking disabilities, attending is no problem. Normally we only had services twice a month and now we greet Shabbat together every week. Every Friday we light the Shabbat candles, and hold a short service with different readings, offered by our members. Rabbi Offenberg sings the Kiddush and everyone is invited to join in and to take part. We hope that more people will join us; it is a good opportunity to exchange ideas with one another. Every Wednesday, we meet for an hour of Torah study and discussion. If you need help setting up Zoom or using the technology, please let us know — we will try to solve this problem.





Our Congregation's 24th anniversary

On February 12th, we celebrated two important dates during our Shabbat celebration. It was the 24th birthday of our congregation and the 10th anniversary of our new and beautiful synagogue in Hamelin. Rabbi Offenberg prepared a presentation with photos and short videos from past community events, bringing back many wonderful memories. Among our guests were those dear friends from near and far who have stood by us for many years. Hans-Georg Spangenberg talked about the beginnings of the community and the difficult stages of the synagogue building. The former county commissioner, Tjark Bartels, who offered county-wide support of our Jewish life, was also present, as was Pastor Udo Wolten. Prof. Dr. Ursula Rudnick, "Encounter—Christians and Jews in Lower Saxony," reported on her experiences in collaboration with our congregation, adding a gift of cases of kosher wine for future services. We are grateful for so many good and loyal friends.

Jewish life in March

Passover

The month of March, or Nissan according to the Hebrew calendar, is called the "Month of Spring." Spring symbolizes the power of renewal inherent in nature. During the winter months of rain and snow, everything in nature is in a state of hibernation and when spring arrives, everything blooms again.

During this wonderful time, Passover comes to us, the Festival of Freedom. And feeling free, especially now that the Coronavirus pandemic is restricting us in almost all areas of life, is valued more than ever. With the arrival of spring, hope also awakens in us that we will get through these difficult times and return to normal life.

Unfortunately, we cannot celebrate a communal Seder evening in the synagogue this year either. We have to try to make a worthy Passover festival possible at home. While stocks last, we offer kosher Passover food for our members: Israeli matzah in one-kilo packs and 0.75-liter bottles of sweet Kedem red wine. Everyone can also order Passover products or pick them up themselves.



New BFD Assistant

We thank Svetlana Banchukova who completed her voluntary service in our community. We wish her continued success and all the best. Beginning in March, Izabella Sheinberg will start her voluntary service. We warmly welcome her and look forward to working with her.

Get well soon

We wish all members who are ill, a quick and complete recovery. Our thoughts are with you and we strive to keep in touch with you. Please call if you need any assistance.

Donations — Todah Rabbah!

We thank everyone who supports our community life with donations. This month we would like to highlight: Elisabeth Pfeiffer, Heidemarie Braun, Maria Mezherytka, Wolfgang Schultner, Ms. Niedert, Ms. Gibas, Ludmilla Späth, Dr. Ursula Rudnick, Weser-Champignon, the Ovsievych family and the Dohme family. May all donors be blessed for their gifts.



Condolences

We express our condolences to Ingrid Wettberg and family on the occasion of the death of Peter Wettberg, of beloved memory. We express our condolences on the occasion of the death of Siegelinde Schömig to the Spangenberg family.

March Yahrzeit

Riva Slavinska	March 18, 2005 / 8th Adar II 5765
Gersch Kogan	March 19, 2009 / 23rd Adar 5769
Polina Khazanova	March 19, 2011 / 13th Adar II 5771
Elena Grabovska	March 28, 2012 / 5th Nissan 5772
Alla Drejzer	March 2, 2013 / 20th Adar 5773
Oksana Kozlova	March 11, 2013 / 29th Adar 5773
Alexandra Konstantinova	March 20, 2019 / 19th Adar II 5779
Polina Peker	March 18th, 2020 / 22nd Adar 5780



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

Shalom,
Your board

Program for March 2021 • Adar–Nisan 5781

Synagogue office hours: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

All dates and times subject to change

Wednesday, March 3	6:00	Torah study Ki Tissa, on Zoom
Friday, March 5	5:30	Friday night services, on Zoom
Monday, March 8	3:00	International Women's Day, on Zoom
Wednesday, March 10	6:00	Torah study Vayakhel-Pekudei, on Zoom
Friday, March 12	5:30	Friday night services, on Zoom
Saturday, March 13	6:00	Religious school, on Zoom
Wednesday, March 17	6:00	Torah Study Vayikra, on Zoom
Friday, March 19	5:30	Friday night services, on Zoom
Saturday, March 20	6:00	Religious school, on Zoom
Wednesday, March 24	6:00	Torah study Tzav, on Zoom
Saturday, March 27	Sundown	Seder at home

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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

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