



## Rabbinic word

We are commanded to observe four mitzvot on Purim:

1. the reading of the Megillah, the Book of Esther,
2. prepare and enjoy a festive meal,
3. giving small, edible gifts to friends and acquaintances, and
4. donating money to the needy so that they too can afford a festive meal.

The Book of Esther reads at first like a comic fairytale but turns dark quickly as an evil planned genocide is revealed.



The four mitzvot mentioned above can be found in the ninth chapter in the Book of Esther. They have reminded Jews for centuries that there are people who have absolutely no qualms about perpetrating evil against other people. Because these are mitzvot which no one can fulfill on their own, they teach us that we need a community and its cohesion to deal with challenging times.

These days mark the anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. It has been a year of horror, and there is no one among us who has not been touched by it. It is the home towns of many community members which are now designated as war zones. Traumatized by fear and grief, family members and compatriots still living there have been forced to seek refuge in surrounding countries; Germany and Hamelin are no exception. The men, for the most part, have stayed to defend their country, but many families have to make a new start here, in a foreign language and environment. Fraught with worry and always anxiously checking their cell phones for news from Ukraine is a daily duty. For many of us, in addition to existential challenges for these refugees, most of us are forced to recognize a world view and a view of history having collapsed and the realization of a horrific situation we thought a year ago could never happen.

I have to say for myself, how naive and also how ignorant I was not to be able to interpret many signs! It seemed unthinkable that after all the suffering and agony in the Second World War, war would now emanate from Russia. Hundreds die daily on the front lines, attacks and atrocities are directed against the civilian population and the destruction of infrastructure in Ukraine is immeasurable.

The mitzvot of Purim warn us to sympathize and help. We hope and pray that this war will soon come to an end. In the words of the eminent Hasidic Rabbi Nachman of Brazlav who once worked in Ukraine:

“May it be Your will, Eternal One, that wars and bloodshed disappear from the world. ‘May no nation lift up sword against another, nor continue to learn war’ (Isa. 2:4). May all the inhabitants of the earth realize that we did not come into this world to hurt one another through strife and violence, with hatred, envy, slander and bloodshed.”

Ken jehi rason—May it be so.  
—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

## February in Review

### Our Youth group goes to Berlin

At the invitation of Rabbi Offenberg, our youth group spent three days in Berlin. The capitol city is an exciting metropole and Rabbi Ulrike had a packed program planned. The teens spent over 3½ hours(!) in the Jewish Museum, whose new permanent exhibition presents Jewish history and religion with different media. Eva, Florencia, Anamaria, Timur and Lennard toured the city, walked through the government district, visited the memorial for the murdered Roma and Sinti at the Brandenburg Gate and also The Field of Stelae at the Holocaust Memorial.

“What is actually kosher?” was the leading question in a kosher supermarket. Later, enjoying a meal at the kosher snack bar, the owners and customers were delighted to hear our kids singing the Birkat HaMazon after eating in its entirety. Baking homemade pizza, ice skating, jumping on trampolines were also part of the fun in Berlin. Hopefully next year again! Perhaps a reader of this newsletter will donate? We thank the Schwazkopff family for their donation this year.







## **Tu Bi Shwat Seder**

As part of our Shabbat celebration on February 3rd, we celebrated our Tu Bi Shwat Seder. Our kitchen chair-woman Lioubov had prepared the table beautifully. In addition to sandwiches, she had prepared a variety of fruits, nuts and olives which we ate during the course of the Seder. First was the fruits with shells, then those with a pit in the middle and finally figs and grapes, edible in their entirety. This was accompanied by four glasses of grape juice or wine. According to tradition, the four glasses change from the white of winter to the bright red of summer during the Seder. The texts and songs reminded us of the importance of trees and our responsibility to nature.

## **Jewish life in March**

### **Hamantaschen Bakery**

On Thursday, March 2, our congregation will once again smell of sweet poppy seed pastry. Under the leadership of Olga Gerr, community members and friends will bake the filled triangular cookies, called Hamantaschen, to be enjoyed a few days later on Purim.



### **Purim**

The Jewish calendar announces the 14th of Adar with the Fast of Esther and Erev Purim. This festival reminds us of the salvation of the Jews in the Persian city of Shushan from destruction by the evil Haman. With courage, cunning and cleverness, Esther and Mordecai managed to avert this doom. We read the Megillah, the biblical book of Esther, and celebrate with costumes and lots of noise.

It is a mitzvah to send small food baskets to friends and acquaintances and to give money to those in need. Please join us on Monday, March 6, at 5:00 pm. We will read the Esther story in different languages, shake noise makers and graggers as soon as the name Haman is heard. We'll sing songs and eat delicious Hamantaschen. Young and old are welcome to come in costume. We look forward to a joyous celebration together!

### **Purim sleepover**

Netzer Germany and the Liberal Jewish Community of Hanover invite children 10 years and older and teenagers to spend a Purim sleepover party from Saturday, March 4, from 2 p.m. until Sunday, 12 noon. There is a varied program prepared with Purim activities, Havdallah, cooking together, costume contest, dancing and lots of fun. Bring a costume, pajamas, toiletries, change of clothes, sleeping mat and a sleeping bag. The families of our youth group have received the necessary information by e-mail are signed up and ready to go.

### **Informational event**

We invite you to an informational event on March 1 at 11:00 a.m. with Margarita Suslovich, social worker of the Lower Saxony Regional Association. This time the topic will be Claims Conference applications Jewish refugees.

### **March 8 — International Women's Day**

We extend our best wishes to the women of our congregation on International Women's Day and hope you enjoy health and happiness. Join us on March 8th for an afternoon. See program.

### **Interfaith Women's Meeting**

On March 20th, an interfaith women's meeting will be held in our synagogue. Our annual theme is "Customs and Rituals in Christianity, Judaism and Islam." Join us and engage with our neighbors.

### **Annual Membership Meeting**

Please check the program and invitation to our annual membership meeting Sunday, March 26, 3:00 pm. Let your voice be heard. Come with ideas to make our congregation even better!

### **New members**

We warmly welcome to our congregation the Rubinskyi family and Mr. Reznik as new members of the congregation. Mr. Boikov has joined the Circle of Friends. We are happy and welcome them all.





## Donations — Zedakah

We sincerely thank the members and friends who support our congregational life and upkeep of our beautiful synagogue with generous donations. This month we would like to give special mention to Wolfgang Schultner, Elisabeth Schlagmann, Elisabeth Pfeiffer, Mrs. Mezherysky and the Dohme family. Generous donations came from Reinhard Richard Hampel and an anonymous donor. May they all be blessed for their generosity.

## Tree of Life

Right now in winter, our tree needs some new leaves. Here is an opportunity for members, friends and supporters to do two mitzvot (good deeds) at once. Your contribution of a minimum of €50 can commemorate a special occasion, a birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, a wedding, gratitude, anniversaries, memorials or honors, and at the same time make a donation to the synagogue. Forms are available in the office.

A new leaf on the Tree of Life was commissioned by the Truchsess family. It bears the inscription “To the birth of Carlotta Truchseß. The Grandparents.” Congratulations to Wolfgang and Ulrike Truchseß on their granddaughter!

## Condolence

We extend our sympathy to the WUPJ community on the passing of Ruth Cohen, former Chair and EUPJ Honorary Life President and pioneer of Reform Jewry.

## March Yahrzeit

Riva Slavinska	March 18, 2005 / 8 Adar II 5765
Gersch Kogan	March 19, 2009 / 23. Adar 5769
Polina Khazanova	March 19, 2011 / 13. Adar II 5771
Elena Grabovska	March 28, 2012 / 5. Nissan 5772
Alla Drejzer	March 2, 2013 / 20. Adar 5773
Oksana Kozlova	March 11, 2013 / 29. Adar 5773
Alexandra Konstantinova	March 20, 2019 / 19. Adar II 5779
Polina Peker	March 18, 2020 / 22. Adar 5780
Rimma Kopirovskaya	March 17, 2022 / 14. Adar II 5782



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

Shalom,  
Your 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 March 2023 • Adar–Nisan 5783

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

Wednesday, March 1	11:00 a.m.	Info event Claims Conference application, with Margarita Suslovich
Thursday, March 2	11:00 a.m.	Hamantaschen Bakery. Led by Olga Gerr
Monday, March 6	5:00 p.m.	PURIM! Reading of the Megillah, Graggers, Hamentaschen Come in costume!
Wednesday, March 8	4:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	International Women’s Day with flowers, champagne & sweets. Shiur on the weekly portion Ki Tissa (Parah), on Zoom
Wednesday, March 15	6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly portion Vayakhel-Pekudej (HaChodesh), on Zoom
Friday, March 17	5:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Saturday, March 18	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Shacharit Shabbat, followed by Kiddush Youth Group
Monday, March 20	3:00 p.m.	Interfaith Women's Meeting. Customs and rituals in Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
Wednesday, March 22	6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly portion Vayikra, on Zoom
Sunday, March 26	3:00 p.m.	Annual membership meeting
Wednesday, March 29	6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly section “Zav,” on Zoom

### **Outside the community**

Friday, March 3	2:55 p.m.	“Shabat Shalom.” Torah interpretation by Rabbi Offenberg, NDR Info (Hameln 99.9 MHz)
March 4–5, Saturday–Sunday,		Purim Sleepover Netzer Germany e.V. and the Liberal Jewish Community of Hanover hosts a Purim Sleepover
Monday, March 6	6:20 a.m.	“The Daily Word.” Purim-radio program with Rabbi Offenberg speaks about Purim. Deutschlandfunk Kultur.
Thursday, March 16	6:00 p.m.	Digital Bible Dialogue, BCJ Lower Saxony. Pastor Ursula Rudnick and Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg discuss Genesis, Chapter 34, on Zoom