



Rabbinical Word

It is said of the founder of Hasidism, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, that whenever the Jewish community was threatened with calamity, he would go into a forest, to a certain spot, to meditate. There he lit a special fire and said a special prayer - and the disaster was averted. After his death, his disciple, the Maggid von Meseritsch, took over the leadership of the Hasidic movement. Even in his time there were enough reasons to worry about the people, and so he also tried to help. He went to the same spot in that forest and said to God, “Lord of the universe, listen! I can't start the fire, but I know the place and I can say the prayer.” It is said that this helped. Many years later, Rabbi Moscheh-Leib of Sassov tried to save the Jewish people from misfortune and went to this forest. He said, “I can't light the fire, nor do I know the prayer, but I know the place.” Later, Rabbi Israel of Rushin became a major leader who had a special responsibility to protect the people. But he stayed in his house, holding his head in his hands, and said to God, “I can't light the fire anymore, I don't know the prayer and I can't even find the special place in the forest. All I can do is tell this story. And that has to be enough.” And it was enough.



Passover is the feast of storytelling. Throughout the evening of the Seder we will tell the story of Israel in Egypt and the Exodus from bondage. And it says in the Haggadah: “Whoever speaks about it, shall be praised!” And it's not just about retelling the past — we're supposed to tell it as if we're just emerging from bondage ourselves. Symbols such as matzah, bitter herbs, salt water, “clay” (charoset) help us visualize, but it is equally important to tell our own stories of oppression and liberation. This is how Jewish life stories intertwine over the millennia. We do not know the specific place where the huts of the Israelites stood in Egypt, where exactly they crossed the Red Sea, but the thought of departure and liberation continues to burn within us. We can hold on to its truth even in times of bondage, war and suffering, because we know that “Pharaoh” will not have the last word. Our story is one of hope, and we continue to tell our children about it so that they too can proudly join the tradition of being part of Israel and keep the idea of freedom alive.

I wish us all a meaningful, kosher and happy Passover.

—Ihre/Eure Rabbinerin Ulrike Offenber

March in Review

Purim festival

On March 6, we celebrated the colorful and joyful festival of Purim with our Rabbi Offenber in a full sanctuary. We read the Megillah (Esther scroll) in our three languages. Rabbi Offenber read from our handwritten Megillah so that congregational members could hear the book in Hebrew, S leying in various intonations, corresponding to the speakers in the text. Honors were given to members who read chapters in German or Russian. It was lovely.

The delicious hamantaschen, baked by a group of members and led by Olga Gerr, were delicious and made our lavish celebration a joy for all.

As is our custom, members volunteered and brought “Slachmones” (Purim baskets) to those members who could not attend. Each basket had been filled with fresh Hamantaschen.

The teens had Purim fun at a sleepover party the weekend before Purim. The Liberal Jewish Community in Hanover had invited many children and young people to attend. The Madrichim and Madrichot had prepared an entertaining and educational program, with costumes, games and songs about Purim. Thank you so much for the regional event!

International Women's Day

The women of our congregation were honored on March 8th by the men of our congregation. The men sang songs of praise and distributed flowers to all the women. The program presented a video concert, which included songs about love and spring. The film brought back sweet memories of past members no longer with us.



After the concert, a festive meal awaited, made even more special, as we celebrated the 60th wedding anniversary of Larisa and Matvey Dvortsis! On behalf of the congregation, our chairwoman Rachel Dohme presented a bouquet of flowers and a gift to them. The wonderful atmosphere of our Jewish home: “Beiteinu” made this unforgettable. We wish to thank Mr. and Mrs. Bogachyk and Mascha Bielau for organizing and preparing everything.

Interfaith women’s meeting

We thank Larisa Dvortsis and Eva Shkolnikova who acted as hosts for the Interfaith Women's Gathering on March 20th. The Jewish, Christian and Muslim women enjoyed the afternoon and look forward to the next meeting.

Jewish life in April

Summertime

Now the days are longer again, it is getting warmer and spring can be felt everywhere. In the Talmud there is a blessing that we should say in the month of Nisan when we see blossoming trees:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁלֹּא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם וּבְרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהֵנוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם.
“Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the world, who lacks nothing in his world and created in it beautiful creatures and lovely trees for the children of adults to enjoy.”

We are grateful for the awakening of nature, for the many small and large signs of new life that give us hope. With the start of daylight savings time, our evening services will start a little later, at 5:30 p.m.



Seder night

The next few weeks will be dominated by Passover, the “Feast of Freedom,” which we will be celebrating this year from April 5th to 13th. We celebrate the First Seder evening together with our rabbi on Wednesday, April 5, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Passover Goods

We are happy to offer kosher Israeli matzah, gefilte fish, matza ball mix and wine at a minimal price, as long as our supply lasts.

In memory of Mrs. Polina Pelts

On Thursday, April 27th, we would like to remember the first and former Vice President and founding member of our congregation, Polina Pelts, of blessed memory. We owe her so much: Polina was the heart of the community and on this day, initiated by the community members, songs and stories will be performed in her honor.

Yom Hashoah

In 1951, on the 27th Nisan, the Israeli Knesset set Yom HaShoah, which is commemorated with a state ceremony in the Yad Vashem memorial in Jerusalem. At exactly 10:00 a.m., a shrill siren sounds throughout the land. Everything comes to a halt as people everywhere stand in silence and our murdered brothers and sisters are remembered. On Tuesday, April 18, we will also commemorate the countless victims of the Shoah and invite you to join us. We will recite prayers, texts and light six memorial candles.

Yom HaAzma’ut

The time from Yom HaShoah through the commemoration day Yom HaSikkaron to the Independence Day Yom HaAzma'ut are called the “Israeli High Holidays” because their events refer to central aspects of Jewish and Israeli identity today. The Shabbat during this time is called “Shabbat Tekumah,” Shabbat of National Reestablishment. The Kabbalat Shabbat service on April 21 will focus on these themes.

Thank you — Todah Rabbah!

After many years of dedicated work, we say goodbye to our caretaker Heinrich Moos, who will retire in April. There is probably no one who knows our community center as well as he does! He has always taken care that nothing breaks (and if it does: that it is repaired quickly), maintained the technology, maintained the outside area, paid attention to cleanliness inside, so that our synagogue is always a friendly, inviting place. We thank him for his many years of conscientious work and wish him all the best for the next chapter of his life.

We also say goodbye to Faina Pelts, whose BAMF project will end at the end of April. For many years she acted in various functions in our office, advised and helped members and new refugees on social issues, translated, led the choir, was a member of the board, and assisted the congregation in many different ways. We are also grateful to her and wish her all the best.

Please join us on April 21st to thank both of them



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 and thanks to Mrs. Stoevesandt and her +60 group, Mrs. Wellerhaus with the students from the Viktoria-Luise-Gymnasium, Mr. Müller with the 7th grade of the Schiller-Gymnasium, Ioulia Berhowski, Mrs. **Sabine Demuth**, Uwe Wolandowitsch and to Rachel Dohme for the donations in March.

We are deeply grateful for a special donation and say “Thank you – Todah Rabah!” to our Canadian sponsors, Nani and Austin Beutel. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

Tree of Life

Spring has sprung! Our tree is aching to bud. Here is an opportunity for members, friends and supporters to do two Mitzvot at once. A 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 upkeep of the synagogue. Forms are available in the office.

April Yahrzeit

Tatyana Khodos	April 4, 1998 / 8. Nisan 5758
Anna Pototcaia	April 11, 2000 / 6. Nisan 5760
Eugenia Borishanskaia	April 26, 2004 / 5. Iyar 5764
Boris Frid	April 28, 2011 / 24. Nisan 5771
Yuriy Lebedinskiy	April 2, 2012 / 10. Nisan 5772
Alex Voronov	April 10, 2012 / 18. Nisan 5772
Ryssia Kochergina	April 27, 2015 / 8. Iyar 5775
Vilen Feldmann	April 24, 2016 / 16. Nisan 5776
Arkadij Drejzer	April 4, 2018 / 19. Nisan 5778
Zinaida Gogulinska	April 19, 2018 / 4. Iyar 5778



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 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 April 2023 • Nisan–Ijar 5783

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

Please note: Faina Pelts will be on vacation from April 11th to 24th.
On April 6th and April 12th the synagogue office will be closed for Passover.

Wednesday, April 5 at 5:30 p.m.	First Seder evening! We wish everyone a happy Passover!
Thursday, April 6 at 10:00 a.m.	Shacharit Passover, followed by Kiddush
Tuesday, April 18 at 5:00 p.m.	Commemoration event for Yom HaShoah
Wednesday, April 19 at 6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly section “Tasria-Mezora,” via Zoom
Friday, April 21 at 5:00 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, Shabbat “Tekumah.” Afterward Kiddush in honor of Faina Pelts and Heinrich Moos
Saturday, April 22 at 10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Shacharit Shabbat, followed by Kiddush and Shiur Children's Kehillah
Wednesday, April 26 at 6:00 p.m.	Shiur on the weekly section “Akharei-Kedoshim”, with Rabbi Tamarah Benima, Amsterdam, via zoom
Thursday, April 27 at 3:00 p.m.	Memorial service in memory of Polina Pelts
Outside the community	
Thursday, April 20 at 6:00 p.m.	ZOOM Bible Dialogue, sponsored by “Encounter Christians and Jews in Lower Saxony”: Dr. Katrin Großmann and Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenber, Joshua, Chapter 1

We wish our members and Jews around the world a Happy Passover!

We wish our Muslim friends and neighbors Ramadan Mubarak!

We wish our Christian friends and neighbors a Happy Easter!