



Dear members of the community, friends and supporters,

We will pick up where we left off and as promised last month, we'll report and show some snapshots of our Passover Seder.

On Friday, the 30th of March, we gathered for a communal Pesach Seder in our synagogue, the feast of our freedom. On Pesach we remember and celebrate this freedom, the Exodus from Egypt. We feel it as if we ourselves were slaves in Egypt and had to wander through the desert. Each one of us has been a slave too. Each of us has to go through "liberation". Several members told their personal stories of this "liberation". How good it is that we can now shape our future together with our children and grandchildren. Joy was palpable in the hearts of the people of our community-one member saying, "This was the most meaningful Seder I ever attended." A day before the holiday the rooms were again made kosher l' Pesach by active helpers who scrubbed and cleaned until there was nothing with leavening to be found. As we do annually, large quantities of matzah and kosher wine had been ordered and sold out. The beautiful floral decorations brought spring into our sanctuary. Everyone found a seat and Rabbi Ulrike began the age-old re-telling of the words of the Passover Haggadah from Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg and by Vladymir Pesok in Russian. Everyone joined in, singing the beloved traditional Passover songs in Hebrew. Eva Trieskunova recited the Four Questions, "Mah Nischтана"—Why is this night different from all other nights? The tables were not only ceremoniously set, but the dishes were delicious. Matzah balls in chicken soup and homemade gefilte fish delighted everyone. Feana and Liubow were officially acknowledged and thanked for their many years of service to the congregation. The two "Master Chefs" were rewarded with resounding applause and sumptuous bouquets for their work. There were many others who helped with the preparation and we thank you all!



After the meal, the children searched for "Afikoman," the part of a broken matzah hidden away. After a successful search, the children were rewarded with small gifts and the Seder continued.

Whether it is the songs of our freedom, or the history of the beloved land of our ancestors, it is also part of our Jewish identity. So the hope of the Passover festival always remains a promise: "Next year in Jerusalem!"

On Thursday, April 12, we commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom haShoah. Thirty members and guests gathered in our sanctuary. In a calm and thoughtful mood, Rachel Dohme welcomed the attendees. The memorial service began with Rebekka Dohme's recording of "Ani Ma'anim." Her voice and the lyrics touched everyone's heart. Rachel shared a personal family story, that of her Aunt Miriam in German and Russian: "For me personally, this day is of deep significance. My Aunt Miriam was one of the few Holocaust survivors released on April 15, 1945 from Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp. She was moved to a DP camp near Celle after the liberation."



Rachel read Miriam's story, which described her life from being rounded up in her hometown of Vilna in 1941 until her marriage in 1951. The congregants felt her pain when told about her daily life and survival in several concentration camps. This story of this one person made the loss felt by the Jewish people and the whole world tangible. Miriam survived the horror of the Nazis and immigrated to America in 1950, was miraculously reunited with Rachel's family and married in 1951. When she died last December at the age of 90, she left behind a son and daughter and two grandsons. We will all never forget her.

Six yellow candles were lit by six members, Polina Pelts, Maria Bilau, Aron Kaplan, Dieter Vogelhuber, Feana Engler and Mark Ovsievyeh, in memory of the Six Million murdered European Jews.

Yom ha Azma'ut

The seventieth anniversary of Israel's founding was celebrated in our community on Sunday, April 22 with a concert by Svetlana Kundish (vocals and guitar) and Patrick Farrell (accordion). Cantor Sveta Kundish spoke about Jewish life in Ukraine and in the former Soviet Union. Her personal experiences mirrored those of many immigrants during emigration. She shared family photos and performed Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Ukrainian and German songs. The members, who themselves had also such experiences of emigration were very touched. "It was a concert that brought us back to our homeland- the good and the bad." said one member. We thank Cantor Sveta Kundish and Patrick Farrell, as well as the Central Council of Jews for their kind support.



Children's group outing on April 14, 2018

Teacher Olga Trieskunova gave this report about the last activity with our littlest ones.

“Our fourth trip took place on May 14th. Shay, Liel, Nanuni, Esther, Greta, Samuel, Eva, Timur and Lennard accompanied by 2 adults (Olga Trieskunova and Stelian Mima) hiked to the city center. On this day the city marathon took place and our Anamaria and Florencia took part. We cheered them on in the large crowd. It was decided unanimously to go to the ice cream parlour. There, among other things, the children visited a small exhibition ‘Witnesses of the Prehistoric Times’ and played in a small indoor playground. At 5:00 p.m. we went to the City Park for a picnic. It was very relaxed among the flowers and fountains and the children continued playing together until it was time to go home.”



We are so happy that Olga creates so many opportunities with our children and strengthens their sense of identity and belonging.

Rabbinic Word

In the Jewish calendar we find ourselves in the time of the biblical census: Every evening we say a short blessing and then: “Today is day X in the Counting of the Omer.” This is how it goes from the day after the Seder evening to Shavuot: 50 days after the beginning of Passover, we celebrate the weekly festival. This count connects the two festivals like a measuring tape.

Originally, the counting of the Omer referred to the beginning of the barley harvest - an Omer is a measure of about 3 liters, which was given as a peace offering in the Temple in Jerusalem. Later, this fifty-day period was observed as a mourning period, in which joyful occasions are avoided. The exception to this was the 33rd day (in Hebrew: Lag BaOmer) where weddings take place and where bonfires made for happy gatherings. The Babylonian Talmud (Jevamot 62b) states: “Twelve thousand disciples had Rabbi Akiva, and they all died in the same period, from Passover to Shavuot, because they did not respect each other.” Allegedly, they died of an epidemic, the plague ending on the 33rd day of the Omer. It is more likely that this is an indication of the young men who participated in the Bar Kochba rebellion against the Romans (132–135) with hundreds of thousands dying.

We owe the tradition to Hasidism and the Zionist movement, which has flourished since the end of the 19th century, to celebrate this day with bonfires, singing and social gathering. The Talmud’s indication that Rabbi Akiva’s disciples died because they did not respect each other should also give us time to reflect on how we treat each other. One of the many beautiful traditions that have emerged in the Hamelin community is that we have been able to visit our neighbor, the Lutheran Reformed Church for our Lag B’Omer picnic. Our synagogue kitchen is milchig and so no meat is allowed. On the holiday of Lag BaOmer **we** enjoy kosher grilled hot dogs and the happy gathering takes place in their garden. Many thanks to our Christian hosts for this kind and generous sign of mutual respect. All are cordially invited on Sunday, May 6, 2:00–4:00 p.m. There will be games and fun for the children and a barbecue picnic with delicious food for all ages.

Jewish Life in May

Lag Ba Omer

On Sunday, May 6, we invite everyone to celebrate Lag BaOmer at 2:00 pm, the 33rd day of the Omer period- 49 days or seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot. Today we remember that on the 33rd day of the Omer period in the 2nd century CE a plague ended during which many disciples of Rabbi Akiva perished. Due to this tragedy the Omer weeks are considered a mourning period. On the 33rd day, Lag Ba Omer it is interrupted. A common custom is to have a bonfire and celebrate with a picnic. We have maintained this tradition in our community for more than 20 years. We are again to be guests in the garden of the Protestant Reformed community in the Hugenottenstraße. If the weather is inclement we will have to cancel the picnic. We ask everyone to bring a salad or a desert. Kosher hot dogs and drinks will be provided.

Victory Day

On May 9 we traditionally celebrate the victory over fascism in our synagogue. It is a day of remembrance and pride for us. We honor all those who fought against fascism in World War II. A special program is being prepared for the day, after which we will sit down to a meal together. Reserve your seat for this special Memorial Day observance.





Shavuot

On the fiftieth day after Passover, we celebrate Shavuot. We fulfill the commandment of the counting of the Omer. Shavuot is one of the three pilgrimage festivals, which include Passover and Sukkot. Passover and Shavuot are connected; for what use is freedom without rules and order? These two holidays complete two halves of an equation. Freedom and law, rights and obligations belong together.

Rabbi Ulrike will lead an Erev Shavuot service and read from the Torah. We will hear the Ten Commandments. Afterwards, in a Tikkun, we will study Torah texts (Tikkun Leyl Shavuot) to discover which of them can serve as a benchmark for our own lives. As is customary, dairy foods are eaten as a reminder that the Torah is as sweet as milk and honey. The next morning, Sunday, the 20th May, we invite everyone to participate in our 2nd annual "Cheesecake Competition". Everyone is asked to present their own homemade creations drawn from family traditions or recipes from favorite cookbooks. There will be two competition categories- cheesecakes and sweet or savory dairy dishes. A jury will award the winners and then everyone will be invited to eat them together. There will be no losers!

Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov on the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel!

Do you have Naches? Good news you want to share with the community? Please inform us in our community office and it will appear in the next community letter.

Get well wishes — Refuah Schlemah

We wish all the people of our community, who are currently experiencing hardship, good recovery and Refuah Schlemah. We will recite Mi Scheberach for all who are ill at services. Our thoughts, prayers and hearts are with them.



Donations — Zedakah

We thank the following people and have supported generous donations. We would like to thank: Pastor Hans Joachim Schliep, the Mima family, the Hasin family, Vladymir Pesok, "IMPULS", Mrs. Olga Trieskunova, the Hameln Senior Council, Mr. Menkens, the Dohme family, Ursula Niedert and Ute Gibas. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

Tree of Life — Etz Chaim

The first buds and flowers adorn the trees and our gardens. Our tree needs new leaves too. Please consider donating a leaf on our Tree of Life. It is possible to commemorate for many occasions, e.g. a birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, wedding, thanks, Yahrzeit or to honor someone and at the same time also make a donation to the synagogue. Forms are in the office and online. Newly ordered:

“In memory of our father and grandfather Arkadij Drejzer 05/27/1941–04/04/1918,” donated by family Drejzer / Hasin

“For the birth of our granddaughter Elisabeth Rose on 03/19/2018,” donated by Alla and Wolfgang



Thanks — Todah Rabah

We thank Mr. Engelhardt for the book donation for our community library.

Thanks to all those who participated in the preparations for the Pesach Seder. We thank all those who help us to make our festivals and many cultural events so beautiful.

Be it planning, implementation or organization, we thank you all. There are so many regular groups, volunteered by members for members, from which so many benefit. We appreciate your commitment very much.

In sympathy

We express our deepest condolences to Drejzer and Hasin families on the death of their beloved father and grandfather Arkadij Drejzer. A service was held remembering Mr. Drejzer on the 9th of April at the Fährndrich Funeral Home under the direction of Rachel Dohme and Vladymir Pesok. His urn will be buried in May at a graveside service.

We also express our deep condolences to the Gogulinski family on the death of their beloved wife, mother and grandmother Sinaida Gogulinski. The funeral took place at the Jewish cemetery on April 24th.

Yahrzeit in May

Please pardon us for omitting a name in last month's Yahrzeit list
We remember Villen Feldman, April 24, 2013 / 16 Nissan 5776
Betya Kholmer, 08. 05. 1997 / 1. Ijar 5757
Evgenia Benderskaya, 24. 05. 2001 / 02. Siwan 5761
Vladimir Rubanov, 14. 05. 2002 / 03. Siwan 5762
Sofia Kasplar, 13. 05. 2008 / 08. Ijar 5768

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



Shalom,
—Your Synagogue board

Program for May 2018 • Iyar–Sivan 5778

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

Wednesday, May 2	10:00 a.m.	Monthly Board meeting
Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg		
Friday, May 4	2:00 p.m.	Bnei Mitzvah class
	4:00 p.m.	Giyur class
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services
	8:00 p.m.	Group study
Saturday, May 5	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study
	1:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehilla
Sunday, May 6	11:00 a.m.	Rabbi's Meeting of the Chevrah Kaddishah, new members welcome!
	2:00 p.m.	Lag B'Omer Picnick: Lutheran Reformed Church garden, Huguenottenstrasse. Bring a vegetarian dish to share, kosher hot dogs; drinks provided.
Wednesday, May 9	4:00 p.m.	Memorial Day concert and buffet
Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg		
Saturday, May 19	5:30 p.m.	Erev Shavuoth services and Tikkun Leyl Shavuoth
Sunday, May 20	10:00 a.m.	Shavuoth morning service and Cheesecake Contest. Bring your favorite cheesecake!
	12:00 p.m.	Children's activity and ice cream party
Outside the Congregation		
Wednesday, May 30	7:20 a.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews. Bus trip to Hamburg, "Jewish Hamburg," €10,- Registration open until May 18th with Polina Pelts. Meeting point: Hameln train station

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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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