



## Dear members of the community, friends and supporters,

L'Shanah Tovah to all of you! May you and your families enjoy good health, happiness, peace and well-being for the coming year 5779!

This summer we've enjoyed unusually hot, sunny weather. We look forward to getting back to a more regular schedule and the High Holy Days bring just that. Beautiful and meaningful services await us all plus interesting meetings, concerts, lectures and celebrations.

Despite the heat and summer break, there were a number of events in our synagogue in July and August that we would like to share with you.

Several of our youngsters attended the summer camp organized and led by the Youth department of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany. Before the campers left, a special service was held wishing them well and acknowledging their hard work at school. This year's religious school class' achievements were celebrated on the last Shabbat in June. The synagogue was adorned with large Hebrew letter pennants, which the children had crafted themselves. All the letters of the Alef-Bet they had learned in the past year were colorfully painted and hung for all to see. In addition, the children performed an Alef-Bet song, getting everyone to sing along. A poster of the Jewish holiday calendar, in which the children had entered the different holidays during the past year and illustrated them with their own drawings, also hung in the synagogue. As a reward for their diligent work, the children received certificates, Alef-Bet stickers and sweets. It was a pleasure to see that the children have discovered how fun learning about Judaism can be. We hope that by the end of the new school year, the white letters will also be colored in. The reading and writing of the Alef-Bet and the knowledge of the Hebrew language are the key to familiarity with Judaism and a secure Jewish identity.

The congregation enjoyed Shabbat services during the summer months and in June, our Rabbi Ulrike was with us for three weekends. Her sermons gave us much to think about and sparked good conversations. In addition to visiting the sick, our Rabbi was busy teaching children and adults and the Giyur candidates. We are very lucky to have such a rabbi in our midst.

Rabbi Ulrike spent the month of July in Israel. There she attended a rabbinical seminar, studying at the renowned Shalom Hartman Institute on her "holidays." While she was in Israel, she also met with Rabbi Ya'ir Tobias. He is a rabbi of the Jordan Valley region in the north of the country. County Commissioner Mr. Tjark Bartels is leading a group of local politicians, business leaders and a representative from our congregation on a week-long trip to establish a city partnership. Representing our congregation is synagogue board member Olga Gerr. We thank Rabbi Offenberg for establishing contact with her colleague Rabbi Tobias and forging plans for our cooperation.

For those of you reading this newsletter and belonging to a synagogue with its own rabbi and regular services, it is hard to understand that this is a problem for us. With a Jewish immigrant population, we are financially taxed to make ends meet. Our members, on an average pay only the minimum annual dues of \$50.00. For American readers especially, this is hard to imagine. If you or your congregation could adopt us as a Mitzvah project or if a donation for the Rabbi's fund is feasible for you, know that you would be helping us immensely. We've worked hard these last 25 years to re-establish Judaism in Hamelin but for this religious life to continue, we need your help. Please contact Rachel Dohme at [racheldohme@jghreform.org](mailto:racheldohme@jghreform.org).

In July, only one service was held, which was lay-led by Rachel and Rebekka. The turnout was amazing, certainly due to the desire of many members to see and hear Rebekka cantor again. Her beautifully clear mezzo-soprano voice carried many worshippers on a musical journey of spirituality. Especially adorable was Rebekka and Amitai's one-year-old baby Taavi, who was lulled to sleep in her arms and through his mother's song. As always everyone enjoyed the delicious Kiddush table set by Liubov.

A lecture in collaboration with the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation "Mod Helmy" was very well attended and resulted in an unknown and compelling story. Here is an excerpt from an article by Wolfgang F. Truchseß:

"It was not so much a reading as a narrative lecture, with the journalist Igal Avidan presenting the story of his research and thus also the story of the Egyptian doctor, Mod Helmy, in an exciting and entertaining way. A surgeon and physiotherapist came across the story of physician Mod Helmy when she opened her practice in 1991 in Berlin-Moabit, right under Helmy's former home. Israeli journalist Igal Avidan, who also lives in Berlin, discovered the story and dedicated time and research, resulting in his book, *Mod Helmy—How an Arab Doctor Rescued Jews in Berlin from the Gestapo.*"







At the invitation of the Society for Christian-Jewish Cooperation, Avidan read from his book and told the story of this courageous doctor in the sanctuary of the Reform Jewish Synagogue Hameln. It was a fascinating story, holding the audience glued to their seats.

Our monthly Senior's Breakfast, sponsored by Aktion Mensch, topic this year is healthy nutrition in ageing. The issue of salt in one's diet was of special interest. There was concentrated interest during the talk about the effect of salt on the body. Many questions followed and continued with the delicious breakfast prepared by Dora Bogachik and Anna Anikina. The buffet included a variety of dishes with vegetables, fish and sweet and savory pastries. Everyone enjoyed the lecture, the lovely table and meeting and communicating with each other.

Another breakfast with a healthy diet took place on 14th August. We talked about nutritional problems for people with Alzheimer's. Basically, it was about the question of which foods can prevent this serious illness. At the meeting, this met with great interest, so that the conversation was continued at the table, which in turn was perfectly prepared by Dora Bogachik and Anna Anikina.

The Sunday Café was also very well attended. The film about the history of Russian Jews aroused much interest. The lively discussion about the film continued with a meal.

Thanks to all who have prepared and participated in these events. We look forward to the next meetings.

During the summer break, our children's group met twice as well. Youth leader Olga Trieskunova reports:

"The thirteenth excursion took place on 10.08.2018. The children and their parents decided to visit the public library in Hameln again. Everyone found something interesting for themselves in the library. In addition to exciting books, the children could also choose interesting CDs to listen to, played different board games together or just colored quietly. In between, they took breaks for snacks. At the second meeting, the children played together at a small playground and talked a lot to each other about the summer holidays and reminisced about summer camp."

Last but not least, Rachel Dohme represented our community, distributed information about our congregation and Reform Judaism and engaged in lively discussions at a World Religions Cultural Festival in the near-by city of Rinteln.



### Jewish life in September

In the special month of September we can look forward to many services for the High Holidays, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah. Erev Rosh Hashanah is the time when we recognize God's kingdom anew. It is taught that the universe with all its creatures is judged. Yom Kippur is the time when the Almighty forgives us after we have done the hard work of reconciling and facing our mistakes and errors in judgement of the past year. At Sukkot and Simchat Torah we rejoice over our renewed relationship with God.

The holidays will be crowned with the generous gift of "Verein Begegnung Christen und Juden in Niedersachsen" - unique, hand-embroidered Torah Mantels by Philadelphia textile artist Mrs. Cheryl Lynch. It will certainly be an awe inspiring moment when the ark is opened for the first time and see the new Torah Mantels in cream and gold-colored silk. The two mantels are embroidered with pomegranates, an arba minim (Sukkot Straus) and a Torah scroll. The donors, members of the "Verein Begegnung Christen und Juden in Niedersachsen" will join us as we admire their gift on Simchat Torah Fest. We are very grateful to Professor Dr. Ursula Rudnick and her organization and Cheryl Lynch.

The Erev Rosh Hashanah service begins on September 9th at 6:00 pm. Join us as we welcome the New Year with apple, honey and vegetarian foods. Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg will conduct the Rosh Hashanah morning service on 10th September at 10.00. We'll enjoy lunch together and then go to the river for the Taschlich ceremony. The Kol Nidre liturgy on September 18th will open our hearts with its haunting tune and commit us to celebrate the holiest holiday of the Jewish year. The next morning our services continue and after Yiskor and Neila prayers, we will break the 25-hour fast together. Of course, children, the elderly or ill should not fast. For our school-age children, school-release forms are available in the office.

On Sunday, September 23, we celebrate Sukkot in the Sukkah in our synagogue courtyard. At 3:00 pm our children will decorate the sukkah and we hope some grown-ups will join in the fun. At 5:30 pm the Sukkot service begins for our Feast of Tabernacles.

On Sunday, the 30th of September at 17.30, we meet again in the synagogue and look forward to it. Do not miss this beautiful festival when we literally hold the Torah as the Torah holds us.

All services are led by Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg.



## Rabbinic Thoughts

The month of Elul has begun and with it the daily Shofar blowing. The Shofar is a wake-up call for our conscience that the High Holidays are imminent and we should prepare for them by doing Repentance (Teshuvah). But Teshuvah is not only a task and a commandment; it is also a unique gift to us, because it opens the possibility for change, for reparation, for a new beginning. It's not about perfecting the ego, often in books on self-optimization. Rather, it's about raising awareness of our limitations. Instead of critically examining ourselves, we often seek the mistakes of others. It is said that angels have four faces and can look in all directions. But we humans only have one face with which we look into the world—and the back of our head is blindly facing backwards. There hide the things that we would rather not perceive; these are the behaviors and habits in which we have conveniently settled. Repentance, however, demands of us an honest willingness to deal with our blind spots. We have to ask critical questions. What went wrong in my life this past year? What relationships have broken and what was my role in it? This process of self-questioning is often accompanied by grief, pain and shame, but there is no shortcut to make it easier. We can not hope that the inner and outer fractures heal by themselves; we have to tackle it ourselves and avoid the usual excuses.

May we muster the necessary strength and patience for this path of repentance, opening ourselves up to new beginnings. May we all be enrolled and sealed for a good year in 5779—a New Year in which we may be blessed with peace, health and happiness.

**לשנה טובה ומבורכת תכתבו ותחתמו!**

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Please note! Our synagogue office is closed on Monday and Tuesday, September 10th and 11th, Rosh Hashanah as well as on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 18th and 19th, Yom Kippur. On the holidays, the regular group activities will not take place.

## Cemetery visits

We will meet for our annual congregational cemetery visits on September 9th at 11:00 am. We will begin at the Cemetery Scharnhorststraße and afterwards at the Cemetery Wehl. Our member and cemetery caretaker Matvei Dvortsis asks for donations for the graves of people who have no relatives. This is a true mitzvah. If you have any questions, please contact the synagogue office! Thank you very much!

## Project “Aktion Mensch”

We will be screening a film and concert on Sunday, September 2, at 3:00 pm dedicated to the work of the composer Boris Prozorovsky. Svetlana Banchukova (vocals), accompanied by Valery Fridman (piano) will perform his works. Literary texts are read by Nadya and Vladimir Pesok. Come and bring your friends!

## Mazel Tov

We congratulate our Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg on being awarded the “Buber Rosenzweig Endowed Professorship” of the EKD. She will teach “Jewish Biblical Interpretation” at the University of Hamburg. There she will introduce theology students to the history and methods of Jewish Bible interpretation. If you are interested in this topic, you do not have to go to Hamburg for it. After every Shabbat morning worship service in our congregation, Rabbi Ulrike conducts a stimulating shiur about the weekly Torah portion. Join us and learn something new!

Boris Kagan's painting exhibition “New and Old,” which was on show at the Hamelin Information Center until August 27th was a great success! We congratulate Mr. Kagan and look forward to further interesting exhibitions.

Our Patrizia Sharon Berhowski can be seen as one of the faces of the WUPJ on their Web site at <http://www.wupj.org>. Patrizia Sharon is portrayed representing young Diasporan Jews who make Aliyah to Israel and who serve in the IDF. We are very proud of her with her parents, Ioulia and Vadim, as well as her big sister, Masha.



## Cultural Festival in Bad Munder

Our community will participate in this year's “Cultural Festival,” which will take place on Saturday, September 29 in Bad Munder. We will demonstrate our cultural work through the dance group “Chag Sameach” and the choir “Shalom.” It is very nice to see how many different clubs, organizations and communities there are now in the district of Hameln-Pyrmont. The stage program will definitely be colorful! A multi-religious service will open this year's Cultural Festival. Our community will be represented by Dieter Vogelhuber and Israel Edelstein. We thank all participants for their cooperation. They are ambassadors of the community and create a positive image of Judaism.

## Get well

We wish all the people of our community, who are going through hard times, good recovery. Our thoughts and hearts are with them.

## Donations — Tzedakah

We sincerely thank the dear members and friends who have supported our synagogue life and the synagogue construction with generous donations.

We thank: Pastor Corinna Engelmann with her church group from Kichbrak and Hunzen, Mrs. Ursula Niedert and Mrs. Rachel Dohme. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



## Tree of Life — Etz Chaim

In autumn we see the colorful leaves on all the trees. So it is with our "Tree of Life" in the synagogue. Please consider ordering a new "leaf" for special occasions, e.g. Birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, wedding, thanks, Yahrzeit, or honors and so also the synagogue donation. Forms are in the office. Many Thanks!

## Thanks — Toda Rabah

We thank:

- Professor Dr. Ursula Rudnick and her organization and textile artist Cheryl Lynch for the beautiful Torah Mantels!
- The Union of Progressive Jews in Germany and the World Union of Progressive Jews for a grant for our rabbi for the High Holidays.
- Mr. Dieter Schulz and our caretaker Mr. Heinrich Moos for refurbishing our synagogue floors.
- All those who help us to make our festivals and many cultural events so beautiful, be it planning, implementation or organization. There are so many regular groups, run by members for members and which benefit so many. We thank everyone and appreciate your commitment.

## Condolences

Our condolences to the Tiktiner family on the death of Mr. Tiktiner, past president and lay leader of the Bad Pymont Reform Congregation.

## Yahrzeit in September

Samson Avrus — September 3, 1999 / 22nd Elul 5759

May the memory of him be a blessing to us. Kaddish is spoken during the services. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office. We ask you to think of a funerary mandate during your lifetime. Forms are available in the office.



Shalom,

Your synagogue board

## [Newsletter Archives](#)

### **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 September 2018 • Elul 5778–Tishrei 5779

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

Sunday, September 2	3:00 p.m.	Sunday Café and Concert, S. Bantchukova, V. Fridman, N.&V. Pesok, Sponsored by Aktion Mensch
Sunday, September 9	11:00 a.m. 5:30 p.m.	Congregational Cemetery services Erev Rosh Hashanah services. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share
Monday, September 10	10:00 a.m. 12:30 p.m.	Rosh Hashanah services Luncheon followed by Tashlich und Torah study
Friday, September 14	2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	Bar/Bat Mitzvah class Giyur class Friday night services followed by Oneg Shabbat Mishnah study
Saturday, September 15	10:00 a.m. 1:30 p.m.	Shacharit services, Kiddush and Torah study Kinder Kehillah
Tuesday, September 18	7:00 p.m.	Kol Nidre services
Wednesday, September 19	10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m. Sundown	Yom Kippur services Yiskor, Ne'ila Break the Fast communal meal
Sunday, September 23	3:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehilla and Sukkah decoration Sukkoth celebration
Sunday, September 30	3:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah Simchat Torah Simchat Torah celebration
<b>Outside the Congregation</b>		
Tuesday, September 25	7:00 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews Lecture: Dr. Steffen Hagemann, "Israel's Statehood" St. Augustinus Church, Lohstrasse
Sunday, September 29	12:00 noon	Cultural Festival in Bad Münder, D. Vogelhuber, I. Edelstein, choir Shalom, dance troupe Chag Sameach