



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

September–October 2020 • Av–Elul 5780, Elul–Tishrei 5781

[JHG Home](#) [Program](#)



Dear members, friends and supporters,

The summer is coming to an end and with it the Jewish year 5780. The month of Elul is marked by preparations for the High Holidays and we look forward to seeing as many as possible again in the synagogue. The Synagogue Board wishes you and your families all the best, health, happiness, peace and well-being for the coming year 5781!

Shanah Tovah!

Rachel Dohme, Olga Gerr and Peter Wendt

Despite the many restrictions due to the Corona pandemic, we met in July and August for the Shabbat services, the German course and the yoga group resumed their activities while observing the AHA rules (distance, hygiene, masks). The children’s Kehilah also met regularly until the beginning of the summer school holidays. At the end of their school year, the children received certificates from Rabbi Offenberg, documenting their learning progress, and a special gift of a book.

Fortunately, our synagogue offers enough space but wearing a mask during the service and restricting singing greatly impairs the joy and ease of our Shabbat celebrations. We also miss our Kiddushim. We meet, share news, break out of our solitude and of course enjoy the Sabbath meal together from the richly laid table. We thank Liubov, who also in the past few weeks baked her delicious Challot to share. During the summer we have used our garden to sit together and, weather permitting, we will continue to move most of our activities outside in the coming weeks. Then we can sit together, sing and eat together without masks. We are observing the infection rate in the county of Hameln-Pyrmont and are keeping all of our health in mind. We very much hope that the number of cases will not increase, but we all need to retain the ability to improvise. Only if everyone observes the necessary safety measures can our community center remain a social place, where on the Shabbat everyone arriving is greeted with a hearty “Shabbat Shalom” and on Friday evening we can sing, “Hinej mah tov umah na’im schevet achim gam jachad” — “How good and pleasant it is to sit together like brothers and sisters.”

Interreligious Dialogue

As part of the integration project “Interreligious Dialogue,” an “Interreligious Women’s Meeting” was planned in June. Representatives from the Judaism, Christianity and Islam wanted to exchange views on the history and traditions of their religions and their practice. This serves to strengthen mutual understanding and good interfaith relations. Due to the Corona Virus pandemic, this meeting had to be cancelled. However, the women would like to stay in touch. So the idea was born to start a conversation with the help of a chain letter. Women from each community created a questionnaire about their experiences and wishes during the pandemic. A small booklet will be created and distributed in each of the religious communities in order to reach a wider audience.

Jewish September

On the eve of September 18th the Jewish New Year 5781 begins with Rosh Hashanah. The schedule for the holidays of the month of Tishri is enclosed, please note the times of worship indicated therein. *All events are subject to change due to Covid.*

As every year we visit the cemeteries before the High Holidays to remember and honor our deceased relatives and members. On September 18th we meet at 11:00 a.m. at the cemetery Scharnhorststraße and then drive to the Jewish cemetery Am Wehl.

The autumn atmosphere of September reminds us of the agricultural harvest. The fruits on the trees and the earth have ripened. This is the time of the year when we Jews experience our High Holy Days. What about the fruits of our lives? Rosh HaShanah is called the “Day of Judgment” because God judges our deeds of the past year, but it is also the “Day of Remembrance” because God remembers us in grace. Our lives are in this tension between responsibility for our actions, the knowledge of our weaknesses and the hope for God’s mercy. Rosh HaShanah, the “head” of the year, is the day when we eat apples with honey and wish each other a sweet new year. Then the ten days of reflection begin, where we can take concrete steps of renewal, both internal and external, each one of us personally. We have the opportunity to correct wrong decisions. The 10th day we reach the highest holiday Yom Kippur, the day of reconciliation.

The evening service on Rosh HaShanah begins on September 18th at 5:30 pm. Afterwards we welcome the New Year with round challot, apple and honey. At the moment a common meal is only possible outside and we hope to sit in the garden.



Rabbi Offenberg will lead the Rosh HaShanah morning service on Saturday, September 19th at 10:00 am. After Kiddush and Schiur we will go together to the Hamel River for the Taschlich ceremony.

On the evening of Sunday, September 27th, Kol Nidre with its haunting melody will open our hearts and get us in the mood for Yom Kippur. We ask for reconciliation from God, and those who are in good health will confirm this by fasting. After the Jiskor and Neila prayers we break the 25-hour fast together on Monday evening, September 28th.

For our school-age children, forms for school exemption on Yom Kippur (and other Jewish holidays) are available in the office.

Rabbinical word

Just throw everything away, leave and start all over again somewhere where nobody knows you — who among us does not sometimes have this thought? To turn over a new leaf or to erase the past with all its mistakes, insults and conflicts — how beneficial would such a drastic change be! But we know that this is not possible, we cannot run away from our lives. We carry our personal biographies around with us like a snail carries its shell. It is not possible to throw off this burden; we can only try to make it lighter by cleaning up our “house.” Which loads can be reduced?

In order to ease us for this difficult process of trial, Judaism has the institution of the High Holidays. For a few weeks of the year we are called upon to look back and reflect on ourselves. Actually, the term “high holidays” does not cover this process; in Hebrew the time of repentance and penance is called “Jamim Nora'im” — the “terrible days,” sometimes translated as “reverent days.” Rosh Hashanah is presented as Jom haDin, “Day of Judgment,” on which we pass before God like the sheep of a flock before their shepherd and are judged according to our actions for a good or bad year, for life or death. At Yom Kippur the judgment is then sealed, and our efforts to show our repentance through fasting and prayer are particularly intense.

This idea is indeed very intimidating; many of us cannot access these traditional images and such a distant concept of God. Perhaps we might be more successful in finding an approach to the Ten Days of Introspection if we understand them as a time of encounter. Encounter with ourselves, encounter with our deeds, our thoughts, with the innermost motives of our actions. What drives us, why do we behave the way we do? What are our weaknesses, what are our strengths, how do we shape our relationships? An honest examination is not always pleasant; it is a judgment with oneself. But only this critical encounter with ourselves makes a new beginning possible. Our goal then is a new beginning with ourselves, with the people around us, reconciliation with the past and new perspectives for the future. Whether we also seek the encounter with God in this process depends on whether our own world view gives God a place. Everyone can answer this question privately and there is no insurance for or against unexpected encounters in the Days of Introspection.

This act of spiritual inventory is vital but not because we yearn for personal perfection or a flawless new beginning, to an originally white, blank sheet of paper. It is not an interruption, but a correction of the path in the middle of a journey. It is this ability to reflect that makes our humanity unique. The Israeli poet T. Carmi writes: “One must therefore get used to starting from the old and always finishing from the new.” The High Holidays can enthrall us when we look at them as a chance for a new beginning from the old.

I wish us all a good, healthy and New Year 5781.

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Bicycle Tour

Our congregation has been actively involved in working toward peace and understanding for more than two decades. As part of the project “Interreligious Dialogue,” a bicycle tour to various places of worship in Hameln will begin on Thursday, September 10th at 4 p.m. It begins at our synagogue in the Bärenstraße, where we will tour our sanctuary, visiting the Lutheran Reformed Church in the Hugenottenstraße and from there to the Mosque in Hunoldstraße.

In each of these places of worship there is the opportunity to learn more about the meaning and traditions of the respective religions.

Informational Meeting

We invite members to an information meeting on Wednesday, September 30th at 11.00 a.m. The topic “New immigration regulations for FSU Jews” will be discussed by Margarita Suslovitsch, social worker, State Board of Jewish Congregations in Lower Saxony. If you are interested, please register at the synagogue office.

Get Well wishes — Refuah Schlemah

We wish everyone who is experiencing illness or going through difficult times a complete recovery. Our thoughts and hearts are with them. Please call the office if you need help.

Loneliness can make people depressed and ill as much as any disease. *Who can you visit?*

Donations — Zedakah

A heartfelt Thank You — Todah Rabbah! We thank members and friends who have supported our community life and the synagogue with generous donations. We thank: Family Beere, Mrs. Scheunpflug, Mr. M. Ovsievych, Mrs. I. Grach, Mr. D. Vogelhuber, Mr. A. Zyryanov, Ute Niedert and Family Dohme.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Members for the Chewra Kaddischa needed!

It is the highest Mitzvah to belong to a Chevra Kaddishah. It is about performing the Taharah, ritual washing and dressing of the deceased. We are looking for men and women who can take on this holy responsibility.

Condolences

Our longstanding member Musiy Khazanov passed away in August. We extend our condolences to his daughter Mrs. Ludmila Doroschenka and family. The funeral of Mr. Khazanov took place at the cemetery Am Wehl.

We also offer our heartfelt condolences to our member Arkadi Zyryanov on the death of his wife Emilie Sheenkova, who died after a long illness. The funeral took place on August 24th, officiated by Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg.

We extend our deepest condolences to our valued custodian, Mr. Moss, on the death of his mother, Adeline Moss.

May the bereaved be comforted in the midst of the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

September Yahrzeit

Samson Avrus — September 3, 1999 / 22 Elul 5759

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



Shalom

—Your Community 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

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

High Holidays 2020 / 5781

Program for September–October 2020 • Av–Elul 5780, Elul–Tishrei 5781

Rosh HaShanah

Friday, September 18	11:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Cemetery visits & Kaddish, Scharnhorststraße and Am Wehl
	5:30 p.m.	Erev Rosh HaShanah
Saturday, September 19	10:00 a.m.	Shacharith Rosh HaSchanah
	12:30 p.m.	Shiur
	1:30 p.m.	Tashlich-Ceremony at the Hamel River

Yom Kippur

Sunday, September 27	6:30 p.m.	Kol Nidre / Ma'ariv Yom Kippur
Monday, September 28	10:00 a.m.	Shacharith Yom Kippur
	6:00 p.m.	Yiskor and Ne'ilah

Sukkoth

Friday, October	2:00 p.m.	Pe'ulah with the religious school and decorating the Sukkah
	5:30 p.m.	Erev Sukkoth services
Saturday, October 3	10:00 a.m.	Shacharith 1st day of Sukkoth

Schemini Azeret and Simchat Torah

Friday, October 9	3:00 p.m.	Pe'ulah with the religious school
	5:30 p.m.	Ma'ariv Erev Simchat Torah
Saturday, October 10	10:00 a.m.	Shacharith Simchat Torah

*HAPPY NEW YEAR 5781
LESHANAH TOVAH TIKATEVU !*