



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

October 2020 • Tishri–Heshvan 5781

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

May you all be inscribed for a good, healthy year 5781.



Remember to follow the rules when you enter the synagogue: social distancing, hand washing and masking up. Please also observe the Kiddush rules and stay seated after the services!

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

As in every year, we visited our cemeteries before the High Holidays. We went to the graves of our deceased members and family and honored each individual with loving stories. Memories offer us emotional bridges to our loved ones, and so it felt as if time stood still as we collectively remembered them. United with them and with each other, we stood as one Jewish community.

We celebrated Erev and Shacharith Rosh Hashanah together in our synagogue. It was good that despite the Corona rules, everyone could find a place to sit. Beitenu (Our House) was full, and we were happy to be able to welcome the year 5781 together. Space was also made available for visitors from Bielefeld and Berlin. As the police stood guard in front of the door, the members could give the service their full attention.

We thank our Rabbi Offenberg for the wonderful services and Volodymyr Pesok for the skillful shofar blowing in a duet with the rabbi. We also thank our synagogue board members Peter, Olga and Rachel, who do so much unseen work for the community, volunteers Zoia, Petro



and Svetlana, who offer their services to our community, our helpful caretaker Heinrich and of course the irreplaceable Liubov.

After morning services we walked to the banks of the Hamel River for the Taschlich ceremony. We had written our transgressions on fallen leaves and tossed them and breadcrumbs into the water. This symbolic act gave a sense of relief and the ducks enjoyed an extra meal!

On the evening of Yom Kippur we heard Kol Nidre beautifully sung by Rebekka Schleier, which touched every heart. The following evening service and the next day-long services on Yom Kippur, led by Rabbi Offenberg, were deeply meaningful and moving. Of course, every heart remembered the tragic events of last Yom Kippur in Halle.

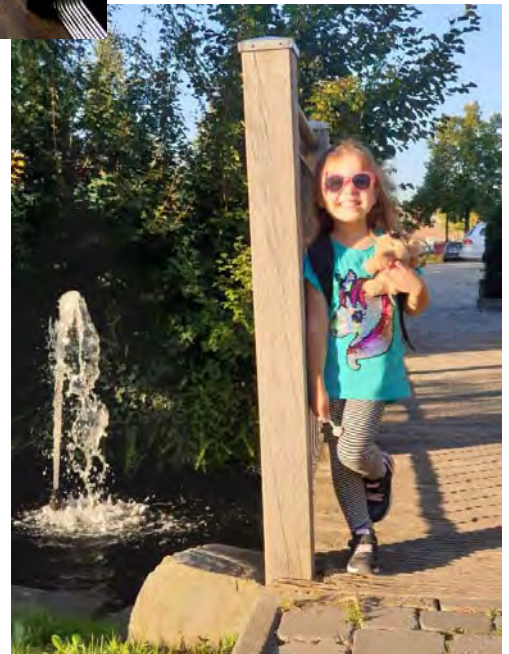
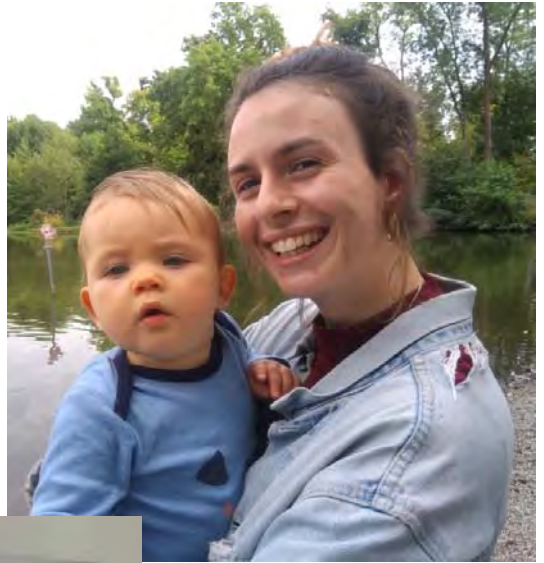
Jiskor allowed us to remember our deceased and to keep their memories alive through our ritual of saying their names aloud and laying of a stone in the glow of the Yahrzeit candle. The Ne'ilah prayer brought our Day of Atonement to a gentle and evocative end. Break the Fast bags were distributed for the way home after a long day of prayers and personal contemplation. We can only hope for a good, healthy and happy New Year. Ken jehi rason! May it be so!



Rabbi's Thoughts

Jewish religiosity is not expressed by rejecting the world and withdrawing to secluded sacred spaces, but strives to create moments of holiness in the midst of our lives. This is achieved through short blessings ("brachot"), which preface a plethora of actions and thus assist us to appreciate the necessities of our life. We always say a blessing before we practice a mitzvah. This begins with washing your hands after getting up and extends to all areas of life. These blessings do not only refer to ritual acts such as putting on the tallit. The sanctification of life is paramount and the mitzvah of saving life ("Pikuach Nefesh") is subordinate to almost all other commandments. Blessings are a way of gaining access to dimensions we associate with holiness that can be found in everyday life. They bring a glow into our lives by tying our actions and our routines back to the great work of creation and meaningfulness. What else is meant by sanctification?

We are currently experiencing that the pandemic is putting all of our certainties to the test. This is also noticeable in our religious services where the commandment to protect life makes many of our usual rituals impossible. No gathering around the Torah scroll, no sociable Kiddush meals, masking up in the sanctuary. Most probably we will feel this again painfully during Sukkot and Simchat Torah. Sitting together in the small sukkah and dancing with the Torah scrolls will not be as we have known it in the past. We are Jews and so we are finding and will continue to find other ways to keep the holidays holy and to be together as a community.



As unpopular as the masks are because they hinder breathing, speaking and communication, they are currently the most suitable means of curbing the spread of the corona virus — and thus protecting lives. The American rabbi Valerie Weinstein took up the Jewish principle of saying a blessing before a godly act (“Mitzvah”) and suggested a brachah for putting on our masks:

“Baruch atah Adonaj, Elohejnu Melech HaOlam, ascher kidschanu bemitzwotaw veziwanu al shemirat hanefesch.”

“Blessed are you, Eternal, our God, Sovereign of the world, who sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us to protect life.”

Perhaps a change of perspective can help us: Not only seeing the masks as a burden, but as part of our Jewish responsibility for our world and for our neighbors (because the masks primarily protect others, not ourselves). A blessing makes it clear to us that we are doing a mitzvah in consideration of our fellow human beings.

We live in extraordinary times, and they require extraordinary behaviors. In adapting to these necessities, we join generations of our ancestors who have preserved Judaism through adversity and brought it to flower again and again. May the New Year 5781 raise awareness of our responsibility, and may we all be preserved in health and solidarity.

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Jewish October

We look forward to Sukkot and Simchat Torah on the first two weekends in October.

We will decorate the Sukkah in our garden together on Friday, October 2nd at 4:00 p.m. The service will begin at 5:30 p.m. Then we celebrate the Festival of Booths with Arba’ah Minim and with nature’s gifts. Rachel’s pear tree produced something to snack on for everyone.

A week later there is reason to be happy again, as we can celebrate the joyous Torah festival, Simchat Torah, together. How pleasant to once again celebrate this festival with our sister community from Bad Pyrmont. On the fourth weekend in October, Shabbat Noah, we look forward to services and of course to Shiurim and the children’s kehillah.

Board election 2021

Our synagogue board is looking for a few more good men and women! Please consider whether you would like to participate in this important work. Together we can do a lot and much more.

Interfaith Dialogue

On September 10th, as part of the “Interfaith Dialogue” project, a bicycle tour to various houses of worship in Hamelin took place. We visited our synagogue, the Catholic church St. Augustinus and the Thiewall Mosque. It was a very successful event and helped build bridges between the religions.



Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Denisa, Stelian, Greta and Samuel on the birth of David Uziel Mima on August 24th. May David live in health, happiness and peace!
The family thanks everyone for their calls, cards, and gifts.

Tree of Life

Three new leaves have sprouted on our Tree of Life.

Donated by Dr. Ivo and Kirstin Schwarzkopf: Helge Dinkela

Donated by the Dohme family: In honor of Taavi Lua Schleier and

In honor of the birth of Finias Tira Schleier

Get well wishes — Refuah Schlemah

We wish all people in our community who are going through difficult times a good and complete recovery. Our thoughts and hearts are with them. Loneliness can sometimes be worse than illness. Who can you visit or call?

Donations — Zedakah

A big thank you Todah Rabah! to all members and friends who have supported our community life and the synagogue with generous donations. We thank the Schwarzkopf Family, the Ovsievyeh Family, Ms. Niedert, Ms. Gibas and the Dohme family. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Condolences

Our deepest condolences to Ms. Irina Yevdokymova on the death of her kind-hearted and esteemed husband, Yevgenij Yevdokymov, who passed away after a long illness. He was a wonderful artist, a helpful friend, a loyal member, a dear father and a caring husband. We will hold him in loving memory. The funeral took place on September 15th under the direction of Rabbi Offenberg. May the bereaved be comforted in the midst of the mourning of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yahrzeit in October

Oleksii Bogdanov	October 10, 2014 / 16 Tishri 5774
Lev Bachmachnikov	October 15, 2017 / 25 Tishri 5778
Vladimir Borishansky	October 29, 2019 / 30.Tishri 5780

May the memory of them be a blessing to us. Kaddish is spoken with family members during services. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office. We ask you to think about a funeral power of attorney while you are still alive. Forms are available from the office.



Shalom,
Your synagogue board

[Newsletter Archive](#)

Program for October 2020 • Tishri–Heshvan 5781

Sukkoth

Friday, 10/2	4:00 pm	Pe'ulah with the religious class
	5:30 pm	Erev Sukkoth
Saturday, 10/3	10:00 am	Shacharith Sukkoth

Shemini Azeret and Simchat Torah

Friday, 10/9	4:00 pm	Pe'ulah with the religious class
	5:30 pm	Maariv Simchat Torah
Saturday 10/10.	10:00 pm	Schacharit Simchat Torah
Friday, 10/23	5:30 pm	Kabbalath Schabbat
Saturday, 10/24	10:00 am	Schabbat Schacharit

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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