



# Jewish Community of Hamelin

Member of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany

Member of the World Union of Progressive Judaism

Member of the Central Council of Jews of Germany

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## Program for November 2009 • Heshvan–Kislev 5770

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

Monday, November 2	12:00 noon	“Judaism” a course in Russian with W. Pesok
Tuesday, November 3	9:00 a.m.	Monthly board meeting
Saturday, November 7	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with R. Dohme
Sunday, November 8	4:00 p.m.	Klezmer Concert: “Benkschaft” & “Duo Hora” Jewish ballads and songs Reformed Lutheran Church, Hugenottenstrasse
Monday, November 9	3:30 p.m.	Memorial service, Bürenstrasse
	4:30 p.m.	Open discussion with Eva & Harold Brown, “My Grandfather” Reformed Lutheran Church, Hugenottenstrasse
Thursday, November 12		<b>Rabbi Irit Shillor’s Visit</b>
	3:00 p.m.	“Rabbi’s Table: Numerology in Judaism”
	4:00 p.m.	Bar Mitzvah class
Friday, November 13	4:00 p.m.	Religious class with L. Blase
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Rabbi Irit Shillor
Saturday, November 14	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Irit Shillor
Wednesday, November 18	11:00 a.m.	Russian Book Club with A. Konstantinova
Saturday, November 21	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with R. Dohme
Sunday, November 22	16:00 p.m.	Senior’s Cafe in honor of Josef Pelts “We came from the Stetl” — a play written by Josef Pelts Directed and produced by Faina Pelts and Svetlana Banschukova
Tuesday, November 24	4:00 p.m.	“Russian Afternoon” with M. Olvovskaja Art History class
Friday, November 27	4:00 p.m.	Religious class with F. Pelts & L. Blase
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services & Birthday Kiddush with Natascha Lyskovoy
Saturday, November 28	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Natascha Lyskovoy

### Activities outside the community

Wednesday, November 4	5:00 p.m.	Interreligious Women’s Group. Hunoldstrasse Mosque “The meaning of Ramadan”
Sunday, November 8	4:00 p.m.	Klezmer Concert: “Benkschaft” & “Duo Hora” Jewish ballads and songs Reformed Lutheran Church, Hugenottenstrasse
Tuesday, November 10	9:00 p.m.	Society of Christians and Jews, “Christians and Jewish Dialogue: Death and Dying” House of the Church, Hamelin

Dear members, friends and supporters,



ended with a "Break-the-Fast" meal, gently ending the cycle of the High Holy Days and fortifying us after the strenuous services for the joyous holidays of Sukkot and Simchat Torah. We bid Rabbi Baird farewell, sending her back to her family in Haifa and looking forward to next year's services with her.

Our Rabbi Irit Shillor's monthly visit coincided with Sukkoth this year, and we happily celebrated the "Feast of the Tabernacles" with her. The inclement weather prohibited us from erecting our Sukka on our land in the Bürenstrasse as planned, but the religious school children decided to create a makeshift Sukka in front of our door. The wind and rain played havoc with it, but we held Kiddush on Friday night and Shabbat morning inside. Everyone had the opportunity to shake the Lulav. Guests from the Reformed Lutheran Church were especially interested in our holiday traditions. The Sukka withstood a week of turbulent weather before being dismantled for Simchat Torah.

We are grateful to the many members and friends who made contributions to our new synagogue in honor of the High Holy Days. More than 1,500 Euros were donated this year. We wish to mention and thank Rabbi Ilana Baird, who donated a portion of her salary. These donations are a sign of our continued dedication toward our goal of building the first Reform synagogue in post-war Germany.

As the cold and blustery month of November approaches, we look back on the moving and meaningful services our congregation celebrated in October. November is known for its uncomfortable temperatures, clouds and rain, but in our congregation one can always enjoy a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Looking back, we remember the moving services, led by Rabbi Ilana Baird at Yom Kippur. Our High Holiday services attendance this year's was the highest ever, a continuing sign of our community's spiritual development. The sanctuary was filled, and we were particularly pleased that so many members from our sister congregation in Bad Pyrmont joined us for the holidays. Kol Nidre was hauntingly sung by our Faina Pelts. The services



Simchat Torah, the festival that celebrates the receiving of the Torah, saw the first visit of our new Abraham Geiger rabbinical student, Natascha Lyskovoy. As is our tradition and as part of the service, we unrolled the Torah, and each and every person held the scroll, gently, lovingly and with respect. Natascha Lyskovoy, standing in the middle of the community and the Torah, read the last and first paragraphs from the scroll.

Making this holiday even more celebratory was the fact that our national youth movement held a leadership training weekend in Hamelin and joined us for our services. The young people's seminar will prepare them to become future youth leaders. They represent the youth of our national movement's



liberal congregations. The Union of Progressive Jews in Germany (UPJ) Youth Director, Galit Reich, introduced our new Israeli Schlicah, Judith Weinberger. Our member Greta Golberg represented our congregation at the weekend seminar. She and the other young people took an active role in the Friday night services, under the direction of Mrs. Lyskovoy. The young people spent their weekend seminar, in part, in our congregational rooms, and it was a pleasure having them. We look forward to their next visit.



Our congregation sponsored a musical highlight, thanks to the generous support of the Central Council of Jews of Germany's cultural program, on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Cantor Jaakov Fahlenkamp, accompanied by the multi-talented Boris Rosenthal, offered a concert of Jewish music, spanning and including liturgy and Klezmer and traditional folk songs. Cantor Fahlenkamp serves the Jewish Congregation Berlin and performs in congregations across Germany, bringing Chasanut and Jewish music, spiced with anecdotes in an entertaining form. The audience was moved by Cantor Fahlenkamps lovely voice. Once again, we wish to thank Pastor Martin Hoffmann and the Reformed Lutheran Church for inviting us to host this concert in their rooms. It was a pleasure to see many of our non-Jewish neighbors in attendance. This cooperation underlines our continual wish to share our beautiful culture and traditions with our neighbors and we see it as a positive step in our inter-religious work.

### **Our Internet Presence**

Those of you reading this newsletter in English are reading the Internet version. The newsletter is also available in print form in [German](#) and [Russian](#) for members and supporters here in Germany. Many hours and many hands and heads go into producing this monthly informational newsletter. Keeping us "online" is no small expense for our small community of 90 percent Russian Jewish immigrants. We recognize the importance of this media tool in connecting and informing others to our congregational efforts and developments. This newsletter has been the most efficient and successful outreach tool in our attempts to network internationally. Many new relationships have been established and built as a result of this newsletter, and we are grateful to all involved. If you would care to help insure that we can stay online, please contact Rachel Dohme at [racheldohme@jghreform.org](mailto:racheldohme@jghreform.org). We appreciate any and all support.

### **Jewish November**

November 9<sup>th</sup> once again reminds us of the tragic events that took place 71 years ago in towns and cities all over Germany. On November 9, 1938, our synagogue in the Bürenstrasse was destroyed by Nazi criminals and no one raised protest. It was the beginning of years of unthinkable terror against our people—against all Mankind.

We will stand together—Jews, Christians, and Moslems, men, women, and children, old and young—and remember in unbearable sadness the horror of those years as we hold memorial services at the site of the former synagogue. Through our tears, we will work for the day when our new synagogue will stand on that very soil.

We are honored to have Eva Brown with us. Eva is the granddaughter of the last president of the Jewish Congregation of Hamelin, Dr. Siegmund Kratzenstein, of blessed memory. Dr. Kratzenstein was interned in Buchenwald, where he was brutally tortured before he was released to die as a result of the mistreatment in Hamelin in late November 1938. A gravestone was finally erected in 2006 for him by the Brown family and our congregation.

Following the memorial service, we invite those interested to a podium discussion with Eva and Harold Brown in the Reformed Lutheran Church. Mr. Hans-Georg Spangenberger will lead the discussion. We hope many people will take advantage of this opportunity to speak with the Browns and hear their story.

On November 8<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m., our newest musical group, "Benkschaft," will offer a Klezmer Concert in the Reformed Lutheran Church. The musicians, Uwe Wolandowitsch, Rudi Brückner and Petr Chrastina, will take us on a musical odyssey with bittersweet melodies from the Eastern Europe of our ancestors. It is certain to be a concert with a special note.

### **Cooperation with the Hamelin Museum**

The Hamelin Museum is currently undergoing major renovations and will reopen in 2010. A very important part of the renovations will involve a new permanent exhibition about Jewish life in Hamelin and the lives of local Jewish families during the Holocaust. The generation who came before us will be shown through the example of the Kratzenstein family.

It is a special honor to welcome back our friends and members, Eva, nee Cranston (Kratzenstei) and her husband, Harold Brown, from Sydney, Australia, who will help assemble the exhibition. The Browns will work with Museum Director Dr. Gesa Snell and museum historians. This valuable cooperation is of religious and historical importance, and we are proud to be part of this effort.

The life of the Kratzenstein family will attempt to give the Holocaust a "face." Instead of talking about "the Jews of Hamelin," one family and their tragic story will exemplify what happened to so many. We feel strongly that this approach will not only tell the story of one Jewish family but also make the reality and brutality of this period more real. The new exhibit will be visited by many school classes and so will touch many young German students in a personal way. It should leave no one unaffected.

There will be many opportunities for our members and local citizens to get to know the Browns during their one-month stay in Hamelin. In addition to attending our religious services, the Browns will be received by Hamelin Mayor Susanne Lippmann, speak at a podium discussion following the memorial service on November 9<sup>th</sup>, be guests of honor at a "Welcome Party" at the Museum on November 11<sup>th</sup>, and also meet with high school seniors during their stay.

We are proud to be actively involved in this important project.



### **Stage Play: *We Came From The Stetl***

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 p.m. we are proud to present *We Came from the Stetl*, a play written by Josef Pelts, of blessed memory. We wish to honor Josef by presenting his play once again in our congregation. Josef wrote the piece in the first years of his immigration to Germany. The story tells of life in a tiny village somewhere near Odessa. The episodes are presented lovingly in music and text. The piece has been directed and produced by Josef's daughter, Faina Pelts, and Svetlana Banchukova. We look forward to seeing everyone there.



### **Behind the Scenes**

As promised last month, we are continuing to showcase special people and groups in our congregation. This month, our focus is on a very special young woman.

Since our inception, our members have been there for each other. Many members have helped others.

Sometimes the members of our congregation remain in our hearts even when they are thousands of miles away from us. Such a person is our young cantor, Rebekka Dohme, who is studying in New York City. We are always happy when Rebekka is home. Her beautiful voice always adds a special touch to our services and means so much to so many. Because so many people enjoy hearing Rebekka's voice, an idea was born. A CD was created featuring Shabbat melodies, which not only will please our ears but will function as a fundraiser for our new synagogue. We are thrilled to hear Rebekka's voice and some traditional pieces with a new interpretation. Rebekka's voice makes you sit up and listen and is proof that music knows no boundaries!

In next month's newsletter we will continue this segment, giving readers a peek behind the scenes of our synagogue's doors.

### **Joshua Wendt will celebrate his Bar Mitzvah on December 12<sup>th</sup>**

Joshua Wendt will be called to the Torah for the first time on Shabbat Vayeshev on Saturday, December 12, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. Rabbi Irit Shillor will lead services with Joshua. Joshua and his proud parents invite everyone to share the joy of this day with them in our synagogue. Joshua has worked, studied, and prepared for two years for this special day, and we are happy to celebrate with him.

### **Greetings from Jerusalem**

Our former Abraham Geiger rabbinical student Adrian Schell is spending his third year in Jerusalem. In order to stay connected to us, he has decided to write a letter to the members each month. This letter will appear in our German and Russian newsletters. In the English version, there will be an abridged summary.

Dear Friends,

*It's become cold in Jerusalem. It's hard to believe we were sitting in our Sukkas only a few weeks ago. Sukkot is such a joyous time in Israel. There are many markets and concerts and one sees a different side of Israel.*

*I'm enjoying my studies here. At the Conservative Yeshiva I am attending, I study with a partner. We read and discuss the texts with one another. Our teacher is always available to help out and add his commentary. You can imagine how loud it gets with 40 students talking at once! I also attend HUC once a week, participating in classes and courses that the Israeli Reform rabbinical students are taking.*

*It's seems to be no coincidence that we're reading and studying Bereschit, "In the Beginning" just as I am at the beginning of my studies here. We read from Creation, the first generations of our ancestors, with their strengths and weaknesses. Here in Jerusalem, we student rabbis also have our strengths and weaknesses but must all work together and grow together as a group. It is not always easy, but we know we are learning things here that will become a part of our lives as future rabbis.*

*A very meaningful example is the solidarity we all feel concerning Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas more than three years ago. We all come from such different backgrounds and cultures, but all Israel celebrated on Sukkot with Gilad's family when news of a video showing him still alive was received. We can hope again that he will be released. In the Reform synagogue where I attended Yom Kippur services, a chair was left symbolically vacant for him. Everywhere Psalm 121 was heard in hope of his release, unifying all Jews and all Israelis.*



שִׁיר, לַמַּעֲלוֹת  
אֲשָׁא עֵינַי, אֶל-הַהָרִים, מֵאֵין יבֵּא עֲזָרִי  
(A Song of Ascents: I raise my eyes to  
the mountains from whence will come my help.)

*B'vracha,  
Adrian*

### Donations — Tzedaka

- We are grateful to the many people who continually support our work and our plans to build a new synagogue.
  - We thank all those who made special contributions in honor of Rosh Hashanah. More than 1,500 Euros was donated by members this year. We wish to thank: Mr. Boris Frid and his wife, Elisaveta, Rabbi Ilana Baird, Mrs. Rimma Kopirovskaja, Mrs.S. Varschavska, and Mr. Lior Blase.
  - We also wish to thank the many concert attendees who contributed to our Synagogue Project. Many thanks!
- May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



### Tree of Life — Etz Chayim

Who will contribute the next leaf? Each leaf not only adorns our sanctuary but also helps us raise funds for our synagogue. Leaves can be ordered through our office or by contacting [Rachel Dohme](#) or on [Tree of Life](#) on this Web site. Each leaf costs a minimum of \$100 (quadruple *chai* plus expenses). Please contribute a leaf and help us to build our synagogue!

Rabbi Ilana Baird contributed a leaf:

- In memory of Evgenia Benzion Meilach

### Mazel Tov — Congratulations

Congratulations to Patrizia Berhovski on her role in this year's performance of *The Nutcracker*, performed by the Frese-Baus Ballet School in Hamelin.

Thank you —Toda Raba

We appreciate and thank our community members who helped make our holidays, services, and celebrations special. Our Sukkot and Simchat Torah services were especially beautiful this year. The homemade dishes were delicious, and we thank everyone who helped with the planning, organization and implementation of our festivals.

Many thanks to our choir "Shalom,": our Israeli Dance Troupe "Chag Sameach," and to Lior, Patrizia and Mr. Medvetskiy, Dieter, Polina, and Elena for their hard work and excellent presentations at this year's "Peace Festival." Once again, our congregation took part in active inter-religious work, representing modern, liberal Judaism.

We are grateful to each and every person and every organization, in Germany and America, for their support of our community.

### **Our Condolences**

Our condolences to the family and friends of our "Friends" member, Mrs. Luise Schwaff, who passed away in October.

### **Unveiling**

The unveiling ceremony for Josef Pelts, beloved husband of Polina Pelts, father of Faina Pelts, grandfather of Inna and Greta Golberg and great-grandfather of Elias, was held on October 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. R. Dohme led the service.



### **Yahrzeit**

Revol'd Banschukov	November 28, 1999 / 19 Kislev 5760
Jan Olvovski	November 25, 2001 / 10 Kislev 5762
Riva Voronova	November 16, 2002 / 11 Kislev 5763
Josef Pelts	November 20, 2008 / 22. Heshvan 5769

May their memory be for a blessing. Please join family members during Sabbath services as we recite Kaddish. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office.

**Shalom,**

**—Your Synagogue Board**