



Rabbinic word

The Hebrew word for “congregation” is “kehillah,” which comes from the root khl, meaning “to come together.” From the same word family comes the term “Hakhel” (pronounced hak-hel), which has a special meaning this year. In the fifth book of Moses, chapter 31, Moscheh speaks to the people of Israel about the future:



“Every seven years, in the jubilee year, on the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God, in the place which He will choose, you shall read the Torah to all Israel. Assemble the people, men, women, and children, and the strangers in your communities that they may hear and learn, and that they may fear the Lord your God, and keep all the words of the Torah and do them. And their children, who do not yet know them, shall hear them.”

Sukkot was a pilgrimage festival where both young and old in Israel made pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate the holidays there. Every seven years, at the end of the Shabbat year, when the soil had not been tilled and the farmers were therefore not occupied with bringing in the harvest, the Torah was read before the crowd that had gathered in the city. This ceremony was called Hakhel (“gathering”). There are differing views as to whether all of the Five Books of Moses were in fact read from beginning to end or just parts of them, but the bottom line was that knowledge of the Scriptures was not just for an elite of scholars, but for all: “men, women, children and the stranger.”

This year we were back in this calendar cycle: Rosh Hashanah was a jubilee year and Sukkot should have been the Hakhel. This ceremony has not been celebrated since the Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. Only with the reestablishment of a Jewish community in the Land of Israel were there attempts to tie in with this tradition again. Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Halevi Herzog, the grandfather of the current President, initiated a Hakhel ceremony in the fall of 1945 — a special train was even used for this occasion to bring pilgrims from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Since then, a mini-Hakhel has been held in Jerusalem every seven years (except for 1973 after the Yom Kippur War), including this year. There were other initiatives around the world: In some synagogues, people came together for a Hakhel, and the entire Torah was recited in an online event for around 16 hours. The renewal of the knowledge of the Torah does not have to be committed only as a pilgrimage.

Comparable to a Hakhel, we celebrate Simchat Torah every year, the festival of Torah joy, which certainly does not coincidentally coincide with the end of Sukkot. We read the last chapter of the Torah and immediately start all over again, carrying the Torah scrolls through the synagogue and dancing with them. And every Shabbat is a repetition of the gift of the Torah at Sinai: It takes place every week when we gather in the synagogue for Shacharit services — not necessarily in front of a crowd of thousands, a minyan of ten people is sufficient for this. It would be nice if some of the enthusiasm with which we danced with the Torah scrolls at Simchat Torah could remind members to attend services in the synagogue on Shabbat morning, creating a minyan and allowing us to read and hear the Torah. Only in this way does the Torah remain the center of a Jewish community (kehillah).

Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Review of the month of October

The holidays of the Jewish month of Tishrei lined up almost seamlessly: Rosh Hashanah/Shabbat/Yom Kippur/Shabbat/Sukkot/Shabbat/Schmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. It was also a time of emotional ebb and flow, between the sadness associated with visiting the cemeteries and Yiskor, and the happiness of sitting in the Sukkah and dancing with the Torah. At this point I would like to say thank you to all those who, through their participation and help, made these holidays a special time. Many thanks to Rabbi Offenberg for leading the services, the drashot and the Torah readings. Thanks to Volodymyr for blowing the shofar. Thanks to Faina for translating the drashot and to Petya for reading the sermon aloud in Russian. Thanks to Liubov for the sumptuous and lovingly prepared meals. Thanks to Masha and Larisa for all the work in the kitchen. Thanks to



Valerij for coordinating transportation and organizational preparations. Thanks to Heinrich Moos for preparing the synagogue and Sukkah for all our holidays and events. Thanks to Matvej for help with setting up chairs and cleaning up. Thanks to Olga for organizing so many necessities from our office. Thanks to Ioulia and to Eva for translating. Thanks to Feana for preparing the cemetery visits and mobilizing members. Thanks to Rachel for all the background help and for the delicious Sukkot pears. Thanks to Tymur for actively helping with Simchat Torah. Thank you to all members who took part in the services and celebrations and each contributed in their own way to making the first weeks of the new year 5783 so festive. May we continue to spend many holidays in such a joyful atmosphere!

Jewish Life in November

November 9th

On Wednesday November 9th we commemorate the destruction of synagogues in Germany by the Nazis. Every year it is important for us to take this sad day as an occasion to commemorate the once flourishing Jewish life in Germany. The memorial service will begin at 4:00 p.m. in front of our Synagogue. Lauren Wellichausen will represent our congregation on piano and voice, singing pieces from Esther Ofarim among others. After the memorial service, Rabbi Offenberg will extend an invitation to all present to join us in the sanctuary for a short presentation.

Havdalah

On Saturday, November 19 at 5:00 p.m. younger members of the community are invited to Havdalah and a movie.

Mitzvah Day

“Mitzvah” is Hebrew and colloquially means “good deed.” We donate our time to bring help and joy where it is needed. This can involve visiting the sick or the elderly, projects with refugees, collecting food for the homeless, planting trees and other similar actions. More than 2,000 volunteers are active every year on Mitzvah Day in Germany to help others. Around 40,000 people worldwide donate their time to make our world a little bit better.

This year Mitzvah Day in our community will be on Sunday, November 20th at 3:00 pm. Under the guidance of Olga and Masha, we will be baking together and making packages for our homebound members. Please join us!

Glikl of Hamelin

The city of Hamelin is not only world-famous for the Pied Piper legend. At least in the Jewish world, the name “Glikl (or Glückel) of Hamelin” is a household name. The merchant woman Glikl bas Judah Leib (1646–1722) became famous because of the memoirs she left behind, which are a rare testimony to Jewish social history. On Sunday, November 20 at 11:00 a.m., Rabbi Offenberg will present a portrait of this important historical Jewish woman and her memoirs at the Hamelin Library Society in the Pfortmühle. All are welcome.

Get well soon

The One who blessed our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and our mothers Sarah, Rebeccah, Rachel and Leah, may also send blessings and healing to all our sick. May they be blessed with patience and strength of heart, and may they be granted full recovery in body and spirit.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Larisa and Matvej Dvortsis on the two great-grandchildren who enrich their family with another generation. May they grow up in health and peace and bring much joy to their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.



Donations — Zedakah

We sincerely thank the members and friends who support our community life and the maintenance of the synagogue with generous donations. This month we would like to highlight: Dr. Rubanov, Mrs. Bartenbaum, Mrs. Niedert and the Dohme family. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

November Yahrzeits

Dr. Siegmund Kratzenstein	11/28/1938 / 5. Kislew 5699
Revold Banchukov	11/28/1999 / 19. Kislev 5760
Jan Olvovskj	11/25/2001 / 10. Kislev 5762
Riva Voronova	11/16/2002 / 11. Kislev 5763
Josef Pelts	11/ 20/ 2008 / 22. Cheshvan 5769
Lev Vinnytskiy	11/21/2013 / 18. Kislev 5774
Dr. Leo Hepner	11/25/2015 / 13. Kislew 5776
Borys Uchiytel	11/22/2018 / 14. Kislev 5779
Dr. Felix Peres	11/21/ 2020 / 5. Kislew 5780



May their memory be blessed. Kaddish is spoken with family members during services. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office.

Shalom,
Your synagogue 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

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Program for November 2022 • Cheshvan–Kislev 5783

Office hours: Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, November 2	6:00 p.m.	Shiur for “Lech Lecha,” via zoom
Friday, November 4	5:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Saturday, November 5	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Shabbat Shabbat “Lech Lecha” B’nai Mitzvah class
Wednesday, November 9	4:00 p.m.	Memorial Service for Pogromnacht 1938 We meet in front of the synagogue
Wednesday, November 16	6:00 p.m.	Shiur "Chayah Sarah", via zoom
Friday, November 18	5:30 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat, followed by Kiddush
Saturday, November 19,	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.	Shacharit Shabbat “Chaya Sarah” B’nai Mitzvah class Havdalah and movie night
Sunday, November 20	3:00 p.m.	Mitzvah Day
Wednesday, November 23	6:00 p.m.	Shiur “Toldot,” via zoom
Wednesday, November 30	6:00 p.m.	Shiur "Wajeze," via zoom

Outside the community

Monday, November 7	6:00 p.m.	“Schanah & Sanah” Conversation between Iman Andrea Reimann and Rabbi Offenberg “Life Cycle in Judaism and in Islam” Topic: Conversion, via zoom
Thursday, November 17	6:00 p.m.	Digital Bible Dialogue Rabbi Offenberg and Pastor Jens Wening talk about Numbers 12/Bemidbar. Encounter Christians and Jews, Lower Saxony eV, via zoom
Sunday, November 20,	11:00 a.m.	“Glückl von Hamelin” Lecture by Rabbi Offenberg, Hamelin Library Society, City Library, Pfortmühle