



Dear members of the community, friends and supporters,

As promised in our last newsletter, we'd like to share this report on the community trip to Braunschweig and Quedlinburg, which was sponsored by "Aktion Mensch" and took place on October 30th. Mrs. Anna Anikina, a participant of the trip, shares her impressions here:



"We were blessed with one of the most beautifully golden autumn days in October as our bus excursion to Braunschweig and Quedlinburg took place. Braunschweig is the city of Duke Heinrich Leo and medieval story-teller Till Eulenspiegel. The city occupies a significant place in the history of Germany. We visited the Cathedral of St. Blasius, one of Germany's oldest churches, saw Germany's largest Quadriga, the Brunswick Quadriga in the Residenzschloss, and visited the oldest Jewish museum in the world, in which the sacred objects and the interior of the Hornburg synagogue are exhibited. In Quedlinburg, whose entire old town together with the castle is protected by the UNESCO as a world treasure, we enjoyed a tour of the city. The charm of this small town made a pleasant impression on us. The excursion was accompanied by interesting stories about the history of Germany. We thank the congregation and "Aktion Mensch" for this informative, interesting and unforgettable journey."

Now to the events of November:

80th anniversary of the Pogromnacht 1938



On the 80th anniversary of the November Pogrom of 1938, we and citizens of Hamelin, including Hamelin Mayor Claudio Griese, diverse politicians and religious leaders all met to remember the day our former synagogue was burned down, Jewish homes and businesses were sacked and looted, and Hamelin Jews were chased, beaten and arrested by the Gestapo. It was the beginning of the end of German Jewry, as the world knew it. The memorial service in front of our synagogue reminded us all—those who have never forgotten and those who need reminding—of the persecuted Jewish children, women and men of our city. The Society for Christians and Jews invited three students from the Viktoria Luise-Gymnasium to read the names of the more than 100 murdered Hamelin Jews. Rabbi Offenberg sang the El Male Rachamim and led us in the recitation of Kaddish. Our synagogue choir Shalom, under the direction of Petr Chrastina, accompanied the commemoration. After the wreath-laying ceremony by our members Aron Kaplan and Dieter Vogelhuber, all in attendance were invited to Yiskor services in the synagogue. It was moving to see how many people sat in the sanctuary with us. Rabbi Offenberg included in our commemoration the 11 murdered in Pittsburgh. After a short break, we commenced Kabbalah Shabbat services, demonstrating that despite persecution and anti-Jewish sentiment in the past and present, we will not stop working to strengthen Jewish life in Hamelin today. The lyrics of the Yiddish song, "Zog nit Keynmol, Wir sind da!" (We are here!) never rang more true.

Senior breakfast and Sunday café

We meet with our seniors once a month for breakfast and once a month for cake and coffee. These activities are generously supported by "Aktion Mensch." The senior breakfast is becoming increasingly popular. At each meeting healthy nutrition is the accent. We meet, eat and learn!

On Tuesday, November 13 we talked extensively about teas and their health benefits. Sunday café on November 25th was also enjoyed by our "young at heart." We would like to take this opportunity to thank our BFD workers, Svitlana Hladchenko and Anna Anikina, who lovingly prepared the food and the table.

Mitzvah Day

The "Day of Good Deeds," an international Jewish institution, took place on Sunday, November 18. Jews of all ages participate in this day of Mitzvot worldwide. Our community took part, as in every year. Together, we made Hanukkah gifts and decorations for the elders of our community. We hope they will enjoy decorating their homes for the Hanukkah festival. Everyone worked with great joy and inspiration. It was fun to do something for others together. The "Mitzvah Day" ended with a concert by our choir "Shalom," who sang popular Hebrew, Russian and Israeli songs. On this day we donated our time to bring help and joy where needed. It was not about money but about experiencing in the community that everyone—really everyone—can make our world a little bit better. Our thanks go to all involved. Please enjoy the photo collage of Mitzvah Day 2018.

Mitzvah Day 2018



Reformation Day

For the first time in our state of Lower Saxony, a new public holiday, Reformation Day, was celebrated. Our community participated in interfaith events for this day. In four separate discussions, our chairman Rachel Dohme and Rabbi Offenberg discussed with representatives of Christian churches the Reformer Martin Luther and his virulent anti-Semitism.



Jewish life in December

Our Festival of Lights, Hanukkah is more than a feast day; It's an eight-day spiritual journey. Many people know the story of the triumph of a small group of Jews fighting against their Greek oppressors, and of the small jar of oil, which according to legend, was enough to re-ignite the Temple's Great Menorah and burn for eight days instead of only one day. We can truly experience the spirit of the Hanukkah Festival as we bring its joy, warmth and light into our lives—not just in our families but toward the whole world.

This year Hanukkah begins on December 2nd and ends on December 10th. At 3:00 p.m. the children and parents will meet for a family afternoon of crafts, singing and Hanukkah games, followed by our congregational Hanukkah Party, on Erev Hanukkah (this year, Sunday, December 2) with Rabbi Offenberg. After Candle Lighting with

our children's group, we can all enjoy a concert from "The Klezmer Tunes." Their program is called "Back to Odessa." We thank the German Central Council of Jews for this cultural treat and hope that many members and guests will come to our party. The children will receive small gifts, we'll eat latkes and sufganiyot and have some Hanukkah fun. See you there!

The next day, Monday, December 3rd at 7:00 p.m. we will light the second candle in our Hannukiah and then begin an interfaith conversation with the Christian-Jewish Society's Hans-Georg Spangenberg and Rabbi Offenberg about "stories and songs around Hanukkah and St. Nicholas"! Don't miss it!

Rabbinic word

Hanukkah means "dedication"—and what is meant is the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after the Maccabee rebellion in 164 BCE. Our Hanukkah candelabra still reminds us of the miracle of that one small jar of oil, which not only burnt for one day but eight days until new oil could be procured. In essence, Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the few over the many, the weak over the strong and the preservation of one's identity. The Temple was rededicated. A good 230 years after this military and spiritual victory, the sanctuary was destroyed again, this time by the Romans and since then not rebuilt. For a long time, Judaism mourned this loss (in some of our liturgy, this grief is still present today), but it was wisely decided to build the religion instead of the Jerusalem Temple again, to support and strengthen many small but important wells of Jewish life. These include the synagogues and teaching institutions but also individual Jews. Our focus is not on the offering of sacrifices in a central place, but on the implementation of the Jewish teachings in our everyday lives.

A story from the Midrash Avot de Rabbi Nathan illustrates this change: "Once Rabban Yohanan ben Sakkai went out of Jerusalem. His disciple, Rabbi Yehoshua, went after him and saw the ruined temple. Rabbi Yehoshua said, 'Alas, that it is in ruins—the place where one could atone for the sins of Israel.' Rabban Yohanan ben Sakkai answered, 'My son, do not let your heart be heavy. We have a form of atonement that equals that.' 'And which is it?' 'This is the accomplishment of good deeds (Gemilut Hassadim), as the Bible says (Hosea 6: 6): "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings".'

With Hanukkah we remember the Temple that was destroyed 2,000 years ago, but we no longer need it as a place of worship. The preservation of Judaism proves how much we let it guide us in our lives. At Hanukkah we light a candle, adding one each day until on the 8th night all eight candles burn brightly. Especially in the darkest time, we should multiply the light, so that we can feel it in our lives. This doctrine applies to us through the whole year, whatever the darkness is—injustice, strife, sorrow, suffering . . . "Each individual is a small candle, and together we are a strong light."

—Your Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg

Greeting the New Secular Year

The community will welcome the year 2019 on Tuesday, January 8, at 4:00 p.m. Many members are involved in the preparation of this event, which makes us very happy. There will be entertainment and delicious food. Please register at the office until the 20th of December. Admission: 10 € per person for members, 15 € for non-members.

Get well

We wish all the people of our community who are ill at home, in hospital or in care facilities a good and complete recovery. Our thoughts and hearts are with them.

Donations — Zedakah

We sincerely thank the members and friends who share our community life and support our synagogue's upkeep with donations. We would like to pay special tribute to the Scheunpflug family, Mr. Mark Judelson, Mr. Alex Gogulinski, Mr. Dieter Vogelhuber, Mrs. Elisabeth Pfeiffer, Mrs. Anna-Lena Held and her 11th grade class, Mrs. Zischkale-Henßen, Ith Education Center, the Evangelical Lutheran Church Association Hameln-Holzminden, Mrs. Rachel Dohme and Mrs. Ursula Niedert. May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Tree of Life — Etz Chayim

One can commemorate special occasions through the leaves, e.g., birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, wedding, thanks, Yahrzeit, memories or honors, and so also support our synagogue's upkeep.

Newly added:

- Ms. Genrietta Bachmatchnikova "In memory of my beloved husband Lev Bachmatchnikov"
- Alex Gogulinski "In loving memory of Zinaida Gogulinska from her grandchildren"
- Family Dohme "In honor of the life of Gerd Scheunpflug"

Thanks — Todah Rabbah

We are filled with gratitude and deeply moved that the Scheunpflug family helped us raise money for our rabbi's salary by requesting donations in lieu of flowers and wreaths at the funeral of husband and our foundation member, Mr. Gerd Scheunpflug, of beloved memory. We will remember Gerd Scheunpflug, of blessed memory, who always supported us in life and in death. In appreciation of the life of Gerd Scheunpflug, a new leaf can be seen on the Tree of Life.

We would also like to thank our member, Mr. Israel Edelstein, who helped the Hamelin Lutheran Church's cantor, Mr. Stefan Vanselow with the pronunciation of Hebrew texts for their Leonard Bernstein concert, "Psalms".

We thank all those who help us again and again to make our festivals and cultural events so beautiful. We appreciate your commitment very much.

Deepest Sympathy

With deep sadness we mourn the loss of our dear member Borys Uchytel, who died on November 22nd after a long illness. Borys was a shining example of making lifelong Jewish learning a priority. We will miss him very much and never forget his positive outlook on life and his dedication to Judaism. Our deepest condolences to his family.

Yahrzeiten in December

Roza Chirita	12/1/2000 / 4. Kislev 5761
Frida Dachkevich	12/3/2001 / 18. Kislev 5762
Grigori Drabkine	12/7/2005 / 6. Kislev 5766
Igor Fuksa	12/5/2006 / 15. Kislev 5767
Genrich Leimunski	12/29/2006 / 8. Tevet 5767
Ira Leimunskis	12/3/2011 / 7. Kislev 5772
Milja Golberg	12/18/2012 / 5. Tevet 5773
Mikhail Timonin	12/14/2015 / 2. Tevet 5776
Jakovs Judelsons	12/5/2015 / 3. Tevet 5776



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

We wish our congregation a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas to all our Christian friends and a Happy New Year 2019 to all!

Shalom!

Your board

Program for December 2018 • Kislev–Tevet 5779

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

Please note that the synagogue will be closed from December 24 2018 to January 2, 2019. In an emergency, call Rachel Dohme.

Sunday, December 2	3:00 p.m.	Chanukka Family Afternoon Arts and Crafts, Chanukka songs, Dreidel and games—everything about Chanukka with Rabbi Offenberg
	4:30 p.m.	Chanukka Party with Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg. Concert: “The Klezmer Tunes” sponsored by the German Central Council of Jews
Monday, December 3	5:00 p.m.	Monthly board meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Interfaith dialogue & 2nd Chanukka candle lighting In Cooperation of the Society of Christians and Jews with Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg and Hans-Georg Spangenberg, “Chanukka and Advent songs and readings”
Tuesday, December 11	11:00 a.m.	Breakfast Club “Healthy Nutrition” with the friendly support of “Aktion Mensch”
Friday, December 14	2:00 p.m.	Bar/Bat Mitzvah class
	4:00 p.m.	Giyur class
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services followed by Oneg Shabbat
	8:00 p.m.	Mishnah study
Saturday, December 15	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services, Kiddush and Torah study
	1:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah I
	2:30 p.m.	Kinder Kehillah II
Sunday, December 30	3:00 p.m.	Sunday Café „New Year 2019!“ with the friendly support of “Aktion Mensch”

[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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