



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

January 2018 • Tevet–Shvat 5778

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We wish all members, friends and supporters a healthy and happy 2018! We would like to thank all our employees and volunteers. Your tireless work enriches and supports so many ways and without you, the ideals and goals of our congregation would hardly be possible.

We kindly remind members and our friends to transfer their annual dues. Thank you very much!



Before we welcome 2018, let's reminisce about the beautiful services and events in December.

Our community Chanukkah festival took place on December 12th. The synagogue twinkled and sparkled with Chanukkah decorations in many happy colors. The decorations dangled from the walls and gave the already warm atmosphere of our sanctuary a special holiday touch. After retelling the Chanukkah story, Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg lit the first candle and sang the blessings with our children. The congregation joined in as we sang the traditional Hanukkah anthem "Maoz Tzur" together.

*Rock of Ages let our song,
Praise thy saving power;
Thou, amidst the raging foes,
Wast our sheltering tower.
Furious they assailed us,
But Thine arm availed us,
And Thy word broke their sword,
When our own strength failed us.*

The children received Channukah gift bags in blue and silver, filled with sweets and dreidels, prepared with love by Olga Gerr and Lucia Zajtchenko. The rest of the congregation did not go home empty handed.

Faina Pelts had organized a concert, thanks to the kind support of the Central Council of Jews in Germany. Young and old were musically mesmerized by the talented "Berlin Oriental Group." Hands were clapping, feet were stomping, and it wasn't long until people were up and dancing to Klezmer and Israeli tunes.

The Chanukkah buffet beckoned, lovingly prepared by Liubow, and members and guests enjoyed the delicious food, which was baked or fried in oil. Potato latkes and sweet, jelly-filled sufganiyot, fruits and sweets pleased the stomach as well as the eyes! Dreidelspiele and lively conversations let the evening come to an end hours later. Thanks to all who participated and helped.

Rabbinic word for the newsletter, January 2018, of the Jewish Community Hamelin

As I write these lines, the longest night of the year is still ahead of us. The period up until the winter solstice can be difficult and not only in a physiological sense (Vitamin D!). We need light. It is no wonder that we celebrate our Festival of Lights in this season. A look at our surroundings shows us that Christmas is also celebrated as a festival of lights.

Each evening, we light one more candle on our chanukkia and on the eighth day, all eight candles shine brightly out into the night and announce that darkness can be overcome.

The Babylonian Talmud (Avodah Sarah 8a) tells a story of Adam, the first human being. In the first year after his creation, he had no experience with the cycle of the seasons and only saw how winter days were getting shorter and shorter. He was startled and said, "Alas, perhaps I have sinned and therefore the world around me is getting darker until one day it returns to its original state of chaos and dissolution?" Frightened, he fasted for eight days. The winter solstice occurred and Adam noticed that the days were getting longer again. Then he calmed down and stated, "So that's the way of the world" and held an eight-day celebration, a kind of precursor holiday for our Hanukkah!

Even though light and darkness on earth are the result of cosmic processes and thus beyond our influence, our soul has a deeper answer to that. Our personal behavior does not affect how many hours a day the sun shines on the earth, but it does affect what moments we perceive as light and those we perceive as dark. We cannot change the course of the world, but our souls can sometimes be bathed in darkness in broad daylight, and conversely, in the middle of the darkness, feel light.

And this is precisely what Hanukkah is about—that we perceive a light, even if it is still very small in the beginning, and that we spread light into the world, so that it also shines into the souls of other people. It is not merely a matter of a match and a candle, but an act of devotion to our neighbors and to the world.

—Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg





Jewish January **Day of remembrance**

On the 27th of January our congregation together with the city of Hamelin will observe a day of remembrance. On January 27, 1945, Red Army soldiers freed the survivors of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, the largest extermination camp of the Nazi regime. This memorial day was set by the German Federal President Roman Herzog on January 3, 1966.

Author Natasha Wodin considers a rarely discussed element of the Holocaust in her book, which she based on her own family history: forced slave labor during the Shoah.

The “Hamelin Forum” invites all interested citizens at 6:00 p.m. on January 27th in the Weserbergland Center for a reading of her extraordinary book, *She came from Mariupol*. Admission is free.

New Year’s reception

On January 9, 2018, we will celebrate the beginning of the new secular year together. Come and celebrate with us. It will be a wonderful evening with lots of good music, delicious food and great entertainment.

Informational Meeting: “Russian Pension”

On January 15 we are offering an informational event concerning those members who are Russian citizens and therefore eligible for pensions from the Russian government. The meeting also serves to prepare for the visit of the Russian consul, who will come to us on February 1st. Both events take place at 11.00 am.

Annual General Meeting

In 2018 we will be holding board elections. If you’d like to run for our important honorary board work, you should contact the community office. Please remember to pay your membership dues for 2018.

Get well wishes

We wish all those in our community who are currently experiencing illness at home, in the hospital or in a care facility a complete recovery. Our thoughts and hearts are with them.



Thanks — Toda Raba

Thank you, Rabbi Offenberg, for the lecture for the Society of Christians and Jews on Chanukkah and Chanukkah worship. Many people profited from it.

Thanks to the Berlin Oriental Group and Central Council of Jews of Germany for the Chanukkah concert and to Faina for the organization.

Todah Rabah to Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg for her first year as our rabbi and spiritual leader!

Donations — Tzedaka

We sincerely thank the dear members and friends who have supported our congregational life and our synagogue maintenance with generous donations. Thank you to the 11th grade of the Elisabeth-Selbert-School, the Mima family, Mrs. Niedert, Mrs. Dohme, Mrs. Gibas, Mrs. Schwigon, Mr. Lebedinskiy, Mrs. Bruns and Mrs. Pfeiffer.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

Tree of Life — Etz Chaim

Even in the winter months, our tree needs new leaves. Can you help? The cost of each leaf is \$100, quadruple chai: \$18 x 4 (plus expenses). Each donation represents the performance of four mitzvot:

1. A donation to help support the rebirth of Progressive Jewish Life in Germany by building a new synagogue.
2. The celebration of a simcha or the remembrance of a loved one.
3. Raising the spirits of Russian Jewish immigrants in Germany who are trying to embrace the beautiful traditions and customs of Judaism.
4. One mitzvah leads to another!



Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to our friends and supporters, Nani and Austin Beutel, who were honored in December in Boston (USA) with the WUPJ Humanitarian Award. No one deserves it more!

We congratulate the choir director of our group “Shalom,” Peter Chrastina, on his 60th birthday. We wish him good health and all the best.

Yahrzeit in January

Chaja-Rahel Kruchkovitch 29. 01. 2003 / 26. Shevat 5763

Larissa Shapiro 4. 01. 2013 / 22. Tevet 5773

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



Shalom and Happy 2018!

—Your board

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

Thursday, January 4 10:00 a.m. Monthly Board Meeting (Board members only)

Tuesday, January 9 4:00 p.m. New Year Reception, €10,- p.P.

Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg's weekend

Friday, January 12 4:00 p.m. Gijur class
5:30 p.m. Friday night services
8:00 p.m. Mishna Study Group, Tractate Berachot

Saturday, January 13 10:00 a.m. Shacharit services and Torah study
4:30 p.m. Kinder Kehilla and Family Havdallah ceremony

Monday, January 15 11:00 a.m. Informational meeting for pensions in Russia

Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg's weekend

Friday, January 26 4:00 p.m. Gijur class
5:30 p.m. Friday night services
8:00 p.m. Mishna Study Group, Tractate Berachot

Saturday, January 27 10:00 a.m. Shacharit services and Torah study
1:30 p.m. Kinder Kehilla

Monday, January 29 1:00 p.m. Lecture: "Safety at Home," Police Officer Mr. Oliver Bente

Events outside the Synagogue

Saturday, January 27 6:00 p.m. Holocaust Remembrance Day, Reading with Natascha Wodin, Weserbergland Center

[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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