



# The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter



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February 2012 • Shevat-Adar 5772

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

**Please remember to pay your annual membership dues. The congregation depends on everyone to pay promptly in order that we can continue our work.**

The month of February has a special meaning for our congregation. We look back to our beginnings and look forward for what it yet to come.

Our members enjoyed a New Year's reception on January 5th. Volunteers shared many hours of preparation, which resulted in a lovely evening for all. Our house, "Beitenu," has become the focal point for many members, and such an evening gave many a feeling of home. Irina Jevdokima said, "The evening was lovely and felt like being with a big family at home. The food was excellent." Aleksandra Konstaninova added, "Everything was so well organized. Special thanks go to the Bogachick family and their team of helpers who created such a delicious meal. I felt like I was at a family dinner." Sinaida Gogulinska reported, "I felt transported back to my former home with my Mischpoche, flooded with pleasant memories from my youth. In my many years as a teacher, we often had similar celebrations, and it reminded me of them. Thank you!"

Our congregation has enjoyed years of cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews. The positive inter-religious work has not only added to better understanding of our Jewish Reform religious and cultural practices but also resulted in active support for our congregation from the local community. Polina Pelts and Rabbi Irit Shillor welcomed Professor Dr. Ursula Rudnick from Hannover in our sanctuary where she gave a fascinating lecture. We were particularly pleased to welcome so many guests to our synagogue. She spoke about theological changes within the Lutheran church with regard to Judaism.

Congregational vice president Polina Pelts and several of our members accepted the invitation of Hamelin's mayor and the German Women's Club to represent our congregation and our participation at the formal conclusion of the "Women's Archives."

January 27th is international Holocaust Remembrance Day and recalls the liberation of the concentration camp in Auschwitz in 1945 by Soviet troops. A theatre piece entitled *Address Unknown*, based on a book by Kressmann Taylor, marked the day. We remember and remind and call upon all to show civil courage in the face of racism in all its forms. Never again!

## 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 of our congregational efforts and developments. And 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 us stay online, please contact Rachel Dohme at [racheldohme@ighreform.org](mailto:racheldohme@ighreform.org). We appreciate any and all support.





## Jewish February

Please join us on February 8th as we celebrate our annual congregational Tu BiShevat Seder. We can read in the Torah that a tree can only be harvested after it has grown for at least three years. Our Seder celebrates the “first fruits,” and we will taste fruits and nuts, juices and wine together as we recall this beautiful tradition, which has its origins in the 16th century. The Torah teaches us that we are akin to a “tree in the field,” held by our roots and yearning toward the heavens. We seek to understand our relationship with God and its meaning. Similar to a tree, we hope our lives leave something of value behind.

During the Seder, we imagine the fruits growing in Israel and feel connected with our spiritual homeland.

After the Seder an interesting lecture will be offered in the Museum. Dr. Gesa Snell will offer a look into the Museum archives as she presents the history of Hertz Joseph, a merchant who lived and worked in Hamelin in the 18th century.

The roots of our past and the fruits of our future—joined on one day.

## Rabbis, Rabbis, Rabbis!

February will see our congregation blessed with visits from rabbis and rabbinical students.

We always look forward to our rabbi’s monthly visits. Rabbi Irit Shillor will celebrate our one year dedication anniversary with us on February 17th and 18th. What a special moment we will share together. Rabbi Shillor will talk about the many “firsts” we’ve experienced this year.

Abraham Geiger Rabbinical student Natascha Lyskovoy will also be with us in February. On February 3rd and 4th she will be accompanied by Rabbi Dr. Tovia Ben-Chorin and his wife Adina. It is an honor to welcome the Ben-Chorins to our synagogue.



## New Series with Rabbi Irit Shillor

The new series has gotten off to a good start und we look forward to each month’s installment as we explore different topics from a Reform perspective. In February we’ll look at the laws pertaining to food, and in April the topic will be “Relationships.” The series will continue with new topics decided upon by the participants.

## Birthday Celebrations

Our congregation made history on February 18, 1997, with the founding of the first Jewish congregation in post-war Hamelin. Our congregation re-established Jewish life, so brutally destroyed, in our city. The lifeline of Judaism pulsated again. Just as the pre-war Jewish congregation, we have taken our place in the religious, cultural and social landscape of our city. During the last fifteen years, with patience, love and respect, we have reinstated Reform Judaism in all its myriad facets for each other and our non-Jewish friends and neighbors.



History was written again on February 20, 2011, with the dedication of the first newly constructed Reform synagogue in post-war Germany. Our new synagogue, aptly named “Beitenu” (our house), stands proudly today on the exact spot where the Hamelin synagogue stood until its destruction at the hands of the Nazis on November 9, 1938. Today, a year later, our Synagogue is a central meeting place in Hamelin for learning and prayer. It has become a central part of many people’s lives, changing them for the good.

With heartfelt gratitude and humility, we thank Nani and Austin Beutel for the generous donation they have made to our library and education programs. Coincidentally, the donation comes as we celebrate this special birthday and anniversary. The Beutel family is known for their unwavering support of the World Union for Progressive Judaism and their congregations. Several of our members have profited from attending the excellent “Beutel Seminar” in Israel. We thank the Beutels for their recognition of our work, patience and perseverance and honor them for their generosity.

We invite all our members and friends to celebrate with us as Rabbi Shillor leads us in a festive service on Friday, February 17th. The synagogue choir “Shalom” will help us welcome Shabbat as we look back and ahead. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.

### **Street Sign**

We thank the city of Hamelin for putting up a new street sign and making it official that our address is “Bürenstrasse, Synagogenplatz 1.” This gesture shows the support of the city for our synagogue and our community.

### **Annual Membership Meeting**

Members will receive an invitation to our annual membership meeting, including a proxy voting form. We have elections this year and hope for a good turnout. Make your voice heard!

### **Refu’ah Shlemah — Get Well Soon**

We pray for the continued recovery of Dr. Ferdinand Dohme and all who are ill.

### **Tzedakah — Donations**

We thank our members and friends who support our community life and the building of our synagogue with generous donations.

We thank the group “Benkschaft,” Mr. David Arnovitz, Mrs. Sabine Demuth, the Lutheran Church Choir “Open my LIPS” in Lüdge, Herr Adolf Späth, Herr Hans Weltner and Rachel Dohme.

We especially wish to thank Nani and Austin Beutel, Toronto, for their most generous donation, which will be used for our synagogue library and educational programs in our congregation.

May they all be blessed for their generosity.

### **Etz Chayim — Tree of Life**

Especially during the cold and dreary winter months we will need new leaves for our tree. The tree offers our members, friends and supporters the opportunity for two mitzvot (good deeds) at once. One can commemorate special occasions, such as births, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, weddings, Yahrzeits and special honors and also support the maintenance of our synagogue. Thank you!

### **Todah Rabah — Thank You**

We wish to thank Polina Pelts for everything she does quietly and competently behind the scenes, especially in these months when our congregational president has had to be absent.

We thank everyone who helped in making our holidays and cultural events very special. Our thanks go to everyone who plan and organize activities in our community.

Thank you to everyone who helped organized the visit of the Russian consulate. We are pleased to help our Russian members and other Russians living in Hameln, who we hope will become members soon.

### **Yahrzeit in February**

Anna Raik	February 12, 2000 / 6th Adar I 5760
Vladimir Legkov	February 7, 2003 / 6th Adar I 5763
David Saks	February 2, 2008 / 30th Shevat 5768

May their memory be a blessing. Kaddish will be recited during our Shabbat services. Yahrzeit candles can be bought at the community.



**Shalom! — The Community Board**

## Program for February 2012 • Shevat–Adar 5772

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

### Student rabbi Natascha Lyskovoy's visit

Friday, February 3	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services Honored guests: Rabbi Dr. Tovia Ben-Chorin and Adina Ben-Chorin
Saturday, February 4	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study Honored guests: Rabbi Dr. Tovia Ben-Chorin and Adina Ben-Chorin
Monday, February 6	12 noon	“Judaism” a course in Russian
Tuesday, February 7	1:00 p.m.	Monthly board meeting
Wednesday, February 8	5:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	<b>Tu BiShevat Seder</b> with R. Dohme Dr. Gesa Snell, Hameln Museum: “Hertz Joseph—a merchant from Hamelin”
Saturday, February 11	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with F. Pelts & P. Wendt
Wednesday, February 15	11:00 a.m.	Russian Book Club with A. Konstantinova
<b>Rabbi Irit Shillor's monthly visit</b>		
Thursday, February 16	3:00 p.m.	Rabbi's Table: “Kaschrut from a Reform perspective” Questions and answers with Rabbi Shillor
Friday, February 17	5:30 p.m.	Festive Friday night services in celebration of our one-year dedication with Rabbi Shillor and Choir Shalom. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.
Saturday, February 18	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Shillor
Friday, February 24	11:00 a.m.	“Russian Afternoon” with M. Olvovskaja, Art History class
Saturday, February 25	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with F. Pelts & Heidi Braun
Sunday, February 26	3:00 p.m.	“Young and Jewish Jr.” with Marysol Fischer

### [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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