



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

February 2015 • Shvat–Adar 5775

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2015!

Please remember to pay your annual membership dues. The congregation depends on everyone to pay promptly to enable us to continue our work.

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Let's begin by looking at all the events which took place in our congregation in the chilly month of January.

The congregation's New Year Reception was held on Sunday, January 4th. The evening was enjoyed by one and all, everyone helping in the organization or preparation, the setting up, the rehearsals and musical program or the cleaning up afterwards. It was a fun-filled evening, ushering in the year 2015 from our members for our members.

Rabbi Sascha Lyskovoy and his wife, Natascha, visited our congregation for the first time in January. Many members were excited to meet Rabbi Lyskovoy. He taught and led services, and this time the accent was on Russian. Members sat on the edge of their seats during his sermon. Afterwards one member was overheard to say, "I'm so impressed with him, I'm coming again tomorrow morning!" What a compliment!

Our Youth leader Patrizia offered the "Netzer Kids" and their parents a trip to our sister congregation in Hannover. Our little group took a train to our state capitol and enjoyed a day of fun and activities with Netzer Hannover in "Etz Chayim," the Reform Congregation of Hannover. We hope to be able to offer more joint activities in the future. Patrizia invites all the youngsters to meet her in our synagogue on February 4th for a Tu B'Shevat activity and Seder.

Polina Pelts invited seniors to a breakfast get-together mid-month. Our elders enjoyed being served a delicious meal and having the chance to catch up on each other's family news. There's never a loss for news from family here and in the FSU. Polina was joined by Olga Gerr who brought an idea to decorate clay flower pots for the upcoming festival of Tu B'Shevat. Olga demonstrated decoupage techniques and everyone got to work, each creating his or her own designs. The results were absolutely lovely. The pots will be put to good use when, at the conclusion of our TuB'Shevat Seder, everyone will receive a blooming plant. How nice to know that the decorated pots will hold a hint of spring in the homes of our most senior members. We thank Polina and Olga for this creative project.

Civil courage is a basic Jewish responsibility. A new organization, "Pegida" (similar to the Tea Party in the US), has reared its ugly head across Germany. Its members plead that Germany should maintain a national culture that is politically conservative and fundamentally Christian. The movement began in Leipzig but has spread to cities, big and small, all over Germany. The demonstrations are against a multi-cultural society and especially against Islam, spreading fear, intolerance and distrust of anyone who has a different race, culture or religion. It is of no surprise that an organization like this speaks to right wing radicals. Both Chancellor Merkel and President Gauck, along with German civic and religious leaders have condemned this movement publicly.

When a demonstration was scheduled for Hamelin, many of our members took part in a demonstration against these people. It was important to many of us to stand up and be counted as citizens against any form of discrimination. It was exhilarating to see almost 1,000 people who took to the streets to show their support for a pluralistic society and to reject the racist tenets of this organization. This show of civil courage is being seen and experienced all over Germany, where, for example, at a rally in Hannover recently, 200 Pegida demonstrators were countered by 2,000 anti-Pegida demonstrators.

How timely then that our congregation helped sponsor a Day of Remembrance. January 27th was Holocaust Remembrance Day, which recalls the Liberation by Soviet troops in 1945 of the concentration camp Auschwitz. The day of remembrance was instituted in Germany in 1966 by Chancellor Roman Herzog. A presentation by Daria Leuthier and Niklas Delp, dedicated to Jewish composers who fled the Nazi regime and lived in exile, was held in the

Market Church on January 27th. Using texts and musical selections, we remembered and honored these victims of the Holocaust. The evening was hosted by the city of Hamelin, our congregation and Hamelin's churches.

January closed with beautiful and meaningful services led by Rabbi Irit Shillor. She also offered many opportunities to deepen our knowledge through lectures, classes and Torah study. Rabbi Shillor's work is not only a source of education for our congregants but she acts as a welcome lector for our non-Jewish friends and neighbors. In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews, she and Deacon Spangenberg welcomed a large audience in our synagogue, giving information and insight into the beginnings of Judaism and Christianity. Many questions were posed and a lively discussion ensued. It pleases us that our congregation is a learning center for all.



Gesellschaft für
Christlich-Jüdische
Zusammenarbeit
Hameln e.V.

Congregational president Rachel Dohme represented our congregation at many meetings, including the Integration Commission, a political fact-finding commission on “Death with Dignity,” annual planning meetings with the Society of Christians and Jews and local community service organizations, in addition to important meetings with the Mayor and the County Commissioner concerning our efforts to fund our congregation.

Jewish February

We are pleased that Rabbi Alexander Lyskovoy will join us for his second visit in February. For our many Russian-speaking members, having Rabbi Lyskovoy offers them an opportunity to enjoy services, lectures and Torah study in their mother tongue. For German-speakers translations will be offered. We hope as many members as possible will take the opportunity we have worked hard to provide. Our thanks to donors who through their generous contributions make it possible to pay for rabbinic services twice a month.

We welcome everyone to join us for a festive Tu B'Shevat Seder on Wednesday, February 4th. Come to the table and celebrate this Jewish tradition, which originated in the 16th century. Since we established our congregation in 1997 we have held this Seder every year. We will read and reflect upon texts, psalms and poems as we enjoy tasting fruits, nuts and seeds and drink the prescribed four glasses of wine or juice as directed in our Seder. We will reaffirm our solidarity to the land of Israel.

Youth leader Patrizia will offer the “Netzer Kids” a holiday activity, making our celebration of the “New Year of the Trees” something for everyone.

February 20th marks the fourth birthday of our beautiful new synagogue. It was a monumental task to envision the building of the first newly constructed Reform synagogue in post-war Germany, but we did it—thanks to the help of many members, friends and supporters.

In the past four years, we have filled our synagogue with people wishing to celebrate beautiful Shabbat and holiday services, invited avid audiences to attend lectures pertaining to Reform Judaism and taught thousands of school students and adults about our religion, traditions and culture. We have shared our music in concerts and, in the face of mounting anti-Semitism and racism, opened our doors to our Christian and Muslim neighbors and entered into serious dialogue with them. All of these things individually would be of note, but taken together, considering the obstacles we faced, is nothing short of amazing. We are proud that we have re-established living Judaism in Hamelin. Our past and future priority of education, encounter and dialogue will ensure our future.

Please join us on Friday, February 20th, as we celebrate Shabbat and our fourth birthday with our Rabbi Irit Shillor. Havdallah services and a concert from and for our members will be the icing on the birthday cake.

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, and we are grateful to all involved. If you would like to help us stay online, please contact Rachel Dohme at racheldohme@jghreform.org. We appreciate any and all support.

Refu'ah shlemah

We pray for the complete recovery of all who are ill and everyone who is going through difficult times. We will recite Misheberach for them during services. Please join us.



Donations — Tzedakah

We thank all those who donated to either the congregation or the synagogue foundation:

We wish to thank two donors from the United States, Mrs. Connie Kreshtool and Mrs. Gertrud Lind. Here in Germany, contributions were gratefully received from Mrs. Elisabeth Pfeiffer, Mrs. Heidi Braun, Mrs. Ursula Niedert, Mr. Norbert Baum, Mr. Adolf Späth, Mr. Guido Tinnemann, Mrs. Sabine Demuth, Dr. Gesa Snell, Mr. Hans Weltner, Mrs. Rachel Dohme and Mrs. Ute Gibas.

Special thanks to Mr. Austin und Mrs. Nani Beutel, Canada for their most generous contribution.

May you all be blessed for your generosity.

Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Sofia Bantschukova on the birth of her son, Adam. Congratulations to grandmother, Svetlana Bantschukova, and great-grandmother, Maya Bantschukova, and the entire family.

Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Brrrrr—it's winter. How lucky that our tree lives indoors and regardless of the season, permanently grows new leaves. 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

We thank everyone who helps to make our holiday and cultural events very special. Our thanks go to everyone who plans and organizes activities in our community.

Yahrzeit in February

Anna Raik	Feb.12, 2000 / 6. Adar I 5760
Vladimir Legkov	Feb. 7, 2003 / 6. Adar I 5763
David Saks	Feb. 6, 2008 / 30. Shevat 5768
Michael Lazer	Feb. 5, 2012 / 12. Shevat 5772

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



The Congregation Board



[Newsletter Archives](#)

Program for February 2015 • Shvat–Adar 5775

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 10:00 a.m.– 1:00 p.m.; Tuesday & Thursday: 10.00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Monday, February 2 12 noon "Judaism" a course in Russian with W. Pesok

Wednesday, February 4 2:00 p.m. Monthly Board Meeting
5:30 p.m. Netzer with Patrizia
5:30 p.m. **Tu B'Shvat Seder** with Rachel Dohme

Rabbi Sascha Lyskovoy's visit

Friday, February 6 4:00 p.m. Conversion class
5:30 p.m. Friday night services with Rabbi Lyskovoy

Saturday, February 7 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Lyskovoy

Saturday, February 14 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning services and Torah study with Eva Shkolnikova

Tuesday, February 17 11:00 a.m. Senior's Breakfast Club with P. Pelts

Rabbi Irit Shillor's monthly visit

Friday, February 20 3:00 p.m. Open class with Rabbi Shillor
4:00 p.m. Conversion class
5:30 p.m. Friday night services with Rabbi Shillor
We celebrate our 4th birthday in our new synagogue

Saturday, February 21 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Shillor
4:00 p.m. Birthday concert from and for our members Hawdallah service

Saturday, February 28 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rachel Dohme



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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