



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

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March 2010 • Shvat-Adar 5770

[Program](#)



Dear members, friends and supporters,

Although the February winter snowstorms, winds and ice battered us with subzero temperatures, and the slippery streets and slushy avenues made it difficult to move about, many members found their way into the warm atmosphere



of our congregational rooms. We gathered together for services and concerts, classes, seminars and club meetings. We appreciate the dedication of all those involved.

The Tu BiShvat Seder was especially lovely this year. The wind whistled and the snow wouldn't stop falling, but inside Elena and Liubow transformed our long festive table into a spring meadow. We enjoyed the fifteen fruits and four glasses of wine and juice, which symbolically represent the Earth's awakening and are described in our Tu Bi Shvat Seder Haggadot. Rachel led the Seder, assisted by the religious class students. Patrizia, Joshua, Miriam, Haakon and Gabriel read aloud and Polina read the Russian translations. This year's Tu Bi Shvat's collection was divided between trees for Israel and the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. We thank everyone who contributed. The festival was enjoyed by all.



Rabbi Shillor's visit in February started the month off on the right foot. She offered many new and interesting learning opportunities. She lectured on Mishna and Talmud, held Friday night and led Saturday morning services and Torah study sessions. An especially fascinating element



was the explanation of the religious and spiritual nuances of the Amida prayers. She illuminated the prayer's tradition and historical development, describing the gesticulations some people use during prayer. Many Reform Jews have laid these aside and others have not. We feel it is important to understand these movements as spiritual vehicles and if one chooses to use them, to do so in an informed and conscious way. This underscores our constant desire as Reform Jews to continually and consistently educate ourselves, ensuring an intentional relationship with our traditions. Rabbi Shillor also created a trilingual Birkat Masson (prayer after meals) which we will enjoy practicing. We wish to thank Rabbi Shillor for all that she does for us, even though she is only in Hamelin once a month. We look forward to her March visit.

Sunday, February 14th, was a special Bar Mitzvah celebration. A Bar Mitzvah celebration on a Sunday? It was our congregation's thirteenth birthday! In February 1997 eighteen Jewish men and women established the first Jewish congregation in post-war Hamelin. Today, thirteen years later, we have every reason to celebrate ourselves.

The sanctuary was packed with more than 120 members and guests. Congregational president Rachel Dohme welcomed everyone with a short address, which vice president Polina Pelts translated into Russian. Among the honored guests was the president of the Liberal Congregation of Bad Pyrmont, Mrs. Klara Benke. She brought congratulations and shared wishes for continued positive relations between the

two congregations and was answered with hearty applause. A short prayer of thanks ended the words of welcome and ushered in the musical program.

Our synagogue choir “Shalom,” directed by choir director Petr Chrastina, opened the program with Yiddish and Hebrew songs, modern and traditional. There was something to please everyone and many joined in spontaneously. The choir becomes more and more professional with each performance, although it is composed solely of amateur singers. The applause was deafening.



After the choir finished, our Israeli dance troupe “Chag Sameach” performed. It was hard to sit still and sooner than later, people joined in the dancing. Dance instructor Boris Markhaseev couldn’t have been more pleased.



The party ended with a glass of sweet wine and shouts of “Mazel Tov” as the assembled gathered around the birthday table, enjoying sweets and cakes and conversation with friends and neighbors.

There is no time in this edition of our newsletter to report on Purim celebrations, to be held on February 28th, and to be led by Abraham Geiger rabbinical student Natasha Lyskovoy, but we will report next month and have pictures to share.

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. 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, and we are grateful to all involved.

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

Jewish March

Pesach begins this year at sundown on March 29th, the 14th of Nisan and ends on sundown on April 6th, the 22nd of Nisan.



Our congregational Seder will be held on Monday, March 29th, beginning at 5:00 p.m. Rabbi Irit Shillor will lead with Wladimir Pesok assisting with Russian translation. We will participate in the age-old tradition, set down in our Haggadot. Using the symbolic items on the

Seder plate: the roasted egg, parsley, roasted bone, bitter herbs, sweet charoset, salt water and lots of Matzah, we will retell the story of our ancestors' exodus from Egyptian slavery to freedom. We never tire of hearing the words of Exodus, chapters 5–15, which recount the more than 3,000-year history of our people. The children will chant "Ma Nishtana," the Four Questions and search for the Afikomen, the hidden piece of Matzah, which they will ransom off for a gift. Our voices will rise as one as we sing "Dayenu," a song that praises God's gifts to us, noting that any one of them would have been enough.

Certainly we are one of the few congregations that doesn't charge its members for religious events. Since our inception in 1997, we have never charged our members for any religious holiday service. We are proud of this tradition and hope to be able to continue it. Please be advised that non-members will be asked to pay a 10 Euro fee for our Seder. In order to plan

the meal, we ask members to call or sign up in person by March 24th. Our space is limited, so the sooner the better.

We will undertake a Chametz Putz in our synagogue on Sunday, March 28th, cleansing the kitchen and rooms of anything with leavening for the week of Pesach. Please be aware that only Pesach foods will be allowed in the synagogue during the week.

We wish everyone a sweet Pesach!

Pesach Sales

We will offer our members Israeli Matzah in one-kilogram packages for 4 Euros and Manischewitz wine in 1.5 liter bottles for 10 Euros. These products are certified kosher for Pesach. Supplies are limited so shop early.

Annual Membership Meeting

We invite all members to attend our annual membership meeting on Sunday, March 14th.

This meeting is important because we will be voting on a constitutional change and voting for a new board member. This is necessary because board member Matvej Dvortsis is stepping down due to health concerns. We are saddened that Matvej is unable to serve out his term but wish him well and thank him for his excellent work in the area of culture on the board. We look forward to his continued support and assistance in congregational events.

Members wishing to run for this position on the board are kindly asked to speak with a board member. An active group of members interested in planning and organizing cultural events in the congregation awaits a new board member who is ready and willing to help out.

CD *Shabbat Melodies*

We are pleased that the CD has met with such positive reaction. The CD is selling for a contribution of \$18 and 100% of the money raised will go to our synagogue building fund. Please visit us online at www.ighreform.org and listen to a MP3 selection. It is also possible to download the CD liner notes in German and English.

We are thrilled that all 500 copies have been sold in Germany, England and the US. We thank all those who have supported this project. We have just re-ordered and 300 CDs await happy listeners. Our vision to share beautiful Shabbat music and help ourselves affords one the performance of a double Mitzvah: contributing money to the building project and listening to Shabbat liturgy.

This CD makes the perfect gift for any occasion.



Cultural Events in March

In cooperation with the Society for Christians and Jews we offered a trip to Hanover in February to visit the new liberal synagogue, Etz Chayim. Rabbi Lengyl welcomed us and gave us a tour of this beautiful new synagogue. Our vice president, Polina Pelts, translated, and afterwards we enjoyed coffee and Israeli cakes and had time to share our impressions with one another.

On Sunday, March 7, we will celebrate “Erev,” International Women’s Day. Many different groups and individuals have prepared a colorful program sure to please everyone. Of course, it will be the women of our congregation who will be especially honored by the men of the congregation on this day. Flowers, champagne and sweets will be showered on the ladies. It will certainly be another wonderful afternoon for and by our congregants. We thank everyone who invested their creativity, great ideas and free time to organize this afternoon.



New Series with Rabbi Irit Shillor

Because Rabbi Irit Shillor will arrive on a Friday morning in March, we will be holding her lecture in this month’s “Rabbi’s Table” after Shabbat services and Torah study on March 27th at 1:00 p.m. After services and Kiddush, we’ll study a page of Talmud together. In April we’ll meet for “Rabbi’s Table” as usual on Thursday, April 29th at 3:00 p.m. to discuss Schulchan Aruch. We hope to see many members and guests at both sessions.

Parents’ Café Corner

Religious school teacher Lior has set up a Parents’ Café Corner. While the kids are studying, parents and grandparents are invited to sit down and relax over a steaming cup of tea or coffee and snack on a cookie or two. Enjoy a pleasant conversation and relax. Thanks for the great idea, Lior!



Mazel Tov — Congratulations

We are happy to announce and congratulate Inna Golberg and her husband Afrim on the birth of their second child, Leah-Julien. Congratulations to “big brother” Elias too. The proud grandparents are Faina Pelts and Felix Golberg with Aunt Greta and great grandmother Polina Pelts. Mazel Tov to the entire family.

We also wish to congratulate Margarita Souslovic’s daughter and husband on the birth of their first child and son, Eliasis.



Thank you —Toda Raba

We appreciate and thank our community members who helped make our holidays, services and celebrations special. The homemade dishes were delicious, and we thank everyone who helped with the planning, organization and implementation of our festivals.

There are so many regular activities offered in our congregation by congregants for congregants, and we are grateful for their hard work and dedication.

We are grateful to Polina Pelts German class for once again baking this year’s delicious Hamentaschen.

Thanks to Margarita Souslovic for an informational meeting concerning welfare reform.

Tree of Life — Etz Chayim

Who will contribute the next leaf? Each leaf not only adorns our sanctuary but also helps us raise funds for our synagogue. Leaves can be ordered through our office or by contacting Rachel Dohme, or on this Web site: [Tree of Life](#). Each leaf costs a minimum of \$100 (quadruple chai plus expenses). Please contribute a leaf and help us to build our synagogue!



Yahrzeit in March

Riva Slavinska — March 18, 2005 / 8th Adar II 5765

Gersch Kogan — March 19, 2009 / 23rd Adar 5769

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

Donations-Tzedaka

We are grateful to the many people who continually support our work and our plans to build a new synagogue.

We wish to thank: Elena Grabovska, Mark H. Schwartz, G. Otto, L. Dorries, S. Demuth, A. Armbrecht and Eva-Marie Lange. We thank the school classes from Mrs. Lonkwitz, Dr. Anja Schmidt and Mrs. Spangenberg for their contributions as well as the Women’s Club of the Lutheran church of Obernkirchen. We especially acknowledge a most generous contribution from Dr. Ivo and Mrs. Kirsten Schwartzkopff.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Shalom,
—Your Synagogue Board

Jewish Community of Hamelin

Member of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany
Member of the World Union of Progressive Judaism
Member of the Central Council of Jews of Germany

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Program for March 2010 • Adar–Nisan 5770

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

Monday, March 1	12:00 p.m.	“Judaism,” a class in Russian with Wladimir Pesok
Tuesday, March 2	9:00 a.m.	Monthly Board Meeting
Saturday, March 6	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Faina Pelts & Dieter Vogelhuber
Sunday, March 7	3:00 p.m.	International Women’s Day — Music, champagne and sweets
Friday, March 12	4:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Religious school with Lior Bar-Ami & Faina Pelts Friday night services with Rachel Dohme
Saturday, March 13	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rachel Dohme
Sunday, March 14	3:00 p.m.	Annual membership meeting
Tuesday, March 16	4:00 p.m.	“Russian Afternoon,” art history class with Maya Olvovska
Wednesday, March 17	11:00 a.m.	Russian Book Club with Alexandra Konstantinova
Saturday, March 20	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rachel Dohme
Friday, March 26		Rabbi Irit Shillor’s monthly visit
	4:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Religious school with Lior Bar-Ami & Faina Pelts Friday night services with Rabbi Irit Shillor
Saturday, February 27	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Irit Shillor Oneg Shabbat and Talmud study session
Sunday, March 28	4:00 p.m.	Senior Café with Polina Pelts
Monday, March 29	5:00 p.m.	Erev Pesach Congregational Seder with Rabbi Irit Shillor Members: free; Guests: 10 Euros
Wednesday, March 31	11:00 a.m.	Informational meeting with Mr. Seifert, Renters Association

Activities outside the community

Monday, March 1	5:00 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Inter-religious Women’s group, Lutheran church of Hassisch Oldendorf In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews Lecture: Pastor Wolfgang Raupach-Rudnick, Hannover “Christianity’s Prayers and their Jewish Roots” Social Hall of St. Augustinus Church, Hameln
Monday, March 15	7:00 p.m. 8:00 p.m.	The Society of Christians and Jews, Annual membership meeting Lecture: Dr. Wolfgang Enders, Eschershausen “Pius XII and his role in the Holocaust” Kapitelsaal, Munsterkirche, St. Bonifatius, Hamelin
Wednesday, March 17	7:30 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews “Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Pesach and Easter” Baptist Church, Hameln
Thursday, March 18	7:00 p.m.	Hameln Forum — Lecture: Bernhard Gelderblom “A Journey through the Ukraine” 7.50 Euros/ 5.00 Euros Hefehof, Hamelin

Archived Newsletters:

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