



## The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

[JHG Home](#)

March 2011 • Adar I–Adar II 5771

[Program](#)



**Dear members, friends and supporters,**

The dedication of our beautiful new synagogue was not only a historic day for us but also for the city of Hamelin, the state of Lower Saxony and for Germany. The weekend's celebrations were a wonderful mixture of spirituality, joyous celebration and touching moments.

We began with Friday night services on February 18th. This was the very first service in our new home. The sanctuary was filled as many members and friends gathered together to welcome Shabbat and to dedicate our new synagogue as a congregation. As vice president Polina Pelts lit the Shabbat candles for the first time in our new Jewish home, many were moved to tears. 73 years after Jewish life on this spot was extinguished, the warm glow of the Shabbat candles and all they represent shone again. This moment captured the continuity of Jewish life in Hamelin like no other.



Many friends joined us for the service, beautifully led by Rabbi Irit Shillor. Rebekka Dohme lent her warm and lovely voice to the service and Faina Pelts accompanied her, playing the familiar melodies on the piano. The sanctuary was filled with our voices in song and prayer. We were finally home. Special guests in attendance were Susanne Böttcher and Annette Wellner whose grandmother Rosa Culp had been a member of the pre-war Hamelin congregation. They presented the congregation with a prayer book from their cousin, Ute Siegler. Many words of congratulation from former Jewish citizens of Hamelin from as far away as Israel and Australia were received and read aloud.

In recognition of the dedication our new synagogue, Rabbi Shillor offered a Torah service. This was of special significance because she read from both our Torah scrolls. The “new” Torah had been brought by honored guest, Rabbi Jo David of New York. Rabbi David and her husband, Sofer Neil Yerman had procured a scroll for our new synagogue. Donations from the Hamelin churches and American Jewish donors, Craig Beresin, Alex Yarosh and an anonymous donor had enabled the purchase of the scroll. Rabbi David and Sofer Yerman donated the Atzei Chayim and silver Rimoni. Sofer Yerman certified that the scroll is kosher and dated it to be about 100 years old and having been written in Germany—a true homecoming! Please read the following article from the WUPJ News:



The Jewish Congregation of Hamelin, the World Union affiliate in Hamelin, Germany, was presented with a Torah scroll on February 5 during a ceremony at the World Union's New York office.

“The acquisition of this scroll was made possible by generous donations by ACK Hameln (Arbeitskreis Christliche Kirchen), a consortium of churches in Hamelin, and individuals living in the United States,” said the program printed for the occasion. “This sefer Torah was written in Germany about a hundred years ago and has served congregations in Israel and the United States. Soon it will be returning home.”

JGH now serves over 200 members and is affiliated with the World Union, the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany and the Central Council of Jews of Germany. On February 20, it will be dedicating its new synagogue—the first building specifically constructed for a Progressive congregation in postwar Germany—on the spot where the town's last synagogue was destroyed in 1938 during Kristalnacht.

The Torah was restored by sofer (scribe) Neil Yerman, whose wife, Rabbi Jo David, was instrumental in getting today's JGH established in her role as founder and executive director of the Jewish Appleseed Foundation, which works with young and nascent congregations throughout the world.

The “crowns” above certain letters were created by several honored participants, including Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, the World Union's vice president for philanthropy; Irit Michaelson, general secretary of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany; Rabbi Daniel Frelander, senior vice president of the Union for Reform Judaism; and vice-consul Werner-Ciprian Fugel, representing the German Consulate General. Rebekka Dohme, daughter of JGH founder and President Rachel Dohme, was honored with creating the crown above the first letter of the Torah on behalf of the congregation.



The official moment finally arrived. On Sunday, February 20 at 3:00 p.m. we dedicated our new synagogue, “Beitenu” (Our House). Every available inch of floor space was used to seat our members, patrons, foundation members, donors, religious leaders and local, state and national political representatives. The dedication service began with Patrizia Berhovski and Sören Wendt carrying the two Torah scrolls under the Chuppah, carried by founding members, Emma Lebedinska, Feana Engler, Dr. Felix Peres and Felix Golberg as Rebekka Dohme sang “Ma Tov.” A moving religious service followed, led by Rabbi Irit Shillor. Wladimir Pesok blew the shofar and Polina Pelts lit the Ner Tamid. Each moment was moving and historic.

It has been a long journey but one paved with many moments of solidarity and support. So many people from so many places have helped us reach this momentous occasion and we are eternally grateful.

Following the religious service, dignitaries spoke words of congratulations. Among those who spoke were State Minister of Culture, Dr. Bernd Althusmann, Mayor Susanne Lippmann, and County Commissioner Rudiger Butte, President of the German Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Dr. Henry G. Brandt, President of the European Union of Progressive Judaism, Leslie Bergmann, President of the Union of Progressive Jews of Germany, Dr. Jan Mühlstein, President of the liberal state board of Jewish congregations, Katarina Seidler, General Secretary of the Central Council of Jews of Germany, Stephan Kramer, and many more.



Every speaker found words of praise and recognition for so many years of hard work and dedication of the re-establishment of liberal Judaism in Germany.

Our synagogue choir “Schalom” musically framed the blocks of speakers. A festive reception was offered in heated tents in our garden afterwards and many lingered for conversation and a closer look at the beautifully conceptualized building. The elliptical, egg-shaped form creates a feeling of comfort. Design architect Frank Taylor and the architectural firm of Peter Nasarek with lead architect Cedo Bojic created a spiritual space symbolic of the new life and progressive development worthy of the first newly constructed Reform synagogue in post-Shoah Germany.

Rachel Dohme said in her opening remarks, “Most buildings are made of brick and stone. This building is made of love, patience and gratitude.”



### **Jewish March — Purim, Purimspiel, Hamentaschen**

Purim is just around the corner. Our Purim celebration will be held on Saturday afternoon, March 19th. Rabbinical student Adrian Schell will lead services and we will all hear the reading of the Megillah in Hebrew, German and Russian, sounding our graggers to drown out the name of Haman. We hope everyone will come in costume to add to the fun. Our member Valerij Bogachik has recently organized a theatre group and they will be making their debut with a Purimspiel. In addition, Boris Markhaseev will present new Israeli dances which he and our dance group, "Chag Sameach" have prepared. Polina Pelts plans to bake delicious Hamentaschen with the women of her German language class to everyone's delight. It's certain to be a happy afternoon and we look forward to welcoming everyone.

"Schlachmones" packages for the ill and homebound will also be prepared and delivered by members of the community, as every year.

### **4. Netzertag with Jehudith**

Jehudith will once again offer a „Netzer Day“ on March 4th for the children and youth of our congregation. Jehudith always comes with great ideas, providing fun and something to think about. Please make sure the children are dropped off punctually, parents!

### **Cultural Programs in March**

We will be celebrating International Women's Day on Sunday, March 6th at 3:00 p.m. Valerij Bogachik has organized an entertaining program honoring the women of the congregation. Naturally, the men are also welcome to attend! Join us for the afternoon.

### **Dues**

We thank all who have paid their membership dues. We are indebted to the "Friends" for their membership dues and donations too. Now more than ever, we depend on your financial support. The new synagogue will afford much upkeep and everyone is asked to help.

Please make sure to let us know if your address changes and if you have an Email address. Sending our newsletter by Email cuts costs and affords the reader the opportunity to receive our newsletter in color.

### **Annual Membership Meeting**

Please mark your calendars for Sunday, March 27th. Our annual membership meeting will begin at 3:00p.m. Come and hear all we've achieved in the past year and give your ideas for the upcoming year. See you there!



### **Mazel Tov**

Please excuse us, but we'd like to congratulate ourselves again on our new synagogue and thank God for reaching this moment.

We thank all the many people who have shared in our vision during the last ten years and helped us reach our dream of our own synagogue. Mazel Tov to us!

### **Donations — Tzedaka**

The **Tu Bi Shevat Collection** totaled 180 Euros, half of which came from Mrs. Bachmatchnikova's group, "Russian Citizens." Thank you all. The money has been sent to KKL for reforestation projects in Israel. This is especially necessary after the horrible fires there in past months.

We are grateful to the many people who continually support our work and help us maintain our new synagogue. We thank all those who contributed so generously: Uwe Wolandowitsch, Dieter Vogelhuber, Mark Schwartz, Dr. Oleg and Anna Rubanov, Hans and Johanna Weltner, Ursula Ryf, Lorie Dörries, Rachel Dohme, Gábor Lengyl, Ingrid Wettberg, the Engelbrecht family, Anastasia Krivzova, Polina Pelts, Mrs. Taylor, Heimo Faehndrich, Katarina Seidler, Anneliese Armbrrecht, Sabine Demuth, the Society of Christians and Jews, the Lutheran Church of Hannover, the Hamelin Electricity Company and the Hamelin Savings and Loan Bank.

We thank our American friends for their contributions: Mrs. Connie Creshtool and Mrs. Lybret Brettler.  
May you all be blessed for your generosity.



### **Tree of Life — Etz Chajim**

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 maintain our new synagogue!

The newest leaves have been donated by Mark Schwartz:

Peter Driller 1930–1944 Opfer der Schoa  
Naum Leshchiner 76 Jahre Babi Yar

### **Thanks — 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 thank each and every person who worked to make our dedication weekend such a success. Thanks go out to all who help on moving day and on our Open Door Day.



### **March Jahrzeit**

Riva Slavinska March 18, 2005 / 8. Adar II 5765

Gersch Kogan March 19, 2009 / 23. 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.

### **Shalom**

—Your Synagogue Board

### **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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## Program for March 2011 • Adar I–Adar II 5771

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 noon

Tuesday, March 1	3:00 p.m.	Monthly board meeting
Friday, March 4	4:00 p.m.	Religious class
	5:30 p.m.	4 <sup>th</sup> Netzer day with Jehudith
		Friday night services with rabbinical student Nils Ederberg
Saturday, February 5	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with rabbinical student Nils Ederberg
Sunday, March 6	3:00 p.m.	International Women's Day with Valerij Bogachik
Monday, March 7	12:00 noon	"Judaism" a class in Russian with W. Pesok
Saturday, March 12	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with F. Pelts and R. Dohme
Wednesday, March 16	11:00 a.m.	Russian Literature Club with A. Konstantinova
Friday, March 18	4:00 p.m.	Religious class
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with rabbinical student Adrian Schell
Saturday, March 19	3:00 p.m.	Purim service, Purimspiel, Israeli dancing, Hamentaschen
Thursday, March 24		<b>Rabbi Shillor's visit</b>
	3:00 p.m.	"Rabbi's Table"
Friday, March 25	4:00 p.m.	Religious class
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Rabbi Shillor
Saturday, March 26	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Shillor
Sunday, March 27	3:00 p.m.	Annual membership meeting
Tuesday, March 29	4:00 p.m.	"Russian Afternoon" with M. Olvovskaja, Art History class

### Activities outside the community

Wednesday, March 2	7:00 p.m.	Series: "Let's Talk" "Christianity Lecture, Professor Dr. Regina Ammicht-Quinn Martin-Luther-Gemeinde, Schillerstrasse 19
Sunday, March 20	11:00 a.m.	Series: "Let's Talk" "Judaism-Islam-Christianity" panel discussion Church Center Klein berkel, Schulstrasse 1
	12:00 noon	Regional Netzer Purim Party with Jehudith Jewish Community Center Hannover, Fuhsestrasse 6, Hannover
Monday, March 28	7:00 p.m.	Society of Christians and Jews Annual membership meeting Guest: Architect Mr. Cedo Bojic, "The Hamelin Synagogue" Kapitalsaal, Munster Church St. Bonifatius