



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

March 2017 • Adar–Nisan 5777

[JHG Home](#) [Program](#)

Dear members, friends and supporters,

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

Please note our bank information:
Sparkasse Weserbergland
IBAN: DE47 2545 0110 0031 030380
BIC: NOLADE21SWB



Following our congregation’s New Year’s reception, many Hamelin organizations extended invitations to their receptions. The Women’s League was one which our president attended and to her surprise, two of our members were performing! It is gratifying to see that our many talented Jewish musicians are well received in our city. Well done, Svetlana and Valerij!

Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg drew a large crowd in our synagogue for an evening lecture, “My Jewish Identity.” The evening was in cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews. Her well-prepared and at times provocative lecture elicited many questions, and the audience was intellectually challenged to reflect on some set ideas.

We hope the frosty days are behind us as we head hopefully toward spring. The first sunny days have coaxed the crocuses to show their colors, cheering everyone up. Our beautiful Tu BiShvat Seder table presented us with the first hint of spring.



We were a small (due to the flu epidemic) but hearty group, and we enjoyed a beautiful Seder celebrating the “New Year of the Trees.” Rabbi Ulrike was our Seder Leader; the lovely texts and songs brightened our spirits. Thanks to Liubov’s creativity, the colorful tulips, fresh and dried fruits and nuts, red and white wines and grape juices made our Seder table look like a spring garden.

We ended the Seder by packing bags of fresh fruit and distributing them to our many members at home with the flu. Several bags were also passed out to the homeless in Hamelin’s Old City.



Our 20th Year

We had planned a congregational celebration on our birthday, but due to the epidemic levels of flu, decided to cancel the festivities in February. Not to worry: a new date has been found, and we will celebrate our 20th anniversary on Sunday, April 2nd at 3:00 p.m.

Our choir “Shalom” has prepared a concert for us. Rabbi Offenberg will interject reflective readings between the musical selections. A delicious buffet will tempt every tongue, prepared by Dora, Valerij and Lyudmila.

A Jewish Culture Festival (the first ever in Hamelin) will be celebrated on June 11th with an open house day. The program will begin at noon and end at sundown.

The day will offer information booths and multiple opportunities to explore and experience the wonderful world of Judaism, foods, music, dance, Hebrew and much more. It has always been our intention to share our religious and cultural heritage with our friends and neighbors.

Our congregation was established 20 years ago on February 17, 1997 with 18 men and women who had a dream and a hope to reestablish Jewish life in Hamelin. The conviction was to create a Jewish space in a country new to us all—and we did!

We consciously decided to carry on the religious Reform tradition which was celebrated in Hamelin until the congregation and Jewish life was destroyed in 1938. Our community is steadfast, our synagogue stands and we are indebted and grateful to all those who helped build what we have today.

In our 20th year we will celebrate our past, present and future and hope you will all take part.

Jewish March

It's that time of year again, and Polina and Olga are opening the doors to their annual Hamentaschen Bakery. Won't you please join them? Many hands and rolling pins are needed for the hundreds of poppy seed or jam filled three cornered Purim cookies.

Mark your calendars now for the Purim festivities. Look in your closets for the perfect costume. We will celebrate this joyful holiday on Erev Purim, March 11 at 5:30 p.m. The Megillah reading will, as every year, be heard in Hebrew, German and Russian. Everyone will be able to hear and understand the story of brave Queen Esther. Noisemakers will be aplenty so that we can drown out wicked Haman's name during the reading. If only it were so easy to rid our world of modern Hamans today!

Rabbi Ulrike has worked with the children, and they will perform a short Purimspiel. Come and applaud their efforts. We'll all eat and drink our fill as we celebrate this special holiday. For those unable to attend, a member will be ringing your doorbell with a Schlachmones gift bag. Chag Purim Sameach!



A Message from Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg

Purim is a time when everything is stood on its head. The Esther story is itself full of sudden changes: Whoever thinks they are on top of the pile is suddenly brought down, whereas those who were down at the bottom find themselves suddenly raised to leadership roles. Our Purim festivity is actually not about celebrating the way in which the Jews of Persia were able to turn the tables on their enemies and to become in effect a mirror-image of them; instead we celebrate the way in which power relationships can change — the weak can change their position in society and do not need to stay always at the bottom.

Our custom of wearing costumes emphasizes this issue of changes that are often unexpected but nevertheless possible. It is fun to be someone else for a while, to play with their identity and to laugh about this. The costumes are often comical in themselves and stress this point of sudden changes. More than waving rattles at the mention of Haman's name, it is the act of laughing itself which is liberating, for we know deep down that nothing has to stay forever the way it is. This is also why it is so important to fulfil the Mitzvah of "Matanot LaEvyonim," the "Gifts to the Poor," to enable even those people who are normally treated with contempt or left on the fringes of society to enjoy the festivity, not only in the form of a meal but also to give them the hope that circumstances can change, and the world does not have to stay the way it is.



International Women's Day

Please join us for International Women's Day on Wednesday, March 8th at 4:00 p.m. Faina Pelts and Valerij Bogatchyk have prepared a musical program for the day. Everyone is welcome. Everyone will raise their glasses of bubbly and enjoy delicious sweets and the women will receive a spring flower.

The earliest Women's Day observance was held on February 28, 1909, in New York. It was organized by the Socialist Party of America in remembrance of the 1908 strike of the International Ladies Garment Worker's Union. Originally the day was called International Working Women's Day, and is celebrated on March 8th in different regions of the world with the focus of the celebrations ranging from general celebration of respect, appreciation and love towards women for their economic, political and social achievements.

New Volunteers of the National Volunteers Service

We say goodbye to our volunteers Evgenij Reznik and Valerij Bogachik. We are very grateful for their voluntary work and wish them all the best for their future. We welcome the new volunteers Dorothea Bogachik and Matvej Dvortzis into their service in our congregation and look forward to our cooperation.

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. We appreciate any and all support.

Enjoy the banner of pictures on our Web site at www.ighreform.org

Annual Membership Meeting

Members are invited to this year's membership meeting on March 26th with a separate invitation. Make your voice heard.

Transportation to the Synagogue

We offer members who wish to attend services the opportunity. Call the synagogue office no later than two days prior and we will have a mini-van pick-up arranged. This service is being offered to our seniors or those who cannot get to synagogue any other way.

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.

Donations — Tzedakah

We wish to thank Mrs. Zischkale-Henßen and her groups from the Seminar Center Ith, Mr. Bode and the BHW Group Hameln, Mrs. Alla Jankovski and Mr. Wolfgang Albat, the Russian Pension group, Mr. Adolf Späth, Mrs. Gibas and Rachel Dohme. May you all be blessed for your generosity.



Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Winter is upon us but our tree needs to keep its leaves and add more. The Tree of Life 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. Leaves added last month were donated from:

- Akadij Zyranov: "In memory of my son Dmitriy"
- Rabbi Irit Shillor: "Congregational Rabbi Irit Shillor 2001–2016"
- Dohme family: "In beloved memory of Hanna and Johnny Jones"
- Stella Bodganova: "In honor of the birth of my grandchild Teodor Kummer"
- Akadij Zyranov: "In beloved memory of Nataliya Zaychenko"

New orders were donated from:

- The Dohme family: Mazel Tov Dr. Rebekka Dohme

Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to us, the Jewish Congregation of Hamelin on our 20th anniversary!

Mazel Tov to St. Elisabeth Catholic church on their 40th anniversary! St. Elisabeth hosted us in our first year, allowing us a space to meet for services and holidays.

Mazel Tov to our Rabbi Emerita Irit Shillor and her wife, Lesley Bennett, on their Chuppah in Harlowe, England. Rabbi Natascha Verzhbovska led the ceremony.

Thank you — Todah Rabah

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

March Yahrzeit

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|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Riva Slavinska | March 18, 2005 / 7. Adar II 5765 |
| Gersch Kogan | March 19, 2009 / 23. Adar 5769 |
| Polina Khazanova | March 19, 2011 / 13. Adar II 5771 |
| Elena Grabovska | March 28, 2012 / 5. Nisan 5772 |
| Alla Drejzer | March 2, 2013 / 20. Adar 5773 |
| Oksana Kozlova | March 11, 2013 / 29. Adar 5773 |

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!

—The Congregation Board

[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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Program for March 2017 • Adar–Nisan 5777

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; Tuesday & Thursday: 8.00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

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| Tuesday, March 7 | 10:30 a.m. | Monthly Board Meeting |
| | 11:00 a.m. | “Foreign pensions and German citizenship” — Margarita Suslovic, State Board of Jewish Communities in Lower Saxony |
| Wednesday, March 8 | 4:00 p.m. | International Women’s Day Concert, flowers for the women, champagne and sweets, With Faina Pelts and Valerii Bogatchyk |
| Thursday, March 9 | 10:00 a.m. | Hamentaschen Bakery with Polina Pelts |
| Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg | | |
| Friday, March 10 | 3:00 p.m. | Bnei Mitzvah class |
| | 4:00 p.m. | Kinder Kehilla |
| | 5:30 p.m. | Friday night services |
| Saturday, March 11 | 10:00 a.m. | Saturday morning services |
| | 2:00 p.m. | Giyur class |
| | 5:30 p.m. | EREV PURIM Party! Come in costume and hear the Megillah read, watch a Purimspiel und enjoy delicious homemade Hamentaschen |
| Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg | | |
| Friday, March 24 | 3:00 p.m. | Bnei Mitzvah class |
| | 4:00 p.m. | Kinder Kehilla |
| | 5:30 p.m. | Friday night services |
| Saturday, March 25 | 10:00 a.m. | Saturday morning services |
| | 12:30 p.m. | Torah study |
| | 2:00 p.m. | Giyur class |
| Sunday, March 26 | 3:00 p.m. | Congregation AGM |
| Outside the Congregation | | |
| Thursday, March 30 | 7:00 p.m. | Society of Christians and Jews AGM, Reform Lutheran Church, Hugenottenstrasse, Lecture: Martin Hoffmann |