



## Dear members of the community, friends and supporters,

The month of March brings us spring feelings whether or not the thermometer cooperates. Spring in Hebrew is called Aviv, which has its origin in the word maturity. Spring is a time of renewal and rebirth. Flowers unfold their beauty, pleasant weather pleases us, the days become longer and many animals wake up from their winter hibernation. We all yearn and look forward to the spring, but first of all we would like to look back once again to particularly happy events in our congregational life in February.



We celebrated a happy Tu BiSchwat Seder with our Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg. Many members came to celebrate the “New Year of the Trees.” Rabbi Offenberg led Kabbalat Shabbat services, enriched and beautified by the warm voices of our synagogue choir, Shalom. After the prayers, psalms and songs, we went to the Kiddush table prepared lovingly by Liubow for the Tu-BiSchwat Seder, lavishly laden with various fruits, nuts, challot and spring blossoms. The holiday is a happy one, spirits heightened by the four glasses of wine, the colors of which we mixed to symbolize the change of seasons—starting with white, then pink, light red and finally dark red to greet the awakening of nature and the New Year of the Trees. In turn, everyone had an opportunity to read a section of the Seder aloud in Hebrew, German or Russian. Everyone took a reminder of spring and this beautiful holiday home with them in the form of a potted primrose.

The children of Kinder Kehillah also celebrated Tu BiSchwat the next day with a pe’ulah about plants and learned the blessings for different fruits.

Our chairperson Rachel Dohme and her vice chair Polina Pelts welcomed a full synagogue to our 21st birthday on February 15. We looked back and reviewed the last two decades of our congregational life and, of course, forward. Full of joy for all we achieved with God’s help and many good friends—the rebirth of authentic Jewish life in Hamelin! We welcomed many members and guests to our beautiful celebration. Guests of honor were members of the Foundation Liberale Synagogue Hameln and Rabbi Lorraine Heller from New York, USA.

Our birthday party continued with a 90-minute program, performed by our choir Shalom under the direction of Petr Chrastina, our Israeli dance troupe Chag Sameach under the direction of Boris Markhaseev, and from our sister community Bad Pyrmont their choir Simcha, presented by the chairman of the Community, Klara Behnke. Applause and spring flowers rewarded the artists. The musical celebration was enjoyed by our members as well as our many guests. The end of the concert came too soon. Everyone was invited to a glass of bubbly wine and we toasted ourselves with hearty shouts of “L’Chaim!” Sweets, cookies and cakes rounded off the party. The Jewish community of Hamelin wishes to thank everyone who shows us their solidarity again and again. Our community and our synagogue are a vital piece of Hamelin. Thanks to everyone involved.

Do enjoy yourself looking at the following photographs from our February festivals!

## A Word from our Rabbi

### Thoughts on the twenty-first birthday of our congregation and the seventh birthday of the synagogue building

Before you build a house, let alone a house that is intended for a Jewish congregation, you have to think carefully about what purpose it should serve. The shape is the result—not the other way around. The reward for the individual and collective effort will be that God will not only reside in the sanctuary, but in the midst of us. Not only is a space a meeting place, but the congregation itself.

Here in Hamelin, the members took it upon themselves to build a synagogue or Bet Mikdash Me’at to have a center, a meeting place. Whoever builds such a space, repeats the events of Sinai. It reflects the continuation of Jewish history in the future. I feel full of admiration and I note that the process here was the same as in the construction of the desert sanctuary. First, one thinks about what purpose and what tasks this building should fulfill, and accordingly one chooses the form. The inviting oval form of the Hamelin synagogue and the variable seating make clear that here the focus is on the community of people, and that there is room for a variety of activities (worship, lectures, life cycle event celebrations, concerts and theater productions). Everyone knows that the construction of such a house requires constant renewal. Donations and contributions from each of us are still necessary. This concerns the active participation and participation of religious and cultural activities, but it also concerns the maintenance of this building and its contents. Payment of staff, a rabbi’s salary, electricity, cleaning, and repairs all cost money, and without these investments a Jewish Community Center quickly becomes unusable. Those who are blessed with good finances should give more, but even those who have little money can give a little—each one as the heart urges him to do. With these gifts and efforts we earn and receive God’s presence, which dwells not only in this house but also among us, and that we make Judaism for our children and grandchildren and for ourselves a present as well as a future experience.

—Your Rabbi, Dr. Ulrike Offenberg



## Jewish in March

### Purim

We will read and listen to the "Megillat Esther" (the biblical Esther story) with our Rabbi Ulrike Offenberg on Erev Purim. This is a mitzvah that every Jew should practice. We thank Rabbi Emerita Irit Shillor for her gift of an Esther scroll from which Rabbi Ulrike will chant. The Book of Esther will be read aloud in Hebrew, German and Russian so that everyone can understand it.

Purim is a very happy celebration and it is fun to dress up and let the child in us free with costumes and masks. While listening to the Esther story we will let the noise makers drown out the name of evil Haman. We will sing Purim songs which Rabbi Ulrike has been busy practicing on her guitar.

After the reading, we will dine on the delicious Hamantaschen, which have been baked for the last 20 years under the proven guidance of Polina Pelts. Polina's assistants Olga Gerr and the bakery ladies' team were very busy! We will drink wine and juices and celebrate happily. Of course, we also think of those who are homebound or ill and send them small gifts of food "Schlachmones."



### Passover

There will be time to buy your Passover supplies at the synagogue. Sale of Passover products is for our members only. The synagogue rooms will be cleaned on Thursday, March 29, and made "kosher lePessach." Please lend a hand. As of March 29th we ask that in the Passover period from March 30 to April 7, no leavened products will be allowed into our building.

Passover tells the story of our ancestors' exodus from slavery in Egypt. We will, as every year, join together to celebrate a festive Passover Seder. We will follow the order as written in the Haggadah, eating Matzah and sampling the ceremonial and traditional foods from the Seder plate, re-telling our story. Our youngest ones will ask the four questions, Mah Nischtanah, and we will sing the traditional songs together and begin the counting of the Omer. For us, the Seder also means to be together with friends, neighbors and relatives and to celebrate our freedom as Jews, continuing to fight for social justice for all. Come with your families and experience the Passover feast 5778 in your synagogue.

We wish you all a happy and kosher Passover!

### Annual General Meeting

Sunday, March 4, at 3:00 pm is the time and place to be for our Annual General Meeting. Since we have elections this year, we hope for a good turn-out. If you are unable to attend, you can give a proxy to another member so that your vote can be counted.

### International Women's Day on March 8

Join us as we celebrate International Women's Day at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 8th. A colorful program, performances by many members and groups is in store. The day is the result of many long hours of practice and creative effort to make the day especially lovely for the women of the congregation. The men wish to show their appreciation for all that the women do all year long, saying thank you with flowers, chocolates and sparkling wine. We thank all the volunteers involved who worked to create this beautiful afternoon!



### Get well wishes — Refuah Shlamah

We send out get well wishes to everyone in our community who is experiencing illness or health issues. Our thoughts and prayers are with them for a full and complete recovery.



### Donations — Zedakah

We sincerely thank members and friends who have supported our congregational life and synagogue building with generous donations.

Thank you Mr. Tinnemann, Mr. Wolandowitsch, Mr. Schultner, Mrs. Demuth, Mrs. Braun, the Church of Bodenwerder, Mr. Kaplan, 'the Russian Consulate, Mr. Fischer, Mrs. Berhovski, the elementary school of Klein Berkel, Mrs. Schlagmann, Mrs. Dohme, Mrs. Niedert and Mrs. Gibas.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.

### Tree of Life — Etz Chaim

It is possible to commemorate the commission of a new “leaf” on our Tree of Life for special occasions, e.g., birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, wedding, thanks, Yahrzeit, or to honor someone and in this way also donate to synagogue building upkeep fund. Forms are in the office. Many Thanks!

New leaf: In loving memory of Miriam Elberger 1927–2017, donated by the Dohme family

New orders donated by the Kaplan family:

In memory of our father, Judel Kaplan, December 1907–December 1967

In memory of our mother, Riva Kuperstein, February 1907–February 2002



### Mazel Tov — Congratulations

We congratulate Patrizia Berhowski on her military promotion.

We congratulate Dr. Jan Mühlstein, chairman of our sister community in Munich, on his award. Dr. Mühlstein received the Federal Cross of Merit on the ribbon of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany this week from State Secretary Georg Eisenreich.

We congratulate the Lower Saxony pastor Wilfried Manneke. This year he received the Paul Spiegel Prize for Civil Courage from the Central Council of Jews in Germany. Pastor Manneke has been working against right-wing extremism since 1995.

### March Yahrzeits

Riva Slavinska	18.03.2005 / 8. Adar II 5765
Gersch Kogan	19.03.2009 / 23. Adar 5769
Polina Khazanova	19.03.2011 / 13. Adar II 5771
Elena Grabovska	28.03.2012 / 5. Nissan 5772
Alla Drejzer	02.03.2013 / 20. Adar 5773
Oksana Kozlova	11.03.2013 / 29. Adar 5773

May the memory of our dead be a blessing to us. Kaddish is spoken during Shabbat services for and with the family members. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office for a minimal price.



Shalom,

—Your Synagogue board

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#### **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 for March 2018 • Adar–Nisan 5778

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

Sunday, March 4            12:00 p.m. Monthly board meeting  
   3:00 p.m. Annual Membership meeting

Thursday, March 8            4:00 p.m. International Women’s Day Celebration

Wednesday, March 14        10:00 a.m. Inter-religious Women’s Club

### Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg’s weekend

Friday, March 16            2:00 p.m. B’nei Mitzvah class  
   3:00 p.m. Giyur class I  
   4:00 p.m. Giyur class II  
   5:00 p.m. Discussion: “Jewish practices of burial and mourning”  
   5:00 p.m. Friday night services/Tu Bi Shvat Seder  
   8:00 p.m. Mishna Study Group, Tractate Berachot

Saturday, March 17        10:00 a.m. Shacharit services and Torah study  
   1:30 p.m. Kinder Kehilla

Thursday, March 29        10:00 a.m. Synagogue Chametz-Putz

### Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg’s weekend

Friday, March 30            5:30 p.m. **Community Seder**

Saturday, March 31        10:00 a.m. Shacharit services and Torah study  
   1:30 p.m. Kinder Kehilla

### Outside the congregation

Monday, March 5            7:00 p.m. In Cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews, Film and discussion: *The Last Mensch*, St. Augustinus Social Hall, Lohstrasse, Hamelin