



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

[JHG Home](#)

June 2010 • Sivan–Tammuz 5770

[Program](#)



Dear members, friends and supporters,

Exciting things have been happening in our congregation in the last months. As we reported last month, a film team from Channel 2 (ZDF) paid us a visit. Director Anabel Münstermann's film's focus is Jewish women. In Germany, women rabbis are still rare so it made perfect sense to film in our congregation with our rabbi, Irit Shillor. The film team was conscious of our member's sensitivities and the holiness of Shabbat, carefully documenting yet not intruding on anyone. The Friday night services the film crew observed were very special. Our architects, Mr. Nasarek and Mr. Boijic, were present as well as our young friends from "Netzwerk Bünde." Every seat in our sanctuary was filled with members, guests, and officers of the Foundation for Liberal Synagogue in Hamelin. The young people from Netzwerk Bünde brought us an old cigar box (Bünde was famous for its cigar production) filled with cards and letters from them and former Jewish residents from the city of Bünde, all wishing us well with the building of the new synagogue. Along with the sincere words and actions of these young people, this was a lovely gesture. A second gift was presented that evening. Mr. Robert Zalman van Gasteren, past president of the Jewish Congregation of Lörrach sent us



a beautiful Jerusalem stone which is hand decorated. Unfortunately, Mr. van Gasteren could not join us for the evening because of health problems, but our appreciation and thoughts were with him. Our architects took the two gifts, which represent the past, present and future, assuring us they will be integrated into the walls of our new home in a place of honor.

Two important programs, which honored and remembered those who fought against the Nazis in World War II, took place in April and May. Both evenings were filled with story-telling, music, poetry, and moments of sharing of childhood memories. There were many poignant moments and tears, making the telling and listening sometimes hard to bear. Emotions ran high as loved ones and wartime experiences were recalled. Several members wrote thank-

you letters, expressing their appreciation, and we'd like to share some of their thoughts here.

Soya Varschawskaja wrote: "For the first time, I felt able to share memories that I've kept hidden away in my soul. It was so good and comforting to be among friends and people I could trust. We all belong together."

Rimma Kopirovskaja wrote: "I thank you from the bottom of my heart that we could share this evening together."

Emma Lebedinska wrote: "I wish to thank everyone who made this evening possible. Such evenings are necessary."

Eva Skolnikova summed it up with her words: "Thank you for this evening. These people will eventually pass on but their memories will stay with us."

On the 9th of May our congregation gathered together to remember Liberation Day. Six yellow candles were lit by veterans, representing those lost in the war. The congregation rose to recite Kaddisch in one voice and in solemn remembrance of the millions of lives lost. Faina Pelts punctuated the moment with a softly sung piece dedicated to soldiers far from home. One by one, others joined in.



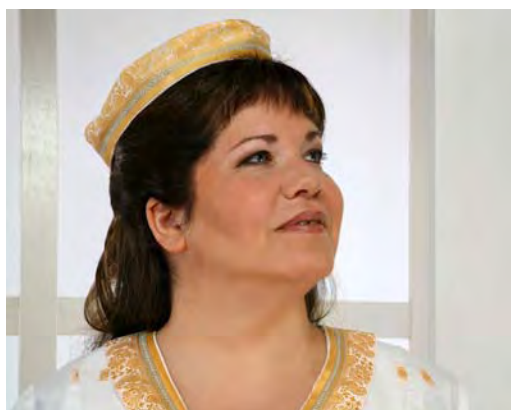
Vice president Polina Pelts presented the veterans with roses and words of gratitude. During the following hours, members spoke spontaneously, recited poems or sang songs of their youth and everyone enjoyed a lovely meal prepared by Elena, Valerii, Dorit, Viktor, Irene and Petro. It was an evening from and for the congregation.

Lag B'Omer was also celebrated. The sun which was missing outside shone inside our walls. Threatening rainclouds kept our picnic inside but none the less joyful. Rabbi Irit Shillor gave a short lecture on the history, meaning and customs of the holiday. Afterwards we enjoyed various homemade salads and desserts and of course kosher hot dogs, grilled to perfection by Aron, Valerii and Arkadij. Everyone enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and look forward to lag B'Omer next year in our own synagogue garden!



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 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@jghreform.org. We appreciate any and all support.



Jewish Culture in June

We are pleased to invite congregants, members of our Friends, and Hamelin citizens to special concert. Cantor Mimi Sheffer will perform in Hamelin on Sunday, June 27, in Haus der Kirche. We are thrilled to have Cantor Sheffer as a guest of our congregation and thank the Central Council of Jews of Germany for the financial support that makes this concert possible. The concert is free; contributions for our new synagogue are much appreciated.

Mimi Sheffer grew up in Israel, studying music in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. She held cantorial pulpits in New York and Connecticut.

Her program will showcase liturgical pieces from the world's most beloved cantors through the ages. It is sure to be a stellar evening, and we look forward to seeing everyone there.

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 percent of the money raised will go to our synagogue building fund. Please visit us online at www.jghreform.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 U.S. 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.



Synagogue Building Begins!

We can't say it better than *Dewezet* journalist Wolfhard F. Truchsess did in an article which appeared in our local paper on May 8th:

A Momentous Day for Hamelin



Rachel Dohme begins to speak, neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Wache hand her a small parcel. It is a stone from the original synagogue. "We collected it from the rubble and have kept it ever since," explains Annette Wache. "You surely need bricks to build the new synagogue," she says to Dohme, "so we wanted to give one to you."

The congregation's president is beaming with happiness as she addresses the crowd: "What a moment we are allowed to experience! What absolute joy! The gratitude that we feel is infinite. Most of all, we thank God." The building of the synagogue, according to Rachel Dohme, is important not only to congregation. "It is just as important to all the citizens of Hamelin as it is to us. Though the wounds of the Holocaust still pain us deeply, the building of this synagogue is testimony to healing and normalization. It will be a vehicle for Tikkun Olam." The synagogue will be a Jewish community center, a place for encounters and dialogue, "a center of Jewish life, visible and open to all."

Mayor Susanne Lippmann described the groundbreaking as a "historical moment for the city," and felt its building honored the city by its "great meaning" as a center for Hamelin because it raises awareness both in and outside Germany. "May the building of the synagogue proceed quickly and well," said Mayor Lippmann, as did County Commissioner Ruediger Butte. It is a "proud day for Hamelin and the entire region," said Butte. Hannover Rabbi Gábor Lengyel recited the Shehechyanu, the prayer to appreciate important Jewish events, and pointed out the importance of building the synagogue in its original location. The synagogue would not only be a house of prayer, but a house of community learning and teaching.

The groundbreaking followed, with Rachel Dohme, Susanne Lipmann, Ruediger Butte, Rabbi Lengyel, and congregational vice president Polina Pelts each sinking the spade in the soft earth. The dedication of the building is planned for February 2011. Lower Saxony's Minister President Christian Wulff will attend.



Two spades, decorated in Israel's colors of blue and white, now stand in the middle of the land upon which the Hamelin synagogue in the Buerenstrasse stood until it was burnt down by the Nazis on the 9th of November 1938. A few feet away a gaily decorated table with champagne bottles and glasses ready to be served stands in wait. About 200 people stand, anticipating the symbolic groundbreaking ceremony representing the building of the first newly constructed Reform synagogue in post-Shoah Germany. School students with their teachers, neighbors, politicians and of course, the members of the Hamelin Reform Jewish Congregation have come to experience what only a few years ago seemed like an impossibility to everyone except the representative of the Jewish community—that Hamelin will once again have a synagogue. Before



that Hamelin will once again have a synagogue. Before Polina Pelts was especially moved. "When I came to Hamelin from Odessa fourteen years ago, I never dreamed it would be possible to experience a day like today. It is the highlight of my life as a Jew that this dream of a new synagogue has actually come true."

Rachel Dohme herself said: "The groundbreaking today is a visible symbol to the members of our community that this dream has become reality." She thanked all those who in the past years have helped her to realize this dream.

The actual building will begin next week.

Farewell Service for Lior Bar-Ami

We will be celebrating a special farewell Erev Shabbat service honoring Lior Bar-Ami, our member and religious school teacher on Friday, June 4th. Lior has decided to spend a year in Israel and has been accepted at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Lior has been a dedicated teacher for our children and spearheaded a project funded by the Women of Reform Judaism. The project, creating a book about and by Reform Jewish children for their non-Jewish schoolmates will be offered to the local public elementary schools this coming September. We are truly grateful for all Lior has done and we will all miss him, especially the children. The world is small and we'll stay in touch and look forward to his return. L'hitraot!

Sixteenth Annual Conference of the Union of Progressive Jews of Germany

The 16th annual conference of the UPJ will be held July 8–11 in Berlin. This year's theme is "Liberal Judaism Today." Fascinating and informative workshops and seminars will be offered by leaders and teachers from Germany and around the world. Moving services in Hebrew, German and Russian will also be celebrated. We hope many of you will attend. Information is available online at www.liberales-juden.de (Jahrestagung 2010).



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 each and every person and organization who has purchased our CD *Shabbat Melodies* in Germany, England, Israel, and America.

We also wish to recognize and thank the following people for their contributions: Mrs. Anabel Münstermann, Barbara Rösel, Rachel Dohme, Jörg-Florian Jensch, Cynthia Rigers, Pastor Otto Pischel, Alexandra Konstantinova, Rabbi Gábor Lengyl, the Jewish Reform Community of Bad Pyrmont and Dr. Till Damaschke.

We wish to recognize the very generous donation from Mrs. Elisabeth Belling and family. Mrs. Belling has continually supported our building project since its inception. Her generosity is inspiring.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



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!

A new leaf has been contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Keijer, USA and reads:

"In honor of Jacob Miles Keijer's graduation from Calabasas High School 2010"

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.

Thanks to Heidi Braun for leading a leadership skills seminar for the board.

Thank you to Rabbi Irit Shillor for contributions of books for our synagogue library.

Yahrzeit in June

- Dr. Ilja Latkov June 5, 1998 / 11th Sivan 5758
- Matvey Slavinskiy June 23, 1998 / 29th Sivan 5758

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

Program for June 2010 • Sivan–Tammuz 5770

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

Wednesday, June 2	12:00 noon	Congregational outing to Höxter Sightseeing, Jacob Pins Society Museum, light lunch Members: €7, non-members: €10
Friday, June 4	4:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Religious school with Lior Bar-Ami Friday night services with Rachel and Rebekka Dohme Festive farewell service for Lior Bar-Ami
Saturday, June 5	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with R. Dohme & F. Pelts
Monday, June 7	12:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.	“Judaism” a class in Russian with Wladimir Pesok Monthly Board Meeting
Saturday, June 12	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with R. Dohme & F. Pelts
Monday, June 14	12:00 noon	Becoming a Citizen, new rules and regulations, Margarita Souslovic
Tuesday, June 15	4:00 p.m.	Video Afternoon with Isaak Katz
Wednesday, June 16	11:00 a.m.	Russian Book Club with Alexandra Konstantinova
Thursday, June 17		Rabbi Irit Shillor’s monthly visit 1:30 p.m. Bat Mitzvah lesson 3:00 p.m. Rabbi’s Table: Liberal Responsa
Friday, June 18	4:00 p.m. 4:30 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Religious school with Greta Golbereg Bat Mitzvah lesson Friday night services with Rabbi Irit Shillor
Saturday, June 19	10:00 a.m. 1:00 p.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Irit Shillor Bat Mitzvah lesson
Tuesday, June 22	5:00 p.m.	“Russian Afternoon” art history class with Mrs. Olvovska “Chagall”
Saturday, June 26	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with R. Dohme & F. Pelts
Sunday, June 27	6:00 p.m.	In cooperation with Senior Café, CONCERT in Haus der Kirche, Hameln, Cantor Mimi Sheffer, Berlin, “Chazzanut 2010” with friendly support of the Central Council of Jews of Germany

Activities outside the community

Tuesday, June 1	7:30 pm	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews “Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Shavuoth and Pentacost” Haus der Kirche, Hameln
Saturday, June 12	11:00 a.m. till 3:00 pm	Opening Day: Family Center, Osterstrasse, Hameln Synagogue choir “Schalom” performance at 1:30 p.m.
Sunday, June 27	6:00 p.m.	In cooperation with Senior Café, CONCERT in Haus der Kirche, Hameln, Cantor Mimi Sheffer, Berlin, “Chazzanut 2010” with friendly support of the Central Council of Jews of Germany

Archived Newsletters:

2010:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May							
2009:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2008:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2007:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2006:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2005:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2004:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2003:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul-Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2002:	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun-Aug		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
2001:		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	

Jewish Community of Hamelin

Member of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany

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