



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

October 2014 • Tishri–Heshvan 5775

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

We wish everyone a happy, healthy and sweet New Year 5775. May we all be inscribed in the Book of Life! L'Shana Tovah Tiketevu!

Shanah Tovah wishes to all of our readers from the Synagogue Board — Rachel Dohme, Polina Pelts, Faina Pelts, Olga Gerr and Peter Wendt



Summer was ushered out with beautiful member-led services, enhanced with music from our synagogue choir. Rabbi Irit Shillor was with us for the first weekend in September and offered, as usual, a myriad of opportunities to learn and join together. She led services, gave fascinating classes, offered a thought-provoking Torah study session, always enhanced through her mother tongue knowledge of Hebrew, gave a public lecture at “House of World Religions” and officiated at two unveilings. In addition she mentored our rabbinical student, Dr. Ulrike Offenberg, who also visited us for the weekend and who will lead the High Holiday services in Hamelin. We certainly know how to keep a rabbi busy! Wouldn't it be wonderful if she could be with us all the time?

Our state board of Jewish congregations' social worker, Margarita Souslovic gave a lecture on September 8th concerning the new rules and regulations allowing easier immigration to Jews in the Ukraine. Information, questions and answers were offered.

Our congregation enjoys a good relationship with the Society of Christians and Jews. We share in many communal programs and support the work of the Society and enjoy the support of the Society of our congregation. Rachel Dohme is the Jewish board member of the Hamelin society.



On Sunday, September 14, we joined with local churches and mosques in the “Walk of the Religions.” The program involves visiting different houses of worship and learning something about each one. It is our congregation's fervent wish to build bridges, not walls, between religions. We firmly believe that dialogue and encounter are essential to peaceful relations between people of different religions and cultures.

Our synagogue was filled with Jews, Christians and Moslems as Rachel Dohme opened the day, giving a short lecture about Rabbi Israel Jacobson, the father of Reform Judaism, continuing with information about Reform Judaism and our congregation. The group moved on to the Mosque and a Lutheran church to round out the day.

As important as it was for our congregation to take part in interreligious programs, it was of utmost importance for our members to take part in the sadly necessary rally against anti-Semitism, organized by the Central Council of Jews in Germany on the very same day. Thanks to Aron Kaplan and Faina Pelts, a bus was chartered and drove our members and members from our sister congregation from Bad Pyrmont to Berlin for the day. It was a long and difficult day but so important. The rally was a show of support of the German Jewish community and against racism. Speakers included Central Council President Dr. Dieter Graumann, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Ronald Lauder, Berlin Mayor Woworeit and many others.

Our members reported how important the day was to them, although physically and emotionally taxing. “It was so inspiring to be part of such a large Jewish presence. Young and old stood together and we felt solidarity with one another. Each speaker reiterated how vital Jewish life in Germany is and how the society as a whole desires it.”

The day was not exclusively serious, spontaneous expressions of Jewish self-confidence were displayed in conversations, singing and dancing through the streets of Berlin.



We thank everyone who took part and who stood up to be counted saying in one voice, “Never again!”

We can be proud to have not only built the first congregation in Hamelin since the total destruction of Jewish life during WWII but to have built a congregation which is comprised of so many active and dedicated members. Our congregational life, although we are a small congregation of 90% FSU immigrants, is one of spirituality and cultural richness.

Last month Polina Pelts invited seniors to a program with Mrs. Lybych and afternoon tea. This year’s “Festival of Cultures” was enhanced through our congregation’s choir and dance performances. Cultural events like these strengthen our self confidence in our Jewish identity, an identity that many of our members have only developed since their immigration to Germany. Mrs. Ioulia Berhowski spoke at a local church on “Israel Sunday” and she and her message was very well received. Those who regularly attend religious services have happily volunteered to lead services when Rabbi Irit cannot be with us. The motto of our mother organization, the World Union of Progressive Judaism rings so true: “There are many ways to be Jewish.”

Our newsletter, printed in English, German and Russian, demands many hours of work. In order to have our newsletter available on the 1st of each month, it needs to be prepared by the middle of the month. Our Rosh Hashanah services occur at the end of this month, so we cannot report on them just yet.

We began preparing by offering, as every year, congregational visits to both cemeteries. We stopped at each grave, spoke lovingly of each person graveside, leaving stones to signify our visit and then repeated prayers together. Rabbinical student Dr. Ulrike Offenber, fourth-year rabbinical student of the Abraham Geiger College, will be officiating at our High Holy Day services. She is very much looking forward to celebrating the holidays with us. Many of us met her when she visited at the beginning of September.

May the call of the shofar speak to our souls and hearts and encourage us to work to achieve Teshuva, Tefilah and Tzedaka so that we may all be inscribed in the Book of Life.

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

Jewish October

Yom Kippur services begin with Kol Nidre on October 3rd at 6:00 p.m. and continue the next day, on October 4th at 10:00 a.m. Members who are physically able are encouraged to fast on this day. Children, the elderly or the ill are reminded not to fast but to attend services. Yiskor services commence at 6:00 p.m. on the afternoon of the 4th. Our Yom Kippur services end with Ne’ila prayers at sundown. Together we will break the fast with tea and challah. Members who need transportation assistance attending services should please contact the synagogue office.



After Yom Kippur we begin making plans for the annual construction of our congregational Sukkah. Please join us to help erect the Sukkah and decorate it on September 8th on Erev Sukkoth. The more helpers we have the better our Sukkah will be. Everyone can help in some way. Let’s make this year’s Sukkah the best and brightest ever!

Rabbi Irit will join us on the weekend of October 17th and help make our observance of Simchat Torah meaningful. Don’t miss the chance to celebrate this wonderful holiday and help hold the Torah as the Torah has held us as a People together for thousands of years. Every heart and soul is certain to be touched.



Membership Meeting

Members have received by separate post an invitation to a special membership meeting on October 5th to decide whether or not we want to amend our constitution. The members will vote on whether or not we keep a proxy voting privilege, replace it with a mail-in vote or neither.

Constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority vote from at least 30 percent of our membership.

We need your help

Mrs. Bantschukova helps many of our elderly members with their doctor's appointments. She accompanies them and translates for them. Members call her and she tries her best to set appointments that are agreeable to all. This takes time and effort. We ask our members to respect Mrs. Bantschukova's privacy and to only call her from Monday until Thursday and to not call after 9:00 p.m. Thank you!

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 thank all those who donated to either the congregation or the synagogue foundation:

Thank you Mr. Adolf Späth, Pastor Mrs. Kesper-Weinrich, Lutheran Women's Circle from Hachmühlen, Mr. Jacob-Arie de Muijnk, the Dohme family, as well as Mr. Hans Weltner, Rachel Dohme and always Mrs. Ute Gibas.

May you all be blessed for your generosity.

Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Autumn has arrived and with the change of season, so every tree changes too. Instead of losing leaves, we've added one! The tree 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. Thank you!

A new leaf has sprouted:

"In memory of Wilma Rinne" donated from the Dohme family

Thank you — Todah Rabah

We wish to thank Aron Kaplan and Faina Pelts for organizing the trip to Berlin and all it involved.

We thank everyone who help in making our holiday and cultural events very special. Our thanks go to everyone who plan and organize activities in our community.

Unveiling

Rabbi Irit Shillor officiated at the unveiling of the gravestones for Oksana Koslova, of blessed memory, and for Larissa Shapiro, of blessed memory, during her September visit. 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.

Gmar chatimah tovah.
May we all be inscribed in the Book of Life

Shalom!

—The Congregation Board



[Newsletter Archives](#)

Program for October 2014 • Tishri–Heshvan 5775

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

Yom Kippur services will be led by rabbinical student Dr. Ulrike Offenberg

Friday, October 3	6:00 p.m.	Kol Nidre services
Saturday, October 4	10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m. sundown	Yom Kippur services Yiskor, Neila services Congregational Break the Fast
Sunday, October 5	12:00 noon 3:00 p.m.	Monthly synagogue board meeting (for board members only) Membership meeting
Monday, October 6	12:00 noon	“Judaism” a course in Russian with W. Pesok Topic: Sukkot & Simchat Torah
Wednesday, October 8	4:00 p.m.	Sukka building and decorating. Everyone is welcome to come and help. Sukkoth service with R. Dohme
Saturday, October 11	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with R. Dohme

Rabbi Irit Shillor’s monthly visit

Friday, October 17	3:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Giyur class Judaism from A to Z-an open class for all Friday night services with Rabbi Irit
Saturday, October 18	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Irit
Monday, October 20	7:00 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews Reading: “The Jews of Bad Pyrmont” with Mr. Manfred Willecke
Saturday, October 25	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with E. Shkolnikova
Sunday, October, 26	3:00 p.m.	Sunday Café and concert with P. Pelts & L. Bellgardt Sponsored by Aktion Mensch

Rabbinical student Dr. Ulrike Offenberg’s visit

Friday, October 31	4:00 p.m. 5:30 p.m.	Giyur class Friday night services with rabbinical student Dr. Offenberg
Saturday, November 1	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with rabbinical student Dr. Offenberg

Activities outside the community

Sunday, October 19	3:00 p.m.	House of World Religion, Podium Discussion, Lecture: “Tell me about your religion” with Rabbi Irit Shillor. Johannes Kirchzentrum, Wilhelm Raabe Weg 24, Rinteln
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We wish all our readers a happy and healthy 5775!

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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