



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

November–December 2015 • Heshvan–Kislev 5776

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

Newspaper reports tell us of this year’s Nobel Prize recipients and we might pause to wonder why such prizes are given. Obviously the first reason is to acknowledge and support the work of those who strive for the betterment of others. Much hard work must be invested, often at the personal cost of time away from family and friends. Time and energy is spent in achieving high goals, and it gratifying to shine a light on such people, especially those whose work is done on a volunteer basis.



We as a congregation were pleased to learn the organization, “Christian and Jewish Encounter,” affiliated with the state of Lower Saxony’s Lutheran Church, awarded our president, Rachel Dohme, with this year’s “Blickwechsel” prize for her engagement over the past 20 years in interreligious dialogue. The award ceremony took place in Hannover on September 6th. We are happy and proud of her and all she has done to support encounter and dialogue between religious groups in Hamelin. May we all be inspired to choose this path.

Looking back we recall the moving High Holiday services we experienced as a congregation each year anew. We began preparing by making our annual congregational visits, led by Rachel Dohme, to both cemeteries. We stopped at each grave, remembered those who are no longer with us with personal anecdotes from their lives, recited prayers and left stones and pebbles to signify our visit.

Dr. Ulrike Offenberg came to us from HUC in Jerusalem and led us for the second year through the High Holy Days. She created a meditative and spiritual atmosphere that touched each heart and soul, guiding us through our religious observances and ending with moving Yom Kippur services. Faina Pelts’ voice enriched the message of the Kol Nidre text to all in attendance. We traveled spiritually from the joy and happiness of Rosh Hashanah to the deeply emotional prayers of atonement on Yom Kippur morning.



After a pause in which study sessions were offered, the sanctuary filled again for Yiskor and Ne’ila services. Our beautiful tradition of individually coming forward before communally reciting Kaddish and laying a stone in remembrance of our loved ones remains, year for year, a moving and meaningful ceremony.



Wladimir Pesok joined Dr. Offenberg, blowing the shofar in tandem. The services ended with the curtain of nightfall, as the Gates of Heaven symbolically closed with the last prayers of Ne'ila. We stood in the darkened sanctuary, arm in arm, tired but happy to celebrate Havdallah.

A few minutes later, we refreshed ourselves with a light “break-the fast” meal and simply enjoyed being together. Once again we felt satisfied with our efforts, which have rebuilt a Reform congregation in Hamelin, serious in its religiosity and a warm and inclusive house for all. We thank Dr. Offenberg for her lovely and well-prepared services.



After Yom Kippur we begin making plans for the annual construction of our congregational Sukkah. Aron Kaplan, Heinrich Moos and Yevgeni Resnik built our booth, and on Erev Sukkoth, youth leader Patrizia Berhovski helped all the little ones create colorful decorations. Faina Pelts and Peter Wendt led the service, and members and friends gathered outside to dwell in the Sukkah and to recite the blessings, shake the Lulav and smell the sweet Etrog. We were pleased to welcome members from our sister congregation in Bad Pyrmont as well as members of our Friends group. Fruit, cakes and tea encouraged everyone to linger and the Sukkah stood in our garden for the week, allowing many the opportunity to dwell in the booth.

We welcomed Rabbi Shillor for Simchat Torah services. We stood in a close circle around the Torah, crowding in and juggling places to get a closer look, as she read and explained the last words of Deuteronomy and the first words of Genesis. They were especially meaningful because we were inaugurating our new Sefer Torah on loan to the congregation from Rachel Dohme. Rabbi Irit took special delight in explaining many different passages and drawing our attention to the excellent condition of the new scroll. She taught us various details which a Sofer employs in the holy work of a scribe. We gained a deeper appreciation and love for our Scroll of the Law. It was thrilling to see our beautiful new Torah, standing as witnesses that its wisdom never ends, standing firmly as a community in continuity.

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 like to help us stay online, please contact Rachel Dohme at racheldohme@jghreform.org. We appreciate any and all support!

Jewish November and December

As every year we will gather together on the 9th of November outside the walls of our newly built synagogue and remember the more than 100 Jewish men, women and children from Hamelin who were murdered at the hands of the Nazis as everyone looked on and no one raised a finger to help. We will stand together and publically as Jews and as citizens of Hamelin with neighbors, friends and strangers and remember never to forget. We rely on our government and all governments to ensure religious freedom and security to its citizens. This is especially important as Germany welcomes one million refugees from war-torn Syria.

After the wreaths for Pogromnacht have been laid, biblical passages have been read and we communally recite Kaddish, we will invite everyone into our sanctuary for a concert of meditational music, performed by Lauren Welliehausen and Lars Karrasch.

The following evening we again invite members and friends to a concert of Music of the Shoah, performed by Natalia Gonohova. Ms. Gonohova will sing in Hebrew and Russian.

We thank the Amadeu Antonio Foundation for their financial support and are pleased to take part in their project, "Antisemitism Awareness Week."



On Monday, November 17th, Polina Pelts hopes to welcome a large crowd for "Mitzvah Day." Polina has planned once again to bake Challot for those members who are housebound. Mitzvah Day is being sponsored by Aktion Mensch and the Central Council of Jews of Germany. Join us and perform the Mitzvah of doing something good for someone else. We read in Pirke Avot, The Sayings of our Fathers, chapter 4, verse 2: "A Mitzvah brings another Mitzvah"

December means Hanukkah and is almost every Jewish child's (and many adults') favorite holiday. The decorations come out of their boxes and are hung in our homes and synagogues, the cookie dough is prepared and cookie cutters in the shape of dreidels, Hanukkias and Stars of David are ready for family fun, potato latkes recipes are selected and Sufganiyot, jelly doughnut bought. Presents are wrapped in brightly-colored Hanukkah paper and dreidels spin on table tops.

This year our holiday begins on the evening of December 6th and ends eight days later on December 14th. Our congregational Hanukkah service and party will be held on December 13th. All eight colorful candles will be aglow as we enjoy a concert of Jewish music from Ms. Flora Polnauer, cantorial student at Abraham Geiger College in Berlin. Come early and stay late!

Youth Activities

Our wonderful Madricha, Patrizia Berhovski, is spending a year in Israel in the Netzer Olami Schnat program. She is still shy of the funds needed. Please contact Rachel Dohme at racheldohme@ighreform.org if anyone can contribute to her year. We and the children miss her but are thrilled that she is participating in this program. Her lively, happy personality is certainly an asset to the Schnat program.

Faina is offering our youngsters an afternoon of Jewish learning fun each month and Ioulia is offering regular family outings. We ask parents and grandparents to instill in their children the importance of their Jewish identity and take part in these activities.

Save the date

Our annual New Year reception will be held on Sunday, January 3rd. Cost is 8€ and registration is open until December 10th. Valerij has a fabulous program and buffet planned. Make sure you sign the list!

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.



Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Autumn has arrived and with the change of season, so every tree changes too. Instead of losing leaves, we need to add them! 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. Who will donate the next one?

Donations — Tzedakah

We thank all those who donated to either the congregation, for the High Holidays or the synagogue foundation: We acknowledge and thank Mr. Pfeil and his organization, GEW, the Elementary school in Saaletal, Mrs. Nadya Kriwtzova, Mrs. Soya Varschavska, the Dohme family, the Khan family, Mrs. Polina Pelts, Mr. Samuil Kudinow, Dr. Oleg Rubanov and family and mother Mrs. Rimma Rubanov, Mr. Valerij Bogatchyk, Mrs. Ute Stange-Kubiak and Mrs. Ute Gibas. Generous donations were received from the USA from the Yoshimitsu Khan family, Mrs. Sandi Firstel, Rabbi Jo David, Mr. Lou Spiro, and the Meschede-Krasa family. May you all be blessed for your generosity.

Thank you — Todah Rabah

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.

Yahrzeit in November and Dezember

Dr. Siegmund Kratzenstein	11/28/1938 / Kislev 5, 5699
Revolod Banchukov	11/28/1999 / Kislev 19, 5760
Jan Olvovskj	11/25/2001 / Kislev 10, 5762
Riva Voronova	11/16/2002 / Kislev 11, 5763
Josif Pelts	11/20/2008 / Cheshvan 22,5769
Lev Vinnyskiy	11/21/2013 / Kislev 18, 5774
Roza Chirita	1. 12. 2000 / 4. Kislev 5761
Frida Dachkevich	3. 12. 2001 / 18. Kislev 5762
Grigori Drabkine	7. 12. 2005 / 6. Kislev 5766
Igor Fuksa	5. 12. 2006 / 15. Kislev 5767
Genrich Leimunski	29. 12. 2006 / 8. Tewet 5767
Ira Leimunskis	3. 12. 2011 / 7. Kislev 5772
Milja Golberg	18. 12. 2012 / 5. Tewet 5773



May the memory of our loved ones 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

Program for December 2015 • Kislev–Tevet 5776

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; Tuesday & Thursday: 10.00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 1	10:00 a.m.	Monthly Board Meeting
Friday, December 4	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Faina Pelts
Saturday, December 5	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rachel Dohme
Sunday, December 6		Netzer Family Outing with Ioulia, Hameln Theater
Saturday, December 12	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Wladimir Pesok
Sunday, December 13	4:00 p.m.	Hanukkah Celebration: Netzer group performance, Hanukkah concert with Student cantor Flora Polnauer, Abraham Geiger College. Hannukiot, dreidels, songs, latkes and much more! We thank the Central Council of Jews of Germany for the support.
Tuesday, December 15	11:00 a.m.	Senior's Breakfast Club: led by Polina Pelts and with support from "Aktion Mensch" Lecture: Rosa Ausländer with Ina Lybych
Friday, December 18	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Peter Wendt
Saturday, December 19	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Peter Wendt
Sunday, December 20	3:00 p.m.	Senior's Café: led by Polina Pelts and with support from "Aktion Mensch" short film: The life of Shalom Aleichem with Valerij Bogachyk

Activities outside the congregation

Tuesday, December 1	7:00 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews, Film: "The Tango of the Rashevskis" with an introduction by Rachel Dohme Kapitalsaal, St. Bonifatius Church, Hamelin
Until December 16, M–F, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.		Exhibit: "Anne Frank," Elisabeth-Selbert-Schule, Hamelin



We wish all our members and friends a happy Hanukkah! To all our Christian friends a very merry Christmas! We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2016!

[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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