



# The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

November 2014 • Heshvan–Kislev 5775

[JGH Home](#) [Program](#)

## Dear members, friends and supporters,

November is a month which often brings harsh weather. It is a time of transition. The beauty of autumn with its colorful swirling leaves and crisp air is replaced with overcast skies and rain and chilling winds. In the biblical book of Kohelet it is written: “To every thing there is a season” and so we, in our part of the world, say goodbye to the sun for a few months, understanding that everything has its time in God’s great plan.

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

Dr. Ulrike Offenberg, fourth-year rabbinical student of the Abraham Geiger College, joined us the next day and led us through the High Holy Day services. Following the 30 days of Month of Elul, we greeted the New Year 5775 with Rosh Hashanah services and observances and ended with moving Yom Kippur services. Faina Pelts’s voice carried the message of the Kol Nidre text to all in attendance on Erev Yom Kippur. Dr. Offenberg led us through the prayers of the following 48 hours with her quiet and calm demeanor, creating an atmosphere of meditation and inner reflection.

The services were earnest but also creative and several members were asked to read chapters of the Haftorah on Yom Kippur morning aloud and give their ideas and impressions. Although the services are indeed long, members were involved and concentrated.

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

A choir of Shofarot blasts ended the services as the Gates of Heaven symbolically closed with the last prayers of Ne’ila, and the sanctuary darkened and we all stood, 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 that 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.

Two days after Yom Kippur we began making plans for the annual construction of our congregational Sukkah. Aron Kaplan and his team set our booth up and on Erev Sukkoth, youth leader Patrizia Berhovski helped all the little ones create colorful decorations. Faina Pelts led the service and after a brief rainfall, members and friends went 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, cake 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 the weekend of October 17th, pleased that she was with us, helping to make our observance of Simchat Torah meaningful. Once again, Rabbi Irit took us on a spiritual journey, explaining many different passages in the scroll. 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. It was thrilling to see our beautiful scroll in its entirety, especially the crowns lovingly added to the beginning letters of the first chapters of Genesis.



Thanks to the work of Sofer Neil Yerman, the scroll, donated in part by the churches of Hamelin three years ago, each of the more than 300,000 letters of the Torah are beautiful, clear and perfect. Although the scroll was written more than a century ago, it was especially gratifying to know that the first crown on the first letter of the first book was penned by our member Rebekka Dohme when she received the Torah as emissary from our congregation from Sofer Yerman in New York City in 2011.

This and every Simchat Torah, we stand as witnesses that the Torah never ends as we stand firmly in the 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, and we are grateful to all involved. If you would like to help us stay online, please contact Rachel Dohme at [racheldohme@jghreform.org](mailto:racheldohme@jghreform.org). We appreciate any and all support.

## Jewish November

Living as Jews in Germany carries with it a daily awareness of the Holocaust. The profound loss of those who came before us here is felt in everything we do. Here, we are pioneers in rebuilding Jewish life and its presence where it once flourished. Our small congregation in Hamelin, in concert with 25 other Reform congregations in Germany, has taken its rightful place in the dark void and re-established Reform Judaism in the land of its birth.

And so, 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 who were murdered at the hands of the Nazis in that time when evil ruled. Rabbi Irit Shillor will lead us in the recitation of Kaddish, and church and civic leaders will recite various biblical passages and texts. Patrizia Berhovski will read the names of dead, and our choir will sing several short pieces. We will stand together as Jews and as citizens of Hamelin with neighbors, friends and strangers and remember never to forget.

Upon conclusion of the memorial service, we will invite everyone into the sanctuary for the opening of a two-week exhibit we are hosting, "Antisemitism in Germany today." On November 12, Rabbi Dr. Gábor Lengyl will give a lecture on Jewish life in the world.

On Sunday, November 16, Polina Pelts hopes to welcome a large crowd for our Breakfast Club.

After a delicious and nutritious breakfast and a healthy dose of socializing, we will bake Challot for those members who are housebound. This project, "Mitzvah Day," is being sponsored by Aktion Mensch and the Central Council of Jews of Germany. Come out on Sunday morning and make the Mitzvah of doing something good for someone else. As Rabbi Abraham Heschel wrote: "No one is lonely when doing a Mitzvah, for a Mitzvah is when God and man meet."



## Membership Meeting

Members will receive with this newsletter an invitation to a special membership meeting on January 11, 2015 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 to this second meeting require a two-thirds majority vote from members present.

## New Members

Please welcome Mrs. Emilie Sheenkova to our “Friends.” Please do what you can to make Mrs. Sheenkova feel at home with us. Friend status is possible for non-Jews who wish to take active part in our congregational life and support our activities. Friends can participate fully, except in voting or holding office.

## 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, for the High Holidays or the synagogue foundation:

Thank you Mrs. Natascha Kriwtzova, Mrs. Soya Varschavska, Mrs. Polina Pelts, Mrs. Anna Armbrrecht, Mrs. Sabine Demuth, Dr. Oleg Rubanov and family and mother Mrs. Rimma Rubanov, Dr. Ferdinand Dohme and family, Mrs. Rimma Kopirovskaja, Mrs. Susanne Kessler, Bad Münders High School with Mrs. Schwanhold and her 10th grade class, Albert Einstein High School and Mrs. Lange and her 10th grade class, Mr. Hans Weltner, Mrs. Rachel Dohme and Mrs. Ute Gibas.

Generous donations were received from the USA from the Yoshimitsu Khan family and the Meschede-Krasa family.

May you all be blessed for your generosity.

## Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Autumn has arrived and with the change of season, 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. Our tree now has 295 leaves! Who will donate the next one?

## Thank you — Todah Rabah

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

## Condolences

We express our heartfelt condolences to the Bogdanov and Gerr families on the death of their beloved husband, father, uncle, son-in-law and brother-in-law, Oleksiü Bogdanova, of blessed memory.

## Yahrzeit in November

Dr. Siegmund Kratzenstein	11/28/1938 / Kislev 5, 5699
Revdol 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

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

[Newsletter Archives](#)

## Program for November 2014 • Heshvan–Kislev 5775

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

### Rabbinical student Dr. Ulrike Offenberg's visit

Saturday, November 1	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with rabbinical student Dr. Offenberg
Monday, November 3	12:00 noon	“Judaism” a course in Russian with W. Pesok, Topic: 9 <sup>th</sup> November 1938
Tuesday, November 4	10:00 a.m.	Monthly synagogue board meeting (for board members only)

### Rabbi Irit Shillor's monthly visit

Friday, November 7	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, November 8	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Irit
<b>Sunday, November 9</b>	<b>4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Memorial service: Pogromnacht 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1938</b> Mit Rabbi Irit Shillor and our synagogue choir “Shalom” <b>Opening of the exhibit in our synagogue: “Anti-Semitism in Germany today”</b>
Tuesday, November 11	11:00 a.m.	Informational meeting: “Partnership parent and school” Margarita Souslovic, Hannover
Wednesday, November 12	7:00 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews Rabbi Dr. Gábor Lengyl, Hannover, “Judaism in the World”
Saturday, November 15	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with W. Pesok
Sunday, November, 16	11:00 a.m.	Breakfast Club and Mitzvah Day with P. Pelts. Challah Bakery, sponsored by <b>Aktion Mensch</b> and the Central Council of Jews of Germany
Friday, November 21	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with P. Wendt
Saturday, November 22	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with P. Wendt
Saturday, November 29	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with H. Braun

### 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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