



## Dear members, friends and supporters,

Before we look ahead to November, let us review what happened in October in our congregation.

A day before Erev Rosh Hashanah we met at both Jewish cemeteries to honor and remember beloved family members and friends. This is a tradition shared by many Jewish communities. As a group we visited each grave, standing in silence until someone began to speak about the departed. Stories were shared, words of love and gratitude were spoken and tears fell. For a moment the dear departed were with us in spirit. After each grave was visited, each person recalled and each headstone crowned with stones and pebbles, we stood together to recite Kaddish for all.

The next evening our members sought a seat in our sanctuary to greet the New Year 5777. Dr. Ulrike Offenberg greeted the congregation in Hebrew, German and Russian, and held beautiful and meaningful services in all three languages, making sure everyone felt included. Upon completion of the liturgy, hearing the final blast of the Shofar and shouts of L'shanah Tovah Tikatevu, the focus switched to the buffet tables, laden with home-made dishes, brought by our members to share. Our kitchen team added plates of gefilte fish, fresh salads, steaming potatoes, wine and a gorgeous round challah. The blessings were pronounced and honey kissed each apple slice to the delight of all in attendance.

The next morning we were in for a surprise. The synagogue's security system was on lock down and would not be budged. What does a group of Jews do when faced with a problem? They discuss it, of course, and everyone offers a different solution. Finally it was agreed upon to accept Ioulia Berhovski's invitation to convene in her living room, which we did. It is actually an old European Jewish tradition to meet in a private home for services. We were in luck. A guest from Bielefeld had brought a Challah and a bottle of wine and Ioulia had Chumashim at home. The davening could begin! What began as a problem ended in a beautiful service at "Bayit Berhovski." Maybe it was supposed to be. Who can say? We might even try it again.

Kol Nidre brought a quieter atmosphere; one could feel the earnestness of the evening. Faina Pelts sang Kol Nidre with deep awe, and the service ended in a hush, members leaving deep in their own thoughts. The next morning, the services continued. Jiskor service is especially meaningful because of a tradition that Rabbi Arnold Zoref, of beloved memory, shared with us. Lights dimmed with only soft piano music playing as each person stood, came forward, laid a stone and spoke the names of family and friends they wished remembered.

The closing prayers of Ne'ila brought to mind the image of the "Book of Life" in which we hope all will be inscribed. Havdalah ended the long day of prayer, and we broke the fast with hot tea and sweet challah.

Our holidays continued with Sukkoth and Simchat Torah. Sukkot was well-attended. The Synagogue Foundation had built a pergola in our garden, which we put to good use as our Sukkah. The children had decorated it and even built a model Sukkah of their own. Fruits and sweet cakes added to the festivities.

The end is only the beginning and so it was with Simchat Torah. Rachel Dohme led a novel and creative service. Her sermon described the work of a sofer, and after hearing the last and first words of Torah read aloud, the scrolls were passed from person to person. Each person in turn expressed what the Torah meant to them. No two descriptions were alike. Clearly though, everyone agreed as we hold the Torah, the Torah holds us—as a people, as a congregation and as "Menschen."

Enjoy the collage of photos on page 2.

After so many meaningful services, we were all refreshed and ready for some joyous music. Trio Yas from Berlin delivered that promise. The trio, C. David, S. Möricke and G. Shalom, played with heart and soul, and it wasn't long until people were clapping, stomping and dancing. We thank the Central Council of Jews of Germany for the financial support that made the concert possible.

## 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 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](mailto:racheldohme@jghreform.org). We appreciate any and all support!



# The High Holy Days und Sukkoth





## Jewish November

November is a dark and sad month in Germany.

We will gather outside the synagogue on Wednesday, November 9th and remember the countless individuals who once lived in our town, went to school, married and raised children, were respected doctors and business people who served their community and went in and out of the synagogue, which once stood where ours stands now.

We will remember November 9th, 1938—the black day when it was agreed upon by their friends, neighbors and politicians that the Jews of Hamelin were to be stripped of all human honor and dignity and of their very lives. We feel so profoundly the absence of those brutally ripped from their lives at a time when the world turned away from God.

Our synagogue choir “Shalom,” Rachel Dohme and officers of the Society of Christians and Jews will offer a memorial service, attended by our members and the citizens of Hamelin. After Kaddish is recited and stones and flowers have been symbolically laid, we will enter the synagogue for a short memorial music program from “Benschaft.”

## Mitzvah Tag 2016

We hope for a big turnout at this year’s Mitzvah Day on Sunday, November 13th. We’ll begin with a delicious and leisurely breakfast.

We’ll break into groups, some baking challot and some creating Shabbat candlesticks. We’ll add the Kiddush blessings and a personal note, and the Shabbat packages will be delivered to those members who are too ill or frail to attend services.

We hope to see you there!



## Shalom–Shalom

On December 2nd we will celebrate a very special Shabbat service. We will honor our rabbi of the last fifteen years, Rabbi Irit Shillor, showering her with words of praise and thanks as she passes her pulpit on to Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenbergl.

Rabbi Shillor has helped guide and form our congregation for almost two decades. She came to us as a Leo Baeck rabbinical student in 2001 and stayed on after her S’micha in 2002, making monthly visits from her home in England until today.

She has been a wise and just voice, helping individuals through joyous and trying times. She has made Judaism accessible to those who were estranged from it, instructed our young people, bringing them to Bar and Bat Mitzvah, and taught those who hungered for more knowledge, depth and understanding. She brought Jews by Choice into our fold and offered non-Jews an opportunity to learn about our religious beliefs and culture. Her calm advice and analytical method solved many a problem and aided solutions in the design and building of our synagogue.

We owe her so much and can never thank her enough for all she has done for this congregation. We are honored to bestow upon her the title of Rabbi Emeritus. We hope she will find time to visit us on occasion and know she will always have a special place for us in her heart as we have her in ours. With a tear and a smile we say L’hitraot Irit.

No door closes without a new one opening and so it is with us. On December 2nd we will welcome Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenbergl as Rabbi Shillor’s spiritual successor. We are thrilled to have Rabbi Offenbergl as our congregational rabbi. She will receive S’micha with honors at her ordination at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem on November 17th. We look forward to working with this young Rabbi who brings a deep knowledge and strong religiosity to the pulpit. Her gentle and soft-spoken manner and ability to preach in German, English, Hebrew and Russian are added pluses.

As with any transition, some things will remain constant while others will be new. Our members and invited guests will rejoice together as our community, with steady footing takes its next step into the future. Invitations will go out in November.

## Hope and Return

Our congregation has been caring for a Jewish-Albanian family for the past year. The young father of the family has Jewish roots. Unfortunately, this was not enough to qualify him or the family to stay in Germany. The young couple and their two children were quickly integrated into our community: they began conversion class and learning German; they found work, earning their own keep; and the children attended public schools. The family had to return to Albania but with the help of our county commissioner and our congregation may have a real chance to return.

A strong and helpful article was written by Christine Schmitt about the family and our congregation in the German Jewish weekly newspaper *Jüdische Allgemeine*. It is available on our Web site in German.

If you’d like to help the family, contact Rachel Dohme. We all are hoping for their return and right to stay in Germany.

## Information from the Central Council of Jews in Germany

Please check the information table for the newest information about winter activities for seniors in Bad Sobernheim.

## Winter Machene/Camp

The Union of Progressive Jews of Germany invites children and youth to participate in a winter vacation camp December 23–30. The program looks packed with fun. More information is available in the synagogue.

## 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 wish to thank Mrs. Kritzowa, the Rubanov family, Mr. Uchytel, Mrs. Zisckle-Henßen and her group from the Seminar Center Ith, Mrs. Gibas, Mrs. Dohme and Mrs. Berhovski. Todah Rabah! 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.

One new leaf will soon sprout:

Boris Uchytel: "In memory of my beloved parents Marija and Josef Uchytel"



## Thank you — Todah Rabah

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

## November Yahrzeit

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

—The Congregation Board

## [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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## Program for November 2016 • Tishrei–Heshvan 5777

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; Tuesday & Thursday: 8.00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 2	12:00 noon	Monthly Board Meeting
Saturday, November 5	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services/Torah study with R. Dohme
Wednesday, November 9	4:00 p.m.	Memorial service for Pogromnacht 1938. After the service we invite everyone to join us inside for a memorial concert with “Benkschaft”

### Rabbi Irit Shillor’s visit November 10–13

Thursday, November 8	7:30 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews, Discussion with Hans-Georg Spangenberg and Rabbi Irit, “Remembrance”
Friday, November 11	4:00 p.m.	Shiur
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Rabbi Irit
Saturday, November 12	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Irit
Sunday, November 13	10:00 a.m.	<b>Mitzvah Day</b> with R. Dohme and Rabbi Irit. Join us for breakfast and a Mitzvah project!
Monday, November 21	3:00 p.m.	Movie Matinee with V. Bogatchyk, “The Uncle’s Dream”

### Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg’s visit November 25–26

Friday, November 25	4:00 p.m.	Shiur
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Rabbi Ulrike
Saturday, November 26	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Ulrike

### Activities outside the community

Sunday, November 6	5:00 p.m.	Concert “Shalom,” Ev.-Luth. Church Holtensen
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