



**Dear members, friends and supporters,**

“Oh Hanukkah, Oh Hannukah, come light the menorah!  
Let’s have a party; we’ll all dance the Hora!”

Depending how old our readers are, these lines will bring back happy childhood memories. Who doesn’t remember counting the days until Hanukkah?



Let’s count backwards first and see what happened within the walls of our synagogue in November.

The sanctuary was hushed and lit with candles. Pastor Lange welcomed her parishioners to a special evening with our choir “Shalom” in their Lutheran church.



Jewish music drifted through the pews of the 100-year-old church in the tiny village of Holtensen. Once again, our congregation demonstrated that liberal Judaism stresses that we as people, regardless of religion, culture or nationality have more that we share than what separates us.

On the 9th of November, we gathered in front of our synagogue and city’s memorial to the pre-war Jewish community to observe and remember Pogromnacht 1938.

This November 9th was like all others for the past 78 years—dark, cold and terribly sad. The two pyramid oak trees, planted in 1879 when the first synagogue was dedicated, are the only living remnants of that time and they held silent watch over the ceremony.

Our synagogue choir “Shalom”, Rachel Dohme and officers of the Society of Christians and Jews led a memorial service, attended by our members and the citizens of Hamelin. High school students read the names of the Jewish community that was destroyed, one by one.

The names are for all to see and read on large bronze plaques, affixed to the memorial structure. We deplore the so-called “Stumbling Stones” (Stolpersteine), which are embedded in the sidewalks of many German city streets. The names of the murdered are tread upon, scratched, soiled and unnoticed as people hustle and bustle through the streets.

The memorial service concluded with a short memorial music program from “Benschaft” in our sanctuary.



Our synagogue and our congregation is not only a testimony to the survival of Jewish life but a center for expressing the Jewish ethics we share. On the following Sunday morning, a group of eighteen(!) members and Rabbi Irit sat down for breakfast together on “Mitzvah Day”.

Mitzvah Day is observed in JCCs, synagogues and temples throughout the world. As we have in past years, we wanted to do something good for others. We broke into three groups and got to work creating “Shabbat at Home” bags for those members too frail or ill to attend Shabbat services. In the kitchen, the Challah bakers were busy readying the dough, braiding the loaves and sliding them in and out of the warm oven. The perfume of the loaves was heavenly! Another group put together safety Shabbat candles (battery lit) and adding the prayer sheet for Kiddush, which Rabbi Irit had prepared. In addition, personal notes were written on decorated cards. The last group put everything together and made a list of those to be visited. After several hours of laughter and work, members left with bags in hand, off to visit those at home with our Mitzvah Day gifts.

Enjoy the collage of November’s events and the new banner of pictures on our Web site at [www.jghreform.org](http://www.jghreform.org).



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

## Jewish December

### Shalom-Shalom

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

Rabbi Shillor has helped guide and form our congregation for almost two decades. She came to us as a Leo Baeck rabbinical student in 1999 and stayed on after her S'micha in 2000, 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, taught those who hungered for more knowledge, depth and understanding, 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 her with the title of Rabbi Emeritus. We hope she will find time to visit us on occasion and know we will always have a special place in her heart and 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 Offenberg as Rabbi Shillor's spiritual successor. We are thrilled to have Rabbi Offenberg as our congregational rabbi. She received 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 is an added plus.

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.



Join us on December 28th for our Hanukkah party. We'll light the fourth candle, retell the story of Hanukkah, play with dreidels, feast on potato latkes and sufganiyot and hand out presents to the children.

### Information from the Central Council of Jews in Germany

Please check the information table for the newest information about winter activities for seniors and seminars 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 23rd–30th. The program looks packed with fun. More information is available in the synagogue.

## Hope and Return

The Jewish-Albanian family—Stelian, Denisa, Greta and Samuel are back! They have come home. The family wishes to express their gratitude to everyone who helped them to return to Germany. The congregation and the office of the County Commissioner Mr. Tjark Bartels worked hard providing the German embassy in Albania with every document requested. (There were many!) Finally on November 14th, the family was given visas to enter Germany legally.

The young couple and their two children have now returned to their beloved community; they can continue their conversion class and return to their workplaces. The children are happy to return to their kindergarten and elementary school and we are happy to have them with us. If you'd like to help the family, contact Rachel Dohme.

## 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.

## Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg on her ordination at HUC, Jerusalem. She received her S'micha on November 17th with honors.



## Donations — Tzedakah

We wish to thank Mrs. Zisckle-Henßen and her groups from the Seminar Center Ith, Mrs. Meyer, Mr. Zyranov, Rabbi Irit Shillor, Dr. Tatjana Meschede, Dr. Gesa Snell, Mrs. Gibas and Dohme family.

May you all be blessed for your generosity.

## Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Autumn will soon change to winter and with the change of season, so every tree changes too. Instead of losing leaves, we've added two! The Tree of Life 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.

New leaves added last month were donated from:

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

Audrey Friedmann Marcus: "In memory of my husband Fred Marcus"

Three new leaves will soon sprout:

Akadij Zyranov: "In memory of my son Dmitriy"

Rabbi Irit Shillor: "Congregational rabbi Irit Shillor 2001–2016"

Dohme family: "In beloved memory of Hanna and Johnny Jones"



## 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.

## December Yahrzeit

Roza Chirita	12/1/2000 / 4. Kislew 5761
Frida Dachkevich	12/3/2001 / 18. Kislew 5762
Grigori Drabkine	12/7/2005 / 6. Kislew 5766
Igor Fuks	12/5/2006 / 15. Kislew 5767
Genrich Leimunski	12/29/2006 / 8. Tewet 5767
Ira Leimunskis	12/3/2011 / 7. Kislew 5772
Milja Golberg	12/18/2012 / 5. Tewet 5773
Mikhail Timonin	12/14/2015 / 2. Tewet 5776
Jakovs Judelsons	12/15/2015 / 3. Tewet 5776



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

## Program for December 2016 • Kislev–Tevet 5777

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

Friday, December 2	5:30 p.m.	Friday night service: Farewell service for Rabbi Irit Shillor and Induction service for Rabbi Dr. Ulrike Offenberg, followed by a festive Kiddush
Saturday, December 3	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Shiur, Rabbi Dr. Offenberg, Cantor Eliyahu Schleifer
Sunday, December 4		Sunday school with Rabbi Ulrike
Thursday, December 8	10:00 noon	Monthly Board Meeting
Friday, December 16	10:00 a.m.	Friday night services with F. Pelts
Sunday, December 18	3:00 p.m.	Members for members concert, “Russian romantic songs” S. Bantschukova, Valerij Friedman, Nadja and Vladimir Pesok
Wednesday, December 28	5:30 p.m.	<b>Hannukah Fest</b> with Rabbi Ulrike. Don't miss the fun and food!

### Activities outside the community

Monday, December 5	7:00 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews, Lecture: Dr. Stoltmann-Lukas, “Heavenly Jerusalem” Social Hall, St. Augustinus Catholic Church
In January: Tuesday, January 10	4:00 p.m.	New Year 2017 Reception: Dinner and music program Tickets: €10, Registration until December 20

We wish all our members and families a very happy Hanukkah and a healthy and happy 2017!  
Holiday wishes and a happy new year to our Christian friends and neighbors!  
May we all live in a peaceful world!

### [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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