

Agudas Achim Congregation

07/2016



**A GUIDE TO
THE IOWA CITY/CORALVILLE
JEWISH
COMMUNITY**



AGUDAS ACHIM CONGREGATION

401 East Oakdale Blvd.

Coralville, IA 52241

(319)337-3813

www.agudasachimic.org

WELCOME!

We hope that you will find this guide helpful as you become settled in the Iowa City area.

The Synagogue cordially invites you to become members. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Administrator or the Rabbi.

SYNAGOGUE STAFF

Rabbi

Rabbi Jeff Portman
jrportman@agudasachimic.org

Synagogue President

Michael Flaum
michael.flaum@gmail.com

Administrator

Nina Weinstein
ninaweinstein@agudasachimic.org

Gift Shop

Joanne Margolin
jrmargolin@gmail.com

Principal

Sonja Spear
sonja.spear@gmail.com

Office Secretary

Karen Brady
secretary@agudasachimic.org

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Tel: (319) 337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

Prayer Book Fund – supports the purchase of prayer books

Rabbi Portman Program Fund – supports adult education programming

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund – supports needs identified by the Rabbi

School Fund – discretionary fund for the Principal and the Education Committee

Sim & Sara Strauss Fund – supports projects approved by the Board of Directors

Sisterhood Mitzvah & Memorial Fund – supports Sisterhood projects

Synagogue Assistance Fund – provides emergency support for local Jewish families

Tikun Olam Fund – “Repair the World” fund supports social justice causes

Torah Enhancement Fund – supports maintenance of the Torahs

Fresh Challah

Challah is available at the New Pioneer Co-op at both the Iowa City and Coralville stores, and at the Hy-Vee on North Dodge Street.

Passover Products

HyVee and most of the other grocery stores carry a small selection of Passover foods.

AGUDAS ACHIM GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Braverman Talmud Torah Fund – supports the Religious School

Building Fund – supports our new synagogue

Cantor Fund – supports High Holidays

Cemetery Fund – supports the Agudas Achim cemetery

Fine Arts Fund – supports art acquisitions and endeavors

Garden & Landscaping Fund – supports the enhancement and maintenance of the synagogue grounds

General Fund – supports the various needs of the synagogue

Kadima Endowment Fund – supports the synagogue

Lauren Reece Flaum Terrace Fund – supports the maintenance of the terrace

Library Fund – funding for the library books suitable for both children and adults

Louis Ginsberg Youth Fund – supports youth group enrichment projects and camp scholarships

Marcus Scholarship Fund – provides tuition scholarships for children in the Religious School

RABBI'S WELCOME

Dear Community Members,

Welcome to the community! Iowa City/Coralville is an inviting place for Jewish people — in fact, the first Jewish person to become a mayor of any city in the United States was a member of our congregation back in 1873.

The Jewish community is an integral part of the local area. We are doctors, lawyers, professors, artists, teachers, musicians, and most of all, families. Iowa City/Coralville offers many big-city amenities in a small-town atmosphere. During the summer, one can enjoy music in the downtown, and all year long, the public can participate in local guest lectures and programs. The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics has been consistently ranked in the top ten nationally and it offers some of the best medical care in the country.

Agudas Achim is the nexus of the local Jewish community, providing a well-rounded education for youth as well as a fulfilling experience for the entire family. Just as we are proud members of both the Reform and Conservative Jewish movements, we proudly welcome families of all backgrounds.

Once again, feel free to contact me. The Iowa City/Coralville Jewish community is a strong and vibrant group that embraces all who wish to join.

With thanks,

Rabbi Jeff Portman

jrportman@agudasachimic.org

HISTORY

Before 1910, Jewish families in Iowa City met for services in private homes. In 1915, a rabbi was engaged, and in 1916, Agudas Achim Congregation was incorporated. In 1920 permanent quarters were acquired on South Clinton Street across from the county courthouse.

In 1950 the congregation built a facility on Washington Street where it stayed for over 60 years. In June of 2012, it became evident that the Washington Street site was no longer adequate because of space limitations and major damage due to recent flooding. The congregation sold the property and purchased a building in Coralville. The synagogue moved to its new location in February of 2013.

ORGANIZATION AND BUILDING

Agudas Achim has a rabbi, an administrator, a principal, and an office secretary. The board consists of the president, president elect, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and seven other board members who serve as chairs of committees. There are three additional appointed committee heads.

We are affiliated with both the Conservative movement, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, and the Reform movement, the Union for Reform Judaism. We serve approximately 200 member families in the Iowa City/Coralville area.

HILLEL FOUNDATION

Hillel has been serving the needs of Jewish students at the University of Iowa since 1926. The Hillel House is located near campus on the corner of Market and Dubuque Streets. David Weltman is the Hillel Director. For more information contact Hillel at (319) 338-0778.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual membership dues are based on a Fair Share basis. When you join, you will receive a Fair Share Membership Contribution Schedule. You will be sent statements in July, September, December, March, and June. Agudas Achim functions on a fiscal year which runs from July 1 to June 30.

In addition to the dues schedule, you will receive membership information forms, school registration (if applicable) as well as additional information about the synagogue.

SHOPPING GUIDE

Sisterhood Gift Shop

The Gift Shop is open during synagogue office hours. Find candles of all kinds (Chanukah, Havdalah, Shabbat, Memorial) as well as books, games, gifts, dreidels, kippot, and mezuzot. The Gift Shop will also do special orders. Call Joanne Margolin at (319)351-2181 with any questions.

SISTERHOOD

Agudas Achim Sisterhood is the women's social and service organization of the synagogue. Founded in 1918, Sisterhood members are devoted to Judaism and to strengthening the bond of unity among Jewish women. Members sponsor activities which support the Congregation, the Talmud Torah, and the youth programs. They run the Gift Shop, and make hamentashen for Purim, and they sponsor social events, including the Sisterhood Shabbat. Please contact Beverly Jones at (319)335-0740 if you have any questions.

HADASSAH

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, has a joint Iowa City/Coralville/Cedar Rapids chapter. Hadassah supports Hadassah Hospital and other medical projects in Israel. For more information, contact Joanne Margolin at (319)351-2181.

THE IOWA CITY JEWISH FEDERATION

This group supports the needs of the Jewish community locally, nationally, and internationally. The ICJF is the local organization for United Jewish Communities. For more information contact David Roston, david.roston@gmail.com

CHABAD HOUSE

Rabbi Avremel Blesofsky is the Chabad rabbi in Iowa City. The Chabad House is located at 420 E. Jefferson.
Phone number: 358-1323.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Shabbat services are held at 7:00 on Friday evenings and 9:30 on Saturday mornings. We use two different prayer books: *Siddur Sim Shalom* (Conservative), and *Mishkan Tefillah* (Reform). There is an Oneg following each service. The refreshments are provided and served by the congregation families. There are often programs after the Friday evening services. The schedule of these services, as well as special holiday services, are always announced in our monthly bulletin.

OBSERVING LIFE'S MILESTONES

Jewish tradition has always emphasized close family ties and communal sharing of simchas and sorrows. To get help choosing a name of a new baby, arrange for a bris, or to find out the customs for honoring the birth of a daughter, contact the Rabbi.

The synagogue is available for the religious and social activities of its members. Our administrator will be happy to assist you with ideas and advice regarding local caterers, the use of the social hall and kitchen, and the general preparation for your event.

It is traditional in Judaism to celebrate life passages religiously, and it is also customary to commemorate the event by making a donation. Once you get into the habit, you will find that no occasion seems complete without the added significance of the remembrance.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The synagogue's religious school is organized with the purpose of providing each child with a well-rounded Jewish education. The children meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:15 PM to 6:15 PM for Hebrew School (children 7 years old and above), and 10:00 AM to noon on Sundays, for Sunday School.

Meeting three times a week offers the children exposure to different aspects of Jewish culture, history, ethics, and Hebrew language. The school has grades from preschool through tenth grade. The program is enriched by various activities aimed at developing the child's sense of appreciation for Jewish values. For more information, call the Principal, Sonja Spear at 319-338-3486 or email her at Principal@AgudasAchimIC.org

LIBRARY

The Agudas Achim library contains more than 3,000 titles of general Jewish interest, including a wide selection of books for children and young readers. In addition, the synagogue subscribes to several Jewish newspapers and magazine. Supported almost entirely by donations, the library is available for use by anyone in the community.

ADULT EDUCATION

The congregation offers a variety of adult education programs from beginning Hebrew to Talmud study. We have Oneg Shabbat speakers and special lectures during the year, Sunday Schmoozes and concerts. Contact the synagogue office for information about current programs.

JEWISH CAMPS

The synagogue has information on many of the major Jewish camps for children in the Midwest. Call for information. In addition, the synagogue offers partial scholarships for children of congregants.

BULLETIN

A monthly bulletin is sent out to the membership by email. This bulletin contains information about upcoming events and useful information about other Jewish programs offered by Hillel and the University of Iowa.

CONGREGATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Agudas Achim is governed democratically through congregational meetings and the election of members to the board of trustees. Each member has one vote. A Congregational meeting is held each year. The Board of Trustees, elected every two years at the June congregational meeting, carries out the policies voted on by the Congregation and makes day-to-day decisions at its monthly open meetings. Copies of the Congregation By-Laws and Policies are available. Board positions include the chairs of the following committees: Adult Education, Sisterhood, Ritual, Social, Youth, School, Membership, Ways & Means, and Tikun Olam.

CEMETERY

The synagogue's cemetery is on Linder Road. It is maintained by the synagogue and governed by the Cemetery Committee of the synagogue. Copies of the cemetery's policies are available at the office.