



AGUDAS ACHIM CONGREGATION

קהילת אגודת אחים

401 E. Oakdale Blvd. Coralville, Iowa 52241

www.agudasachimic.org (319) 337-3813

Dear Congregational Family,

Putting (digital) pen to (pixelated) paper has become an annual ritual as I write the letter accompanying the Fair Share form, articulating my gratitude for your continued support of our congregation.

Finding our Jewish way in a post-10/7 world can feel bewildering, lonely and heartbreaking. The deep trauma and sense of loss many of us hold is hard to put into words, followed so closely on the heels of our hard-won COVID recovery.

Despite the difficulties of this past year, the synagogue leadership has continued to work together collaboratively and passionately; we have held small group meetings, offered facilitation, prayer and education, supported victims of violence in the region through Magen David Adom and HIAS, reached out pastorally, and much more. We have also continued to make improvements to our building, support local causes and connect our fellow Jews and those who journey through life with us. To our delight, our congregational membership continues to grow. The Jewish heart of Coralville and Iowa City beats strongly.

Your contribution, in both tangible and intangible forms, ensures that Agudas Achim can continue in its mission to be a 'vibrant, egalitarian, inclusive Jewish community'. Dedicated to our values of chesed (loving-kindness), kavod (respect) and tikkun olam (repairing the world), we hope to walk this earth gently. It is such a grand vision, but we execute it daily in small ways. We carry ourselves in Iowa with Jewish pride and dignity, without compromising who we are.

Among our achievements, however, we are also facing the reality of a budget deficit. Fortunately, we have reserves. Yet we humbly ask that you fill out your FairShare forms and contribute as generously as you can. This year, we are asking members to consider contributing an additional 10% on your annual dues so we can continue our good work.

Agudas Achim is your (Jewish) home away from home; a soft place to land, a deep place to question and wrestle, a warm place to be comforted, a bold place to grow... and moreover, a blessedly diverse place where each and every one of us gets to meet our Jewishness on our own terms, in the fullness and truthfulness of our own being.

May we continue to build up this very special place in our little corner of the world.

With a grateful heart, *shalom uv'rachah, peace and blessing,*

Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

Esther Hugenholtz
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