

Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241 Phone: 319-337-3813 www.AgudasAchimIC.org

April 2018 / Nisan-Iyar 5778

FROM THE RABBI Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

A Seat at the Table

By the time you read this bulletin article, you'll have experienced your family Seder and perhaps even joined us for our Communal Seder at the synagogue, which was a roaring success. Right now, you might be munching matzah, waiting as eager for Spring as I am.

I'm not quite ready to leave the Passover Spirit just yet. Every year, there's a treasure-trove to be discovered in the pedagogy of the Haggadah and this year was particularly sweet for my family as my husband and I kvelled (were proud of) over our children singing Mah Nishtana. Pesach is about family and food, connection and memory but it is also about an idea: a powerful idea that has brought down tyrants and transformed civilizations, that has brought dignity to the oppressed and humility to the haughty. Pesach is the Jewish imperative of 'ha lachma anya': 'this is the bread of affliction, let all who are hungry, come and eat'. Pesach is about taking a seat at the table.

As I'm looking forward to Rabbinic Installation coming near later this month and celebrating with

our community, I'm also turning inwards, to reflect on the values and vision I hold dear as a Rabbi and how these are in harmony with the values we hold dear as a community. One of the things that made me fall in love with Agudas Achim is the open, inclusive nature of our community. I love how Agudas Achim, under the leadership of our Emeritus Rabbi, has created a culture where people have a seat at the proverbial table, where newcomers are welcomed with warmth, where interfaith families find a supportive and spiritually nourishing home and where seekers who are curious about Judaism can explore that Judaism with us. I often like to say that I'm a rabbi to all those who wish to have me as their rabbi, regardless of their Jewish or non-Jewish background or where they find themselves in their Jewish journey. This culture of inclusivity has served us well: our membership is stable and we have friends in other faith communities all across Iowa City. We have a beautiful new synagogue, a thriving Hebrew School and compelling Adult Education

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FROM THE RABBI

Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

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(Continued from page 1)

programming. In short, in many ways, we are already giving people a seat at the table.

However, just like Elijah's Cup at the Seder, we should also look to the future – and look towards a time where full inclusion is both a messianic promise and a redemptive reality. In order to give

people a seat at the table, we need to open the door so that they may enter. Kathy Jacobs, our Synagogue President, and I attended the Ruderman Family Foundation Disability Inclusion Seminar in Chicago mid-March and learnt a great deal: in how to include families and individuals with different abilities and needs, from the practical (get a cart on wheels in the synagogue with hearing loops, magnifying sheets, Kindles and soft fidget toys) to

the strategic (how to source funding, how to shift language, how to change cultures).

Likewise, we as a community should think ahead on how we capitalize on our diversity: to see it as a strength, to see it as an invitation to be aspirational, to grow our community. As we are now in the Omer Period, counting our way to Shavu'ot, we are reminded of the ultimate inclusion event in our People's history: Matan Torah, the giving of the Torah, at which all stood: men, women and children, the Israelites at that moment and those not yet born, as well as those who would join us as Jews-by-Choice in the future. We are reminded that Moses was married to a Jew-of-Color and himself had a speech impediment. We are reminded that a fifth of the population who exited Egypt were not Israelites but Egyptians who were compelled by this story of freedom. As we move our own community into its second century, we are given an incredible opportunity to be covenanted to these ideals and

to talk about them: and what we can do in practical, 'tachlis' (real, tangible) ways to implement them.

Despite rising antisemitism and ominous statistics on Jewish demographics in Pew Reports, I ultimately remain an incorrigible Jewish optimist. I, for one, find the Jewish story incredibly compelling. What a story it is, where we sit at a table, with simple household objects – a bone, some parsley,

an egg, some horseradish, some apples ground with wine and nuts – become part of a transformative narrative that can set all of us free, that invites us to walk through that open door of Elijah and sit at that table!

To close this month's Bulletin piece, I'd like to quote an article written by a Yossi Kahana, Director of the Jewish National Fund's Task Force on Disabilities, who is also a Jewish

father with an intellectually disabled son. He reflects on his Pesach experience:

"But what if your son is the proverbial child who doesn't know how to ask? Or, perhaps, like our son Eran, who was born with severe intellectual disabilities and never spoke, not even one word, in all of his 23-years? The Hagaddah's answer is clear: 'Open up for him.' You begin for him. It doesn't say to be ashamed of him, or keep him separate, or distance him. The opposite is true. He sits with us on at the Seder table and he is an integral part of us. It is our responsibility to include even the most vulnerable, including those with the most severe disabilities in our world. We must open up for them the opportunity for hope."

Let us go from Pesach and beyond, and celebrate our ability to open. It is one of the great gifts of our community and of our tradition. I look forward to opening doors and sharing tables with you for the years to come.

INSTALLATION OF RABBI HUGENHOLTZ

Agudas Achim Congregation invites you to celebrate the

Installation of Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz



Please join us as we formalize the covenantal relationship between

Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

and

Agudas Achim Congregation

Saturday April 21, 2018 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat Afternoon Services and Installation
Dessert Reception to follow

401 E. Oakdale Blvd, Coralville, Iowa 52241

We look forward to sharing this joyous and sacred occasion with you.

RSVP 319 337 3813 secretary@agudasachimic.org



INSTALLATION OF RABBI ESTHER HUGENHOLTZ

Weekend Schedule of Events

Thursday, April 19

6:30 p.m. Yom ha'Atzma'ut (Israeli Independence Day) Dinner (Please RSVP)

Friday, April 20

7:30 p.m. Reform Friday Night (Kabbalat Shabbat) Service

Talk: "Stories from the European Beit Din" with Rabbi Dr. Jackie Tabick, Convenor of the European 8:45 p.m.

and Reform Judaism's Beit Din and Rabbi of West Central Liberal Synagogue

Saturday, April 21

Conservative Saturday Morning (Shacharit Shabbat) Service

9:30 a.m. Sermon: "The Next Era of the Jewish Experience" by Rabbi Steven Wernick,

C.E.O. of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

12:15 p.m. Kiddush Lunch in the Social Hall

1:30 p.m. Conversation: "Israel at 70" led by Rabbi Wernick

7:00 p.m. Conservative Afternoon (Mincha) Service followed by Installation of Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

by Rabbi Jackie Tabick, followed by Havdalah and Dessert Reception

Sunday, April 22

3:00 p.m. 8th Annual Concert of Commemoration



FROM THE PRESIDENT **Kathy Jacobs**

Six Months In

The rabbi and I are both six months into our first year of service as rabbi and board president. We jumped right into the high holidays running. Thankfully, the Ritual Committee had a draft plan to help the rabbi finalize the services. Now it's April, we have enjoyed Tu B'Shevat, Purim, and Passover, and I feel the High Holidays are about to be coming around again.

Service Times

I've watched Rabbi Hugenholtz and the congregation work through issues around service times, pulled one way by those who want the service to start on the dot and follow the schedules that they were accustomed to, and those who want to draw out the services with discussion, commentary, and song. I think we now have struck a fine balance. Services start on time, even if there is only one person present. Rabbi Hugenholtz has refined her service plans so that she can start the Torah service at 10:30 Saturday morning. That supports finishing on time, helped by the creation of a Torah table that allows those wishing to continue the discussion to keep the conversation going over lunch. To make this work, it is helpful for latecomers to arrive by 10:15 for the

Call to Worship. Friday Services are starting at 7:30 as planned.

Passover

As I write this, we have had a great start to our weeklong celebration of Passover. Following first night Seders that

fell on Erev Shabbat, the Synagogue hosted our Second Seder on Saturday evening for the sixty-four of us who signed up. The service was led by Chuck Friedman and Rabbi Hugenholtz, with assistance from Eliana Friedman who carried the microphone from table to table making it possible for group participation. The festival meal was prepared by Nina and Alan Weinstein with the assistance of Karen Brady our Administrator, our Secretary John Wertz, and Board Members Beverly Jones and Susan Ausman. It was a wonderful meal. Originally

we had arranged for the Bread Garden to cater the meal, but they canceled the arrangement by email (not nice). At an emergency meeting of the Ritual Committee, co-chair Alan Weinstein bravely stepped up and volunteered to take over the meal preparation. It was a wonderful event. We were happy to include a larger than usual contingent from Oaknoll who had their own plans canceled. Many thanks to the brave group responsible for this meal. I would also like to acknowledge the team of nonmembers led by Cherie Cool-Rudd whom we have been hiring to setup, serve and clean up. These ladies have become our friends and I can recommend them to anyone who is arranging a private party using our kitchen and social hall.

Volunteers

I need to say something more about our volunteers. In addition to those already mentioned, I need to acknowledge the work of the board members who with their committees and as a board have accomplished so much, so far, this year. But there are others, quite apart from those with formal charges, who keep our community going in small and big ways. They care for our indoor plants, bake challah for services, set up and clean up for post-

> service onegs, and bring dishes to supplement our Kiddush lunch. Those who manage our outdoor plantings live nearby also keep an eye on our property and recently informed us when the outdoor lights were out. There is also a small, but energetic group, who,

having learned about our need to upgrade our security system is planning an auction to take place on Sunday, June 3rd, with Dr. Cargill as auctioneer, to help fund the project. I must also acknowledge the rabbi's husband, David Middleton, who is leading the project to migrate our website to a new platform. I am surely missing many who quietly, and at times unobserved, help us in so many ways; please forgive me if I have failed to credit your efforts.

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SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL SERVICE SCHEDULE

Torah Portion	Date	Service Time	Service		
Pesach 7					
	Thursday, April 5	7:30 p.m.	Erev Pesach Service		
	Friday, April 6	9:30 a.m.	Pesach Shacharit Service		
Pesach 8					
	Friday, April 6	7:30 p.m.	Shabbat Evening Service		
	Saturday, April 7	9:30 a.m.	Shabbat and Festival Service		
Shemini					
(Leviticus 9:1–11:47)	Friday, April 13	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah		
	Saturday, April 14	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom		
Tazria-Metzora					
(Leviticus 12:1–15:33)	Friday, April 20	6:00 p.m.	Family Chavurah		
		7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah		
	Saturday, April 21	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom		
Achare-Kedoshim					
(Leviticus 16:1–20:27)	Friday, April 27	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah		
	Saturday, April 28	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom		

TALMUD STUDY GROUP

The Talmud study group meets at **9:00 a.m. on Sundays!** Everyone is invited. No Hebrew language skill is required. Materials will be provided. For more information contact Rabbi Portman at irportman@gmail.com.

WARM UP AMERICA Constance Berman

Dear Knitters, Warm Up America will meet on April 15 and April 29, from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the synagogue. We look forward to seeing you then!

-Connie and Fred George

JACOB COHEN BAR MITZVAH



PLEASE JOIN US IN CELEBRATION AS

JACOB HENRY COHEN

IS CALLED TO THE TORAH AS A BAR MITZVAH
SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2018, 9:30 A.M.
LUNCHEON TO FOLLOW.

AHARON ZINGMAN BAR MITZVAH



PLEASE JOIN US AS

AHARON ZINGMAN

IS CALLED TO THE TORAH AS A BAR MITZVAH SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018, 9:30 A.M.

CAEL JONES BAR MITZVAH

Save the date: Cael Jones will be having his Bar Mitzvah on May 5 at 9:30 a.m.

SCHOOL NEWS Sonja Spear

Coming Up: Fired Up for Shabbat – Reunion!

April 29, 10:00-12:00

Fired Up! 520 E. Washington St. (Next to New Pi Food Co-op)



The B'nei Mitzvah class invites all the kids who have already had their bar/bat mitzvahs to join them at Fired Up to paint Kiddush cups, nosh, and get to know Rabbi Hugenholtz.

This is a chance to see your old Hebrew School friends, connect with the kids in the B'nei Mitzvah class, and make your own Kiddush cup. It will be a lot of fun, so please help get the word out! The fine folks at Fired Up! are opening on a Sunday just for us. Please RSVP to Secretary@AgudasAchimlC.org by Thursday, April 26.

Purim passed in the blink of an eye, and Passover is almost upon us! The Sunday School only met twice last month because of Spring Break. But we spent

both of those meetings learning about Passover.

The **Kindergarten** made little Passover plates by gluing muffin liners onto paper plates. Each liner contained a symbol from the Passover plate.

Last day of Sunday School: April 29

Last day of Hebrew School: April 30

The kids discussed which foods we eat for Passover (matzah!) and which we do not (bagels!). The **Second Grade** retold the story of the Exodus from a child's point of view. Was it scary? How brave was the first person to step into the sea? They also practiced chanting the Four Questions.

The **Third/Fourth Grade** learned all about *matzah* by making it themselves! They learned that you need to mix the dough very fast to prevent fermentation and prick it all over to keep it flat. Of course, you could learn that from a book. But no amount of book learning would teach you the final lesson: The best matzah is cooked until it is deeply colored. The **Fifth/Sixth** grade explored the difference between a *mihag* (custom) and a *mitzvah* (commandment) when it comes to Passover. They were interested to learn, for instance, that some Jews refrain from eating matzah balls until the last day of Passover.

Passover has also overtaken the Hebrew School, where the fifteen-minute service has been devoted to discussing and practicing the Four Questions.

Eddie Hochman joined the teaching staff for the First Year class on Wednesday. Eddie has worked at a Jewish summer camp, where he probably honed his skill on the ukele. He will be bringing his musical skills to help the students work through prayers. The **First Year** has started with the table blessings for Shabbat.

The **Second Year** has been working on the Shema and Ve'ahavtah prayers. They began by paraphrasing the prayer in their own words so that they could understand them in English. After all,

these are very old prayers. They practiced reading them together and in pairs. They followed up on this lesson by working on spelling. They started with a list of numbered words on the board. The teacher

read the words out of order, and the kids wrote the number of the words as they heard them. Then the teacher covered the words and read them slowly. The kids wrote what they heard, then checked their own work against the list on the board.

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SCHOOL NEWS Sonja Spear (cont.)

As a result of this exercise, both the students and the teacher realized that the kids had trouble distinguishing "ha" from "kha," especially at the end of a word. Not only are these similar sounds, but "kha" does not occur in English. So it is not surprising that the students struggle with this distinction. But, of course, the endings in "ha" and "kha" denote different things in Hebrew, making the distinction important. The teacher can now focus the next several lessons on distinguishing these sounds.

Watching the kids struggle with Hebrew, I feel that I understand much more deeply than I did before how much complexity is hidden behind the simple word "read." When we read in our native tongue, we do not just sound words out letter by letter. We take in phonemes as a whole and anticipate from context and our deep knowledge of the language what the word *might* be. Even so, English speakers can encounter many challenges in learning to read and write in English, including simply distinguishing between similar letters. It is developmentally normal for students as old as seven to write some letters backwards, for instance. I will confess to writing my J's backwards from time to time as late as age ten.

It is that much harder to distinguish letters in Hebrew, where many letters are marked by very small differences. Furthermore, students do not have a rich Hebrew vocabulary to support their efforts. They are decoding a new alphabet in order to pronounce unfamiliar words.

I would like to learn more about creating a supportive environment for learning to read Hebrew. That is one of the reasons that Rabbi Hugenholtz and I are going to New CAJE, a conference on Jewish education, this summer. I am going to the conference with many questions and an open agenda. Is there an aspect of Jewish education for which you would like me to find more resources? Please let me know.



SISTERHOOD NEWS Beverly Jones

Rabbi Hugenholtz Installation

Sisterhood is honored to have been asked to host the Reception following the Installation of Rabbi Hugenholtz on Saturday evening, April 21. We would like to ask the help of our members in providing refreshments for the Reception. We expect a large crowd, and we need both sweet and savory dairy/pareve items. Please contact sisterhood@agudasachimic.org if you can help.

DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS

Please note the following corrections to the synagogue directory:

- Suisan Goldberg's correct phone number is 319.361.5996.
- We neglected to print Hani Elkadi and Ewa Bardach's daughter, Nina Bardach Elkadi.
- The cell phone numbers of David and Karlene Katz are 319.621.4722 and 319.621.6414, respectively.

TIKKUN OLAM PRESENTATION: HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVES

April 15, 2018, 10:30 a.m. at Agudas Achim

Have you completed a Health Care Directive?
Do your loved ones know your end of life wishes?
Do you have a health care agent?

If the answer to these questions is no, consider attending this presentation. We will be presenting a program that will go through the document. At the end of this presentation you will have the information you need to complete the document. Once it is witnessed or notarized this will be a document that can be entered into your medical records, or distributed to your loved ones.

To RSVP, contact Martha Lubaroff at mlubaroff@gmail.com.

FROM THE STACKS Frank Salomon

Bal Ej, a documentary on the clandestine lives of Ethiopian Jewish craftspeople

We've all heard of the 1979-1990 Israeli airlifts to rescue the Ethiopian Jews, known as Beta Israel or (to their enemies) Falasha. The official Israeli position is that the Ethiopian emigration is now complete. But Israeli filmmaker Irene Orleansky has been following the Beta Israel on the ground in Ethiopia, and she shows us that a number of people who consider themselves Jews are still living in clandestinity. Some dwell in an outlying neighborhood of Addis Ababa, and others in tiny hidden hamlets among the hills and canyons of North Shewa Province.

Our synagogue library has just obtained the remarkable documentary "Bal Ej" on DVD. It brings us close to the experience of life as crypto-Jews, the life many of our forebears endured as Marranos or disguised Jews. It is a frightening condition. Ethiopian crypto-Jews are usually called buda or "were-hyenas" by hostile Christian neighbors. People believe that their illnesses are caused by the evil eye of the Bal Ej. Most Bal Ej families earn a living as craftspeople, working in pottery, blacksmithing, and weaving. But they are so hated and feared by others, that customers in markets refuse to buy products directly from Bal Ej hands. Some cover their faces when they shop the area.

The Bal Ej live in secretive clusters where they defend themselves by superficially conforming to Ethiopian Orthodox Christian customs. They have no rabbis of their own. Orleansky (debatably) calls their rustic version of Jewish worship "pre-rabbinic." In the countryside, Bal Ej inhabit hidden hamlets organized by leading elders, who govern them as "monasteries." Orleansky visited a few. Her camera testifies to crippling poverty, fear, and isolation. But she also emphasizes the younger leadership which has learned "modern Judaism" from Israelis. Younger leaders are pushing for the Bal Ej to make themselves known and take their place as an ethnic group in Ethiopia's current, less-repressive state.

Bal Ej is 96 minutes long. Find it on the New in the Library shelf in the Braverman Library.



EARLY KEYBOARD SOCIETY CONCERT

Sunday, April 15, 3:00 p.m. Agudas Achim

Please Join us for an Early Keyboard Society Concert featuring acclaimed harpsichordist Margaret Irwin-Brandon, and pieces by Louis Couperin, François Couperin, and Armand-Louis Couperin.

This concert is free and open to the public.



FOODIE JEWS SMALL GROUP

Please join us for the next small group meeting, for anyone who loves to cook or eat:

Foodie Jews!

Sunday, April 29, 12:30 p.m.

Please RSVP at secretary@agudasachimic.org or 319.337.3813.

"HOLOCAUST DIARIES" TALK

Thursday, April 12, 7:30 p.m. Becker Room

This will be a talk by Kirsten Kumpf Baele,
Ph.D., on the subject of
Holocaust Diaries and in honor of
Yom HaShoah.

POST-PESACH PIZZA NIGHT

Saturday, April 7, 8:30 p.m.

Reminder for those who've already sent RSVPs.



Maggie's Farm Wood-Fired Pizza, 1308 Melrose Ave., Iowa City



DONATIONS

RABBI DISCRETIONARY FUND

Sue & Ken Blackwell: In memory of Mark

Rothstein

Connie Brothers: In memory of Gladys Marcus

Jim & Ann Estin: In memory of Edith Davidson

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Linda Kerber: For CPR Training

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David Braverman

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TIKUN OLAM FUND

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Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong: In memory

of Mark Armstrong (son)

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SOCIAL COMMITTEE FUND

Robert & Vida Brenner: In memory of

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SEDER REPORT Alan Weinstein

The second seder at Agudas Achim was attended by 64, and was splendid, with Rabbi Esther and Chuck Friedman leading us through the Haggadah. This was a broad community effort. The seder was shopped for by the Rabbi and Kathy Jacobs, and prepared with the assistance of John Wertz and Karen Brady, Susan Ausman, Beverly Jones, and Nina Weinstein. Cherie, Rose and Victoria were our excellent kitchen staff. I thank this entire team of devoted Passover enthusiasts. Chag Sameach!

GRADES 4-7 BOWLING

Bowling activity for children grades 4-7: Sunday, April 8, 12:00 p.m.

Contact the office if interested.



APRIL 2018 Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat 2 3 5 6 1 4 9:30am - 12:00pm Shabbat and Festival :30pm NO Introduction 7:30pm - 8:30pm Shabbat Evening Service 12 8 10 11 14 9:30am - 12:00pm Shabbat Moming Serv 12:00pm - 2:30pm 4-7 grade bowling activity 7:30pm - 9:30pm 17 19 21 15 16 18 20 9:30am - 12:00pm Shabbat Morning Services 4:15pm - 6:15pm Hebr 10:00am - 12:00pm Sunday School 10:30am - 11:30am Honoring your Wishes Tikun Olam 1:30pm - 2:30pm Israel a 70: Rabbi Wernick Shabbat Evening Service 22 23 25 26 27 28 9:30am - 12:00pm Shabbat Morning Servic 7:30pm - 8:30pm Shabbat Evening Service 29 9:30am - 12:00pm Shabbat Morning Serv 10:00am - 12:00pm 7:30pm - 8:30pm

CARGILL TALK

Save the date: May 6th, 11:00 a.m. for a talk by Robert Cargill.

"As tiny scales join to form a strong coat of armor, so little donations combine to form a large total of good"

From the Talmud

Should you desire to make a contribution, may we suggest any of the following synagogue funds:

Braverman Talmud Torah	The Rabbi Portman Program Fund
Building Fund	Prayer Book Fund
Cemetery Fund	Rabbi's Discretionary Fund
Fine Arts Fund	School Fund
General Fund	Sim & Sara Strauss Memorial Fund
Garden & Landscaping Fund	Sisterhood Mitzvah & Memorial Fund
High Holiday/Cantor Fund	Synagogue Assistance Fund
Lauren Reece Flaum Terrace Fund	Tikun Olam Fund
Library Fund	Torah Enhancement Fund
Louis Ginsberg Youth Fund	Kadima Fund
Marcus Scholarship Fund	
Contribution in memory of	
Contribution in honor of	

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