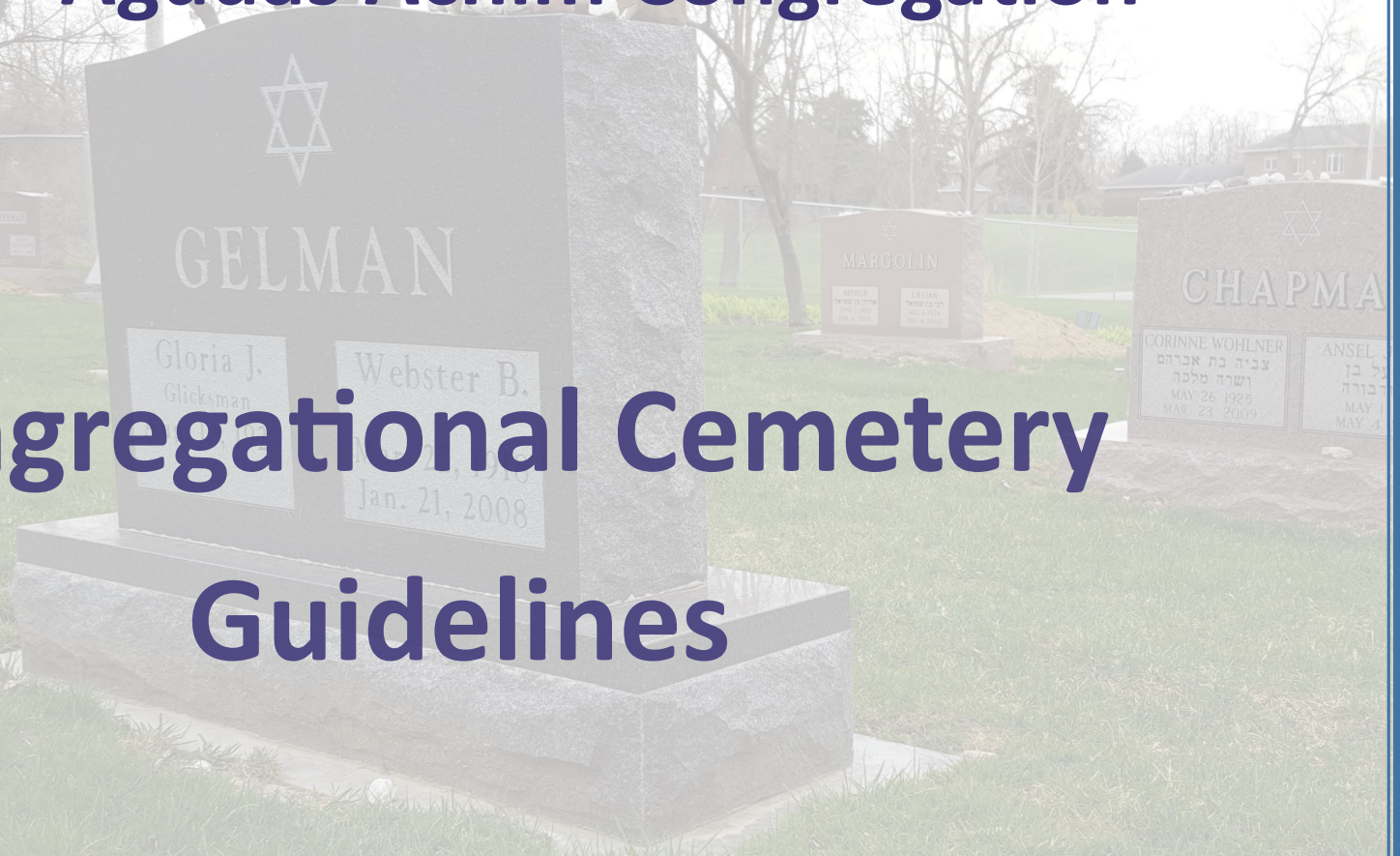




# Agudas Achim Congregation

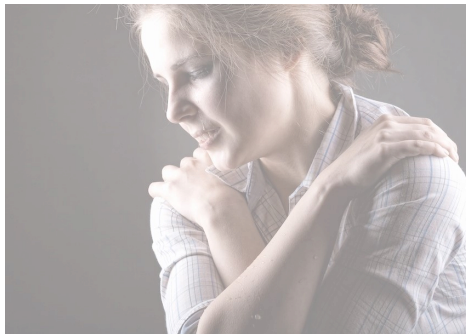
## Congregational Cemetery Guidelines



## EXPERIENCING LOSS

The death of a loved one is one of the most profound losses that occurs in our lives. Our relationship, once immediate, transforms into one of memory. Judaism provides helpful support that shepherds friends and family along this path of transformation. As a community, we wish to be part of that process, helping to honor your loved one and comfort you as well.

These guidelines are meant to help you at this difficult time and to provide the parameters our community uses to maintain the sanctity of and support for our cemetery.



## PREPLANNING

In the United States, we have an aversion to discussing or even acknowledging death. And yet, when we can think about and plan for the end of our lives, we are better able to focus on living, knowing that our wishes will be honored when our lives draw to a close.

## HISTORY OF AGUDAS ACHIM CEMETERY

One of your choices is whether to be buried in Agudas Achim's congregational cemetery. Here is a brief history of our cemetery:

1859: The United States Hebrew Association of Iowa City is founded for the purpose of establishing the cemetery that currently serves Agudas Achim Congregation. Land is purchased for a cemetery.

(Sometime prior to 1916): Cemetery is sold. Why the cemetery was sold remains a mysterious episode in the history of Iowa City's Jewish community, but it appears that most of the first wave of German Jewish families left town as a new wave of Russian Jewish families arrived, and the German Jewish families dug up the graves, took the remains with them and sold the cemetery to the adjoining landowner.

1921: Agudas Achim repurchases the old Jewish cemetery.

2006: Additional land is purchased to expand the cemetery to its present size.

2013: The entrance, driveway, landscaping and fencing is reconfigured to increase ease of access.

## WHO MAY BE BURIED IN THE AGUDAS ACHIM CEMETERY?

Members of Agudas Achim Congregation, extended family of members, and Jewish non-members may be interred at the Agudas Achim cemetery.

## ARE THERE AREAS WHERE ONLY JEWS CAN BE BURIED?

Many Jews follow the legal dictates to be buried on consecrated ground available to Jews only. An area nearest the public roadway is reserved for Cohanim.

### **What about my non-Jewish spouse or family?**

Our congregation has created an area within the cemetery where spouses or other immediate family members of different faiths may be buried together. We are pleased to be able to offer both options for our families so each person may follow the dictates of his or her beliefs.



### **Who is considered Jewish for purposes of the cemetery?**

In our congregation, a person is considered Jewish if he or she is either born into the Jewish faith and does not practice any other religion, or has formally converted to Judaism. We consider a child to be Jewish if either of his or her parents is Jewish, and the child is raised as a Jew.

### **Are there special privileges for being a member of Agudas Achim Congregation?**

Yes. The cost of burial in the cemetery is reduced based on the length of membership in the congregation. (See the separate materials for a full listing of the current Cemetery Fees.) These benefits remain for former members who move out of Johnson County. Former members who remain in the Iowa City area are assessed the non-member



fees. Adult, non-dependent children who are not themselves members may also be buried at the Agudas Achim Cemetery for the non-member fees.

**Are cremated remains allowed to be buried within the cemetery?**

Yes. We respect people's decisions regarding cremation and will inter cremains in a full plot dedicated to the deceased. The burial fees are the same regardless of the decision to be cremated.

**May a person who commits suicide be buried in the Agudas Achim cemetery?**

We follow an interpretation of *halachah* (Jewish law) that allows people who commit suicide to be buried in a Jewish cemetery.

## GRAVESITES AND HEADSTONES

**May I choose any place in the cemetery for a plot?**

Sections of the cemetery are designated as open for burial by the Rabbi and cemetery committee. This is in order to appropriately coordinate the expansion of the cemetery. The individual plot for burial is selected by the family, in cooperation with the Rabbi and cemetery committee, at the time of death, from sections then currently classified as



open. Family members who wish to be buried next to a spouse, child or parent may reserve burial locations in advance in order to be buried next to each other.

**Is a cement vault required?**

Iowa law does not presently require cement vaults. Families may elect to use a vault at their expense. This reduces the possibility of the casket breaking in the future.

**Are there restrictions on headstones or plantings?**

In order to create a beautiful Jewish cemetery that can be appropriately maintained and preserved, headstones may be any height up to 35 inches.

Plantings are not permitted. Out of respect for the Jewish character of the cemetery, only Jewish religious symbols may be used on headstones. Use of any non-religious symbols must be approved in advance by the Rabbi.

Jewish tradition encourages the placing of small stones on headstones as a sign that someone is actively caring for the grave. Stones are available at the cemetery entrance.

## PREPARING FOR A FUNERAL

Jewish tradition directs that the deceased be ritually washed (*Taharah*) and then guarded (*Shmeira*) until burial. However, we leave these choices to the discretion of the family of the deceased. For those families who wish to follow these traditions, congregational volunteers will ritually wash and/or stay with the body until burial. These services are provided at no additional cost.

## FUNERAL SERVICES

### **Where and when may I hold the funeral service?**

Funeral services may be held at the synagogue (which is fairly close to the cemetery), a funeral

home, or at the graveside. Services may be held at any time excluding Shabbat and Jewish holidays. It is important to confer with the Rabbi before announcing the day, time of the service or making final plans with the funeral home.

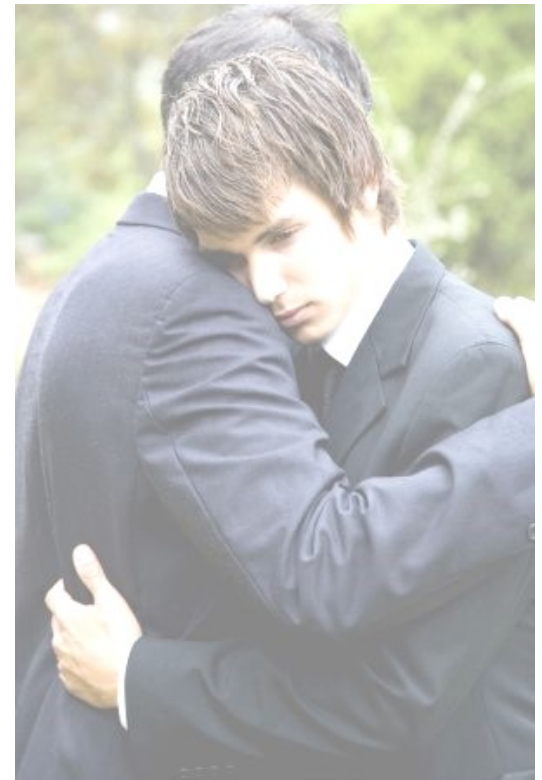
### **What else do I need for the funeral service?**

#### *Clothing for the deceased*

It is traditional for the deceased to be dressed in a simple, unadorned shroud.

The congregation will provide a traditional shroud at no additional fee, if the family wishes.

Otherwise clothing for the deceased is left to the discretion of the family.

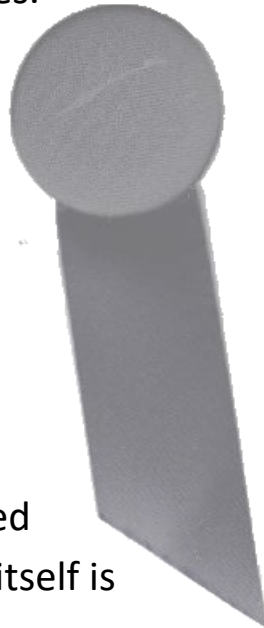


### *Soil from Israel*

According to Jewish tradition, the body is to be buried with soil from the Land of Israel. The synagogue will provide a small packet of soil from Israel if the family wishes. There is no additional fee for the packet of soil.

### *Tearing garments*

First-order relatives (spouse, children, parents, siblings) are called upon to tear a piece of their clothing before the funeral and to wear that clothing for the full seven days of Shiva (the initial week of mourning after the burial). This is symbolic of our loved one being torn from our lives. Many people will substitute a black ribbon which they will tear and wear, rather than tearing their clothing. The synagogue will provide black ribbons to those who wish, at no additional fee.



## **FOLLOWING THE FUNERAL**

### **Meal of Condolence**

Judaism enjoins us to honor the deceased and comfort the bereaved. The funeral itself is

meant to honor our loved one. To provide comfort, Jewish tradition prescribes that we provide a meal of condolence following the funeral. With the permission of the deceased's family, the congregation's funeral committee will be notified to prepare the meal of condolence after the funeral, which may be at the synagogue, at the home of the deceased, or at the home of a family member or friend.

### **Mourning Period—Shivah**

Shivah is a seven-day period in which the immediate family of the person who has died traditionally remains home in deep mourning. Rather, community members convene in their house in order to establish a minyan, a quorum needed to say the Kaddish (memorial prayer).

Our congregation will arrange for a Shivah services if the family so desires.

### *Yahrzeit Candle*

It is traditional to light a candle on the anniversary of a loved one's death. This Yahrzeit candle may be purchased from the synagogue gift shop.



### *Shivah Candle*

Mourners traditionally light a candle that burns for the entire seven-day Shivah period. The congregation provides a Shivah candle to the family following the funeral service.

## FUNERAL COSTS

Families are responsible for several costs regarding the funeral and burial.

### *Burial Plot*

The fee for burial in the Agudas Achim Cemetery is determined by several factors including the number of years a person has been a member of, and thus supported, Agudas Achim Congregation. Please refer to the Cemetery Fee sheet for details.

### *Perpetual Care*

In addition to the fee for burial, there is a one-time perpetual care fee that assists the congregation in caring for the cemetery into the future. Please refer to the Cemetery Fee sheet for the applicable amount. The congregation will invoice the family for the perpetual care fee along with the burial fee,



unless the deceased has made arrangements in advance.

*When we are dead, and people weep for us and grieve, let it be because we touched their lives with beauty and simplicity. Let it not be said that life was good to us, but rather, that we were good to life.*

—Jacob Philip Rudin

### *Casket, funeral home, preparation of the grave*

These and any other funeral costs are the responsibility of the family and are typically handled through the funeral home.



## WHERE IS THE AGUDAS ACHIM CEMETERY?

The Agudas Achim Cemetery is located at 875 Linder Road NE, Iowa City between Dubuque St. NE and Prairie du Chien Road NE (just a little west of Linder Road's intersection with Prairie du Chien Road NE).

