

Agudas Achim Congregation

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www.AgudasAchimIC.org

December 2019 / Kislev-Tevet 5780

FROM THE RABBI Esther Hugenholtz

December is known as a quiet month in the Jewish calendar but to my delight, there's still plenty going on. The center piece of the month will be the Union of Reform Judaism Biennial that a few lay leaders and myself will be attending. Some of you may remember me talking about the Biennial experience in glowing terms two years ago. This time, we are particularly lucky because the Biennial is in Chicago which means we can send a larger contingent.

We will convene at McCormick Center to join 6000+ Jews for five days of learning, praying, networking and upskilling. Having sifted through the sessions, I am excited to attend such topics as 'Eye on the Why – What's Relevant and Meaningful to Families with Young Children' and 'Community Organizing 201 – Using Relational Outreach to Strengthen Your Social Justice Efforts'. Other worthwhile sessions that we hope to attend discuss 'developing a culture of giving', 'using data to strengthen your congregation' (for those of you who know my husband, you will not be surprised that he's signed up to that one!), 'can Judaism survive in the age of millennials' and 'big ideas for small congregations'.

The purpose of the Biennial, apart from listening to the latest in Jewish pop music (yes, that's a thing), eating subpar and overpriced conference food and enjoying the vendors' Shuk, so close to Chanukkah, is to tap into these wider, national networks of Jewish communities. It is to remind ourselves that the project of Judaism is not just a local project but connected to our brothers and sisters across the nation and in fact, across the world. 'Kol Yisrael arevim zeh la zeh', the Talmud tells us, 'all of Israel is responsible for each other', and the Biennial is living, breathing testimony to that. It is important to remember that we are part of a greater whole; part of a tradition that shapes ideas and improves lives, that has something important to say about the world we live in and that can add real comfort and compassion to that world.

Life at Agudas Achim centers on bringing that truth into the many facets of our lives. Our new initiative to wear name tags is geared to make the space we create together a little more proactively welcoming and a little less intimidating for visitors, newcomers and those who might not have stepped through the doors for a while. We also encourage members to sponsor the Oneg (refreshments after Shabbat services) so that we can weave the threads of community together (so please let the office know if you want to feed your fellow Jews!) Our superb lecture series by Professor Darryl Heller on 'Black-Jewish Relations' is an opportunity for us to do deep thinking and thoughtful building on both

(Continued on page 2)

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

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relationships and justice work. (I, for one, would love to see us move from a place of learning and growth to action and engagement on racial justice issues — we would be in line with what the national denominations, Reform and Conservative both, are doing). As we are closing out the secular year and approaching 2020, we will need the steadying hand of a compassionate ethic in a world that is turning more and more volatile and uncertain. For us to lift each other up with the blessings of community is not just good for us, but for our world. The longer I am a rabbi, the more I realize what a powerful thing the project of sacred community is, and how unique it is in a world where other priorities can seem so dominant.

So when you light your chanukkiyot this year, think not only about the miracle that connects us to God, our history and our quest for dignity and independence, but also about how that first Chanukkah was a project in building community. That little cruse of oil burned for eight days, perhaps, so that the Jews could reconnect with each other and rebuild the severed ties of community. We helped each other clean out the temple, press the oil, light the lamps. We helped each other mend the broken pieces and restore our sense of self. We were there with each other to celebrate and rededicate.

In the spirit of this, my husband and I are inviting the community to celebrate our baby daughter's Baby Blessing with us on Friday the 27th of December. We will have Chanukkah candles, song, something nice to eat, and more importantly, each other. We hope to see you there!

WAY OUT THERE: A PIECE ABOUT THE IOWA CITY JEWISH COMMUNITY BY CANTOR JOEL CAPLAN (PUBLISHED IN HIS CONGREGATION'S BULLETIN)

Nancy, my wife, says I should write the following for this month's article. I fully agree. (Smart move, huh?) Here goes:

We want to tell you a bit about the Jewish community in Iowa City, Iowa.

My father, Dr. Richard M. Caplan, of blessed memory, died in mid-August in Iowa City. He and my mother, Ellen, were both born in Iowa (in Des Moines, the capital city) and have lived in Iowa City for over 55 years. His funeral and shiva were there. Nancy, our children, and I were all out there during that time.

Now, Nancy and I have lived here in Caldwell for 35 years — much longer than I ever lived in Iowa — and we love it here. At the same time, every now and

then I hear a local say, "Iowa? I didn't know there were Jews in Iowa."

I respond, "When I was growing up, I didn't know there were Jews in New Jersey."

Okay, okay.... The point is that there are some really beautiful things about the lowa City Jewish community that you might not expect:

1) The Larger Community: The Jewish community seems to have a wonderful relationship with the city as a whole. For instance, funeral arrangements were made by Lensing's, a local non-Jewish funeral home. They were compassionate and lovely to work with and arranged for tahara and sh'mira in their building. Tahara is the traditional Jewish washing of the body and preparing it for burial; more on Sh'mira below. I

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WAY OUT THERE Cantor Joel Caplan (cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

went to high school with Vicki Lensing, one of the owners.

2) Sh'mira: This is the traditional "watching" of the body until the time of burial, a mark of respect for the body in which the soul was housed. Traditionally, you don't leave the body alone until burial, so a series of watchers (shomrim) might sign up for two-hour shifts, just to sit in the same room as the body, or in an adjacent room, and perhaps read Psalms.

Sound like something you might like to do?

It's quite a beautiful mitzvah, but it's hard to get people to do it – and that's understandable, especially if we're talking about the 2-4 am shift.

But in Iowa City, with a synagogue of about 180 member families, volunteers made it happen. The funeral home staff gave out their door code to the volunteers, so that they could enter the building at 4 am or whenever....

- 3) Attendance: My parents have been among the pillars of the Iowa City Jewish community and have been very involved in the greater community and in the university there. Even so, we were pleasantly surprised that there was standing room only at the funeral.
- 4) Traffic: In our area, many of us pull over to let a funeral procession pass by if the procession is traveling in the same direction as we are. In Iowa City, we noticed this happening, but we also saw that traffic coming the opposite way also stopped respectfully to let our procession go by. They're very nice in the Midwest....
- 5) Meal of Condolence: At CAI, and in most places around the world, when a Jewish family buries the body of a loved one, the family usually comes back home for a "Meal of Condolence." The family eats, affirming that life goes on.

In Iowa City, the custom is that the Meal of Condolence is held at the shul, for anyone who

wants to come, not just family. It's a community endeavor. Two days after my father's death, members of the shul had prepared enough food so that when 100 people came back to the shul for the Meal of Condolence, there was plenty for everyone.

- 6) Minyanim: We held minyan in the morning and evening for all the seven days of shiva. There were 20-25 people at each minyan; some people came more than once, but during the week, over 70 people took part. Again, this is in a congregation of about 180 families, about a fifth the size of ours. And, like at CAI, some of the most active members there are Jews by choice.
- 7) Rabbis: Both the new rabbi and the rabbi emeritus officiated at the funeral. They were wonderful and a great comfort. (My mother was part of the Rabbinic search committee.) It's wonderful to have fine rabbis in smaller towns as well as bigger ones. Hats off to Ned and Jane Gladstein and Bill and Amy Lipsey, who are helping make sure that there are good rabbis all over the world, including in smaller towns in both the United States and Israel.
- 8) Moving: Several concerned CAI friends have asked, "Is your mother now going to move out here?" No. Her life, her community, her shul, her friends, and much of her family are right there in Iowa City. She and my dad have lived for over 17 years in a beautiful independent apartment in a residence much like Crane's Mill, and within a few miles live two of my brothers, their wives, our nephew, and my father's sister. The Jewish community and the greater community have given great support to my mom and the family, and they will no doubt continue to do so. Moral: We're proud to have a fine congregation here, and Nancy and I felt your love all the way out in the Midwest. At the same time, it's comforting to know that there are many fine Jewish communities in bigger and littler cities all over the world.

Thank you all for your continued support and condolences.

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

Torah Portion	Date	Service Time	Service
Vayetze	Friday, December 6	7:30 p.m.	Sim Shalom (Conservative)
(Genesis 28:10–32:3)	Saturday, December 7	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Vayishlach	Friday, December 13	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
(Genesis 32:4–36:43)	Saturday, December 14	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom
Vayeshev	Friday, December 20	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
(Genesis 37:1–40:23)	Saturday, December 21	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom
Miketz	Friday, December 27	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
(Genesis 41:1–44:17; Numbers 28:9–15; Numbers 7:42-47)	Saturday, December 28	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom

LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

Congratulations to the families of Juniper Josephine Kline and Ariella Rose Greenfield on their baby blessings!

WARM UP AMERICA Connie Berman

Warm Up America will meet on December 8 and December 15.



GIFT SHOP NEWS Joanne Margolin

Chanukah is late this year, beginning the evening of Sunday, December 22, so you have plenty of time to shop! By the time you read this, the gelt will be in and we'll be all stocked with the usual Chanukah fare.

I will be at the synagogue to help you on Sunday, December 8, 15, and 22, from 10-12. During the week, Monday - Thursday, Karen or John will be there to assist you. We have lots of fun stuff, so come on over and take a look!

Contact Joanne at jrmargolin@gmail.com or 351-2181.

ONEG HOSTING

Members are encouraged to host weekly Onegs to celebrate an event or honor a friend or family member. Please contact the office to reserve your date.

Thanks to Jane & Stan Zukin for offering to host the oneg on December 13, as well as Katie Herz & Marco Hefti for hosting the kiddush lunch on December 14!

Announcing a six-part lecture series by University of Iowa Professor Darryl Heller:

Black and Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective



Despite their shared minority status in Anglo-Christian America, Jews and Blacks inherit a complex relation infused with all the dilemmas of US history. We will contextualize Black/Jewish relations through discussion of Jewish involvement in the slave trade, Jewish participation in the Civil Rights Movement, affirmative action, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and issues in the age of Trump.

November 10: Questions and Problems in talking about the

relationship between Blacks and Jews

November 17: Black-Jewish relations in colonial and antebellum

America

December 1: The second meeting in the urban North

December 8: Black-Jewish relations in the Civil Rights Movement /

Things Fall Apart: Black Power & Affirmative Action

December 15: Where are we now?

Please note this schedule change.
All talks at 10:30 a.m. in Agudas Achim's social hall.

Darryl M. Heller, PhD is a visiting assistant professor in Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies at the University of Iowa where he is part of a team developing curriculum for a new social justice major.

FROM THE PRESIDENT Sue Weinberg

As the days are getting shorter and the temperatures are dropping (what happened to FALL?!?) the Jewish calendar also slows down a bit. We are past the fall holidays and approaching Hanukkah, which is considered a fairly minor holiday (except to kids!). I hope to see many of you at the Agudas Achim Hanukkah party, which will be held on the last night of Hanukkah – Sunday, December 29. It will be beautiful and magical with all the candles lit on everyone's menorahs. And Hanukkah food can't be beat – who doesn't love latkes and sufganyot?

Some of the congregational leadership will be traveling to the URJ Biennial the second week of December. I will hopefully have some interesting things to report in my January column. I have never been to a Biennial, but many people have urged me to attend. They say there is nothing quite like celebrating Shabbat with 5000 fellow Jews. And it's close this year— it is being held in Chicago. The rabbi and her family, Janice, Kathy, and I plan to attend, along with a few congregants. I have already registered for some interesting-sounding sessions,

and I am looking forward to networking with other synagogue presidents. There will also be SHOPPING. I've been told that many vendors will be present with a wide variety of Judaica for sale. Plus, the advantage of Chicago being within driving distance is that I can stop at Hungarian Kosher grocery store and stock up. Among other things, I plan to purchase a case of wine for Kiddush as an alternative to Manischewitz.

In other news, the joint Iowa City, Coralville, and CAMBUS transit study is underway. There have been several public meetings held; the rabbi and I attended one and spoke to a woman from the Coralville Transit system. She was very receptive to our feedback requesting bus service to the Oakdale Blvd neighborhood, so hopefully this will be something that will be implemented.

And lastly, it is wonderful to have Rabbi Hugenholtz back, and see her lovely family (including baby Shifra) at services again.

Chag sameach/Happy Hanukkah everyone, and a happy and healthy secular New Year!



International Dinner and a Movie

Monday, December 24, 6:00 p.m. at Agudas Achim

Showing Keeping Up With the Steins

Please bring a potluck Asian or Middle Eastern dish to share!

Agudas Achim Hanukkah Party Sunday, December 29 5:30 p.m.

Come celebrate the last night of Hanukkah!

We will have lots of latkes with sour cream and applesauce for dinner. Wear your seasonal sweater, and bring your menorah and candles for a group menorah lighting and some singing!



Members: \$12 Non-members: \$15 17 and under: free

Please send payment to the office in advance.

Additional donations are welcome. If payment is an issue, please contact the office.

Please RSVP to the synagogue office at secretary@agudasachimic.org or 319-337-3813 by Thursday, December 26.

SCHOOL NEWS Sonja Spear

We are nearly at the end of the semester already! If you want to see what the **Hebrew School** has been up to, please come to services on Saturday, December 7, when students will help to lead the Torah Service. The Sunday School will hold a very, *very* early Hanukkah party at 12:00 on December 8. The kids will display their work and sing Hanukkah songs.

The end of the semester is a good time to look back at what the school has done so far. We have tried a few new things this year. Perhaps the most important was incorporating more Hebrew into the Sunday School. We have done this in a number of ways. In the younger grades, students have worked with a Letter of the Week every week. These students are still acquiring literacy in English, so I do not expect them to master an entirely new alphabet, especially since we only meet once a week. The idea is to support their Hebrew literacy by giving them the chance to manipulate letters. For example, the Kindergarten recently made the letter lamed (L) out of pipe cleaners and identified the letters in their own names.

In the older grades, we have introduced *Hebrew* Through Movement, a program developed and pioneered by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland. You may have seen the kids running in place (ba-makom), hopping on command, or just rising and sitting. There is method to the madness! The idea is that kids learn to respond physically to commands in Hebrew, so that they are engaged physically as well as intellectually in learning. As they hop to the *delet* (door) and point to the *siddur*, they acquire nouns as well as verbs. Then, when they begin to learn Hebrew prayers, they will already have some vocabulary and have the music of Hebrew in their ears. It is so much easier to learn to read a familiar word than it is to learn to read meaningless, unfamiliar words in a foreign alphabet. Hebrew Through Movement creates a foundation for literacy.

Students attending the **Supplementary Hebrew Hour** often have no previous exposure to the Hebrew alphabet. Now that they have had a semester of

Hebrew Through Movement and acquired some vocabulary, we will begin introducing the alphabet next semester. I am looking forward to the moment when they sound out their first word and realize that it is a word they already know!

In the Sunday School, the **Sixth Grade** learned about the historical origins of Hanukkah by learning about the Maccabees and their fight against Hellenism. The class had an inconclusive debate about whether the Maccabees were zealots or not. But everyone agreed that the real history of Hanukkah was more exciting than they had thought. That class also read about the death of Moses. They argued about whether God was too harsh with Moses in denying him entrance to the Promised Land. (Most of them said no!) Then they learned about the famous midrash (interpretation) of a line from Moses' last sermon: "It [the Torah] is not in heaven." There is a famous story in the Talmud in which this line clinches an argument about whether a certain oven is kosher, and who gets to decide. The kids illustrated the story, so come see their work on Sunday.

The **Fourth/Fifth Grade** used *Hebrew Through Movement* to learn key words for Hanukkah, including: *lehadlik* (to light), *ner* (candle), *lesovev* (to spin), and *sevivon* (top). In addition, the class feels ready to teach anyone the game of dreidel and the Hanukkah blessings.

The **Second/Third** grade is preparing to decorate Hanukkah cookies to share with the school. But they have mostly been focusing on stories from the Torah this semester. They had a lively discussion about the generosity of Abraham in his dealings with Lot. This lesson opened into a longer discussion of *shalom bayit* (a peaceful home), the value of maintaining respectful and kind relations at home, even if that means being generous with your brother or sister.

As you can see, we have been trying to combine learning stories from the Torah with more general Jewish cultural values. One of those values is that learning is sweet. So we have definitely been having fun! I'm already looking forward to next semester.

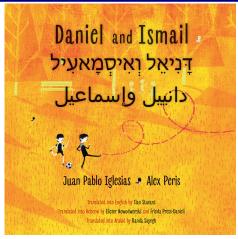
FROM THE STACKS Ellen Caplan

DANIEL AND ISMAIL, by Juan Pablo Iglesias

Daniel and Ismail, one Jewish and one Palestinian, bond playing in a park with soccer balls each boy has received for his birthday. Their parents are not happy with this relationship, but the boys find each other in the park again and get back to what matters to them, playing the game they both love.

Daniel and Ismail, written in Spanish, was discovered in Chile by Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor of Humanities, Latin American, and Latino Culture at Amherst College. He was so impressed with it that he has published this edition, each page printed in Arabic, Hebrew and English. A remarkable picture book, the story confronts the

very adult
conflicts that
children around
the world face,
and shows us
that different
cultures,
religions,
societies, and
languages can



all share the same interests.

Find *Daniel and Ismail* on the Featured this Month shelf in the Braverman Library during December.

After that it will be in the Children's Library at E/Igl.

SISTERHOOD NEWS Beverly Jones

Book Discussion Group

Nineteen women have signed up for the new book discussion group formed by Sisterhood. Based on this number and availability, we'll have two groups; one meeting on Wednesday afternoon from 1:00-2:30, and the other on Sunday afternoon from 1:00-2:30. The meetings will take place once a month in the Becker Room at the Synagogue. The first meetings will be to organize: Wednesday, December 4, for the Wednesday group; and Sunday, December 8, for the Sunday group. At these first meetings, each group will finalize their meeting schedules and create their reading lists.

We welcome additional members. If you would like to be included, please call Phyllis Petchers at 319-569-2922 or email phyllispetchers@gmail.com.

Please bring a book suggestion and short description with you.

Dues

Sisterhood supports Agudas Achim financially with an annual donation, as well as special synagogue programs as needed. We also support Women's League for Conservative Judaism, and Women of Reform Judaism. Sisterhood needs your financial help to be able to do all this. We encourage you to help us with your annual dues of \$36.00. Checks can be made out to Agudas Achim Sisterhood, and mailed to our Treasurer, Joni Caplan, 520 Brookland Park Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246. Please contact sisterhood@agudasachimic.org for other methods of payment. We hope to hear from you before December 31.

DONATIONS

RABBI DISCRETIONARY FUND

Michael & Jennifer Flatté: In memory of

Stanley Flatte

Alan Mutnick and Rachel: In memory of

Barbara Anne Mutnick

Dorothy Paul: In memory of David M. Paul

2ND CENTURY FUND

Marcia Wolff and family: In memory of Richard

Caplan

CEMETERY FUND

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Beverly Tys-Berson

Goldene Haendel, Betty, Harriet, Judy and Shelly:

In memory of June Braverman

Rhoda Vernon: In memory of David Vernon

FINE ARTS FUND

Helen Goldstein: In memory of June Braverman

Mel & Diane Sunshine: In memory of Joseph

Sunshine

GARDEN FUND

Ellen Caplan: In memory of Leonard A. Cohn

Helen Goldstein: In memory of Louis & Etta Tunik

GENERAL FUND

David & Constance Berman: In memory of

Andrew Hoffman

Jody & Janie Braverman: In memory of Elsie Wingo

and June Braverman

Ellen Caplan: with heartfelt thanks and appreciation

of Jeanne Cadoret & crew for the meal of

condolence

Robin & Margie Hemley

Mildred Lavin

HIGH HOLIDAY/CANTOR FUND

Naomi Bloom & Ellen Marie Lauricella Gary & Mindy Russell: In memory of

Frank Friedland and Sidney J. Lenett

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Bess Weinstein

LIBRARY FUND

Ellen Caplan: In memory of Rose Marie Caplan

Rhoda Vernon: In memory of Herman Sterman

ONEG FUND

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Ellen Caplan

PJ LIBRARY

Ellen Caplan: In honor of Norah & Arden Caplan,

and Tal Savitt

PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Richard & Judy Hurtig: In memory of

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memory of Mathilde N. Loewen Salomon

PRAYERBOOK FUND

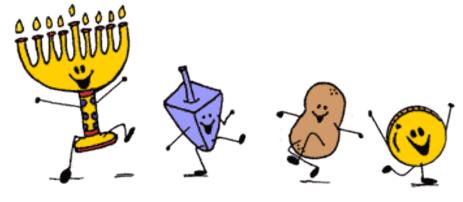
Charlotte Dvoretzky: In memory of

Edward Dvoretzky

TIKUN OLAM FUND

Kathy Ormond: In memory of Jacqueline Fooshe

Ormond



DECEMBER 2019

Sun	1	Daryll Heller Lecture Series	10:30 AM	Sun	15	Warm Up America	10:00 AM
		MahJong Group	2:00 PM			Daryll Heller Lecture Series	10:30 AM
Mon	2	Hebrew School	4:15 PM			MahJong Group	2:00 PM
		Sisterhood Board Meeting	7:00 PM	Mon	16	Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM	Wed	18	Education Committee	6:00 PM
Wed	4	Sisterhood Book Group	1:00 PM			Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
		Hebrew School	4:15 PM	Fri	20	Family Chavurah	6:00 PM
Fri	6	Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM
Sat	7	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Sat	21	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	8	Sunday School	10:00 AM				
		Warm Up America	10:00 AM	rues	24	International Dinner and a Movie Night	6:00 PM
		Daryll Heller Lecture Series	10:30 AM		/ed 25 Office Closed		
		Very Early Hanukkah Party	12:00 PM				
		Sisterhood Book Group	1:00 PM	Fri	27	Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM
		MahJong Group	2:00 PM			Shifra Middleton-Hugenholtz	
		High Holidays Donor Tea	4:00 PM			Baby Blessing	
Mon	9	Hebrew School	4:15 PM	Sat	28	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM	Sun	29	Hanukkah Party	5:30 PM
Tues	10	Membership Committee	7:00 PM			SAVE THE DATE!	
Wed	11	Hebrew School	4:15 PM	Office Closed - January 1			
Fri	13	Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM	Sunday School resumes - January 26			
Sat	14	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Hebrew School resumes - January 27			

DECEMBER YAHRZEITS

M. David Allweiss	Chester Jacoby Flaum	Bernice Levine	Gladys Ehrenreich
Myron Baum	Lawrence Gelfand	Esther Levy	Pruchno
Aaron Braverman	Liba Goldberg	Robert C. Levy	Ida Rotman
Rosalie Braverman	Mendel Goldberg	Henry Magaziner	Michael Allen Sabin
Jean Weinstein Breggin	Jonathan Goldstein	Morris M. Marcus	Ida Simon
William Brenner	Barbara Goodsell	Lillian Margolin	Pauline Skorton
Rose Marie Caplan	Janet Gussin	David Gray McClean	Louis Snider
Victor Cohen	Victoria Haendel	Meyer Middleman	Belle Strauss
Ethel Corwin	Aristide Haravon	Benjamin Ross Mutnick	Esther Tsai Sugg
William M. David Jr.	Ilene Holbrook	Michael Nadler	Morris Weinberg
Lena C. Dicker	Ben E. Kubby	Marjorie Osdoba	
Melvin "Buddy" Eisen	Judi Lerner Aizenberg		

"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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Rabbi	Esther Hugenholtz	Office Secretary	John Wertz
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Principal	Sonja Spear		
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