



Agudas Achim Congregation

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FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

What is the place that we call ‘home’? In our Torah reading cycle, we are now firmly embedded in the Book of Exodus, where the Israelites are trying to escape Egyptian slavery and journey across the wilderness to a new kind of ‘home’, a ‘promised land’. It is from this historical paradigm that the Torah derives the oft-repeated injunction to ‘love the stranger, for you were strangers in Egypt’. The Torah plays with nuanced layers of home and belonging, with notions of transience and permanence, with home both as a physical place and as a spiritual ideal. Moses himself, the adopted Egyptian prince, had to negotiate and renegotiate what ‘home’ meant in his life and sojourning; from the palaces of Ramses and Pitom, to the oases in Midian, from the Sinai wilderness to the top of Mt. Nebo overlooking Canaan. At each juncture, Moses would have had to ask himself where ‘home’ was and what it meant to him.

As a seasoned immigrant myself, I can relate to Moses’ experience. I’ve called different places home, including Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Israel, the United Kingdom and, of course, the United States. And the predictable is happening: Iowa is becoming my home and I’ve stopped referring to Europe as being my home. Although I am still a long way away from being a naturalized citizen, I caught myself talking in the first person plural when discussing the American people! Dave and I have, in fact, received our work authorization permits, bringing us one step closer to our green cards. When it comes to our immigration trajectory, we are optimistic and grateful.

Home also embeds itself into your habits and mannerisms. I’ve significantly reduced my complaints about the winter cold and delight in taking my children sledding, find myself leafing through seed catalogues for the garden, have been hooked on following the caucuses and started dipping my pizza crusts in ranch dressing, although I still say ‘soda’ and not ‘pop’. But most of all, home is what we make of it, the relationships we build and the work we engage in to improve our dwelling places, whether that’s on an individual level or a planetary level. As we look forward to the cycle of Tu Bishvat, Purim and Pesach, we can find lessons in how home is either built up or torn down, whether we feel rooted and sheltered or uprooted and disoriented. As we journey deeper into 2020, and what promises to be a fraught year, applying the metaphors of our Jewish tradition can help us cultivate greater understanding of our place in today’s world, through both challenges and blessings.

Agudas Achim is honing this idea of ‘home’. Kathy Jacobs’ Mussar class provides a spiritual sanctuary for deep growth and questioning, the Mah Jong, Warm Up America and Book groups build community and companionship in other ways. The past year’s Introduction to Judaism class is winding down and I am preparing to launch a new class, so if you want to join us, just let me or the office know. We are also focusing on protecting our communal home through the important work that the Safety

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FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Committee is doing under the leadership of Dave Middleton and we are welcoming new members into our home with our Membership Shabbat on Friday the 31st of January. We will be kicking off the festivities with a wine-and-cheese buffet at 6:45 p.m., before services, and close out with a special chocolate-themed oneg afterwards, so if you want to make new friends and snack on delicious morsels, please come join us.

Home, of course, also extends beyond the physical walls of this building. When snowed in a few weeks ago, I decided to livestream services from my Facebook account. As our President reported, it was a bit of an impromptu experiment, but it seemed to work and it was a fun, pleasurable and unique way to build digital community. (I still have to research Sue Weinberg's halakhic question whether you can make a minyan online). We also extended ourselves by our first time congregational participation in the Martin Luther King Day Unity Rally. Cold though it was (I won't complain about it

though!), we had a good turn out and were given the gift of building stronger and deeper relationships with the wider Iowa City community. We are also indebted to the Tikkun Olam Committee and dedicated members of Agudas Achim who helped out with the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition Voter Registration Drive.

In my personal rabbinate, I am also seeking to find new ways to build stronger relationships in our community. A wonderful new bookstore annex coffee shop called Sidekick Books and Coffee opened near my house and your rabbi would love to schedule a time to hang out with you and grab coffee (or tea) – because Judaism charges us to make a home everywhere in the world, and not just the four walls of our building.

Mishlei, the Book of Proverbs, tells us 'Bayit tzadikim ya'amod' – 'the house of the righteous will stand' (12:7). As we continue to shuffle snow and look towards the first glimmers of spring, let us continue to build a righteous home: for our families, for our community, for our country and the world entire. I think we're off to a good start.

TAL SCHNEIDER TALK

Tal Schneider Talk: Israeli Society at a Crossroads

Wednesday, February 5, 7:00 p.m.

Iowa Hillel, 122 E Market St.

A look at Israel's four principal sectors - the national religious, the secular, Arabs and the Ultra-Orthodox through President Rivlin's lens. The lecture will refer to recent demographic changes in Israel's "Four Main Tribes" (as described by Rivlin): where they meet, how they differ on military service, education, media, Shabbat customs, transportation, poverty and more. We will discuss comprehensive solutions for the future of a fragmented society.

Tal Schneider is the chief Diplomatic and Political Correspondent for the Israeli financial daily, Globes. She is the paper's senior political writer, lead columnist and analyst and, with over 160,000 followers, serves as the paper's point person for digital and social media platforms. She covers the Israeli political scene, Israeli foreign policy, the U.S.-Israel relationship, Middle East diplomacy and the Jewish world in her daily beat. Between 2004 and 2009, she has served as Maariv's Washington, D.C. correspondent.

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

We came back to **Sunday School** on a cold and gloomy day at the end of January. I decided to start the semester with some fun games to cheer everyone up.

We played Twister in Hebrew, learning the words *kaf regel* (foot), *yad* (hand), not to mention the colors: *adam* (red), *yirok* (green), *kakhol* (blue), and *tzahov* (yellow). Then I gave the kids a set of Post-Its with Hebrew words written on them and a second stack of cards with hints and translations. The kids ran through the synagogue labeling everything in Hebrew. It was particularly challenging to label the *ner tamid* (eternal light)! I discovered in this process that it is difficult to distinguish the Reform *siddur* from the Conservative one.

Finally, the older kids divided into teams. Their challenge was to create a skit using a set of Hebrew words related to Tu B'shvat or Purim. The team watching the skit had to listen for the Hebrew words and try to figure out their meaning based on the skit. The audience had quite a challenge! But the performers helped by basing their skit on a game show.

By that time, everyone was pretty hot and thirsty. So we finished the day with some lemonade and snacks.



In **Hebrew School** the next day I decided that I should re-enforce the colors and teach a little about Tu Bishvat. So I brought in red apples, green apples, dates, blue berries, and bananas. In Hebrew, I asked the kids to point to fruits of each color. When they were pretty good at that, we sliced the fruits up and ate them. But first we had to recite the appropriate blessing. That was the point at which it occurred to me that, technically, bananas do not grow on trees. After quick consultation with the rabbi, and we concluded that bananas are *pri-ha-‘adamah*, “fruit of the earth.” When I shared that news with the kids, we had a very interesting discussion about why Adam and *adamah* are related words. The kids concluded that the next time they met someone named “Adam,” they would call him “Earthling.”

It was a fun start to the semester. Next week we will learn all about Judaism and ecology for Tu Bishvat.

WARM UP AMERICA

Connie Berman

Warm Up America will meet **February 9 and 23**. We are particularly excited to welcome new members of the group.

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE

Torah Portion	Date	Service Time	Service
Bo <i>(Exodus 10:1–13:16)</i>	Friday, January 31	7:30 p.m.	Sim Shalom (Conservative)
	Saturday, February 1	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Beshalach <i>(Exodus 13:17–17:16)</i>	Friday, February 7	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, February 8	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom
Yitro <i>(Exodus 18:1–20:23)</i>	Friday, February 14	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, February 15	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom
Mishpatim <i>(Exodus 21:1–24:18)</i>	Friday, February 21	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, February 22	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom
Terumah <i>(Exodus 25:1–27:19)</i>	Friday, February 28	7:30 p.m.	Sim Shalom
	Saturday, February 29	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah

LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

The Congregation extends its condolences to Nina and Alan Weinstein on the death of Nina's brother, Phillip Lasansky.

The congregation extends its condolences to Stephen Strauss and family on the death of Susan Strauss.

FEBRUARY YAHRZEITS

Michael Balch	Merrel Goldberg	Harry Levin	LaVerne Siebuhr
David Blum	Judith Goldfein	Marvin Marcus	Sam Skorton
John Brady	Rose Goldman	Arthur Margolin	Betty Snider
Arnie Breggin	Joseph Greenberg	Samuel Markovitz	Goldie Solganick
James Terrell Bryant	Patricia Hass	Tamara Mazur	Gladys Paul Spiller
Barbara Jean Bunnell	Charles Hecht	Patrick McEwen	Benjamin Sprince
Helen Chazanoff	Jacob Horowitz	Edna Irene McGinnis	Isaac Strauss
Mary Jessie Clements	Maurice Joselson	Rabbi Elijah "Zeke"	Gittel Tepper
Donald Cohn	Sydney Josselson	Palnick	Wayne VanArendonk
Belle Coster	Sylvia Kaufman	James Robin	Olive Wertz
Sara Dorfman	Simone Kay	Dennis Saletta	Maynard "Moe"
Sol Elster	Shmarya Kleinman	Sam Sandler	Whitebook
Louis Friedman	Allen Kraft	Susan Schechter	Alan Widiss
Marlene Garfin	Lillian Kraft	Lama Shetzer	Celia Wolf
Webster Gelman	Boris Kuperman	Harry Shulman	Earl Yanney

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sue Weinberg

Shalom, everyone. I hope that you are keeping warm and safe. This past January has reinforced our need to review and create some synagogue policies. Due to snow and ice, services had to be cancelled two different weekends last month. The rabbi and I are in the process of discussing and formalizing the guidelines for when to cancel services and how to notify members. So far we have tentatively agreed that a decision will be made by 6:00 p.m. Friday if evening services will be cancelled, and by 8:00 a.m. Saturday morning for morning Shabbat services. An email will be sent out, and notification will be posted on the synagogue webpage and on KCRG.com. We are working on guidelines as to when to cancel, but even if services are held, please be careful and if you have any concerns about the weather or the roads, stay home and be safe. For one evening service, the Rabbi experimented with livestreaming an abbreviated service on Facebook, and we are exploring other options to make services more accessible, possibly using Zoom, as not everyone has a Facebook account.

Other policies are needed, and they are being worked on behind the scenes. For the safety of all, in the near future, there will be a new synagogue key policy, as well as a policy for interactions between children and non-related adults.

The safety committee is also hard at work researching options to harden our building while remaining warm and welcoming, which is a difficult line to straddle. They presented some of their research to the board in January, and we anticipate holding a couple of listening posts in the next few months. We are tentatively planning a congregational meeting sometime in late March or

April for their recommendations to be presented to the congregation, as well as the costs and a timeline for implementing them. They have submitted a grant application to Homeland Security, which, if approved, will assist with funding the security updates that need to be implemented, although unfortunately, the grant will only cover a small portion of the costs. We have formed a committee to discuss options for fundraising, which will also be presented at the congregational meeting. And along with other safety measures, I want to encourage everyone to wear their nametags when they attend synagogue services and events. (And if I forget to put mine on, please remind me!)

In other news, I want to thank Karen Lipman for her service as chair of the Kitchen Committee. In addition to helping set up and organize the kitchen, she has supervised kashuring it for Pesach. She is stepping away from this role to spend more time visiting her new grandchild – mazel tov! I also want to thank Beverly Jones for agreeing to step into this role. Beverly has worked tirelessly in the synagogue kitchen almost every Shabbat for years, so she was a natural fit to take over the role. Thank you both for your service!

I also want to thank Frank Salomon, the past Adult Ed chair. Even though he no longer sits on the board or chairs the Adult Ed committee, he is still working tirelessly to provide speakers and programs, including arranging the very well received series of talks on Black-Jewish Relations by Daryl Heller. Here's a hint of things to come - watch the bulletin and the weekly emails, there might be more programming coming on this topic!

Be well, stay warm, and I hope to see you at services, programs, or other events.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The Bereavement Support Group will meet on **Wednesday, February 19** at 12:30 p.m.

SISTERHOOD NEWS

Beverly Jones

Spring Tea

Sisterhood's Spring Tea will be held on Sunday, April 5, 2:00 p.m. at the home of Karen Charney, 51 Eversull Lane, Iowa City. We hope that you will join us for an afternoon of conversation and camaraderie as we enjoy the warmth of Spring. Refreshments will be provided by the Sisterhood Board. We are in the process of arranging an informative and fun program. Details to follow.

Women's League Regional Conference

Expand Your Universe. That's the theme of our Women's League for Conservative Judaism regional Spring Conference which will take place in Houston from April 18-21, 2020. The Conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel NASA/Clear Lake (southeast Houston on Galveston Bay).

There will be a variety of programming, including discussions with local rabbis, a Middle East update

by the Israeli Consul, an overview of Jewish women artists, fun activities such as Mahjongg, Tai Chi, and crafts, as well as time for worship. A tour of the NASA Johnson Space Center is also planned.

Please contact sisterhood@agudasachimic.org for information on registration fees, hotel rates, and related information. There is a competitive scholarship available that will reimburse expenses up to \$500.00. The scholarship deadline is February 19, 2020. You must be a dues-paying member of Sisterhood to participate. Sisterhood will also help subsidize expenses.

Dues

Speaking of dues, there is no wrong time to join Sisterhood. Please send your check for \$36.00, made out to Sisterhood, to our treasurer, Joni Caplan, 520 Brookland Park Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246. You can also donate to Sisterhood through its Mitzvah and Memorial Fund in honor of, or in memory of, someone.

FROM THE STACKS

Ellen Caplan

Honeycake Magazine

This month's feature is a new magazine for children, primarily those aged 2 to 6. Subtitled "The Jewish Magazine for Creative Kids," HONEYCAKE began as the idea of a young mother who envisioned a publication filled with stories, poems, songs, activities and kitchen fun for these youngsters. A page with appeal for adults as well as children challenges the viewer to find hidden objects: a pencil, fish, fork, pizza slice, feather, sailboat, light bulb, and hockey stick.

The first issue appeared in time for Hanukkah; the next is planned for Passover. Eventually it's hoped that HONEYCAKE will appear quarterly. Find the first issue on the table in the Braverman Library, along with purchasing information.



DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Lea Haravon Collins & Steve Collins: In memory of Jacob Haravon Collins

Bob & Donna Rodnitzky: In memory of Ann & Nathan Rodnitzky

Stephen Strauss and Gary & Gloria Moreau: In memory of Susan Strauss

2ND CENTURY FUND

Deborah Lee: In memory of Richard Caplan

Nancy Sprince: from Zwerling Sprince Family

CEMETERY FUND

Irene Palnick: In memory of Rabbi Elijah "Zeke" Palnick

David Schapira

FINE ARTS FUND

Helen Goldstein: In memory of Susan Strauss

GENERAL FUND

Deborah Loewenberg Ball: In gratitude for taharah ritual for Gerhard Loewenberg

David & Constance Berman: In memory of Doris Hoffman

Aaron Caplan & Leah Lee: In honor of David & Joni Caplan

Kathleen Jacobs

David Roston & Rita Marcus: In memory of Gitel Tepper, Isador Tepper, and Larry Tepper

David Roston & Rita Marcus: In gratitude for getting through a dangerous event

GENERAL FUND (CONT.)

Jonathan & Susan Simon: In memory of Irene Simon, Mendel Goldberg, and Liba Goldberg

Gerald & Hope Solomons: In honor of Kathy Jacobs, from Mary & Nan

LIBRARY FUND

Linda Kerber: In memory of Sylvia Kaufman

ONEG FUND

Ellen Caplan

LAUREN REECE FLAUM TERRACE FUND

Mark Graber & Hetty Hall: In memory of George Elisha Hall

SIM & SARA STRAUSS MEMORIAL FUND

Ellen Caplan: In memory of Susan O. Strauss

Julia Gelfand & David Lang: In memory of Susan Strauss

Carolyn Lefkow: In memory of Susan Strauss

Diane Lohnes: In memory of Susan Strauss

Dennis and Anne McCafferty: In memory of Susan Strauss

Stephen Strauss: In memory of Jim Strauss, Rebecca Posner, Meyer Markovitz

SOCIAL COMMITTEE FUND

Kathleen Jacobs: For kitchen helpers for Latke party

TIKUN OLAM FUND

Carrie Z. Norton: In memory of Morris L. Ziskind

HILLEL COFFEE MUG COLLECTION

Iowa Hillel's student board raised funds over winter break to purchase an espresso machine for the Hillel House. As part of our initiatives to be eco-friendly, we will be composting our coffee grounds and also be using reusable coffee mugs instead of single use throw away cups. Also as part of that initiative, we want to get used coffee mugs instead of buying new, which is where YOU come in. If you would like to donate some gently used mugs, please drop them by Agudas Achim or send us an email to office@iowahillel.org. (Or if you're coming to Tal Schneider's talk, you can bring them to Hillel then!) Thank you!

FEBRUARY 2020

Fri	31	New Member Social Hour	6:45 PM	Sat	15	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM	Sun	16	Sunday School	10:00 AM
		New Member Chocolate Oneg	8:30 PM			MahJong Group	2:30 PM
Sat	1	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Mon	17	Hebrew School	4:15 PM
Sun	2	Sunday School	10:00 AM	Wed	19	Hebrew School	4:15 PM
		MahJong Group	2:30 PM			Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
Mon	3	Hebrew School	4:15 PM	Thurs	20	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
		Sisterhood Board Meeting	7:00 PM	Fri	21	Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM
Wed	5	Hebrew School	4:15 PM	Sat	22	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Fri	7	Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM	Sun	23	Sunday School	10:00 AM
Sat	8	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM			Warm-Up America	10:00 AM
Sun	9	Sunday School	10:00 AM			MahJong Group	2:30 PM
		Warm-Up America	10:00 AM	Mon	24	Hebrew School	4:15 PM
		MahJong Group	2:30 PM	Wed	26	Free Lunch	11:30 AM
Mon	10	Hebrew School	4:15 PM			Book Group	1:00 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM			Hebrew School	4:15 PM
Tues	11	Membership Committee	7:00 PM	Fri	28	Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM
Wed	12	Hebrew School	4:15 PM	Sat	29	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Thurs	13	Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM				
Fri	14	Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM				

STAFF

Rabbi	Esther Hugenholtz	Office Secretary	John Wertz
Administrator	Karen Brady	Custodian	Amos Kiche
Principal	Sonja Spear		

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President	Sue Weinberg	Adult Education	<i>Vacant</i>
President Elect	Janice Weiner	Sisterhood Liaison	Nancy Sprince
Vice President	David Lubaroff	Social	Meadow Amster
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Ritual	Peter Rubenstein; Alan Weinstein	At Large 2	Curtis Braverman
Religious School	Chuck Friedman	At Large 3	Mark Ginsberg