



# Agudas Achim Congregation

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**April 2020 / Nisan–Iyyar 5780**

## FROM THE RABBI

*Esther Hugenholtz*

Purim is long gone and we are only a week away from Passover, but one of Purim's enduring truths stands: this is a time of *'hafuch'*, 'inversion', of a topsy-turvy reality. The world as we knew it has been suspended and a new reality is emerging in real time. We don't know what that new reality will look like long-term but we do know that everything seems inverted right now. What we once considered ancient metaphor is now lived experience. We encounter the juxtaposition of public health being shaped by both cutting-edge 21<sup>st</sup> century science and Bronze Age quarantine techniques as illustrated by the Book of Leviticus. All of a sudden, the Plagues of Egypt seem a little too, well, *real*.

Of course, our first priority as a community is to stay healthy and safe and to reach out in solidarity to those within and beyond our membership who need support. This pandemic will affect each of us differently. Some of may struggle financially; others emotionally or spiritually. Perhaps all at once. Some may relish the silence; others may crave connection. This is a time for gentleness, love and connection. For a card, phone call, email or video chat. A curb drop-off to bring an isolated individual a little extra joy on long and lonely days.

Hence, the Board and I made a decision to create a two-fold fund: an Emergency Fund (for this pandemic in specific and for other calamities in the future) to support members in distress as well as

our ongoing Tikkun Olam Fund in order to support those beyond the metaphorical walls of our community. We encourage you to donate to whichever fund speaks to you. Pesach is a time where metaphor becomes experience and where memory becomes solidarity. If you can give, please give: not just money, but time, kindness and attention. If you would enjoy making phone calls to check in on our membership, please let us know – we would like to build a team of volunteers to do that holy work.

These are strange and unprecedented times. In our topsy-turvy world, it is completely legitimate to give yourself permission to feel whatever you need to feel: fear, anxiety, a sense of loss... but perhaps also a heightened sense of awareness, gratitude and purpose. This pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint, and in true fashion for all existential crises, universal in its impact and implications. Thankfully, we are part of a tradition and community that knows how to navigate existential marathons. We Jews have a lot of collective wisdom and stamina. We can draw on the wellspring of our ancestral stories and our universal ethics and bring light to our homes and hearts.

Passover will not be the same. Although the Second Seder will be livestreamed through Zoom from my house so that we can have a digital experience, many of us will experience our Sedarim in

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## FROM THE RABBI

### *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

diminished capacity, or even alone. All the more important to emphasize our interconnectedness as a community and to share resources – keep your eye out on the Pesach Bulletin that will come out very soon. Judaism is, if anything, resourceful, and through our marathon of history we have created new ways of finding meaning from among the ashes of our experience, whether that is from Egyptian slavery, the destruction of our Temples, our days of Exile or the often bloodied encounter with Modernity. We are called to continue putting one foot in front of another, perform one mitzvah at a time, and watch the slow but relentless transformation of our world. Very rarely is a generation like ours placed in the position where we can literally save lives: by sheltering-in-place, through physical distancing and through continued acts of loving-kindness.

One day, perhaps in months, we will come out of this; our own ‘*Yitzi’at Mitzrayim*’, our own exiting from the narrow straights. We will create new rituals and new prayers, new commemorations and new behaviors and hopefully, a better and brighter world. Right now, we feel more keenly that what is simple is true. The pyramids of Pharaoh are inverted into the humble Maslow’s pyramid of needs. Food, shelter, safety, health, love. The blessings of sunlight and air, the gifts of time and reflection, the injunction of healing and togetherness. A new Haggadah – a Telling – will be written for the generations to come of this Plague Year. One day, we will raise our voices in a thanksgiving for making it through to the other side. For now, *dayeinu*, it is enough, if we find safety and love, if we can be attentive to the living and cherish those we may lose. *L’shanah haba’ah* – and next year – we will be together. *L’chaim* – to life!

## APRIL YAHRZEITS

Rachel Abrons	Donald Dorfman	Masha Braverman Kunik	Charles Retish
Mark Armstrong	Phyllis Eisenberg	Lena Landweber	Sarah Retish
Mark D Armstrong	Donna Farber	Mauricio Lasansky	George Richter
Celia Balch	Freda Feinberg	Raizel Levin	Herman Robin
Chaim Berman	Morris Friedman	Erna Luwisch	Ethel Rothstein
Pearl Berman	Florence Glick	Evelyn Madison	Mary Frances Russell
Ruth Berman	David Glicksman	Gladys Lax Marcus	John Sawyer
David Braverman	Leona Herman	Sara Middleman	Harry Schlesinger
Ellie Breggin	Paul Theodoor	Sarah Rebecca Milavetz	Hy Schumeister
Mildred Brenner	Hugenholtz	Corrine “Corky” Miller	Michael Solursh
James Brodsky	Elizabeth Ifland	Paul Mutnick	Rosetta Standig
Ansel Chapman	Ida Kleinman	Henry Gilford Picard	Bernard Vernon
Dorothy Donner	Marilyn Kubby	Milton Reece	Irene Weinberg

## WARM UP AMERICA

### *Connie Berman*

Warm Up America will be meeting virtually, if at all. But I will be bringing home both materials and in process afghans to hand out when you need them. My email is [constance-berman@uiowa.edu](mailto:constance-berman@uiowa.edu).

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Sue Weinberg*

Dear all,

This is not the column I had planned to write for this month's bulletin. I was going to welcome spring in Iowa, say how much I was looking forward to Passover and to celebrating the seder with friends and family. I was going to tell you that my sister would be visiting for Passover, it would have been the first time I have seen her since last Passover (she was sick at the High Holidays and was unable to come down). I was going to tell you about the congregational meeting that was scheduled to be held in April with updates and information from various committees, including a presentation from the Safety committee about the plans to harden our facility.

But that has all changed.

The world has changed.

The synagogue has temporarily closed. The congregational meeting is being postponed. There will not be a community second seder, and my sister will not be coming down from the far reaches of northern Minnesota. There is very little face-to-face contact between us (or between anyone!). People are staying home. All of our meetings are being held via Zoom. The Rabbi is conducting services from her home via livestreaming and zoom, as well as streaming afternoon teas and opportunities to check in.

These are big changes. The world is changing. I am hopeful that we will emerge from this with an improved social, medical, and economic safety net, and a renewed sense of community and camaraderie. We need to stay in touch however possible. Consider sending a card to someone. Pick up the phone, send an email, initiate a skype or

facetime session with a friend, loved one, or just someone who might be alone and lonely. Schedule a zoom meeting to play a game of some kind with someone. In our age of technology there are many ways to stay connected.

There are a lot of resources that are being provided for free via the internet, including educational content, museum and zoo tours (check out the free -range penguins from the San Diego Zoo, Kansas City Zoo, and Ripley's Aquarium, among others), NASA photos, concerts, Broadway plays, uplifting videos of quarantined people singing together, and of course, puppies and kittens! Take advantage of these free offerings to keep in touch with the outside world.

Be creative, and while you isolate yourself physically, don't isolate yourself emotionally.

John and Karen are mostly working from home, and the synagogue office is operating primarily via email. Phone messages are checked whenever possible but email should be your primary contact method. The rabbi is available via phone or zoom for pastoral support. I would suggest subscribing to the [synagogue Facebook page](#) and becoming friends with Rabbi Hugenholtz's [rabbinic Facebook page](#) for the most up-to-date information about synagogue news as well as links to various livestreams for services and check-ins (streaming links for Shabbat services on Zoom: [Friday Night](#); [Saturday Morning](#)). We'd love for you to join us!

If you need other support, such as a grocery or medication delivery, we will try to help. You can contact the office, the rabbi, the caring committee, or myself, and we will try our best to assist you with

The world is changing. I am hopeful that we will emerge from this with an improved social, medical, and economic safety net, and a renewed sense of community and camaraderie.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Sue Weinberg (cont.)*

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whatever you need. Keep your spirits up, stay healthy, and we will come out of this even stronger.

In conclusion, here is something fun. One of the strongest recommendations for protecting yourself, your families, and others, is to wash your hands for 20 seconds. Traditionally, the recommendation has been to sing Happy Birthday twice to make sure you wash for long enough. I

Space: the final frontier.

These are the voyages of the starship *Enterprise*.

Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds.

To seek out new life and new civilizations.

To boldly go where no one has gone before!

would like to offer an alternative. If you recite the following as you wash your hands, while channeling William Shatner's style of speaking, it will take the recommended 20 seconds.

(feel free to hum the theremin-sounding theme, although it is not necessary for timing).

L'shalom,  
Sue

## SISTERHOOD NEWS

*Beverly Jones*

We wish everyone good health and good cheer as we shelter in place, observe social distancing, and go about our jobs as safely as possible. Sisterhood cancelled its April Spring Tea; and if current projections about the Coronavirus peak period are correct, we could have to cancel our June Mitzvah Fund Brunch. It's still on the schedule: It will be a fun program with Elizabeth Miller describing her

spelunking adventures, with all proceeds from the event going to charity. While we hope for the best, we'll follow all medical guidelines.

If you have family or community news, information, personal needs, or just some fun stories to share, we can pass them on through Sisterhood's email account, [sisterhood@agudasachimic.org](mailto:sisterhood@agudasachimic.org).

## (POSTPONED) MARTHA LUBAROFF LUNCHEON

Our April 4 celebration of Martha Lubaroff's special birthday has been postponed.

Feel free to send her a card or an email instead.



## SCHOOL NEWS

*Sonja Spear*

I had so many plans. The Sunday School students were about to begin a unit on Passover. The Sixth Grade was going to use the Passover Haggadah to learn about the difference between Biblical and Rabbinic Judaism. The Fourth and Fifth Grade were going to learn about the variety of Passover practices around the world, including different *charoset* recipes. On the way, they would have practiced various part of the Passover seder. The Third Grade was going to illustrate the Passover story. The Kindergarten would have made a seder plate and other crafts.

I planned to have the kids set up booths along the hall in the school wing so that they could share what they learned with each other and with their parents. At one point, I even imagined acting out the parting of the Red Sea. Squirt bottles were involved. On a warm day it would have been fun. We were going to have a *hametz* hunt with flashlights. I know that Shellie Smith was planning a lock in so that the older kids could enjoy a sleepover in the synagogue.

Like so many of you, including those whose plans never involve squirt bottles, I have put my plans on hold. I am very proud that Agudas Achim was among the first institutions to close its doors in order to protect its members and the public. I am proud of all of my students who, I am sure, are only driving their parents crazy just a little bit. I am also proud of my community for modeling what it means to care for each other.

I will continue to post projects and discussion topics to the Members of Agudas Achim Facebook page while we all wait out the virus. I will be sending out new lists of online resources for parents as I find them. But I also know from experience that suddenly transitioning to home schooling is not easy. I have found that it takes time to establish a new routine. You may be finding the same.

So for right now, the school is on pause. I am sad when I think of everything that we might have done. I miss seeing the kids. I am sure they miss seeing each other. But we will be back in session next year. Meanwhile, I am making plans.

## MUSSAR GROUP

*Kathy Jacobs*

What is Mussar? Consider joining “A Season of Mussar 1.”

Online group meetings begin on or about April 26, at a day and time that works for participants.

In addition to the previous meeting that was held, there will be a Zoom meeting that will serve as an Introduction to Mussar on April 19 at 2:00 p.m. ([click for Zoom link](#)).

Group members will study the soul-traits of Humility, Anger, Gratitude, Trust, Honor, and Zeal (Alacrity). Course participants will follow a curriculum created by The Mussar Institute (TMI) which explores Jewish values through text study - with the group and with a personal study partner (*chevruta*) - and through the use of meditation, contemplation, chanting, and forming supportive intentions and actions. Please join Kathy Jacobs to learn what Mussar has to offer.

## BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The bereavement group will meet at 12:30 p.m. on April 15, via Zoom. Contact the office for details.

## SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL SERVICE SCHEDULE (ALL SERVICES VIA ZOOM)

Streaming links for Shabbat services on Zoom: [Friday Night \(7:30 p.m.\)](#); [Saturday Morning \(9:30 a.m.\)](#)

Service	Date	Time	Siddur
Shabbat	Friday, April 3	7:30 p.m.	Sim Shalom (Conservative)
<i>Tzav</i>	Saturday, April 4	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Pesach morning service	Thursday, April 9	9:30 a.m.	
Pesach Second Seder	Thursday, April 9	6:30 p.m.	
Pesach morning service	Friday, April 10	9:30 a.m.	
Shabbat	Friday, April 10	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, April 11	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom
Pesach evening service	Tuesday, April 14	6:30 p.m.	
Pesach morning service	Wednesday, April 15	9:30 a.m.	
Pesach morning service	Thursday, April 16	9:30 a.m.	
Shabbat	Friday, April 17	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
<i>Sh'mini</i>	Saturday, April 18	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom
Shabbat	Friday, April 24	7:30 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
<i>Tazria-M'tzora</i>	Saturday, April 25	9:30 a.m.	Sim Shalom

### ISRAEL TRIP UPDATE

*Peter Rubenstein*

Hi all,

I spoke with Bob Cargill and he and his family are still planning to be in Israel for the year. Also, Rabbi Misha Zinkow, the person from Makor Journeys with whom we are dealing, thinks it is way to early to even think about canceling the trip. He also assured me that if the trip had to be canceled, any of us who had enrolled would have our money refunded. So visit the web site and sign up. As He Who Shall Not Be Named once said, "what have you got to lose?"

In terms of air travel, though, we recommend waiting until closer to the trip to make your reservations. Most airlines are waiving cancellation fees for reservations because of the uncertainty of traveling. However, if you cancel, you get the value of the ticket as credit for future travel, not a cash refund. Hoping to see many of you in Eretz Yisrael this winter.



## DONATIONS

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

**Robert & Vida Brenner**

**Gloria Gelman:** In memory of David Glicksman

**Sam & Marj Kuperman:** In honor of  
Martha Lubaroff's birthday

**Steven & Barcey Levy:** In honor of birth and bris of  
Joshua Thurston Welter

**Barry London & Linda M. Cadaret:** In memory of  
Edith London & Benjamin London

**Jerry Naylor**

**Bob & Donna Rodnitzky:** In memory of  
Dorothy Pliner

**Gary & Mindy Russell:** In memory of  
Jean Leiberman Lenett

**Shellie & Nathan Smith**

### CEMETERY FUND

**Michael & Joanne Margolin:** In memory of  
Benjamin Hertz

**Rhoda Vernon:** In memory of Bernard Vernon

### FAMILY ASSISTANCE FUND

**Bennett Brown & Maurine Neiman:** for the poor

### GENERAL FUND

**Jeff & Sara Braverman:** In memory of  
David Braverman

**Kathleen Jacobs**

### LOUIS GINSBERG YOUTH FUND

**Mark & Vickie Ginsberg:** In memory of  
Rose Lee Pomerantz

### LAUREN REECE FLAUM TERRACE FUND

**Richard & Nancee Blum:** In memory of Joseph Rose

### SIM & SARA STRAUSS MEMORIAL FUND

**Richard Strauss & Ellen Herman:** In memory of  
Sam & Anna Markovitz, Sim & Sara Strauss, and  
William Herman

**Stephen Strauss:** In memory of Anna Markovitz,  
Sara Strauss, and Dinah Markovitz

### TALMUD TORAH FUND

**Mace & Kay Braverman:** In memory of  
Rosalie Braverman

**Eloise McCuskey**

### TIKUN OLAM FUND

**Doug & Beverly Jones:** In memory of  
Goldie Solganick

**Mark & Jayne Sandler:** In memory of Sol Crandell,  
and Esther & Jay Sandler

**Nathan Eugene Savin & Susan Enzle:** In memory of  
Reuben Savin and Lucile Potter

## SHELTER HOUSE BOOK SALE POSTPONED

*Helene Lubaroff*

Due to the need to take sensible health precautions, The Shelter House has postponed their annual Book Sale fundraiser. Therefore, the Tikun Olam Committee will suspend its book drive until The Shelter House announces that they are once again accepting book donations.

In the meantime, for those who wish to participate, this time of social/physical distancing provides a

great opportunity to sort out books to donate. Fun for the whole family!

New this year: Once the book drive resumes, Tikun Olam will offer porch pick-up of donations, in addition to drop boxes at the Synagogue. Please place books in bags or small boxes for pick-up. More details to follow.

## APRIL 2020

ALL SERVICES, MEETINGS, AND EVENTS WILL BE VIA ZOOM. EMAIL THE OFFICE IF YOU NEED DETAILS.			
		Thurs 16	<b>Pesach Morning Service</b> 9:30 AM
			Executive Committee Meeting 5:30 PM
Wed	1	Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM	Fri 17
Thurs	2	Social Committee Meeting 4:30 PM	Sat 18
		Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv 8:30 PM	Sun 19
Fri	3	Shabbat Evening Services 7:30 PM	
Sat	4	Shabbat Morning Services 9:30 AM	
Sun	5	Talmud Study Group 9:00 AM	
		Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM	
Mon	6	Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM	Mon 20
		Sisterhood Board Meeting 7:00 PM	
		Intro to Judaism 7:30 PM	Wed 22
Wed	8	Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM	
Thurs	9	<b>Pesach Morning Service</b> 9:30 AM	
		<b>Second Seder with Rabbi Hugenholtz</b> 6:30 PM	
Fri	10	<b>Festival Service</b> 9:30 AM	Thurs 23
		Shabbat Evening Services 7:30 PM	
Sat	11	Shabbat Morning Services 9:30 AM	Fri 24
Sun	12	Talmud Study Group 9:00 AM	Sat 25
		Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM	Sun 26
Mon	13	Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM	
		Intro to Judaism 7:30 PM	Mon 27
Tues	14	<b>Pesach Evening Service</b> 6:30 PM	
Wed	15	<b>Pesach Morning Service</b> 9:30 AM	Wed 29
		Bereavement Group 12:30 PM	Thurs 30
			Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv 8:30 PM
			<b>Adult Ed: What is Mussar? Via Zoom</b> 2:00 PM
			Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM
			Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM
			Intro to Judaism 7:30 PM
			Free Lunch 11:30 AM
			Book Group 1:00 PM
			Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM
			Education Committee 6:00 PM
			Board Meeting 7:00 PM
			Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv 8:30 PM
			Shabbat Evening Services 7:30 PM
			Shabbat Morning Services 9:30 AM
			Talmud Study Group 9:00 AM
			Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM
			Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM
			Intro to Judaism 7:30 PM
			Tea Time Check-In 4:00 PM

## TALMUD STUDY GROUP

The Talmud study group has begun meeting again, via Zoom, on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

[Click here](#) to join at the appropriate time.

## GIFT SHOP NEWS

*Joanne Margolin*

The synagogue office is closed for the immediate future, but if you need items from the gift shop, please send an email to [secretary@agudasachimic.org](mailto:secretary@agudasachimic.org). John and Karen will be in the office about once a week, and can arrange to leave items outside the door to be picked up if you set it up ahead of time with them. We will worry about payment for items at a later date. It may take 3-4 days to arrange the pickup.



**“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<br>__ Building Fund<br>__ Cemetery Fund<br>__ Fine Arts Fund<br>__ General Fund<br>__ Garden & Landscaping Fund<br>__ High Holiday/Cantor Fund<br>__ Lauren Reece Flaum Terrace Fund<br>__ Library Fund<br>__ Louis Ginsberg Youth Fund<br>__ Marcus Scholarship Fund | __ The Rabbi Portman Program Fund<br>__ Prayer Book Fund<br>__ Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund<br>__ School Fund<br>__ Sim & Sara Strauss Memorial Fund<br>__ Sisterhood Mitzvah & Memorial Fund<br>__ Synagogue Assistance Fund<br>__ Tikun Olam Fund<br>__ Torah Enhancement Fund<br>__ Kadima Fund |
|---|--|

**Contribution in memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contribution in honor of** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>STAFF</b>			
Rabbi	Esther Hugenholtz	Office Secretary	John Wertz
Administrator	Karen Brady	Custodian	Amos Kiche
Principal	Sonja Spear		
<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>			
President	Sue Weinberg	Adult Education	Daphne Lison; Bennett Brown
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Religious School	Chuck Friedman	At Large 3	Mark Ginsberg