



Agudas Achim Congregation

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www.AgudasAchimIC.org

May 2020 / Iyar–Sivan 5780

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

Sacred Waiting

I remember well when I started contributing articles to Agudas Achim’s Monthly Bulletin. I was still in England, waiting for my visa, with all the promise and potential of becoming your Rabbi. Those months felt excruciatingly long and I know it did for you too. Limbo is an emotionally difficult place to be in and writing those articles made our relationship tangible. It allowed us to build a connection across that vast distance of oceans and continents.

I remember scouring the Bulletin for updates. Was there news on my visa? Would we even be able to successfully conclude this audacious project of hiring an overseas Rabbi? Once I arrived here, I heard that many of you held the same fears as I did; a mirror image of each other’s hopes.

That process now started four years ago. My family was so relieved to finally board that plane to Cedar Rapids Airport. The congregation and its leadership has been my rock throughout this process. Finding a house. Settling in. Extending the visa. Petitioning for the adjustment to permanent residency. Helping us become Iowans. Each of these incremental moments represented a microcosm of that ‘limbo’; another hurdle to clear; another chapter in a both deeply human and momentous

story. Building up emotional reserves and deep relationships for what came next during these tumultuous times. Counting the days, relishing the road and its respites, pitching our proverbial tent en route to that ever-shimmering ideal. This is not just my family’s story. It’s the story of all of our lives; it’s the Jewish story and the American story.

None of us could ever predict that we would be where we are now. Isn’t it strange how some things continue as they are while other things have been existentially upended? My green card process continues at good pace: the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) has asked us to submit the prerequisite medical exam, which we will be doing in a few weeks. This is one of the last stages in the green card process and we are both grateful and hopeful that we are approaching its finalization. Becoming permanent residents will

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solidify the intention that we expressed four years ago, by choosing to move to this beautiful country. In a sense, it is a perfect sentiment for the Omer period, where we count from our redemption from Egyptian slavery to the consummation of the covenant through the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. The Israelites

too, knew that weird and unsettling rhythm of

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FROM THE RABBI *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

stasis and upheaval, where at once nothing and everything seems to happen.

We know that we will make it through the other side of this. It won't be easy, and it won't be quick. Still, we possess the spiritual, emotional and moral instruments as both a community and as individuals to make it through. We cannot control world events, but we can perform *mitzvot*. We can be kind; we can treat each other with grace. We can be honest about the very real pressures and stresses so many of us are facing: financial, medical or emotional. We can give voice to our fear so that we can feel less alone in them. We can model bravery through vulnerability. We can reach out to each other. We can support local businesses, bolster the voice of the scientific community, pursue civic obligations and bring *tikkun olam*, one socially-distanced step at a time. Whether we find ourselves a little discombobulated on Zoom (how weird is it to both share private space and communal activity from our homes – so let's treat each other with grace and mindfulness of what we share and how we share it) or overwhelmed with children (or other

caretaking roles) at home, we know that we are undergoing this as a Jewish (and Jewish-adjacent) collective. If there are issues present for people, please know that just because I'm not in the office, doesn't mean I am not fully available for you to talk to and connect with.

As we count the Omer, there is a mystical-Kabbalistic habit to count with through a matrix of spiritual 'middot' (soul traits) based on aspects of the Divine. The stasis and upheaval that we feel may appear chaotic, but they can, within us, bring deep introspection and ask of us of who we seek to be and what soul-traits we seek to cultivate. Being in limbo is hard – I know that from personal experience too well – but this is a sacred waiting; an exhalation of the breath of life; a moment to question, an opportunity to learn and a time to dream.

As is fitting for this time of year, of potential and renewal, of celebrating our Jewish heritage and upholding our Jewish hopes. '*Im tirtzu, ein zo aggadah*' – 'if you will it, it is no dream'. Let's keep dreaming bold and gentle dreams, dear ones, during this sacred waiting.

MAY Yahrzeits

Louise Allweiss
Grace Bernstein
Emma Braverman
Anna Brenner
Jimmy Price Bryant
Helene Colen
Ana Cotler
Hy Dicker
Harry Herbert Dreyfuss
Katie Fishman
Steven Frankel
Frances Green
Lee Green

Lev Gudkov
Sarah Stone Haendel
Sarah Hall
Reaves Holbrook
Bessie Josselson
Samuel Kanef
Bernard M. Levy
Maurice E. Lipman
Edith Meyer
Robert Alan Naylor
Samuel Osdoba
Anna Roston
Susan Schuler

Freda Schumeister
Richard Simon
Micki Soldofsky
Louis Solganick
Susan Sorokin
Israel Standig
Yetta Standig
Miriam Stone
Rose Baskin Tear
Etta Tunik
Ruth Maxine Berg Waldman
Irving Warren

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sue Weinberg

Dear all,

Well, Passover is past, and my hope is that you all had a meaningful Passover and were able to connect with friends and loved ones via phone or video.

We had a lovely second Seder led by Rabbi Esther thru zoom, with both congregants and others joining. The rabbi is also leading Shabbat services every week, and we have some exciting news about Saturday services. The board has made the decision to move some of the synagogues Torahs into private homes, and the rabbi has decided that halachicly, since zoom is considered a halachic minyan, reading Torah during a zoom service is permissible. So we will now have Torah readings on Shabbat!

The board continues to monitor best practices for our services and meetings, and for the time being all synagogue activities and services will continue to be held remotely. Therefore, our annual congregational meeting will be held on Thursday

June 18, 2020, via zoom. A link will be sent out prior to the meeting.

There is a new link on the synagogue webpage listing free resources and websites offering virtual tours, performances, interesting websites, and educational opportunities. Many thanks to Kate Jett and Judy Brodkey for compiling the list. Check it periodically as new entries are added as they are discovered. If you have any suggested additions to this list, please [email them](#) to the synagogue office. The list can be found [here](#).

In closing, I want to remind everyone to please be kind. We are all under a lot of strain and pressure, along with unique circumstances that may not be obvious. So please be kind, to yourself, and to others. Rather than taking offense, try to see another perspective. And assume the best of people rather than the worst. We are all in this together and we will get through it together!

Stay safe, stay healthy!

L'shalom,
Sue

SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE (ALL SERVICES VIA ZOOM)

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

Achare-Kedoshim <i>(Leviticus 16:1–20:27)</i>	Friday, May 1 Saturday, May 2	7:30 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Emor <i>(Leviticus 21:1–24:23)</i>	Friday, May 8 Saturday, May 9	7:30 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Behar-Bechukotai <i>(Leviticus 25:1–27:34)</i>	Friday, May 15 Saturday, May 16	7:30 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Bamidbar <i>(Numbers 1:1–4:20)</i>	Friday, May 22 Saturday, May 23	7:30 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
(Shavuot) <i>(Numbers 1:1–4:20)</i>	Friday, May 29 Saturday, May 30	7:30 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem

SISTERHOOD NEWS

Beverly Jones

Spring Tea Presentation

We wish to thank Hillel Director, Ashley Carol-Fingerhut, for volunteering to do a Zoom presentation of her talk on "How Big is Your Story," that had been scheduled for the cancelled Sisterhood Spring Tea. We also thank Nancy Sprince for helping to get this organized.

Sisterhood Board Vacancies

A new Sisterhood Board term of office will take place on July 1. Two of our long-time Board members, Karen Lipman and Beverly Jones, will be stepping down after many years of combined service. We thank them for their service to Sisterhood and Synagogue. We are happy to welcome Elizabeth Miller who is joining the Board. If nothing changes, however, our Board will continue to be short-handed, with just four members. We strongly encourage Sisterhood members to volunteer for the Board. There are some misconceptions about the Sisterhood Board: Of course everyone is busy, but this is not a full-time job, and it's not just for women of a certain age. If you can spare a couple of

hours a month, this may be a meaningful activity for you. We currently meet most months, with a minimum of six meetings a year. Each Board determines the date, time, and location of its meetings. Each Board determines the direction it wants to take in helping the Synagogue and the Jewish community; whether it's Jewish education and observance, social action, or just social. We work with other Synagogue committees, and yes, we are involved in providing food for Synagogue events. We welcome women of all ages, and levels of religious observance. And there are lots of opportunities for ad hoc participation in planning specific activities. If you are interested, please contact sisterhood@agudasachimic.org.

Well Wishes

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. 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.

ISRAEL TRIP NEWS

Dear Friends,

Dr. Cargill's sabbatical has been postponed due to difficulties associated with COVID-19. Most of the people likely to go on the trip are in the at-risk group due to age and medical conditions. Finally, there is likely to be a resurgence of the virus in the Fall/Winter that would make it inadvisable if not impossible to travel. In light of these conditions, and with the agreement of Makor, the agency with whom we are working, we have decided to postpone the Agudas Achim Trip to Israel until a later date when conditions for travel will be more appropriate. Thank you for your understanding.



Sincerely,

Peter Rubenstein, Co-chair Israel Trip Committee
Esther Hugenholtz, Rabbi
Sue Weinberg, President

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

Mr. Rogers used to quote his mother's advice about what to do when things seem bleak, "look for the helpers." I was especially proud when Tobey Epstein and Jeremiah Collins, two graduates of the school, contacted me and asked to help. Tobey and Jeremiah founded the Jewish Studies Club at their high school. They offered the club's services in sending encouraging cards to little kids shut in during this pandemic and in helping other housebound people as much as they can.

I have already sent around an email asking if you would like the club to send a card to your kid. But if you missed it, please let me know.

In other news, the Sixth Grade had a zoom session with their wonderful teacher, Sari. Sari graduates from the University this summer. Her plans for the future included moving to Washington, D.C. and getting a teaching license. For now, she is living with her parents. I think she was as happy to talk to the students and get a taste of her normal adult life as the kids were to share their Passover experiences with her.

As for the school, it is still on hold. But that simply gives me time to reflect and to plan. Partly inspired by the Jewish Studies Club, I would like to increase the number of graduates of the religious school program who are willing to come back to the school to help the younger kids.

I am looking for anyone who attended the school and had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah who would be willing to be a reading buddy/study buddy on Sunday mornings. Hebrew a little rusty? No problem! I can help with that. Also, sometimes the best teacher is the one who knows first hand that learning isn't easy.

So come back to the school, work with some fun kids and – oh, yeah, I almost forgot – earn a little money in the process. Mr. Rogers' mother was right, we should look for the helpers. But it is also a lot of fun to be a helper.

GIFT SHOP NEWS

Joanne Margolin

There are a couple of things I'd like everyone to be aware of, in terms of what we can do to help you out with Gift Shop needs during this time.

One is that I have a supply of both Shabbat and yahrzeit candles at my house, and I would be glad to set them outside the front door for you to come and pick up if/when you need them. The other is that Karen and John have offered to do the same thing, on the days that one or the other of them is at the synagogue.

If you need a tallis, a mezuzah, candlesticks, cards, or whatever else, John can take a picture of what's

there for you, and you can make a selection that way -- and then come and pick it up at the synagogue entrance. No money will change hands, but you can either send me a check or we'll keep track of the purchase and take care of it when we're back to normal. We want you to have what you need, and will do what we can to make that happen.

In the meantime, stay well!

Joanne Margolin

jrmargolin@gmail.com ~ 351-2181

DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Sue & Ken Blackwell: In memory of Ethel Rothstein and Mark Rothstein

Steven & Barcey Levy: In memory of Warren Stroh

David & Martha Lubaroff: In memory of Albert Lubaroff and Phyllis Isenberg

Alan Mutnick: In memory of Paul Mutnick

Dorothy Paul: In memory of Florence Glick

Susan Phillips: Thanks for prayers at Matthew's bedside

Nancy Sprince: In memory of Ben and Sari Sprince

ADULT EDUCATION FUND

Kathleen Jacobs

BRAVERMAN TALMUD TORAH FUND

Eloise McCuskey: In memory of David Braverman and Corrine Miller

CEMETERY FUND

Lorraine Dorfman: In memory of Donald Dorfman (for pavilion)

Greta Robin: In memory of Herman Robin and Harry Schlesinger

Mark Robin: In memory of Herman Robin

Paul Robin: In memory of Herman Robin

COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND

Jody & Janie Braverman

Susan Groff-VanArendonk

COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND (CONT.)

Kathleen Jacobs

Irwin & Patricia Levin: In honor of our children and their families

Richard Levine: In memory of Morty & Bernice Levine

Dan & Phyllis Petchers

Gary & Mindy Russell: In memory of Mary Frances Russell

Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong: In memory of Stanley L. Weinberg and Irene Weinberg

Alan & Nina Weinstein

FINE ARTS FUND

Alan & Nina Weinstein: In memory of Mauricio Lasansky

GENERAL FUND

David & Constance Berman: In memory of Ruth S. and H. D. Berman

Jody & Janie Braverman: In memory of David Braverman, Ellie Breggin, Corky Miller, and Moshe David Richman

Kathy Jacobs

Katherine Keller: In memory of Ansel and Corinne Chapman

PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Connie Brothers: In memory of Gladys L. Marcus

Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong: In memory of Mark Armstrong and Mark D Armstrong

WARM UP AMERICA

Connie Berman

Warm Up America meetings continue in hiatus. We have afghans to give out and many in my living room waiting to have borders crocheted and little white tags put on them. Ruth will be dropping off three more for me to launder tomorrow -- again they will need edges. Meanwhile squares continue to be made and once we have enough we might get Meredith's girls or Lucy's granddaughters to lay out anew. (They could be sent off in a plastic bag to them to be laundered.) Please let me know if there are any crying out needs to give them away. Stay well, make squares, enjoy spring from your window.



Afghan donated to
Amos Kiche and family

MAY 2020

ALL SERVICES, MEETINGS, AND EVENTS WILL BE VIA ZOOM. EMAIL THE OFFICE IF YOU NEED DETAILS.

Fri	1	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Sat	16	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM	Sun	17	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
Sat	2	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM			Mussar Study Group	1:00 PM
Sun	3	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Mussar Study Group	1:00 PM	Mon	18	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
Mon	4	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Wed	20	Bereavement Group	12:30 PM
		Adult Ed Committee	5:30 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Sisterhood Board Meeting	7:00 PM			Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM	Thurs	21	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
Wed	6	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM
Thurs	7	Social Committee Meeting	4:30 PM	Fri	22	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM
Fri	8	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Sat	23	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM	Sun	24	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
Sat	9	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Mon	25	MEMORIAL DAY	
Sun	10	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Wed	27	Free Lunch	11:30 AM
		Mussar Study Group	1:00 PM			Book Group	1:00 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
Mon	11	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Thurs	28	Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Fri	29	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM
Wed	13	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Sat	30	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Thurs	14	Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM	Sun	31	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM			Mussar Study Group	1:00 PM
Fri	15	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:30 PM				

SAVE THE DATE: Annual Congregational Meeting, Thursday, June 18, 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

TALMUD STUDY GROUP

The Talmud study group meets, via Zoom, on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

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

CARING COMMITTEE NEWS DURING THE TIME OF COVID-19

Kathy Jacobs

Volunteer Activities

While staying home to avoid exposure to the virus calls for physical distancing, it does not have to mean *social* distancing. We can still remain connected despite separation.

Our Committee, with the help of several member volunteers, is making calls to members looking for a check in phone call or email. Initially we called, emailed or texted every member in the current synagogue directory to ask if you were interested in receiving a weekly or more frequent telephone call or email. We are currently contacting 35 members. However, if we have missed you, or you would now like to be added to our list, please contact Kathy Jacobs who coordinates volunteer services.

Additionally, two fine graduates of the synagogue's school have started a Jewish Studies Club in their High School. Now that we are facing the physical distancing of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tobey Epstein and Jeremiah Collins are offering their services to run errands for and write notes to vulnerable members of our community. Our principal, Sonja Spear is also contacting parents to

determine if they would like Tobey or Jeremiah to send a note or card to their children.

Please contact Kathy Jacobs at (319) 331-4039 or kathymjacobs@icloud.com to volunteer your services and with all requests for phone calls or assistance. Kathy will direct requests to the Jewish Studies Club or our other volunteers able to run errands on your behalf using proper sanitary precautions.

New Community Relief Fund

The board has created a fund to collect monies to provide assistance to community members who are financially affected by a pandemic or other disaster (flood, tornado, etc.) now or in the future. The fund has been started with a modest amount of seed money. Your generosity in supporting those in need of assistance will be appreciated.

If you are able to offer financial help, please send your check to the synagogue marked for the fund. If you are in need of assistance, please make a confidential request to our office and Rabbi Hugenholtz.

STAFF

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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President Elect	Janice Weiner	Sisterhood Liaison	Nancy Sprince
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Ritual	Peter Rubenstein; Alan Weinstein	At Large 2	Curtis Braverman
Religious School	Chuck Friedman	At Large 3	Mark Ginsberg