



# Agudas Achim Congregation

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[www.AgudasAchimIC.org](http://www.AgudasAchimIC.org)

## High Holidays 5781

### LETTER FROM THE RABBI

*Esther Hugenholtz*

Wednesday August 26 2020 / 6 Elul 5780

Dear Agudas Achim Family,

'Ozi v'zimrat Yah, vayehi lishuah' – 'Yah [God] is my strength and my song, in God will be my deliverance.' This line from the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-18), turned into a popular liturgical chant, has been sitting with me for these High Holidays.

Before the pandemic, there were already the stirrings of challenging times that invited me to contemplate our strength or power. Questions of power are at the heart of our Jewish self-understanding. It is God's power—according to the wisdom of our tradition—that has redeemed

us from Egyptian slavery. It is our human power that allows us as a society both to perpetuate unspeakable cruelties as well as bring healing and restoration to our aching world. And it is our personal, individual power that exhorts us to turn inwards; to hold ourselves accountable and to return to our truest, kindest, most just selves, in alignment with the Divine. There can be no power without responsibility and the Jewish tradition calls upon us to take it—especially during the High Holiday season.

Then, the pandemic hit and the tectonic shifts were felt in every aspect of our lives. Nothing

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**Happy  
Rosh  
HaShanah!**

Sept. 18-20, 2020

**Yom Kippur**

Sept. 27-28, 2020

## LETTER FROM THE RABBI

*Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

over these last six months has felt the same. We have become unmoored from what brought us familiar comfort and consolation. We have had to physically distance ourselves from the ones we love and witness our planet being thrown into turmoil on account of the novel coronavirus. Untold suffering has visited the hearts of people, including the unprecedented loss of life in our own beloved America.

Many of us—myself included—have felt the wide range of existential emotions that comes with such a once-in-a-century event. Fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, melancholy, loneliness, despair... but also perhaps gratitude for loved ones, for good health (as of yet!), for time to reflect, for renewed purpose and fresh consciousness. The vicissitudes of this plague year are carved into the tablets of our hearts. Ancient prayers for healing had become metaphor; and the metaphor has now become a desperate plea once again. Hence, we are called to reflect not only on strength but also on deliverance. We keenly feel the yearning for redemption; for a world repaired and made whole, for communities restored and individuals healed. 'Oz' – strength – and 'yeshuah' – deliverance – are at the heart of the High Holidays this year; polarities of reckoning and yearning.

Still, these are bound together by one last but crucial element that completes the dialectic: 'zimrah' – song. Our souls may contend with power while our hearts desire redemption, but we bring these together in melody and poetry, in community and song. While singing on Zoom does present some challenges, it is my prayer that coming together as a community digitally will allow us to raise and blend both voices and hearts and feel encouraged, renewed, strengthened and healed for the coming year ahead.

Just as the Holy One is our song, so too is our beloved synagogue community. Many of us are painfully aware that we have not gathered together in six months already. We miss the buzz at Kiddush and Oneg, the patter of children's feet in the lobby of our synagogue building, the chatter and learning at Adult Education and social events and the cheer of daily operations happening in our building. Our communal home has fallen silent. Meanwhile, at home many of us are contending with the new reality: as parents or caregivers, as employees or retirees, all of us balancing so much with so little reprieve.

Here we are, in Elul. These High Holidays are our reprieve. These are the still waters that will quench our thirst for connection and reflection. Here we will challenge our minds and soothe our souls, stand with each other in the great chain of our beautiful Jewish tradition and sing the song of our community.

Dear brothers and sisters; dear siblings. We will find deliverance and the world, albeit changed, will find a new equilibrium. Our synagogue doors will open once again and we shall raise our voices in thanksgiving. Meanwhile, we will love each other, learn with each other, support each other and bring each other joy, laughter, memories of the past and hopes for the future.

Wishing you only sweetness in this strange, unprecedented and remarkable New Year,

Shalom uv'rachah, with peace and blessing,

Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

## Selichot 5780

**Saturday, September 12, 2020**

Selichot Service

9:00 p.m.

## Rosh Hashanah 5781

**Friday, September 18, 2020 (first night)**

Erev Rosh Hashanah Services Conservative/Reform  
hybrid led from Machzor Lev Shalem

8:00 p.m.

**Saturday, September 19, 2020 (first day)**

Rosh Hashanah Morning Services  
Reform led from Machzor Mishkan haNefesh

9:30 a.m.

Second Day Rosh Hashanah Evening Services  
Conservative/Reform hybrid led from  
Machzor Lev Shalem

8:00 p.m.

**Sunday, September 20, 2020 (second day)**

Rosh Hashanah Morning Services  
Conservative led from Machzor Lev Shalem

9:30 a.m.

**לשנה טובה תכתבו**

**May you be inscribed for a good year**

## **Kever Avot 5781**

**Sunday, September 27, 2020**

Service live-streamed on Zoom by the Rabbi from  
Agudas Achim Cemetery

12:00 p.m.

## **Yom Kippur 5781**

**Sunday, September 27, 2020**

Kol Nidre\*

6:00 p.m.

**Monday, September 28, 2020**

Morning Services

Conservative led from Machzor Lev Shalem

9:30 a.m.

Yizkor

5:00 p.m.

Minchah (Afternoon Service)

6:00 p.m.

Neilah (Closing Service)

7:30 p.m.

Havdalah and Blowing of Shofar

8:30 p.m.

**לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו**

**May you be inscribed and sealed in the book of life**



## Sukkot 5781

### Friday, October 2, 2020

Erev Sukkot Service live-streamed from  
the Rabbi's Sukkah\*

Schmooze at 6:30 p.m.  
Service at 7:00 p.m.

### Saturday, October 3, 2020

Sukkot Morning Service live-streamed from  
the Rabbi's Sukkah\*

9:30 a.m.

While, due to the pandemic, we will not celebrate Sukkot in-person, we will be making the synagogue sukkah available to community members to use during the Festival. Please make sure to only use it when no others are using it and to maintain social distancing at all times.

## Shemini Atzeret 5781

### Friday, October 9, 2020

Erev Shemini Atzeret Service

Schmooze at 6:30 p.m.  
Service at 7:00 p.m.

### Saturday, October 10, 2020

Shemini Atzeret (and Yizkor) Service

9:30 a.m.

Note: We have decided to make the second day of Sukkot (Sunday October 4th) and Simchat Torah (Sunday October 11th) optional. If you wish to have a Zoom service for both these festivals, please contact the office and you will be placed on a list and notified of a service, provided we have enough people for a minyan (prayer quorum). We also fully understand that congregants may wish to spend these festival days without the intrusiveness of Zoom technology.

**חג שמח !**

**Chag Sameach**

**Happy Holiday!**

# HIGH HOLIDAYS INFORMATION

## High Holidays During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Due to the unprecedented Coronavirus Pandemic, this year's High Holiday services will be held entirely online, via the medium Zoom. Most services will be led by the Rabbi from the sanctuary at the synagogue, but the building will remain closed to the congregation. The Rabbi and lay leaders will make every endeavor to create the special, warm, communal and spiritual atmosphere that characterizes High Holidays at Agudas Achim through the live-streamed services.

Although some (larger) congregations have chosen to pre-record services, we have chosen not to. During the last six months, we have hosted and led services in real-time on Zoom and have found the medium capable of creating an interactive, participatory and musical worship experience. We are intending to replicate this on a larger scale for the High Holidays and if you are excited by the prospect of leading a part of the service, conducting a reading either in English or Hebrew or taking part in a ritual, please let Rabbi Hugenholz or the Ritual Committee know of your wishes. We look forward to involving as many people as we can.

While this High Holiday cycle will be different than any other in living historical memory, and while we will very much miss gathering in person, we can rest assured that moving and keeping services online is in line with the highest Jewish principles of 'pikuach nefesh' (saving a life) and a 'mitzvah g'dolah' (a great moral act and obligation). Where we will lose touch and mingling, we will gain a renewed passion and deeper understanding of the themes of the High Holidays such as life, mortality, wisdom, compassion and reflection, as well as health, illness and collective responsibility. The coming year, 5781, may as of yet present us with many unknowns and challenges, we can rest in the assurance that it will also present us with the sweetness of community at its finest: where we endeavor to protect each other and the most vulnerable among us, and extend an invitation for deep prayer, repentance and acts of righteousness. As such, these High Holidays will be precious and help us acquire a heart of wisdom, while we number our days.

### A Note on Zoom Usage

If you are unfamiliar with Zoom as a platform and Zoom services at Agudas Achim, please read the following to familiarize yourself with Zoom.

Zoom is a video-conferencing platform that can be run either in an internet browser on a computer or laptop or as a (free, downloadable) app on your mobile device (phone or tablet). It is also possible to attend each Zoom session on the phone through a dial-in number, although you would only be able to access audio and not visuals.

Each service will have a designated Zoom link on which you can click on your computer or device or you can call the designated phone number provided with the meeting code and password if you wish to attend on the phone. Once you have logged in as per the instructions, you will find

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yourself in a 'waiting room' until your entry into the digital service is approved. This is a security measure to keep our congregation safe. The Zoom leader (or their assistant) will clear you to enter the main service.

In the main service, you can participate, talk, sing or use the chat feature. You can also choose to switch your video on or off, allowing for both public participation or a moment of privacy should you need it. There is also a mute button, used to either mute yourself or be centrally muted by the Zoom leader in order to streamline the sound quality: the Zoom software cannot handle multiple voices very well and although you can sing in the privacy of your home, we do ask that you mute yourself since corporate/collective singing is not possible on Zoom. You may also be muted centrally by the leader or asked to unmute if you wish to participate in the service or learning opportunity. If you wish to contribute without speaking, you may leave messages in the chat box.

While Zoom may seem complex, it is a straightforward and intuitive platform. Glitches may invariably happen and that is part of the natural process. Meanwhile, we look forward to delivering an authentic, bespoke High Holiday worship experience through Zoom.

## **Machzorim**

As we plan for the upcoming High Holidays, we face unique challenges with having all our services via Zoom. One of these challenges is how to get the machzors (High Holiday prayer books) to our congregants and guests. We are implementing a plan to loan High Holiday machzors to local families. As our services will be a mix of Reform and Conservative, the loan will include a Reform machzor, a Conservative machzor, and a small gift bag, one per family.

**Books will be available for pickup at the synagogue on**  
**Sunday September 13 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
**Monday September 14 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and**  
**Tuesday September 15 from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

**\*\*Please wear a mask and/or a face shield when you arrive at the synagogue to pick up the books.\*\***

If you are unable to come to the synagogue during these times, please contact the office to make other arrangements.

We have a limited number of machzorim available, so the limit of one per family will be strictly enforced. Should you wish to obtain copies for your personal use, they can be purchased through these links: [Reform](#), [Conservative](#).

**We would like an approximate count of how many sets of books will be borrowed. Notify the office ([secretary@agudasachimic.org](mailto:secretary@agudasachimic.org)) if you wish to borrow books, and whether you will pick them up at the designated times or if you need them to be delivered. Also, please indicate whether you need a gluten-free gift.**

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The machzors will also be available on-line. Links to the on-line editions will be provided in emails sent closer to the holidays.

Machzor return dates and times will be available and publicized after Yom Kippur, and the option of having someone pick up the books from you will also be available. **They must be returned to the synagogue by November 30 or the replacement cost of the books will be billed to you.** Replacement costs are \$49 for Conservative, \$44 for Reform.

Please fill out the High Holidays Pray Book Checkout form that is included in this packet and bring it with you when you pick up your machzors. Additional forms will be available at the synagogue if needed.

I hope to see many of you at our zoom services, and I wish you a sweet New Year!

L'shana tova tikateyvu!

Sue Weinberg, President, Agudas Achim

## **Selichot**

### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 9:00 P.M.**

This will be a short, musical service led by Rabbi Hugenholtz. The Torah mantles will be changed for the High Holidays.

## **Where will Rabbi Hugenholtz be?**

Rabbi Hugenholtz will preside at services in the sanctuary of the synagogue while the community gathers on Zoom. Due to the logistical challenges of the pandemic, there will be no parallel Reform or Conservative services: a service will be either Reform or Conservative or a hybrid combination of both. Please consult the service chart for details.

## **Children's Services**

Due to the pandemic, there will be no (in-person or Zoom) children's services this year. The Religious School will provide a special High Holiday crafts box for congregational families at this time, with the hope to make the High Holidays more meaningful at home.

## **Lunch after Rosh HaShanah Services**

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we are not able to offer lunch at this time.

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## **Kever Avot (Graves of the Ancestors)**

### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 12:00 P.M. ON ZOOM**

It is customary to visit the graves of loved ones near Rosh HaShanah. Via Zoom, the Rabbi will live-stream the service from the Cemetery, allowing individuals to 'visit' graves of their departed relatives and friends digitally.

## **Kol Nidre**

### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 6:00 P.M.**

Karen Charney and Ben Coelho will provide a short musical prelude for Kol Nidre before the service begins at 6:00 p.m.

## **Yizkor**

### **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 5:00 P.M.**

The Yizkor list will be made available digitally during Yizkor on Yom Kippur afternoon. You may add names to that list by calling or emailing the synagogue by Wednesday, September 23. Names listed in the synagogue bulletin as well as those on the Memorial Tablets in the sanctuary are automatically included. There is no charge.

## **Mi Sheberach – A Prayer for Healing**

You may add names of loved ones to this list which will be read during the Torah service at each of the services. *Mi Sheberach* is a prayer for healing whether it be physical, mental or emotional. Please email John Wertz at [secretary@agudasachimic.org](mailto:secretary@agudasachimic.org) if you wish to add your name or the names of loved ones to this list. You do not need to be present at the service. There is no charge.

## **Havdalah at the End of Yom Kippur**

We anticipate that we will conclude Yom Kippur services starting with the start of Neilah at approximately 6:45 p.m. on **Monday, September 28**. The final shofar blast is planned for 8:30 p.m.

## **Shofar at the End of Yom Kippur**

Please bring your shofar to the Yom Kippur Zoom services and join us digitally at the end of the service in blowing a final *Tekiah Gedolah*, the "great blast" that draws our services to a close. Everyone with a shofar at home is invited to participate.

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## **Break Fast after Yom Kippur**

Regrettably, there will be no communal break-fast and we encourage congregants and guests to enjoy break-fast in the privacy and safety of their own homes.

## **Fasting on Yom Kippur**

Jewish tradition mandates that only those people who can fast without any jeopardy to health may do so. Young children should not fast and older children may do a modified fast.

## **Wearing White**

There is a custom to wear white for the High Holidays, symbolizing purity and new beginnings. If you are comfortable, you are invited to wear white in the spirit of the season and can do so from the comfort of your home. An alternative 'twist' for our Zoom services is inserting a white or Jewishly/High Holiday-themed virtual background on Zoom, which will in turn be visible to your fellow worship attendees.

## **Lulov and Etrog**

Agudas Achim will be ordering Lulav/etrog sets from Rosenblum's World of Judaica, which will arrive prior to Sukkot. Please let the office know by **Thursday, September 10** if you'd like us to order a set for you to pick up at the synagogue. You will be notified when they arrive. Options are as follows:

Standard set: \$50.00

Premium set: \$60.00

Deluxe set: \$70.00

## **Flowers**

We would like to thank Sisterhood for donating the floral arrangements for both Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

## **Food Drive**

Agudas Achim will once again have a food drive during the High Holidays. Our donations will go to the North Liberty Community Pantry and are especially crucial now in the wake of the pandemic. Please fill up grocery bags and bring them to the synagogue when you pick up or drop off your High Holiday prayer books. Cash, food toiletries and diapers are welcome. Please see the flyer on the next page for most needed items.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.



# Agudas Achim Congregation

## High Holidays Food Drive

In Support of:



North Liberty  
**Community Pantry**

Information Provided By:  
Tikkun Olam Committee

### Top Ten North Liberty Community Pantry needs

1. **Cash or Check – to Agudas Achim or North Liberty Community Food Pantry (\$1 can purchase 5 lbs of food!)**
2. **Canned Meats**
3. **Peanut Butter**
4. **Canned Fruit**
5. **100% Fruit Juice**
6. **Canned Veggies**
7. **Feminine Hygiene Items**
8. **Shampoo & Conditioner**
9. **Soap**
10. **Toilet Paper**

**Accepting CASH, Food, Toiletries, & Diapers**

**Bring Donation When You Pick Up or Drop Off Books**

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Office Hours: by appointment during the pandemic

## Staff

**Rabbi:** Esther Hugenholtz    [rabbi@agudasachimic.org](mailto:rabbi@agudasachimic.org)  
**Principal:** Sonja Spear    [principal@agudasachimic.org](mailto:principal@agudasachimic.org)  
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