



Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241

Phone: 319-337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

November 2020 / Cheshvan–Kislev 5781

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

Between the Suns

There's an interesting Halakhic (Jewish legal) term called 'bein hash'mashim', literally, 'between the suns'. This term refers to the twilight period at sunset, when it is neither day nor night and time feels fluid and hard to define. In Jewish law, this is a tricky period since so many of our mitzvot (commandments) are either performed during the day or the night. This in-between category causes some confusion. We simply don't know where we are but we know that nightfall is coming.

This is an excellent metaphor for the current moment. We are all waiting to exhale, eager to release the tension in our belly. It seems very fitting for where we find ourselves in the year. In a way, November is a 'bein hash'mashim' writ large; the time between Fall and Winter, where the veil is stretched thin as the world tips towards darkness. It is no small wonder that in the Northern Hemisphere at least, we have festivals of harvest, light and cheer to keep melancholy at bay, such as Thanksgiving and the Solstice Festivals, or that embrace the fear and uncertainty of our mortal lives, such as Halloween. In Judaism, this period aligns with Cheshvan, the month of silence, the only month when no Jewish holidays are observed.

We are waiting to exhale as we hurtle towards one of the most decisive elections of our life-time; not just for our country but for our world. We are waiting to exhale as we await the conclusion of Stage Three vaccination trials. We are waiting to

exhale as we ready ourselves for the second wave of the pandemic, as the light dims and we feel our isolation more keenly. There is so much loss of control in our current predicament and I know that I've been struggling with eight months of pandemic isolation. We are emotionally fatigued by all the heaviness and sadness in our world.

Still, Cheshvan makes way for Kislev, a bitterly cold month. And then, oddly, on the 25th of Kislev, we start to bring back a glimmering of hope and light as we light our first Chanukkah candle. Chanukkah, the little holiday that could: minor in the grand sweep of big Jewish ideas; compelling in our *kishkes* (gut) as we seek to take back control, curl our fingers around the darkness and push it away.

This is the time to fold into ourselves a little. For coziness, simplicity and reflection. But also for allowing us to take back control. The Maccabees took back control. And the oil burned for eight days because a brave Kohen (Priest) had the audacity to light the lamps in the first place, even though he knew there was not enough. But somehow, there always is.

As we look towards the glimmers on the horizon, we can imagine what is yet to come. One day, we will open up our building again; perhaps we will be guarded and hesitant. Perhaps we will still keep our distance and wear our masks. But just as we light lamp after lamp during the Festival of Lights, it is an

(Continued on page 2)

FROM THE RABBI *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

inevitability that we will be together once again. We just cannot determine the timeline or the format; we leave that up to the scientists. By that same token, perhaps we can take back control over this country's narrative and focus less on what divides us and more on what unites us. Perhaps we will find newer and better ways to talk to each other compassionately, to uproot ancient and entrenched injustices and to remember that, like the Maccabees of yore, we fought passionately for an imperfect vision of freedom that requires the constant unfolding of the generations. Perhaps in a life across this river of despair can teach us how to think more deeply about the world the pandemic leaves us. We are waiting to exhale, but after that, we can breathe deeply once again and dream.

As for myself and my family: we continue hunkering down, navigating the tedium of endless work Zoom meetings and online school (picture ten alarm clocks set at 30 minute intervals, five days a week),

the anxiety of attempting to stave off infection and the all-pervasive sadness of disconnectedness. We miss our community so much; we crave the simple pleasures of hugs and in-person meetings, of our kids playing with other kids, of corporate worship and indoor dining and of the plain company of other human beings. But we are also so thankful; to (still) be healthy and well (please, God!), to have each other, to be able to bring meaning, comfort and support to our community and to delight in the simple pleasures that are still accessible to us. Lit candles on a dark evening, blustery walks in nature, fresh bread at the dinner table, chapter books read as a family on the couch. We are 'bein hash'mashim', between the blending of the lights, tender and unsure of what we will encounter next. The winter will be hard, cold and dark in so many ways. But, we will strike a match, spark a flame and touch fire to a wick.

Stay strong, friends. See you on the other side, at the pillar of dawn, when the sun starts rising again.

SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL SERVICE SCHEDULE (ALL SERVICES VIA ZOOM)

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

[Saturday Morning \(9:30 a.m.\)](#) Evening services have a schmooze prior to the service at 6:30 p.m.

Vayera <i>(Genesis 18:1-22:24)</i>	Friday, November 6 Saturday, November 7	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Chaye Sarah <i>(Genesis 23:1-25:18)</i>	Friday, November 13 Saturday, November 14	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
Toledot <i>(Genesis 25:19-28:9)</i>	Friday, November 20 Saturday, November 21	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
Vayetze <i>(Genesis 28:10-32:3)</i>	Friday, November 27 Saturday, November 28	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)

DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Michael & Jennifer Flatté: In memory of Ned Siner

Jeanne Jaggard: In memory of Harold Jaffe

Dorothy Paul: In memory of Donald M. Paul

2ND CENTURY FUND

Richard & Phyllis Braverman

CEMETERY FUND

Richard & Goldene Haendel: In memory of
Henry Haendel

Greta Robin: In memory of Polly Schlesinger

COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND

Helene Lubaroff: In honor of the Caring Committee
for the meals & flowers during illness

Leonard Sandler & Lucy David: In honor of Rabbi
Hugenholtz and the congregation for fostering a
sense of community & pride in being Jewish

GENERAL FUND

David & Constance Berman: In memory of
Robert Hoffman

Jody & Janie Braverman: In memory of Elsie Wingo

Laurie & John Canady: In gratitude of prayers for
son

Jonathan & Susan Simon: In memory of our parents

LIBRARY FUND

Paul & Esther Retish: In memory of Susan Strauss

Rhoda Vernon: In memory of Herman Sterman

TIKUN OLAM FUND

David & Constance Berman: for food pantry

Ray & Lindy Buch: for food pantry

Karen Charney & Benjamin Coelho: for food pantry

TIKUN OLAM FUND (CONT.)

Miriam Gilbert: for food pantry

Thérèse Guédon: for the food pantry

Alan Kay and Daphne Lison: for the food pantry

Linda Kerber: for food pantry

Yusuf & Senem Menda: for food pantry

Kathy Ormond: In memory of

Jacqueline Fooshe Ormond

Paul and Esther Retish: for the food pantry

Gene Savin and Susan Enzle: for the food pantry

Rich Strauss and Ellie Herman: for the food pantry

SAFETY FUND

Richard & Nancee Blum

Joel Dressler

Jan Fassler & Daniel Weeks

Nancy Goldsmith: In memory of Aaron S. Levine

Lea Haravon Collins & Steve Collins: In honor of
High Holiday bakers and packet preparers &
distributors

Phillip Horwitz & Catherine Bradley

Sam & Marj Kuperman

Richard Levine

Yusuf & Senem Menda

Robert & JoAnn Miller

Susie & Matt Regan

Paul & Esther Retish

Brian & Jennifer Richman

Mel & Diane Sunshine: In honor of the High
Holidays and in memory of Mildred Siegel

Ellen Weinberg: In appreciation of beautiful High
Holidays services

Alan & Nina Weinstein: In memory of
Maurice & Bess Weinstein and
Emilia Lasansky

YIDDISH STUDY GROUP

The Yiddish Study Group meets Mondays and Fridays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Contact the office for more information.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sue Weinberg

The secular year is slowly coming to an end. As I write this I am still deluged with political ads. I have already voted, and I urge you to vote also, no matter which party or candidate you support. And I hope that the upcoming election can bring our country together again, rather than tearing us farther apart.

We are in the Hebrew month of Cheshvan, which is a quiet month, it is the only month in the Jewish calendar that does not have a holiday. Well planned – giving rabbis a break after the plethora of fall holidays. That means that synagogue presidents and boards also get to step back and take a deep breath.

So with not a lot going on in the Jewish world, I would like to fill you in on some things that have been happening behind the scenes. I apologize that this is a bit longer than my usual column, but please bear with me.

First, a huge shout-out to our administrator Karen Brady and treasurer Mindy Russell. Early in the pandemic, we were given the opportunity to apply for a forgivable grant to cover salaries and building expenses. They worked tirelessly to get our application submitted, and we received a grant in the amount of \$42,600. Recently guidelines and forms became available to request loan forgiveness, and again Karen and Mindy worked to get the forms completed and submitted. We were just notified that we met the requirements and our loan was forgiven and marked Paid In Full!

Another shout-out to Janice Weiner and Dave Middleton, who researched and submitted a request for a Homeland Security grant which we were recently informed was awarded!! And to Mindy Russell, Janelle Jaskolka, and Dan Petchers, who formed a fundraising committee to solicit additional donations for further upgrades. Two letters have been sent to the congregation detailing the fundraising efforts and the proposed upgrades, including a door entry system that will allow us to

keep the building doors locked but also allow members to access the building during designated times, and bullet-resistant window coverings. Costs for these two upgrades will be covered by the Homeland Security grant and an anonymous donation in the amount of \$25,000. However, other upgrades have also been proposed which will need additional funding, so if you are able to, I urge you to donate to our Safety fund. If you did not receive the letters detailing the proposed upgrades please contact the office.

One last shout-out, to Curt Braverman, who as I mentioned last month, save our High Holiday services with his technical knowledge and equipment. The board has approved the creation of an ad-hoc Tech Committee, chaired by Curt, to look into all of our tech issues, including (but not limited to) making sure that information on our building's tech capabilities is documented for future availability, recommending tech upgrades and new equipment needed to stream/broadcast services, both remotely as we are doing currently and to continue streaming once we are in the building, and upgrading our website.

And one last update, on our Pandemic protocols. There was discussion at our last Exec Board meeting and full Board meeting about protocols for reopening the building. All agreed that now is not the time, with our high number of cases in Iowa and the expected spike due to winter and flu season. To help us decide when it is time to reopen, we will be consulting with local medical experts (some of whom are our members!), reviewing state and national recommendations (including from the CDC and my hero Dr. Fauci), best practices from the URJ and USCJ, and monitoring other local faith communities. We will keep you informed as circumstances change and evolve.

L'shalom,
Sue

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

Everyone had grown so much! That was the first thing I noticed when the Sunday School gathered on Zoom for our first meeting in nearly eight months. Some of the boys had surprisingly deep voices. Most of the girls had much longer hair. Until that moment, I hadn't realized how much I'd missed.

We are in the "Sukkat Shalom" ("shelter of peace") section of the curriculum. So the students discussed where they feel safest. Many mentioned in bed (or in their parents' bed) or in their rooms. This simple discussion will blossom into a much more involved meditation on the notion of shelter, culminating in interviews with parents or other family members.

One of the things I like about the La Bri'ut (To Our Health) curriculum that the Jewish Education

Center of Cleveland developed just for online Sunday Schools is that it helps the kids learn to deal with COVID in a very Jewish way. It teaches a little Hebrew, engages a little Torah, and strengthens to bond between the individual and the community.

Community comes in many forms: a Shabbat service over zoom, a chat in the Sukkah while staying six feet apart, even a Sunday School class over zoom. It's not as good as meeting in person, but the more of these experiences we give our children and ourselves, the more secure and normal we feel.

It is not too late register for Sunday School! You can register [here](#). I'm looking forward to seeing even more big kids with long hair next week.

GIFT SHOP NEWS

Joanne Margolin

Chanukah won't begin until December 10th, but we're ready whenever you are! I have a good selection of candles at home (\$12 or \$2.50) and gelt should be arriving soon. Dreidels are here, too, along with new plastic cookie cutters (\$3), and some cards. We have menorahs at the synagogue and, as I mentioned last month, we're happy to take pictures of anything that might interest you. I do take-out or delivery!

Joanne Margolin

351-2181 or jrmargolin@gmail.com



WARM UP AMERICA

Connie Berman

Warm Up America will meet by Zoom at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays November 8 and 22. We have been collecting a beautiful array of blocks and many of them are laid out to sew together. Beautiful edges have been made. Fred George says that a good goal would be to have a bunch ready by Thanksgiving. Keep up all the good work. Hugs, Connie and Freddie.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The bereavement group will meet on Wednesday, November 18 at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom.
For more information, [contact Martha Lubaroff](#).

OCTOBER YAHREZEITS

Selma Asch	Liba Goldberg	Barbara Anne Mutnick
Simon Assouline	Chaim Graber	Michael Nadler
Norman Berg	Selma Graber	Harry Portman
Doris Bonfield	Victoria Haendel	Max Rosenbaum
Florence Braverman	Sage Adams Hall	David Rothstein
Rosalie Braverman	Aristide Haravon	Mathilde Loewen Salomon
Jean Weinstein Breggin	Andrew Hoffman	Edith Schneider
Rose Marie Caplan	Dorothy Kanef	Norman Sellz
Victor Cohen	Ed Laquer	Louis Snider
Lena C. Dicker	Emilia B. Lasansky	Joseph Sunshine
Edward Dvoretzky	Judi Lerner Aizenberg	Bertha Tiss
Max Dvoretzky	Abraham Levitz	Beverly Tys-Berson
Melvin "Buddy" Eisen	Reba Magaziner	David Vernon
Mertie Ellen Evans	Miguel Margulis	Morris Weinberg
Stanley Flatte	Sol Meyer	Bess Weinstein
Lillian Friedman	Leon Middleman	Al Widiss
Miriam Saltzman Goichberg	Meyer Middleman	Bernard Zwerling

WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

The Wednesday book group will meet on Wednesday, November 25 at 12:15 p.m.

OCTOBER 2020

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

Sun	1	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Mon	16	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Sisterhood Event: Karen Charney Musical Program	1:00 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
						Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Wed	18	Bereavement Group	12:30 PM
Mon	2	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Education Committee	6:00 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM			Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
Wed	4	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Thurs	19	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
Thurs	5	Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM			Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM
Fri	6	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Fri	20	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Sat	7	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Sat	21	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	8	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Sun	22	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
Mon	9	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Mon	23	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM	Wed	25	Free Lunch	11:30 AM
Wed	11	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Book Group	12:15 PM
Thurs	12	Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM	Thurs	26	HAPPY THANKSGIVING	
Fri	13	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Fri	27	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Sat	14	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Sat	28	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun	15	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Sun	29	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Sisterhood Event: Connie Berman Program	1:00 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Mon	30	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
						Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
						Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM

TIKUN OLAM NEWS

Jody Braverman

Please return High Holidays Machzorim (prayerbooks) by the end of November.

Unlike past years, Agudas Achim volunteers will not staff the information desk at Mercy Hospital this Christmas. Mercy Hospital does not have volunteers at its information desk due to COVID-19.

We raised \$1017 for the Food Pantry!

BOB WALLACE TALK

Bob Wallace will be giving a talk about the COVID-19 pandemic in the near future. We are still finalizing details, but more information will be forthcoming.

UPCOMING SISTERHOOD EVENTS

On Sunday, November 1 at 1:00 p.m. [via Zoom](#), Sisterhood will be hosting Karen Charney for an hour of simple, meaningful song teaching/leading.

On Sunday, November 15 at 1:00 p.m. [via Zoom](#), Connie Berman will discuss conversion among Christians and Jews in 12th-century Europe.

For more information about these events, contact Sisterhood at sisterhood@agudasachimic.org.

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	Daphne Lison; Bennett Brown
President Elect	Janice Weiner	Sisterhood Liaison	Nancy Sprince
Vice President	David Lubaroff	Social	<i>Vacant</i>
Past President	Kathy Jacobs	Tikun Olam	Jody Braverman
Treasurer	Mindy Russell	Ways & Means	Mindy Russell
Board Secretary	Janelle Jaskolka	Youth	Shellie Smith
Membership	Jane Zukin	At Large 1	Elliott Abrons
Ritual	Peter Rubenstein; Alan Weinstein	At Large 2	Curtis Braverman
Religious School	Chuck Friedman	At Large 3	Bob Wallace