



# Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241

Phone: 319-337-3813

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

## December 2020 / Kislev–Tevet 5781

### FROM THE RABBI

*Esther Hugenholtz*

Hanukkah was one of the first Jewish holidays I celebrated. I was in my early twenties and devouring Jewish books left and right. One of the first Jewish books I read was a book on Humanistic Judaism called ‘*God-Optional Judaism*’ by Judith Seid (still in print and a great read if you are of a more secular bent!). In her book, the author talked about her ambivalence towards Hanukkah’s message: were the Maccabees liberators or intolerant zealots? I remember pondering those questions and gathering with what would become my Jewish community in the Netherlands, in those dark, dreary December days. I remember the marvel of seeing an entire table covered in aluminum foil with candles ablaze: a glorious fire hazard I had never encountered before.

For years, I enjoyed celebrating Hanukkah in a low-key way. I would light my candles, eat my *latkes* and *sufganiyot* and belt out *Ma’oz Tzur*. Much of my focus was usually spent cooking elaborate Pesach dinners for Seder night and deeply immersing myself in the High Holiday experience through sacred journaling, prayer and acts of *t’shuvah*. Hanukkah, as a minor festival, was relegated to the back burner. But then, when I became a parent, I gave myself space and permission to reimagine Hanukkah. Taking a childlike glee in falling in love with Hanukkah all over again and going ‘big’: lots of fairy lights, blue, silver and gold decorations, making all the seasonal dishes, evenings of games and, admittedly, copious gifts. Like many Jews today, I found myself dealing

with the complexities of the ‘December dilemma’; navigating Christmas expectations with extended family as well as encouraging my kids to enjoy the beauty of the Solstice festivals but also safeguarding and cultivating their own sense of unique Jewishness.

It is interesting how such a low-key Jewish holiday has become so high stakes in the contemporary Jewish conversation on assimilation, Jewish identity and interfaith relationships. How do we balance our own sense of self while extending love and grace to those who celebrate differently?

Perhaps this strange pandemic year, where everything is ‘*hafuch*’, topsy turvy, we can all give ourselves permission and space to reimagine Hanukkah to make it more meaningful, more intentional and more relevant to our lived experience. Now, the imagery of a small band of brave Jewish warriors facing off against an overpowering enemy is speaking to me in new ways. Aren’t we all a little bit like the Maccabees? Demonstrating resilience against daunting odds? We have a common enemy in this virus we are trying to keep at bay. Staying true to our core values as Jews and as human beings should be the banner we rally under; only that will allow us to overcome this crisis. I am also finding more comfort in the metaphor of oil lamps burning brightly for eight nights. At a time where we think we can face no more, where we are fatigued, isolated and

*(Continued on page 2)*

## FROM THE RABBI

### *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

lonely, we are called to hang on a little longer. And a little cruse of oil shows us that we can. And if all else fails, this year calls for unmitigated, unadulterated cheer. Why not go all out with the sparkle and light? This is the year to test our new latke recipes or to make sufganiyot (or support a small, local donut business) and double down on everything that brings us joy.

The word Hanukkah carries within itself the verb 'lechanech', to dedicate, but also: to educate. We no longer have a temple, but we light our lights at home and place them out of our windows. This year, our home has been our battleground but also our sanctuary. Many of us, especially those who are navigating online schooling, have had our limits tested at home. Others, especially those who live alone, have had our solitude laid bare. Both call for love, compassion and warmth. We sanctify our

homes during Hanukkah; because our families, friends and relationships are the domain of great victories and enduring miracles. If there is any wisdom to be drawn from this pandemic, then it is that we are reminded of how precious we are in each others' eyes. How special are our relationships. And how powerful is the light of our candles, shining in the darkness?

### **Hanukkah**

Keep your eyes peeled for exciting Hanukkah activities! We will be making our own dreidels in a craft workshop, learning about the 'December Dilemma' with Rabbi Michael Gilboa, learn to bake 'olie bollen' (Dutch sufganiyot) with the Rabbi and have a sing-along and candle lighting on the last night of Hanukkah. Furthermore, there is great additional Hanukkah programming by our local Hillel and an Iowa-wide Hanukkah candle lighting. Come find companionship and community in these events.

## SHABBAT SERVICE SCHEDULE (ALL SERVICES VIA ZOOM)

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

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

<b>Vayishlach</b> <i>(Genesis 32:4-36:43)</i>	Friday, December 4 Saturday, December 5	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
<b>Vayeshev</b> <i>(Genesis 37:1-40:23; Numbers 7:18-29)</i>	Friday, December 11 Saturday, December 12	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
<b>Miketz</b> <i>(Genesis 41:1-44:17)</i>	Friday, December 18 Saturday, December 19	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
<b>Vayigash</b> <i>(Genesis 44:18-47:27)</i>	Friday, December 25 Saturday, December 26	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
<b>Vayechi</b> <i>(Genesis 47:28-50:26)</i>	Friday, January 1 Saturday, January 2	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)

## DONATIONS

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

**Arthur Bonfield:** In memory of Doris Bonfield

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

**Michael & Jennifer Flatté:** In memory of  
Stanley Flatté

**Steven & Barcey Levy:** In memory of  
Robert Thurston

**Alan Mutnick and Rachel Albrecht:** In memory of  
Barbara Anne Mutnick

**Meredith Saletta:** In gratitude for Rabbi Hugenholtz

**Bob & Maureen Wallace**

### BRAVERMAN TALMUD TORAH FUND

**Eloise McCuskey:** In memory of Rosalie Braverman

### CEMETERY FUND

**Lorraine Dorfman:** In memory of Bertha Tiss and  
Beverly Tys-Berson

**Rhoda Vernon:** In memory of David Vernon

### COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND

**Nancy Sprince:** In memory of Bernard Zwerling

### GENERAL GIFTS

**David & Constance Berman:** In memory of  
Andrew Hoffman

**Jody & Janie Braverman:** In memory of Jean Breggin  
and Rosalie Braverman

**Lea Haravon Collins and Steve Collins:** In memory of  
Aristide Haravon

**Rachelle Palnick & Naomi Tsachor:** In memory of  
Alda Haravon

### LIBRARY FUND

**Sam & Marj Kuperman:** In memory of  
Rivalie Sideman Cohn

### PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

**Frank Salomon & Mercedes Nino-Murcia:** In  
memory of Mathilde Salomon

### PRAYERBOOK FUND

**Charlotte Dvoretzky:** In memory of  
Edward Dvoretzky

### SAFETY FUND

**Helen Goldstein**

**Kathleen Jacobs**

**Irwin & Patricia Levin**

**Richard Levine:** In memory of Bernice Levine

**Steven & Barcey Levy**

**Michael & Joanne Margolin**

**Mel & Diane Sunshine:** In memory of  
Joseph Sunshine

**Bob & Maureen Wallace**

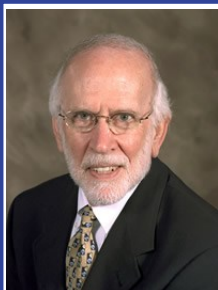
### TIKUN OLAM FUND

**Richard & Phyllis Braverman:** In memory of  
Rosalie Braverman

### WARM UP AMERICA

**Sam & Marj Kuperman:** In memory of Alda Haravon

## DAVID LUBAROFF TALK



### Is Immunotherapy An Effective Treatment For Cancer? A Story from Bench to Bedside

Talk by David Lubaroff

Sunday, December 6 at 10:00 a.m. [at this Zoom link](#)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Sue Weinberg*

As we approach the Festival of Lights, it is perhaps fitting that it occurs during the darkest time of year. This year the darkness is both literal and figurative. But the lights remind us that better days are coming, and there is light at the end of the tunnel (and no, it's NOT a train!). The days will start to get longer, and although we are in a very dark place in the pandemic, the light on the horizon is that there are several very promising vaccines that will hopefully start to be available within the next few months. We just need to stay safe and hang on until they are available.

As I write this, Thanksgiving is tomorrow. Robert and I have ordered a curbside pickup for Thanksgiving dinner which we will eat alone. I can't help thinking of the Thanksgiving dinners past when my mom was alive. We would go to Ottumwa, and she would invite anyone and everyone who didn't have anywhere else to go to join us at the Hotel Ottumwa for a Thanksgiving buffet feast (which she always insisted on paying for!) Being alone with just the two of us is sad, but there are still things to be thankful for.

I'm grateful that Robert and I are together and healthy. I'm grateful for my friends, most of whom I

have not seen in months, but we are still connected and looking forward to seeing each other again next year. I'm grateful for all the front-line medical personnel who are doing their very best to insure that those who are sick get the best care possible so hopefully they can eventually go home to their loved ones. I am grateful for the essential workers who teach the children, who grocery shop for me and bring my purchases to my car, who respond to fires, 911 calls, and other emergencies, who work in manufacturing plants to insure that we have enough toilet paper and other necessities, and who do a myriad of other jobs too numerous to mention. I'm grateful for our congregation, and for the board and synagogue leadership who have supported me (and all of us) during difficult and unprecedented times.

And I am especially grateful that there is light at the end of the tunnel, and that we are getting closer to it every minute of every day.

Wishing you a happy Hanukkah, a happy secular New Year, health, and good fortune as we approach the end of 2020, bringing new beginnings, new hope, and looking forward to the light returning.

## RABBI GILBOA TALK



On **Sunday, December 20 at 10:00 a.m.**, Rabbi Michael Gilboa will give a 'taster session' - he will be available to teach a course on Jewish learning for our congregation after the secular New Year. Come join us for this session [at this link](#) and share your ideas of what you would like Rabbi Gilboa to teach.

The "December Dilemma" is a classic Jewish concern, predating even Christmas and Christianity. For thousands of years various peoples have been celebrating winter holidays, and for nearly as long Jews have been navigating their place in these complex social, cultural, and religious interactions. Join Rabbi Michael Gilboa, founder of The Footpath (and recently returned Iowan) as we explore different Jewish responses to the December Dilemma, from Adam & Eve up to the present day.

## SCHOOL NEWS

*Sonja Spear*

The Seventh Grade, which consists of two students, has been absorbing Jewish culture through the movies. They would like to share their recommendations.

**The Seventh Grade Recommends:** If you like dark comedies, they told me, you will like *JoJo Rabbit* (Taika Waititi, 2019). The other boys in JoJo's Hitler Youth group call him "Rabbit" because he is such a softie. But JoJo tries to fit in, relying on the advice of his imaginary friend, a fantasy version of Adolf Hitler. When JoJo discovers that his own mother is hiding a Jewish girl, he has to figure out where his heart and loyalties lie.

Before seeing this movie, the Seventh Graders had not really thought much about Anti-Semitism. They were shocked by the depth of hatred for Jews in the early twentieth century. The movie also got them thinking about moments in their own lives when

someone has told them, approvingly, that they don't "look Jewish."

While we are on the subject of movies, the Seventh Grade also recommends **Chaiflicks**, a streaming services dedicated to Jewish connect. You can watch Israeli t.v. shows, movies in Hebrew and English, as well as documentaries.

The school continues to meet remotely. We have nearly finished the unit on Sukkat Shalom (the shelter of peace) and will turn to Ometz Lev (Fortitude) after Thanksgiving.

It is always wonderful to see the kids on Zoom. They all seem to be growing by leaps and bounds, which is odd because time seems to be standing still. I hope that we can all come out of our houses soon and see each other for real.

Until then, I wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving and very happy Hanukkah!

## LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

We congratulate Andrea and Joe Chase on the birth of their daughter Evelyn.

"Joe and I wanted to extend our sincerest thanks to everyone who participated in cooking or supplying meals for us during these first few weeks of parenthood. It was a huge help and there are some delicious cooks and bakers in the Agudas Achim community! –Andrea



The congregation extends its condolences to Lea Haravon Collins and family on the death of Lea's mother, Alda Simone Saporta Haravon.

The congregation extends its condolences to Jim Estin and family on the death of Jim's father, Arthur Estin.



## HANUKKAH PROGRAMMING

### Making Dreidels with Kate Jett

On Thursday, December 10 at 7:30 p.m. (the first night of Hanukkah), Kate Jett will host a dreidel-making session via Zoom [at this link](#). [Instructions can be found here](#).

### Making Oliebollen with Rabbi Hugenholtz

On Sunday, December 13 at 3:00 p.m. (the fourth night of Hanukkah), Rabbi Hugenholtz will lead a Zoom session [at this link](#) where she will walk us through making 'Oliebollen' (Dutch sufganiyot). [Find a recipe here](#). For the Zoom class, please feel free to make the dough ahead of time and let it rise so that we can fry the balls together.

### Iowa-Wide Candle Lighting



On Wednesday, December 16 at 6:00 p.m., the Jewish Federation of the Corridor is hosting an Iowa-wide candle lighting on Zoom [at this link](#). Let's gather as connected communities across Iowa from the Missouri River to the Mississippi River to light the Chanukah candles!

### Hillel Trivia Night

For those not participating in our candle lighting (listed below), Hillel will be hosting a trivia night on Thursday, December 17 from 5:30-6:45 p.m. To register for the event or for more information, [click here](#).

### Synagogue Candle Lighting and Hanukkah Songs

On Thursday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m. (the eighth night of Hanukkah), Rabbi Hugenholtz will lead a synagogue-wide candle-lighting and Hanukkah song night [at this link](#). [Lyrics to the songs are here](#).

## BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The bereavement group will meet on December 16 at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom.  
For more information, [contact Martha Lubaroff](#).

## WARM UP AMERICA

*Connie Berman*

Warm Up America will meet on December 13 and 27 at 11:00 a.m.

## WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

The Wednesday book group will meet on Wednesday, December 23 at 1:00 p.m.

## DECEMBER YAHRZEITS

Dr. M. David Allweiss	Leah Halle	Marjorie Osdoba
Kenneth Allweiss	Ilene Holbrook	Gladys Ehrenreich Pruchno
Mildred Bar	Ben E. Kubby	Ann Rodnitzky
Myron Baum	Alice Thorn Laquer	Gertrude M. Rosenbaum
Deanna Boyers	Ellen Leer	Judy Rosenstein
Jesse Boyers	Sam Levey	Michael Allen Sabin
Aaron Braverman	Bernice Levine	Mel Schneider
William Brenner	Esther Levy	Toby Schuman
Betty Brodsky	Jared Levy	Ida Simon
Ethel Corwin	Max Levy	Irene Simon
William M. David Jr.	Pinchas Levy	William Simon
Chester Jacoby Flaum	Robert C. Levy	Pauline Skorton
Lawrence Gelfand	Henry Magaziner	Richard Smith
Mendel Goldberg	Morris M. Marcus	Belle Strauss
Jonathan Goldstein	Lillian Margolin	Sim Strauss
Barbara Goodsell	Zisi Leib Mazur	Esther Tsai Sugg
Lewis Goodsell	David Gray McClean	Janet Whitebook
Janet Gussin	Benjamin Ross Mutnick	Nathan David Zabner
George Elisha Hall	Waverly C. Ormond	

## DECEMBER 2020

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

Wed	2	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Wed	16	Bereavement Group	12:30 PM
Thurs	3	Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM			<b>Hannukah Candlelighting Across Iowa</b>	6:00 PM
Fri	4	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Education Committee	6:00 PM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM			Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM				
Sat	5	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Thurs	17	<b>Agudas Achim Candlelighting and Sing-Along</b>	6:00 PM
Sun	6	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Board Meeting	7:00 PM
		<b>David Lubaroff Talk: Immuno- therapy</b>	10:00 AM	Fri	18	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Virtual Sunday School	10:30 AM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Mon	7	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Sat	19	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Sun	20	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM			<b>Rabbi Michael Gilboa Talk: The December Dilemma</b>	10:00 AM
Wed	9	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
Thurs	10	Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM	Mon	21	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		<b>Dreidel Making with Kate Jett</b>	7:30 PM	Wed	23	Book Group	1:00 PM
		Soulful Virtual Ma'ariv	8:30 PM	Thurs	24	<b>Office Closed - Christmas Holiday</b>	
Fri	11	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Fri	25	Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM	Sat	26	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sat	12	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Sun	27	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
Sun	13	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Warm-Up America	11:00 AM
		Virtual Sunday School	10:30 AM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Warm-Up America	11:00 AM	Mon	28	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		<b>Making Oliebollen with Rabbi Hugenholtz</b>	3:00 PM	Wed	30	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Thurs	31	<b>Office Closed - New Year's Holiday</b>	
Mon	14	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM				

## YIDDISH STUDY GROUP

The Yiddish Study Group meets Mondays and Fridays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom. It will not meet on Christmas or New Year's Day. Contact the office for more information.



## GIFT SHOP NEWS

*Joanne Margolin*

Chanukah will be here soon! In addition to the menorahs and candles that were shown in last month's Bulletin, here are some more things for you to consider. Wrapping paper, menorah "drip platters", latke platters and spatulas, banners, cards, stickers, and dreidels are all at the synagogue. The gelt is in, still at \$.75/bag, though I'm very low on the milk chocolate this year. If you know that's what you'll want, call me ASAP and I'll see if I can get more!

I won't be available on Friday, the 4th, but leaving a message always works and I'll get back to you! Please don't be shy!

Joanne Margolin  
351-2181 or [jrmargolin@gmail.com](mailto:jrmargolin@gmail.com)



### 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