



Agudas Achim Congregation

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May 2021 / Iyar–Sivan 5781

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

There's an emotionally resonant line from Psalm 130 that always moves me. '*Nafshi l'Adonai mishomrim laboker, shomrim la boker.*' (Psalm 130:6) The English is rendered 'I am more eager for the Lord than watchmen for the morning, watchmen for the morning' but I find that translation unsatisfying; it lacks some of the earnest urgency of a more literal translation. I'd be more inclined to translate it as 'my life-force, for the Eternal, more like watchmen to the morning, watchmen to the morning.' It's true; out of context, it appears a little disjointed but I think that is its poetic thrust. There's a harried, desperate quality to the Hebrew, as if the Psalmist recited this with baited breath. When we yearn so deeply for something, we await it eagerly, peering at the horizon, holding ourselves in a little, like a watchman awaiting the very first slivers of light to crack between the land and the sky.

What we have been doing for this last long year is waiting, like watchmen for the dawn. We yearn for what is essential, vital, life-giving and eternal. We yearn for health and connection, friendship and hope, love and relief. We have awaited eagerly the arrival of vaccines and slowly, waveringly dare look towards the dawn.

As our President, Sue Weinberg wrote, we have started making preparations for our own 'dawn' in our community. The Reopening Committee is working hard reviewing scientific evidence and strategizing ways for us to move forward safely. As I

write this, I'm gearing up to get my second vaccine shot tomorrow and am starting to dream of a sensible, safe but also fun family summer where we will slowly start to widen our circle of friends and our number of (pandemic safe) activities. Moreover, we can perhaps look forward to a day when the pandemic will no longer be at the forefront of our minds. That day is not yet here, and it certainly isn't when we observe the global pandemic trends, but we can hope that armed with science and vaccines, that day will come.

Still, we can contemplate how we would greet the dawn after a long, dark night. We can see its glimmers. As Sue wrote in her piece, my family has bought a house and we've moved in. Still surrounded by boxes and home projects that need doing, we are happy and content with our lovely new home, a stone's throw from the synagogue. We are first time homeowners (better late than never!) and its been an exciting journey.

On a communal level, we can rejoice over the fact that the Iowa City School District has finally made it official: in conjunction with Christmas, school kids will get Eid al Fitr and Yom Kippur off, in recognition of the parity of these sacred Muslim and Jewish holy days with Christian holy days. This is an incredibly exciting development that the local press has reported on extensively and we have every reason to be proud and pleased. A rising tide floats all boats really is true, and the solidarity and

(Continued on page 2)

FROM THE RABBI *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

friendship between our local Muslim and Jewish community will continue to serve all well. Of course, out of the bonds we build in local community comes the pledge to heed the call for justice: the verdict of Derek Chauvin again casts a stark light on so much systemic injustice in this country. We too as a community must play a part to help rectify this and embrace the profound and overdue call for racial justice.

There is more happy news, however. Ari Ariel and Lisa Heineman, academics at the University of Iowa, will co-direct a Working Group at the University's Obermann Center for Advanced Studies on the subject of Jewish Studies. The group's activities will include some public events so keep your eyes open for those.

Within the four (digital and physical) walls of our synagogue, lots has been and will continue to happen. Our safety upgrades are being implemented, the Jewish Federation of the Corridor is continuing to plan events, including a Panel on Israel moderated by former Hillel Director Jerry Sorokin, Adult Education at the synagogue is thriving and Kathy Jacobs is launching a new Mussar group. The Introduction to Judaism program is chockablock with students (don't let that stop you from joining if you want to, though!) and our services continue to see increased lay

participation. If you ever want to give a D'var Torah (speech on the Torah portion) or lead a prayer, don't be shy to get in touch. We have some wonderful life-cycle events lined up and a newly finalized B-Mitzvah policy that will offer clarification, guidance and support to our congregational families.

We are... barreling towards Shavu'ot, and before you know it, the High Holidays. I hope that we can offer each other reprieve and companionship, supporting our community and knitting our bonds back together.

We are over half-way through the Omer count, barreling towards Shavu'ot, and before you know it, the High Holidays. I hope that we can offer each other reprieve and companionship, supporting our community and knitting our bonds back together. The weather is warming up and we hope to look forward to some outdoors activities in the near

future. Despite the many challenges still with us, there is a lot to look forward to. I would like to end with the same Psalm I opened this piece with:

'Yachel Yisrael el Adonai ki im Adonai hachessed v'harbeh imo fedut' – 'O Israel, wait for the Eternal; for with the Eternal is steadfast love and great power to redeem.' (Psalm 130:7)

Whether you're secular, spiritual or religious, the unifying element here is love and redemption. The 'watchmen waiting for dawn' are rewarded with the two things that matter most of all in our world: love and hope. We can always bring those, and our beautiful spring makes it a little easier. God knows we all need love and hope to keep us going: tomorrow, and the day after that and after that. After all, there is a glimmer on the horizon...

WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

The Wednesday book group will meet on Wednesday, May 26 at 1:00 p.m. Via Zoom.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Dear Congregants,

We are a People of history. Who we are today reflects the events we have experienced in the past, and we continually refer to these events such as Creation, Exodus, Destruction of the Temple, Inquisition, Holocaust, and the Founding of the State of Israel in virtually every service in which we participate. Likewise, we as individuals have our own histories and events in our past, both religious and non-religious, that have shaped us, have influenced us, and have led us to who we are as people and as Jews today.

We would like to create an opportunity for Congregants to revisit religious milestones from their past and to share these with the Congregation. Thus, beginning in the May bulletin, we will have a new feature called Blast from the Past in which each month we will feature pictures from such milestone events from two of our Congregants. We will show the pictures unidentified and then, on a subsequent page (page 9 this month), we will post the identities of those being featured so you will have a chance to guess whom you are looking at. To make this feature successful, we are asking Congregants to share pictures of significant religious milestones such as bar/bat mitzvah, confirmation, conversion, engagement, and wedding pictures with the Congregation. It will be an opportunity to dig into your photo albums or ask your parents to do so and revisit other events that happened at the same time and reacquaint yourselves with old friends and family members. If you would like to share, take a picture of the photo with your cell phone and send a digital copy to me at peter-rubenstein@uiowa.edu and we will include it in our collection. I look forward to hearing from you.

—Peter Rubenstein



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sue Weinberg

Happy spring, it's really here! The weather is beautiful and I'm thinking of getting my bikes out (both motorcycle and bicycle!). I hope you are all enjoying some outdoor activities after being cooped up in quarantine all winter.

Mazel tov to Rabbi Esther, Dave, Jonathan, Noa, and Shifra for buying their first house, within walking distance of the synagogue! This means that she will be leading Shabbat morning services from the synagogue at least some of the time, although at this point she (and possibly her family) will be the only one in the building.

Our reopening committee (Bob Wallace and Jane Zukin) is still looking into ideas for some outdoor activities to bring us together again. Our administrator Karen Brady is working closely with them to figure out what improvements and updates need to be done to the building so we can get them done this summer. We are also looking ahead to High Holiday services and trying to figure out if it would be possible to hold at least some of them in person, although probably not at the synagogue. Curt Braverman of the Tech committee is in the process of building a computer for the sanctuary and updating the synagogue internet access so that we can continue to zoom services even after we are able to return to in-person services. Stay tuned, we will keep you posted, and thank you to all who are involved in keeping us connected and safe.

Our president-elect Janice Weiner has just finished attending the Scheidt seminar (on zoom), which is a

wonderful program put on by the URJ (Reform movement) for new and incoming presidents. I attended two years ago and it was an amazing experience. Although I'm sure that it was a very different experience being on zoom this time, I know that Janice learned a lot that she will bring back to our community, and made a lot of valuable connections with other presidents and URJ staff.

Janice is also busy putting together her slate of officers, committee chairs, and synagogue trustees, which you will have the opportunity to vote on at the congregational meeting on June 17 at 7:00 p.m. via zoom. More information and the zoom link will be sent out in early June. Please mark your calendar and attend if you can. In addition to voting on the next board, there will be updates from various officers and committees, including an update from the Safety committee on what is being done to harden our facility.

And finally, please remember that the sooner large numbers of people get vaccinated, the sooner it will be safe to congregate again. Please help us make reopening as safe as possible and get vaxxed if you can! Anyone over 16 years old is eligible. If you are having trouble getting an appointment, I would be happy to try and help, so please feel free to reach out to me.

L'shalom,
Sue

MUSSAR TALK

On Sunday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m., Kathy Jacobs will hold a Mussar talk for Shavuot on the subject of "Yirah, Fear or Awe" [at this Zoom link](#). This talk is open to all.

WARM UP AMERICA

Warm Up America is on hiatus throughout May.

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

“Do you remember our last in-person Sunday School class?” one of the teachers asked his students. It took a long time, but the class dredged up a memory of drawing pictures of the plagues. Indeed. Last year we went straight from the plagues of Egypt to the plague of COVID. Now, at last, we have reached the end of our strange year of Zoom Sunday School.

I am so proud of all of the students and teachers for coming together to keep the school going. We fumbled our way through Zoom, at first. Some of us had trouble remembering to turn on (or off!) our cameras. Sometimes we all talked and once. But, for the most part, we showed up for each other. In difficult times, sometimes keeping the community together is the most important thing we can do.

It is hard to say what the next year will be like. Most likely we will spend some time meeting in person but outdoors, and some time meeting online. In either case, we have moved beyond the La B’riut curriculum. It was designed to meet an emergency,

but we have passed instead into a new equilibrium. Online, we will turn to Shalom Learning, a curriculum with more “meat,” that is still focused on holidays, ethics, and Hebrew for prayer. In person, we will address the same topics but, finally, in ways that allow us to move and interact.

Meanwhile, the students have this advice for future generations, in case they ever spend a year shut in at home. “Wash your hands. A lot.” “There are some good things, like you get to show off your pets. But progress is slower.” “The best part of being at home was the cucumber stress reducer.” I don’t know what a cucumber stress reducer is exactly, but I want one!

“Never take time together with people for granted,” one kid concluded. If nothing else, I know that when we are finally back in person, I will enjoy the energy and enthusiasm of the kids that much more. Until then, have a joyous and rejuvenating summer.

SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL SERVICE SCHEDULE (ALL SERVICES VIA ZOOM)

Streaming links for Shabbat services on Zoom: [Friday Night \(7:00 p.m.\)](#);

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

Emor <i>(Leviticus 21:1-24:23)</i>	Friday, April 30 Saturday, May 1	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T’filah (Reform)
Behar-Bechukotai <i>(Leviticus 25:1-27:34)</i>	Friday, May 7 Saturday, May 8	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T’filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
Bamidbar <i>(Numbers 1:1-4:20)</i>	Friday, May 14 Saturday, May 15	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T’filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
Naso <i>(Numbers 4:21-7:89)</i>	Friday, May 21 Saturday, May 22	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T’filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)
Behalotecha <i>(Numbers 8:1-12:16)</i>	Friday, May 28 Saturday, May 29	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T’filah (Reform) Lev Shalem (Conservative)

UPCOMING JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE CORRIDOR EVENTS

Upcoming Jewish Federation of the Corridor events:

Israel and Peace with the Arab World: a post Yom Ha'atzmaut conversation

Thursday May 6, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Join us for a panel discussion about Israel and peace with the Palestinians and the Arab nations. In a changing world, what does the future hold for Israel?

Panelists are Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz of Congregation Agudas Achim in Coralville and Rabbi David Kaufman of Temple B'nai Jeshurun in Des Moines. The discussion will be moderated by Jerry Sorokin, former Assistant Professor of Political Science at University of Iowa and former Executive Director of Iowa Hillel. [Register here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining.

Jewish Identities: Iowa Jewish Scholars Discuss Jewish Identity in the Diaspora

Wednesday May 12, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Join a conversation with Katya Gibel Mevorach (Grinnell College), Inbal Mazar (Drake University), Leah Kalmanson (Drake University), and Laura Cesarco Eglin (Simpson College).

The inspiration for this discussion is to broaden the conversation beyond the American racial lens of whiteness and propose Jews as the paradigm of diversity. How do we think about our Jewishness in the Midwest and also frame it within Jewish global diasporic contexts?

Our conversation will consider "routes" traveled to Iowa. Another theme considers the ways in which Jews encounter Jews, Jews "see" Jews, and the different ways in which we contextualize Jewish identities, Jewish practices, religiosity, Hebrew as a language in which we are/are not conversant, discrete antisemitism, differences among our diaspora countries (or non-diaspora in case of Israelis), etc.

None of the above is intended to be a formal academic presentation, quite the opposite: these are subjects we talk about over coffee, tea, wine, dinner. We will welcome your questions and comments in the last 20 minutes of this hour-long program. This program is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Corridor (Eastern Iowa) and the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines.

[Register here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining.

NACHAS

Are you shepping nachas ('relishing in joyous pride') over an achievement of your own or a fellow congregant? Please let us know your 'nachas' and we will publish it in the Monthly Bulletin.

Did a loved one, friend or yourself win an award, attain an achievement, receive public recognition or succeed in attaining a personal milestone? Submit your entries so that the congregation can share and double your joys.

This month's nachas:

Joe Zabner won the 2021 American Thoracic Society award for Scientific Accomplishment. See more at [this link](#). Mazal tov to Joe and family!

DONATIONS

GENERAL FUND

David & Constance Berman: In memory of
H. D. Berman

Jody & Janie Braverman: In honor of Sue Weinberg
for Passover food prep & travel

Mark Graber & Hetty Hall: In memory of
Raizel Levin

Kathleen Jacobs

Richard & Karen Lipman: In honor of Joseph Zabner
for receiving the 2021 Recognition Award for
Scientific Accomplishment

Mark & Jayne Sandler: In memory of Freda Feinberg

CEMETERY FUND

Robert & Vida Brenner: In memory of
Mildred Brenner

Lorraine Dorfman: In memory of Donald Dorfman

Dorfman & Kaish Family Foundation: In memory of
Donald Dorfman

Richard & Goldene Haendel: In memory of
Sarah Haendel

Katherine Keller: In memory of
Ansel & Corinne Chapman

Sam & Marj Kuperman: In memory of Steve Frankel

Paul Robin: In memory of Herman Robin

David Schapira: In memory of
Leo & Mildred Schapira, Farel Schapira, and
Abraham & Gitel Dicker

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Sue & Ken Blackwell: In memory of Rose Baskin
Tear & Ethel Rothstein

Alan Mutnick & Rachel Albrecht: In memory of
Paul Mutnick

PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Dorothy Paul: In memory of Florence Glick

BRAVERMAN TALMUD TORAH FUND

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Leona Herman

COMMUNITY RELIEF FUND

David & Martha Lubaroff: In memory of
Phyllis Isenberg

YIDDISH STUDY GROUP

The Yiddish Study Group meets Mondays and
Fridays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.
Contact the office for more information.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The bereavement group will meet on
Wednesday, May 19 at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. For
more information, [contact Martha Lubaroff](#).

MAY 2021

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

Sat	1	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Mon	17	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Sun	2	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Virtual Sunday School	10:30 AM	Wed	19	Bereavement Group	12:30 PM
Mon	3	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Education Committee	6:00 PM
		Office open for Haggadah returns 1-4 pm	4:00 PM			Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM	Thur	20	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM	Fri	21	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Tue	4	Young Family Meet & Greet	7:30 PM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
Thurs	6	Office open for Haggadah returns 10am - 2 pm	10:00 AM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
		Yom ha'Atzma'ut Panel	7:00 PM	Sat	22	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Fri	7	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Sun	23	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM			Dr. Steven Green Talk	12:00 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM	Mon	24	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Sat	8	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
Sun	9	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM
Mon	10	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Wed	26	Free Lunch	11:30 AM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Book Group	1:00 PM
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM	Fri	28	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Thurs	13	Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
Fri	14	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM	Sat	29	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM	Sun	30	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
Sat	15	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Mon	31	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Sun	16	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Shavuot Mussar Talk	7:00 PM			Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM
						SAVE THE DATE!	
				Thurs	6/17	ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING	7:00 PM

DR. STEVEN GREEN TALK

On Sunday, May 23 at noon, Dr. Steven Green will give a talk on the subject of "Our Calendar" [at this Zoom link](#).

The Jewish calendar is one of the world's oldest, yet most complicated and accurate calendars. While essentially a lunar calendar, based on the phases of the moon, it also adjusts for the solar year and ensures that holidays are celebrated at the correct times specified in the Torah. We will discuss the origins and evolution of the calendar and some of the astronomical calculations on which the modern calendar is based.

MAY YAHRZEITS

Louise Allweiss	David Jacob Hugenholtz	Becky Robin
Grace Bernstein	Bessie Josselson	Howard Sabin
Emma Braverman	Samuel Kanef	Susan Schuler
Sally Broad	Arthur Kay	Freda Schumeister
Carl Caplan	Esther Klausner	Benjamin Sideman
Helene Colen	Jacob Kosubucki	Alexander Simon
Ana Cotler	Evelyn Levitz	Michael Smith
Gitel Dicker	Maurice E. Lipman	Israel Standig
Hy Dicker	Belle Lupeson	Epstein Stephen
Bruce Fishbane	Russell Smith McGinnis	Miriam Stone
Katie Fishman	Edith Meyer	Jessica Thurston
Steven Frankel	David Michaels	Etta Tunik
Lee Green	Fannie Middleman	Ruth Maxine Berg Waldman
Lev Gudkov	Dee Norton	Irving Warren
Sarah Hall	Samuel Osdoba	Walter Zukin
Reaves Holbrook	Simon Pava	

BLAST FROM THE PAST NAMES

The pictures on Page 3 are of Peter Rubenstein and Rabbi Jeff Portman.

STAFF

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

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