



Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241

Phone: 319-337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

October 2021 / Tishrei–Cheshvan 5782

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

As I am writing this, I am sitting in my sukkah, enjoying my temporary dwelling for the last few days before we pack it up till next year. As my children get older, the holidays take on more meaning and resonance as they are able to participate more. Shaking the lulav is always great fun (kids seem less hung up on Judaism's strange rituals than adults do!) and we had a blast decorating our sukkah this year with our usual fall-themed décor and colorful lights (bought at a Christmas sale, post-Christmas. Here's a top tip: get all your Sukkah and Hanukkah décor discounted the day after Christmas!). This year, we had additional elements from our 'Days United' Sukkot subscription box (including lanterns, paper chains and Ushpizin paper dolls). The weather cooperated and we had only one day of rain, which is a pretty good score.

Every Jewish festival plays with the idea of 'polarity'—it interweaves and synthesizes several complex ideas which brings out a rich texture in our experience of the holiday. Shabbat, for instance, incorporates both notions of rest and freedom. At the Seder, we both eat 'ha'lachma anya', the bread of affliction, while indulging in a luxurious symposium-style banquet. And during Sukkot, the 'z'man simchateinu', the season of our joy, we integrate both deep joy and profound vulnerability.

I've often been puzzled by this. In Northern Europe especially, Sukkot held fewer charms. I'd often get rained on in October and the autumn wind can be fiercely cutting in the Netherlands and England. Not

to mention that I had neither yard nor porch to mount a sukkah on! Our immigration to America fulfilled our long-cherished version of the American Dream: our very own sukkah in our very own yard! Hence, the observance of the festival has been enhanced mightily by our lovely sukkah and the beautiful fall weather we get to experience in this part of the country and I have felt the shift from 'vulnerability' to 'joy' more acutely.

The pandemic, of course, has thrown our collective human family back into new and no-longer-remembered forms of vulnerability. All of a sudden, we are left cautious and at times fearful of infectious disease not experienced in a hundred years. We have all been left to feel unmoored in ways that history will help us articulate in the years to come. In this new reality, then, what is the relationship between vulnerability and joy? How can we find joy when we feel vulnerable and perhaps even afraid?

In a sense, to mix cultural metaphors, Sukkot is our most 'Zen' festival. The Book of Ecclesiastes is the text that accompanies us during this season, where we open ourselves up to the elements and to the weather patterns of both our world and our own souls. Sukkot encourages us to 'let go', to let the wind and rain and sun blow, fall, shine through the deliberate cracks in our 'schach', the roof of our booths. We are confronted with a temporary and ritual 'loss of control' so that perhaps we can find

(Continued on page 2)

FROM THE RABBI *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

(Continued from page 1)

contentment in the release, and joy in the gifts of the earth.

The High Holidays are almost ending and in a few days, I'll pack up our decorations and dismantle our sukkah. We will head into the Jewishly quiet month of Cheshvan; the one month in the Jewish calendar that has no festivals or commemorations. The weather will turn, the light will shift and we will bring the deep and wise lessons of our season with

us. 'For everything there is a time under Heaven', Ecclesiastes teaches us, or as Pete Seeger sang, 'turn, turn, turn.' May we continue to turn, to adjust, adapt, to find release, remission and rest. We have done well, friends. We can look back on an unusual but successful High Holiday season with thanks to the many who worked so hard to bring us this time of year under taxing circumstances. I continue to be proud of our community and all we accomplish. We will continue holding on to each other during the quieting of the year and the turning of the wheel.

SKYE FITZPATCK BAT MITZVAH

We invite you to join us online as

Skye Fitzpatrick

Is called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah

Saturday, October 23, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

[Zoom Link](#)



RABBI'S HIGH HOLIDAY SERMONS

The Rabbi's High Holiday sermons:

The Rabbi's sermons for Rosh HaShanah:

[One Thing We Ask](#)

[Our Homes, Our Souls, Ourselves](#)

Rabbi Hugenholtz's sermons for Yom Kippur:

[On the Doorposts of our Homes](#)

[All The World](#)

And Peter Rubenstein's sermon for Yom Kippur Minchah:

[Onward to Victory](#)

If you would like a print copy of any of these sent to you, contact the office at

secretary@agudasachimic.org.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Janice Weiner

Having made it to the other side of the High Holidays, it feels as if we can now move on with our lives. What does that look like?

Right now, it looks like our Sunday school classes – outside, under the tent, 30 kids learning in groups. It looks like our re-imagined Simchat Torah celebration: gathering around a fire pit with s'mores, pizza and stories from our texts and traditions. It looks like hybrid Shabbat services, with people in the sanctuary interacting with those on Zoom, then inching into “normalcy” with a small kiddush.

It also looks like a lot of tired people. We've been at this for 19 months now. Rabbi Paul Yedwab wrote in his musings on the second pandemic High Holidays, we are all running at about 60% - better than a year ago, but not yet where we want to be. There are days when I can run flat out – and other days when I feel deflated and defeated. And because we are human and under prolonged stress, we are, on the whole, jumpier, testier, less tolerant – and perhaps less forgiving than we should or could be, given the holidays we have just observed. At the same time, there is a chink of hope again in the COVID-19 wall, as our curve flattens following two weeks with a universal mask mandate in our largest school district and with one vaccine company about to submit data for a vaccine for kids 5-11. But we are weary and wary. Fall is here and winter is coming.

As we look forward, it will not be “back” to the old normal – it will be forward looking. My question to all of you is: How can we

purposefully help shape the future? One of many possible answers to that question is by working with the board and the congregation to stand up additional “scaffolding” for our congregation and congregational life. By that, I mean structural elements on which we can rely and which we can utilize to create a healthy, responsive and resilient community.

For me, that structure includes at least three elements: (1) strategic planning, (2) a congregational code of ethics (for which the URJ has a template) and (3) a plan for mutual review – the gold standard for internal review of clergy and staff, also developed by the URJ. . And I would add a fourth element as well - some outward-reaching tikkun olam projects to contribute to the larger community. You will be hearing more about all of these as we roll these out and develop them.

Let me close with this: One of the most exhausting parts of the pandemic has been the sense that everything is spinning out of control. As we gradually regain control by getting vaccinated and putting in place layered mitigation measures, I truly believe that shaping our future with purpose can make us a better, more responsive congregation and help us regain a sense of lost control as we steer our own collective Jewish futures.

Finally, if you have ideas, suggestions – things you like, things you don't like, things you would like to see – please email me at president@agudasachemic.org – I look forward to those ideas and conversations!

As we look forward, it will not be “back” to the old normal – it will be forward looking. My question to all of you is: How can we purposefully help shape the future?

We are entering a season where the concepts of atonement, redemption, and God as Judge play prominent roles, and the parsha Nitzavim is a beautiful introduction to our involvement with these concepts. Imagine a scene in a courtroom where you are standing before a judge because of an action in which you were involved. The judge is about to pronounce a sentence which could have profound effects on your life, even possibility leading to its end. You are full of fear and dread for what that pronouncement might bring.

Parshat Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9 – 30:20), in a sense, recreates this scenario in an interesting way. Actually, I like to think of it as one of the great real estate closings in history where the two parties involved in the property exchange meet in a room with a real estate broker to sign the agreement that seals the deal. For this transaction, the parties involved would be Israel and God with the real estate agent personified by Moses. To summarize, God will give the Promised Land to the Israelites providing they are willing to enter into a covenant or agreement with Him/Her. If we examine the proposed covenant more closely, we see that God sets on the table an extensive series of laws and commandments governing virtually every aspect of life with the stipulation that if Israel obeys these laws, not some of these laws there will be blessings beyond belief, but should the laws be disobeyed, destruction and havoc will be visited upon Israel. Israel has witnessed God's doings for forty years and knows all too well the destruction and suffering that can come about when His laws are disobeyed. Yet, they must enter into this covenant if they are to possess the land in question.

The parsha begins:

You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God – your tribal heads, your elders, and your officials, all the men of Israel, your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to water drawer – to enter into the

covenant of the Lord your God which the Lord your God is concluding with you this day.”

In essence everyone, the entire community without exception are called before God to witness and join. The impact, power, and significance of this opening are such that Rabbi Jeff chose the passage as one of the inscriptions on our synagogue wall that we can recall to remind us why we are here whenever we enter the synagogue. There are no exceptions, because for this proposed social experiment to succeed, there must be buy-in by all, a willingness of the entire people to work for the good of the community. There is no room for the Korachs, working primarily for their own benefit, in this endeavor.

However, the stakes for signing on the dotted line here are enormous due to the potential burden that following the laws would require, the difficulty in seeing them through, and the consequences should there be failure or even rebellion in this endeavor. Moses recognizes the potential for the people rising in resistance to entering this covenant and in an amazing paragraph, seeks to allay the people's fears and angst.

Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, “Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?” Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it? No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart to observe it.

In essence, what God is asking is not impossible but eminently doable. All one has to do is make the commitment to follow the laws, and the requirements of the covenant can be met. Although having impressed the people of Israel that the requirements are attainable, Moses then again

(Continued on page 5)

OMG

D'var by Peter Rubenstein (cont.)

underscores the consequences of neglecting these, especially since they are within everyone's reach "Behold, I set before you this day life and prosperity, death and adversity, going on to say that the outcome depends on adherence to the Teaching.

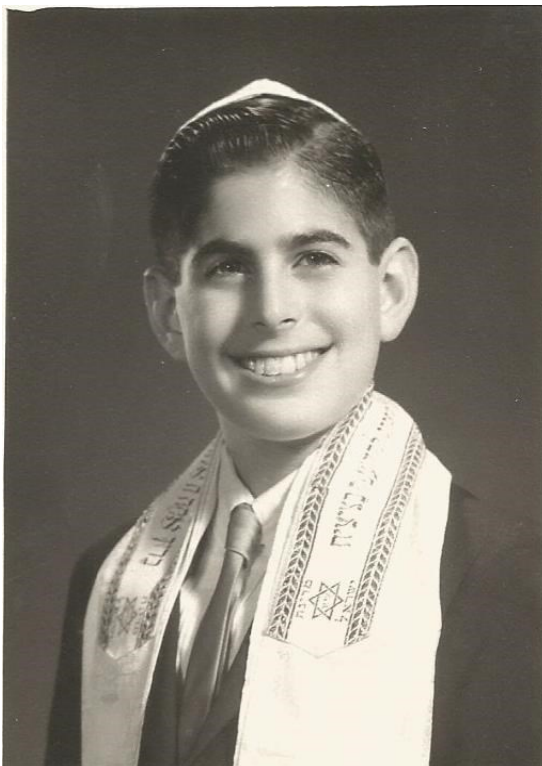
It is amazing to me how applicable this parsha is to our current situation. Our society and world are beset by ills, catastrophe's, troubles, and disregard for the welfare of those among whom we live. It is a situation that will require the participation of all looking toward the common good instead of the good of the individual if we are to survive and prosper. Yet people are focusing more on their own agendas and using fear, division, and denigration to achieve their ends.

Fomenting this turmoil must cease, and, in the interest of the common good, we need to be willing to reaffirm the covenant and stand up to those who would subvert it for their own benefit. Then, perhaps, our actions can bring about the peace and well-being for which we all strive.

Achieving these ends are not impossible, not so difficult that we have to search the universe for the means to bring about these ends. Achieving these ends is well within our grasp. We just have to decide that the effort is worth the reward and that failure and the consequences it brings cannot be tolerated. As we enter the High Holy Day season and focus on the task at hand, let us remember and adopt the slogan for Nike Sporting Goods– Just Do It – and we just may get there.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

See if you can guess who these photos are! The names are on page 8.



SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL SERVICE SCHEDULE

[Streaming link for all Shabbat services on Zoom](#); [click here](#) to sign up for in person attendance

Bereshit <i>(Genesis 1:1-6:8)</i>	Friday, October 1 Saturday, October 2	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Noach <i>(Genesis 6:9-11:32)</i>	Friday, October 8 Saturday, October 9	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Lech Lecha <i>(Genesis 12:1-17:27)</i>	Friday, October 15 Saturday, October 16	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Vayera <i>(Genesis 18:1-22:24)</i>	Friday, October 22 Saturday, October 23	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Chaye Sarah <i>(Genesis 23:1-25:18)</i>	Friday, October 29 Saturday, October 30	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

When you were a kid, did you ever wish that your class could meet outside? Well, the Sunday School got that wish, and, like so many things we wish for, the reality is a little complicated.

Certainly there are wonderful things about being in the open air, even with masks on. It is easy to organize a quick game of tag. When we learn the word *shamayim*, we can point to the sky; when we learn the word *'eret*, we can touch the earth. The sukkah became a place to study and a place to play. Instead of decorating it only once, we could add to the decorations in time for Simchat Torah.

On the other hand, the *shemesh* (sun) was pretty hot, especially on our first Sunday. Kids (and adults) began to droop by the third hour. Hebrew words became indistinct when spoken through a mask. Boundaries blurred as younger siblings tried to sit with older siblings in other classes. (The older siblings were not usually receptive.) The wind carried away artwork, wrappers, and the teachers' voices.

But I could also see friendships forming and existing relationships deepening, and this was also partly due to interacting in a big, open space. The B-Mitzvah students, walking to the synagogue from their meeting in the rabbi's sukkah, started to make up a chant. The younger kids bounced around with each other in a way that they could not in a classroom. In general, everyone seemed happy and energetic.

I have a feeling that in the next few weeks, the kids will teach me more about how to build a supportive group and how to organize our time in the great outdoors. Meanwhile, here's what we've been up to so far.

The **B-Mitzvah Class**, which consists of people who recently had a B-Mitzvah and those about to have one, are collaborating with Prof. Kirsten Kump Baele and her student Marisa Rethman on the Anne Frank

(Continued on page 7)

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

Sapling project. The project involves planning a sapling to commemorate Anne Frank. But, more than that, it is about building a meaningful commemoration that engages the local community. The B-Mitzvah class is exploring Jewish traditions of commemoration, learning about Anne Frank and the Holocaust, and thinking hard about what a memorial does. By the end of the semester, they will share their thoughts and recommendations with the professor's class.

The rest of the school enjoyed a shofar lesson and demonstration by the great Andy Frank, shofar virtuoso. They also learned about sukkot and decorated the sukkah, a real contribution to the congregation. For Simchat Torah, they began to illustrate the first creation story on a long piece of cloth. Samples are now hanging in the sukkah. For the **Second Grade** this will become an ongoing project as they make their own illustrated Torah. The **Pre-K Class** learned the song "Shalom Haverim" and drew pictures as they listened to stories about Sukkot. The **Kindergarten/First** class lay down on the grass in the shape of Hebrew letters, colored figures to put on Noah's Ark, and learned to write their names in Hebrew. **The older kids** (meaning everyone eight through twelve), learned the B'reishit Chant, the first few lines of Genesis in alternating Hebrew and English. For instance, it begins:

B'reishit, in a beginning, God created

'et ha-shamayyim v'et ha-'aretz,

the heavens and the earth

We used this chant to learn vocabulary, words that the kids illustrated. Some of their creations are hanging in the sukkah, if you want to take a look. Finally, in preparation for Simchat Torah, we read about Noah's Ark and learned the "Unicorn Song" by Shel Silverstein with all the hand gestures. What does Noah's Ark have to do with Simchat Torah? Well, we needed to have at least one Torah story to share at our Simchat Torah fire pit and marshmallow roast. What could be better than a silly song? Also, frankly, at this stage in the pandemic, it feels a little like we're all on an ark together – green alligators, long-necked geese, humpty-backed camels, and all.

So, my fellow passengers on the Agudas Achim ark, be careful and be well. The school will continue to learn in and from the great outdoors, at least until the *shemesh* goes away everything freezes this horef.

URGENT REQUEST

Peter Rubenstein

For the past few months, we have been running an item in the bulletin called Blast from the Past, where we feature pictures of our congregants from their bar/bat mitzvahs or other milestones in their lives. Unfortunately, we are running out of pictures to use. Some of you have told me you would send pictures but have yet to do so. So I am imploring you all to search your picture albums and those of

your parents for such pictures that you would be willing to share with us. The best thing to do is to take a cell phone camera shot from the waist or chest up and email it to me at peter-rubenstein@uiowa.edu. Hopefully you will cooperate or we are going to have to bring this item to a close. Happy New Year.

WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

The Book Group will meet via Zoom on Wednesday, October 27 at 1:00 p.m.
Please contact the office for more information.

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, October 20 at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom.
For more information,
[contact Martha Lubaroff](#).

OCTOBER YAHRZEITS

Simon Assouline	Harold Jaffe	Jacob Portman
Doris Bonfield	Dorothy Kanef	Claire Rephun
Florence Braverman	Harry Hagman Kaufman	Max Rosenbaum
Remi Cadoret	Richard Kerber	Mathilde Loewen Salomon
Harry Canter	Fanny Kimmel	Anna Shulman
Rivalie Sideman Cohn	Joseph Kimmel	Mildred Siegel
Edward Dvoretzky	Gordon Korsmo	Steven Steigman
Max Dvoretzky	Albert Leer	Herman Sterman
Ruth Prager Engleman	Andrea Levey	Bertha Tiss
Stanley Flatte	Abraham Levitz	Beverly Tys-Berson
Lillian Friedman	Rosalie Levy	David Vernon
Bernard Gerr	Mary Lubaroff	Bernice Warren
Chaim Graber	Steve Marsden	Eugene Victor Weiner
Selma Graber	Leon Middleman	Jeanne Louise Weiner
Doris Graff	Barbara Anne Mutnick	Joseph Willner
Henry M. Haendel	Jacqueline Fooshe Ormond	Elsie Wingo
Sage Adams Hall	Leo Pliner	
Andrew Hoffman	Harry Portman	

BLAST FROM THE PAST NAMES

The pictures on page 5 are Jerry Sorokin and Rich Levine.

OCTOBER 2021

Fri	1	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Mon	18	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM			Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM
		Pride Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM			Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM
Sat	2	Pride Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Wed	20	Bereavement Group	12:30 PM
		Iowa City Pride March	12:00 PM			Education Committee	6:00 PM
Sun	3	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Ritual Committee	7:30 PM
		Sunday School	9:15 AM	Thur	21	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
		Machzor Dropoff 10-12	10:00 AM	Fri	22	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Mon	4	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM			Skye Fitzpatrick Bat Mitzvah	7:00 PM
Fri	8	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM	Sat	23	Skye Fitzpatrick Bat Mitzvah	9:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM			Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sat	9	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Sun		Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
Sun	10	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Sunday School	9:15 AM
		Sunday School	9:15 AM			Warm-Up America	10:30 AM
		Warm-Up America	10:30 AM	Mon	25	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Mon	11	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
		Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM	Wed	27	Free Lunch	11:30 AM
Fri	15	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Book Group	1:00 PM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM	Fri	29	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
Sat	16	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Sun	17	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Sat	30	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
		Sunday School	9:15 AM	Sun	31	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
						Sunday School	9:15 AM

WARM UP AMERICA

In September, Warm Up America provided 9 afghans for Shelter House. We welcome Agudas Achim members and non-members. We gladly will provide one-on-one help for people remembering old skills in knitting, crocheting, and crohooking. We'll be meeting under the Agudas Achim portico from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Sundays, October 10 and 24, and on November 7 and 21, unless the building has been re-opened. We'll be masked and distanced per applicable protocols. Please consider joining us. Contact Therese Guedon at thereseguedon@gmail.com for further information.



DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Sue & Ken Blackwell: In memory of Jerome Baskin

Arthur Bonfield: In memory of Doris Bonfield

Shelley Engman & Annie Goslin

Jeanne Jaggard: In memory of Harold Jaffe

Steven & Barcey Levy: In memory of
Robert Thurston

Dorothy Paul: In memory of David M. Paul

Bob and Donna Rodnitzky: In memory of
Leo Pliner

Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong: In honor of
Rabbi Hugenholtz leading beautiful &
meaningful High Holiday services under very
difficult conditions

BRAVERMAN TALMUD TORAH FUND

Barbara Levin: In memory of Adolph Glaser

Eloise McCuskey: In memory of
Vincent McFadden

CEMETERY FUND

Greta Robin: In memory of Polly Schlesinger

Becky Sale: In memory of
Brenna & Arnold Davidson

Jack L. Snider: In memory of Herman Snider

Rhoda Vernon: In memory of David Vernon

FAMILY ASSISTANCE FUND

Kathy Ormond: In memory of
Jacqueline Fooshe Ormond and
Waverly C Ormond

FINE ARTS FUND

Kara & John Herbst: In memory of
Marilyn Krachmer

Nancy Sprince: In memory of Lillian Zwerling

Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong: In memory of
Serena Armstrong

GENERAL FUND

David & Constance Berman: In memory of
Robert Hoffman

GENERAL FUND (CONT.)

Corvin Greene: In gratitude of creating a
wonderful community online through these
trying times

Richard Levine: Yizkor - Shemini Atzeret and
Yom Kippur

Thomas & Laurie Smith: In honor of Joanne &
Michael Margolin 50th wedding anniversary

LOUIS GINSBERG YOUTH FUND

Mark & Vickie Ginsberg: In memory of
Louis I Ginsberg, Douglas Ginsberg,
Louis M Ginsberg

Becky Sale: In memory of Doug Ginsberg

Stanley & Jane Zukin: In memory of
Douglas Ginsberg

HIGH HOLIDAY/CANTOR FUND

Benjamin Cooper

Steven Fishman & Renda Greene-Fishman

Joshua & Jennifer Gersten

Jeanne Jaggard

LIBRARY FUND

Rhoda Vernon: In memory of Herman Sterman

RABBI PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Andrey Schneider: In memory of
Mel & Bertie Schneider

Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong: In memory of
Vince

TIKUN OLAM FUND

David & Constance Berman: for CommUnity food
drive

Jody & Janie Braverman: for CommUnity food
drive

Doug & Beverly Jones: for CommUnity food drive

Irwin & Patricia Levin: for CommUnity food drive

Nathan Eugene Savin & Susan Enzle: for
CommUnity food drive

Richard Strauss & Ellen Herman: for CommUnity
food drive

STAFF

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President	Janice Weiner	Adult Education	Bennett Brown
President Elect	David Lubaroff	Social	Kineret Zabner
Vice President	Janelle Jaskolka	Tikun Olam	Elliot Abrons
Past President	Sue Weinberg	Ways & Means	Mindy Russell
Treasurer	Mindy Russell	Youth	Curtis Braverman
Board Secretary	Chuck Friedman	At Large 1	Esther Retish
Membership	Jane Zukin	At Large 2	Bob Wallace
Ritual	Rita Marcus	At Large 3	Samantha Goldish
Religious School	<i>Vacant</i>		