



Agudas Achim Congregation

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Phone: 319-337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

November 2021 / Cheshvan–Kislev 5782

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

I'm sitting in my office, eating my small and secret stash of Sunkist candy from a recent (hybrid) Bat Mitzvah as I write this piece. My office is a *little* less cluttered than it has been since one early March day in 2020, I unwittingly pulled the door shut behind me.

A Wallstreet Journal article did some entertaining reporting on offices left deserted during the pandemic and what a return looked like: computers that didn't have Zoom installed on them (guilty as charged; I've been using my laptop for the past 20 months) to overgrown jungle-like plants and... snacks left in various stages of... let's just call it 'return to their natural state of entropy.'

As we navigate this new 'normal', those of us who are comfortable and able to gather in-person (with the proper mitigation in place, of course) are finding that there's a fair bit of reorganizing to do. In a sense, the spirit of Hanukkah hovers over our slightly disheveled spaces, be they offices, homes or even the synagogue.

In one form or another, it must have been the same for Judah Maccabee and the Hasmoneans when they reconquered and rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem. We like to think of the cruse of oil lasting eight days (a rabbinic innovation to the story not retold in the Book of Maccabees!) but do we ever stop to think of the clean-up the Maccabees had to engage in? Sweeping the floors, purging the altar, removing the idols and the leftover pig sacrifices (ew!). In a startling parallel, the Temple had been

unavailable to the Jewish people for two years and so that first Hanukkah on the 25th of Kislev all those thousands of years ago was in fact, a deferred Sukkot.

Hanukkah means 'rededication' and it is actually in the unglamorous grit that we find true meaning and sanctification. Reorganizing, cleaning, tidying, making the space (whatever space that is!) our own is a way of saying 'we're back'. We are taking emotional ownership of what we had lost and embracing it lovingly and passionately, and seeing it in – dare I make the pun? – a new light.

As we move towards Hanukkah this year, we are encouraged to think about 'rededicating' ourselves to what fills us with joy, life, connection and compassion for our world. We may need a little polishing; trim back a few wayward plants and 'install' a few new (or previously forgotten) habits. But once we've kindled our inner light, that light will spread and grow.

It's been a delight to have been conducting worship with our hybrid model (Zoom and in-person) since June and if you feel comfortable, I encourage you to check us out in our sanctuary and see the camera set-up and enjoy each other's (masked, vaccinated) company. Our Sunday School has moved out of the tent now that the temperatures are dropping and had the first few months of the new school year to bond in the tent and explore this innovative way of doing education.

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FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

More events intersecting the synagogue with the community are popping up as life is reopening. I am back in the ICPL with Hanukkah Story Time on Thursday the 18th of November at 10:30 am for the under five's crowd (and their caregivers) so come and stop in!

Likewise, our B-Mitzvah class is working on a project related to Iowa City's Anne Frank Sapling in collaboration with the University. And oh, did you know that we are planting beautiful yellow daffodils as a commemoration in part of our synagogue garden? We will see their beauty and hope pop up in about six months...

Glancing at the end of November, we hope to have a Hanukkah Party on the first night of Hanukkah, so stay tuned and the Social Committee will update us all on that as well. And, for those of you who want to engage and/or (re)connect with Jewish learning... consider signing up to the new round of the Introduction to Judaism program in the spring semester (start date: somewhere in January or February – TBD).

Perhaps the takeaway as the Festival of Lights is upon us, is that we are all a little bit like Maccabees. There's some cleaning up to do and a little dusting off. But we, as in the words of Lecha Dodi, shall *'hitna'ari me'afar kumi'*, 'arise and shake off the dust.' We are resilient, creative and dedicated. There's reason for hope, light and cheer. Let's get together, in physical or virtual space, and celebrate!

DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Alan Mutnick: In memory of Barbara A Mutnick

Mel & Diane Sunshine: In memory of
Mildred Siegel

CEMETERY FUND

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

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GENERAL FUND (CONT.)

Kathleen Jacobs

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PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Richard & Judy Hurtig: In memory of
Bernice Warren

PRAYERBOOK FUND

Charlotte Dvoretzky: In memory of
Edward Dvoretzky

TIKUN OLAM FUND

David & Martha Lubaroff: CommUnity
food drive

GIFT SHOP NEWS

Joanne Margolin

If you haven't noticed, Chanukah is early this year, the first night being the Sunday after Thanksgiving! You can shop now for candles, cards, gift wrap, decorations, and menorahs, and the gelt will be arriving shortly. All of these things will be available at the synagogue, and the candles and gelt

will also be at my house, ready for pick-up. Email the office if you'd like to get something from the shop, or contact me and we'll figure something out!

Joanne Margolin
351-2181 or jrmargolin@gmail.com

MEMBER GROUP

Jane Zukin

Hey Agudas Achim Member Families! Are you going somewhere or doing something that you think others in our community might be interested in? Want to attend that lecture or see a show at a local theater but would rather not go by yourself? Looking for a play date for your kiddos? Would love to have a great cup of coffee but don't want to drink alone? If so, simply post the information here and invite fellow Agudas

Achim members to join you. It's easy. Just send a post to this FB group with the details and meet up with an old friend or make a new one. Go to the synagogue FB page then click on the Member Group link at the top to join and post. Let's do this!

<https://www.facebook.com/Agudas-Achim-Congregation-IC-345061102174776>

BLAST FROM THE PAST

See if you can guess who these photos are! The names are on page 7.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Janice Weiner

Fall has blown in and winter will not be far behind. The ghosts and goblins of Halloween brightened our evening and made us smile, and we are looking forward to something that approaches a more “normal” Thanksgiving. On the heels of that comes Hanukkah.

As we immerse ourselves in the cycle of seasons and holidays secular and religious, I’ve realized that I’m personally not ready for winter (though I have little choice in the matter). The normal adjustment and preparation is just not happening. That caused me to mull over two things. The first is how we (how I) approach relationships, challenges and the world in general at this point in the pandemic – why it seems so many are less flexible, less generous, less gracious or why, conversely, it seems to take so much more effort now to be patient and creative and chill. Here is how I’ve come to frame it: When joints in the human body age, when people get arthritis, it is the cartilage that goes – that cushion between bones wears away - causing pain as bone rubs against bone when we attempt the most normal of activities. Walking, for example, bending over or opening a jar all become more difficult. It seems to me the pandemic has worn away our social cartilage – talking to people, trying new things, getting out and about – and it can take a serious effort to revitalize it.

Second, since so many of our personal worlds have shrunk during the pandemic, it is really easy to silo.

By that I mean, it is easy to view the world as an individual see it and forget that there are other ways of looking at it – other realities. Societal and political (and social media) polarization have not helped to curb this tendency – indeed, they exacerbate it.

Where am I headed with this? I guess I am suggesting awareness. I’m trying to step back and look at how I approach things, how the board executive, our committees and the board as a whole approach issues and am seeking ways to open up and expand – to connect silos, put committees in touch with one another on issues, to try and rebuild that lost muscle memory and that cartilage. So if my strained metaphors haven’t worn thin for you by now, I would suggest it is a worthwhile exercise. Part of my mantra is “don’t assume” – talk to people, ask directly, meet, think of new ways to connect; and apologize if I overstep. I’m back to that same theme of building community that I’ve been thinking and writing about for several months now. Hanukkah is relevant here: The Temple was desecrated for two years, so that first Hanukkah was all about reminding ourselves to be a sacred community again.

And with that, I wish you all a lovely Thanksgiving and a meaningful and warm start to the holiday of lights.

JEWISH STUDIES OFFERINGS

We’ve been given a list of Jewish Studies courses that will be offered in the Spring 2022 semester at the University of Iowa.

[You can view the list here.](#)

This was compiled by the Jewish Studies Working Group, Obermann Center for Advanced Studies.

SHABBAT AND FESTIVAL SERVICE SCHEDULE

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

Toledot <i>(Genesis 25:19-28:9)</i>	Friday, November 5 Saturday, November 6	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Vayetze <i>(Genesis 28:10-32:3)</i>	Friday, November 12 Saturday, November 13	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Vayishlach <i>(Genesis 32:4-36:43)</i>	Friday, November 19 Saturday, November 20	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Vayeshev <i>(Genesis 37:1-40:23)</i>	Friday, November 26 Saturday, November 27	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

At the end of October, we said a fond farewell to the *'ohel*. *'Ohel* is the Hebrew word for “tent,” a fact that gave the kids an illicit thrill. (If you’re not sure why, try saying the word out loud.) Having captured their interest, I decided to make the *'ohel* and the idea of a journey the center of our lesson for the last day.

We learned “*Ma Tovu*” (“how goodly are your tents, oh Jacob”) so well that the kids could even sing it in a round. Their voices blended together with real joy and confidence, even though they were wearing masks.

I taught the older kids the *midrash* about how the boy Abram, soon to be Abraham, smashed all of his father’s idols except for the largest one. When his father asked what had happened, the boy replied that the idols had fought and killed each other. As you can imagine, his father was neither edified nor amused. But God had already commanded Abraham, “*lech lecha – go*

forth!” So Abraham left his childhood home, taking with him knowledge of the One God and, presumably, an *'ohel*. We discussed what it would mean to leave your father’s house, how scary and exciting that might be.

Finally, I asked the kids to write a song saying goodbye to the *'ohel* using as many Hebrew words as they could. I suggested the tune “Yankee Doodle,” figuring that everyone knows that one.

I was wrong. It turned out that some kids sort of knew it. A few had no idea. They reached for their phones and searched the Internet. Soon, patriotic songs filled the air.

Not everyone knows the tune to Yankee Doodle. Who knew?

That incident got me thinking about tradition and community. We have so many opportunities to

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It can be difficult to find a common experience that cuts across generations. From that point of view, our little Jewish school is sort of old fashioned.

SCHOOL NEWS *(cont.)*

Sonja Spear

curate our knowledge and experiences now. We see ads that some algorithm chooses just for us, listen only to the music we like, often on earphones attached to our ears only. It can be difficult to find a common experience that cuts across generations. From that point of view, our little Jewish school is sort of old fashioned. It teaches prayers that both children and their parents know (or can learn), very old stories, and very old customs.

I hope that with a few things in common – a tune, a prayer, maybe a food – we can create one place where we experience a different kind of community, one not entirely tailored to the needs of individuals but more inclusive.

I had the opportunity the very next day to see if we already have such a community. One of the parents contacted me to say that her child had tested positive for COVID, meaning that the child had probably been infectious while in Sunday School. In these times, it sometimes happens that we have to withdraw from a community to preserve it. I am so grateful to the parents for doing the right thing – the community-minded thing – and going into quarantine. The school, also, did the right thing – the community-minded thing – and shut down. It was a hard decision because sometimes leaving a building feels like leaving community. It is as if we have heard a cry of “lech lecha” and need to travel

away from what we knew and toward something that we do not yet know. It’s hard to reach for the ‘*ohel*’ when you already have a perfectly good shelter. But I am confident that community is not a building, not even a tent; community is a network of people willing to reach out to each other.

I invited families to send the child in quarantine messages of support. I have to admit that the response was a little muted. Perhaps it felt strange not knowing whom to address. “Dear Mystery Family,” one response began. But there is still time for people who want to email me. I will forward your messages.

We will be back in session on November 7th. We will try to use the outdoor space as much as weather permits, but it most likely we will be in the Social Hall and Sanctuary.

At the end of the day on the 7th, we will gather outside to plant daffodils as part of a worldwide living Holocaust memorial. This is a project Janice Weiner introduced to the school, and I am happy that we can do our part. The flowers will, in their own way, represent a resilient and growing community as they multiply over the years. Parents are warmly invited to join the kids in planting the bulbs and to join us for refreshments afterwards. Please look for details in your email.

TIKUN OLAM NEWS

Elliot Abrons

The Tikun Olam Committee and CommUnity Food Bank thank everyone who participated in our High Holidays food drive.

The Synagogue has mailed an Agudas Achim check for \$829.00, covering checks made out to it, as well as individual checks made out to CommUnity, also totaling \$829.00, plus \$10.00 in cash, for a total monetary donation of \$1,668.00. In addition, we delivered the 241 pounds of groceries and household items to the food shelter which were left at Synagogue.

WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

The Book Group will meet via Zoom on Wednesday, November 24 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, November 17 at 12:30 p.m. via
Zoom. For more information,
[contact Martha Lubaroff.](#)

NOVEMBER YAHRZEITS

Selma Asch	Jonathan Goldstein	Marjorie Osdoba
Myron Baum	Victoria Haendel	David Rothstein
Norman Berg	Aristide Haravon	Michael Allen Sabin
Rosalie Braverman	Ben E. Kubby	Edith Schneider
Jean Weinstein Breggin	Alice Thorn Laquer	Norman Sellz
Rose Marie Caplan	Ed Laquer	Ida Simon
Victor Cohen	Emilia B. Lasansky	Pauline Skorton
William M. David Jr.	Judi Lerner Aizenberg	Louis Snider
Lena C. Dicker	Bernice Levine	Esther Tsai Sugg
Melvin "Buddy" Eisen	Reba Magaziner	Joseph Sunshine
Mertie Ellen Evans	Morris M. Marcus	Morris Weinberg
Chester Jacoby Flaum	Miguel Margulis	Bess Weinstein
Lawrence Gelfand	Sol Meyer	Al Widiss
Miriam Saltzman Goichberg	Meyer Middleman	Bernard Zwerling
Liba Goldberg	Benjamin Ross Mutnick	
Mendel Goldberg	Michael Nadler	

BLAST FROM THE PAST NAMES

The pictures on page 3 are Lisa and Ben Margolin.

WARM UP AMERICA



Warm Up America is part of Agudas Achim's community outreach, providing afghans for people who might benefit from a bit of warmth. We welcome congregation members, families, their friends and neighbors. We'll be meeting on Sundays Nov 7th and 21st, and Dec. 5th, from 10:30a.m. to noon in the Agudas Achim board room. We'll be vacc'd and masked, per synagogue policy. Please consider joining us, to help or to schmooze.

We also accept donations of synthetic yarn and of funding for yarn, through the Synagogue's Tikun Olam fund, earmarked for Warm Up America.

The afghan shown contains knit, crochet, and crohooked rectangles provided by WUA's people. Together, we create warmth and beauty. For further information, contact Therese Guedon, thereseguedon@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER 2021

Mon 1	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Thur 18	IC Public Library Hanukkah Story Time with Rabbi Hugenholtz	10:30 AM
	Tea Time Check-In	4:00 PM		Board Meeting	7:00 PM
	Intro to Judaism	7:30 PM			
Fri 5	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Fri 19	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 6	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Sat 20	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun 7	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Sun 21	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
	Sunday School	9:15 AM		Warm-Up America	10:30 AM
	Warm-Up America	10:30 AM	Mon 22	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Mon 8	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 24	Free Lunch	11:30 AM
Thur 11	Exec Meeting	5:30 PM		Book Group	1:00 PM
Fri 12	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Thur 25	HAPPY THANKSGIVING	
	Student-led Service at Rabbi's House	6:00 PM	Fri 26	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 13	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Sat 27	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Sun 14	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Sun 28	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
	Sunday School	9:15 AM		Hanukkah First Night	
Mon 15	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Mon 29	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 17	Bereavement Group	12:30 PM	Dec 10-11	SAVE THE DATE!	
	Ritual Committee	7:30 PM		Sadie Bodzin Bat Mitzvah	

STAFF

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

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