

Agudas Achim Congregation

02/2022



**A GUIDE TO
THE IOWA CITY/CORALVILLE
JEWISH
COMMUNITY**



AGUDAS ACHIM CONGREGATION

401 East Oakdale Blvd.

Coralville, IA 52241

(319)337-3813

www.agudasachimic.org

WELCOME!

We hope that you will find this guide helpful as you become settled in the Iowa City area.

The Synagogue cordially invites you to become members. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Administrator, the Membership Chair, or the Rabbi.

SYNAGOGUE STAFF

Rabbi

Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz
rabbi@agudasachimic.org

Synagogue President

Janice Weiner
president@agudasachimic.org

Administrator

Karen Brady
administrator@agudasachimic.org

Principal

Sonja Spear
principal@agudasachimic.org

Office Secretary

John Wertz
secretary@agudasachimic.org

Membership Chair

Jane Zukin
membership@agudasachimic.org

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Tel: (319) 337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

Prayer Book Fund – supports the purchase of prayer books

Rabbi Portman Program Fund – supports adult education programming

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund – supports needs identified by the Rabbi

Safety Fund – supports projects that enhance the safety of our community and property

School Fund – discretionary fund for the Principal and the Education Committee

Second Century Fund – an endowment fund to ensure the ongoing vitality of the Iowa City Jewish community for years to come

Sim & Sara Strauss Fund – supports projects approved by the Board of Directors

Synagogue Assistance Fund – provides emergency support for local Jewish families

Tikun Olam Fund – “Repair the World” fund supports social justice causes

Torah Enhancement Fund – supports maintenance of the Torahs

Fresh Challah

Challah is available at the New Pioneer Co-op at both the Iowa City and Coralville stores, and at the Hy-Vee on North Dodge Street.

Passover Products

Trader Joes, HyVee and most of the other grocery stores carry a small selection of Passover foods.

AGUDAS ACHIM GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

Braverman Talmud Torah Fund – supports the Religious School

Building Fund – supports our new synagogue

Cemetery Fund – supports the Agudas Achim cemetery

Community Relief Fund – supports local community disaster needs

Fine Arts Fund – supports art acquisitions and endeavors

Garden & Landscaping Fund – supports the enhancement and maintenance of the synagogue grounds

General Fund – supports the various needs of the synagogue

High Holiday/Cantor Fund – supports High Holidays

Kadima Endowment Fund – supports the synagogue

Lauren Reece Flaum Terrace Fund – supports the maintenance of the terrace

Library Fund – funding for the library books suitable for both children and adults

Louis Ginsberg Youth Fund – supports youth group enrichment projects and camp scholarships

Marcus Scholarship Fund – provides tuition scholarships for children in the Religious School

RABBI'S WELCOME

Dear Community Members,

Welcome to the community! Iowa City/Coralville is an inviting place for Jewish people — in fact, the first Jewish person to become a mayor of any city in the United States was a member of our congregation back in 1873.

The Jewish community is an integral part of the local area. We are doctors, lawyers, professors, artists, teachers, musicians, and most of all, families. Iowa City/Coralville offers many big-city amenities in a small-town atmosphere. During the summer, one can enjoy music in the downtown, and all year long, the public can participate in local guest lectures and programs. The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics has been consistently ranked in the top ten nationally and it offers some of the best medical care in the country.

Agudas Achim is the nexus of the local Jewish community, providing a well-rounded education for youth as well as a fulfilling experience for the entire family. Just as we are proud members of both the Reform and Conservative Jewish movements, we proudly welcome families of all backgrounds.

Once again, feel free to contact me. The Iowa City/Coralville Jewish community is a strong and vibrant group that embraces all who wish to join.

With thanks,

Rabbi Esther Hugenholz
rabbi@agudasachimic.org

HISTORY

Before 1910, Jewish families in Iowa City met for services in private homes. In 1915, a rabbi was engaged, and in 1916, Agudas Achim Congregation was incorporated. In 1920 permanent quarters were acquired on South Clinton Street across from the county courthouse.

In 1950 the congregation built a facility on Washington Street where it stayed for over 60 years. In June of 2012, it became evident that the Washington Street site was no longer adequate because of space limitations and major damage due to recent flooding. The congregation sold the property and purchased a building in Coralville. The synagogue moved to its new location in February of 2013.

ORGANIZATION AND BUILDING

Agudas Achim has a rabbi, an administrator, a principal, and an office secretary. The board consists of the president, president elect, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, and eight other board members who serve as chairs of committees. There are three additional at-large board members.

We are affiliated with both the Conservative movement (United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism) and the Reform movement (Union for Reform Judaism). We serve approximately 200 member families in the Iowa City/Coralville area.

HILLEL FOUNDATION

Hillel has been serving the needs of Jewish students at the University of Iowa since 1926. The Hillel House is located near campus on the corner of Market and Dubuque Streets. Ashley Holt is the Hillel Director. For more information contact Hillel at (319) 338-0778.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Annual membership dues are based on a Fair Share basis. When you join, you will receive a Fair Share Membership Pledge form. You will be sent statements with outstanding balances in September, December, March, and June. Agudas Achim functions on a fiscal year which runs from July 1 to June 30.

In addition to the dues schedule, you will receive membership information forms, school registration (if applicable) as well as additional information about the synagogue.

AGUDAS ACHIM GIFT SHOP

The Gift Shop is open during synagogue office hours. Find candles of all kinds (Chanukah, Havdalah, Shabbat, Memorial) as well as books, games, gifts, dreidels, kippot, and mezuzot. The Gift Shop will also do special orders. Call Joanne Margolin at (319)351-2181 with any questions.

SISTERHOOD

Sisterhood is a women's social and service organization of the synagogue. Founded in 1918, Sisterhood members are devoted to Judaism and to strengthening the bond of unity among Jewish women. Members generally sponsor activities which support the Congregation, the Talmud Torah, and the youth programs. They also social events. As of 2022, Agudas Achim Sisterhood is currently on hiatus. Please contact the office if you are interested in re-forming this group.

HADASSAH

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, has a joint Iowa City/Coralville/Cedar Rapids chapter. Hadassah supports Hadassah Hospital and other medical projects in Israel. For more information, contact Joanne Margolin at (319)351-2181.

THE IOWA CITY JEWISH FEDERATION

This group supports the needs of the Jewish community locally, nationally, and internationally. The ICJF is the local organization for United Jewish Communities. For more information contact Jody Braverman at jtbraverman@yahoo.com.

CHABAD HOUSE

Rabbi Avremel Blesofsky is the Chabad rabbi in Iowa City. The Chabad House is located at 420 E. Jefferson.
Phone number: 358-1323.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Shabbat services are held at 7:00 p.m. on Fridays and 9:30 a.m. on Saturdays. We use two different prayer books: *Siddur Sim Shalom* (Conservative), and *Mishkan Tefillah* (Reform). There is an Oneg following each service. The refreshments are provided and served by the congregation families. There are often programs on Sunday mornings. The schedule of these services, as well as special holiday services, are always announced in our monthly bulletin and in our weekly email, which is available to members and non-members alike.

OBSERVING LIFE'S MILESTONES

Jewish tradition has always emphasized close family ties and communal sharing of simchas and sorrows. To get help choosing a name of a new baby, arrange for a bris, or to find out the customs for honoring the birth of a daughter, contact the Rabbi.

The synagogue is available for the religious and social activities of its members. Our administrator will be happy to assist you with ideas and advice regarding local caterers, the use of the social hall and kitchen, and the general preparation for your event.

It is traditional in Judaism to celebrate life passages religiously, and it is also customary to commemorate the event by making a donation. Once you get into the habit, you will find that no occasion seems complete without the added significance of the remembrance.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The synagogue's religious school is organized with the purpose of providing each child with a well-rounded Jewish education. The children meet on Sundays from 9:15 a.m. to noon. We have shorter times for our younger members, starting at age 3.

Our curriculum offers the children exposure to different aspects of Jewish culture, history, ethics, and Hebrew language. The school has grades from preschool through tenth grade. The program is enriched by various activities aimed at developing the child's sense of appreciation for Jewish values. For more information, call the Principal, Sonja Spear at 319-338-3486 or email her at Principal@AgudasAchimIC.org.

LIBRARY

The Agudas Achim library contains more than 3,000 titles of general Jewish interest, including a wide selection of books for children and young readers. In addition, the synagogue subscribes to several Jewish newspapers and magazine. Supported almost entirely by donations, the library is available for use by anyone in the community.

ADULT EDUCATION

The congregation offers a variety of adult education programs from Intro to Judaism to Talmud study. We have Oneg Shabbat speakers and special lectures during the year, Sunday Schmoozes and concerts. Contact the synagogue office for information about current programs.

JEWISH CAMPS

The synagogue has information on many of the major Jewish camps for children in the Midwest. Call for information. In addition, the synagogue offers partial scholarships for children of congregants.

BULLETIN

A monthly bulletin is sent out to the membership by email. This bulletin contains information about upcoming events and useful information about other Jewish programs throughout the community.

CONGREGATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Agudas Achim is governed democratically through congregational meetings and the election of members to the board of trustees. Each member has one vote. A Congregational meeting is held each year. The Board of Trustees, elected every two years at the June congregational meeting, carries out the policies voted on by the Congregation and makes day-to-day decisions at its monthly open meetings. Copies of the Congregation By-Laws and Policies are available. Board positions include the chairs of the following committees: Adult Education, Membership, Ritual, School, Social, Tikun Olam, Ways & Means, and Youth.

CEMETERY

The synagogue's cemetery is on Linder Road. It is maintained by the synagogue and governed by the Cemetery Committee of the synagogue. Copies of the cemetery's policies are available at the office.