



Agudas Achim Congregation

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Phone: 319-337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

April 2023 / Nisan-Iyar 5783

We put out a Pesach Guide that has more detailed information on Pesach specifically. It can be found on our website.

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

One of the weirder features of being a small town rabbi is having synagogue stuff shipped to your house in case the synagogue is closed on the weekends. As of today, several large and heavy boxes are cluttering my vestibule holding matzah and other supplies for the Second Seder. It feels like the start of a sweet Chassidic story set in the shtetl, but Amazon Prime'd in that very 21st century way.

Pesach continues to be one of the most popular and enduring celebrations for American Jews. About 70% of US Jews will either celebrate, host or be invited to a Seder, and a surprising number of non-Jews too who enhance our shared joy at our holiday tables. While some of the more arduous preparations may not take people's fancy, it is otherwise easy to understand why Pesach is so well-loved: food, family, friendship and the sharing of a multi-layered, ever-compelling master story. If we cast back our minds to generations of Jews sitting at their tables through a myriad of circumstances, it is awe-inspiring. We have celebrated in times of oppression and duress, in times of prosperity and freedom, but the core message always remains the same. In times of trouble, Pesach offers us a story of consolation and solidarity; in times of abundance, it offers us a stark moral reminder of none of us being free until all of us are free.

This year, perhaps, it is the story of both. As we find our new footing with COVID, we will gather at our tables with gratitude and humility for what we have lived through these last three years. (Never do I want to go back to the Zoom-Seders of 2020!) At the same time, ever-increasing authoritarianism around the globe and in this country, makes the Passover message all the more relevant and perhaps prophetic. The Seder calls us to reckon with the Pharaohs in our lives; both the inner Pharaohs of our own susceptibility to prejudice and will to power as well as the external Pharaohs we encounter in the power structures of our society. Neither holy task is mutually exclusive: we both need to speak truth to power in the public square and wrestle with our own 'yetzer hara' ('evil inclination', though better translated as 'inclination towards selfishness and self-preservation'). In that sense, the dichotomy between the spiritual and the engaged is false. When the Haggadah tells us to imagine ourselves coming out of Mitzrayim (Egypt), it refers to this integrative vision.

Judaism's audacious claim is that we can light our inner lamp to guide our souls through the small but important moments of daily living as well as shine our beacon into the world according to the lofty vision of the Prophets. But how do we do that?

(Continued on page 2)

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Refining our character is hard enough - taking on the injustices of the world feels particularly overwhelming.

The answer, perhaps, lies exactly in the enduring power of the Seder. Through this sacred table, we merge inside and outside, food and philosophy, community and welcome. The answer, perhaps, also lies in the revolutionary concept of the synagogue. And by 'the synagogue', I don't (just) mean the institution, its people and its assets but the idea of 'the synagogue': a place of gathering and cementing relationships; an incubator of spiritual democracy, a place to hone our instincts of mutual aid and justice. The synagogue's participatory nature both grants us opportunities and makes upon us demands for its support. It gives me comfort to know that both the Jewish home and the synagogue have been pillars of support, mutual aid and justice through millennia. It is up to us to craft a vision for what they will become in the 58th or 21st century.

These thoughts may sound abstract but they are anything but. Every day in my work, I am reminded of the succor our community provides. We support people who are otherwise vulnerable in our society; who are alone, economically disadvantaged and

marginalized - I cannot imagine a more 'Pesachdike' mission. We celebrate both the ethereal and tangible moments in life; births, deaths, transitions, moments of learning and choosing. We create space for the encounter between the self and the Eternal, between our multivocal tradition and the challenges of our time. As our world, and our immediate society, feels the increasing pressures of political polarization, environmental degradation and societal alienation, both the idea and the institution of the synagogue and the home will prove both their mettle and their worth. We are in the business of creating sanctuaries of love, safety and mutuality.

During the second-to-last plague, the plague of 'choshech' (darkness), it was noted that the Israelites had light in their dwellings, while the Egyptians could not see their hands in front of their faces. It's a striking contrast - both a 'historical' reflection on what once was and a 'prophetic' reflection on what may yet be.

The boxes in my house will have to be shlepped to the synagogue, but it seems fitting that synagogue and home are connecting in this way. May we all merit a 'zissen Pesach', a sweet Pesach, with our dwellings and our hearts full of light.

Shalom u'vracha, peace and blessing,
Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

Congratulations to Mark and Vickie Ginsberg on the births of Lyla Vonne O'Neill (Lizzie and Andy O'Neill, Iowa City) and Loren Irving Ginsberg (Shannon McLaughlin and Emily Ginsberg, Olathe, KS) on March 4.

We extend our condolences to Claire Chapnick, Jerry Sorokin, Gary and Michele Chapnick, Sasha Chapnick-Sorokin, Phoebe Chapnick-Sorokin, Josh Chapnick, and Ali Chapnick. and family on the death of Claire's mother, Susan Rita Chapnick.

APRIL SHABBAT SERVICES

[Streaming link for Zoom Shabbat services](#)

Tzav <i>(Leviticus 6:1-8:36)</i>	Friday, March 31		Religious School Chavurah at Rabbi's house, 6:30 p.m.; lay-led service at synagogue 7:00 p.m.
	Saturday, April 1	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Shabbat Chol	Friday, April 7	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
Hamoed Pesach	Saturday, April 8	9:30 a.m.	Zabner Torah Service. No service at the synagogue
Shemini <i>(Leviticus 9:1-11:47)</i>	Friday, April 14	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, April 15	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Tazria-Metzora <i>(Leviticus 12:1-15:33; Numbers 28:9-15)</i>	Friday, April 21	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, April 22	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Achare-Kedoshim <i>(Leviticus 16:1-20:27)</i>	Friday, April 28	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, April 29	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem

PESACH SERVICE SCHEDULE

[Streaming link for all Pesach services including Second Seder](#)

Wednesday, April 5	1st Seder (at people's homes)	No service
Thursday, April 6	Festival Morning Service (1st day)	Service at 9:30 a.m.
Thursday, April 6	Communal "Second Seder" at the synagogue	Seder at 6:30 p.m. Requires RSVP. See inside for details.
Friday, April 7	Festival Morning (2nd day)	Service at 9:30 a.m.
Tuesday, April 11	Festival Evening service	Service at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 12	Festival Morning service	Service at 9:30 a.m.
Thursday, April 13	Festival Morning Service (8th day, Yizkor)	Service at 9:30 a.m.

The Second Seder

AT AGUDAS ACHIM

Thursday, April 6, 6:30 p.m.

SEDER LED BY RABBI HUGENHOLTZ

ADULT MEMBER: \$50 Please let the office know if you'd be willing
ADULT NON-MEMBER: \$60 to donate towards meals for others. If
CHILD UNDER 12: \$20 payment is an issue, please contact the office.

Menu:

Starters

Chicken soup with matzo balls (on the side if GF)
Spinach salad with butternut squash (GF, Vegan)

Main

Brisket with carrots, onions, and celery (GF)
Vegetarian option: marinated portobello mushrooms (GF, Vegan)

Sides

Herb-roasted potatoes (GF, Vegan)
Roasted sweet potatoes, leeks, and parsnips (GF, Vegan)
Sweet and spicy asparagus (GF, Vegan)

Dessert

Flourless chocolate cake (GF, Vegetarian)
Strawberries (GF, Vegan)

Post-Pesach LGBTQ+ Mimouna

Saturday, April 15
7:30 p.m.

You pay for your pizza, Agudas Achim
buys you your first drink!

Part of our Agudas Achim LGBTQ+ small group

Location: Maggie's Farm Pizza
1308 Melrose Ave (University Heights)

Please RSVP to Lisa Heineman:
lisa.heineman.1945@gmail.com

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Janice Weiner

I will keep this very brief.

This winter – though not as enmeshed in the pandemic as the last three – has felt heavy, at least to me. We all need spring, hope, renewal, light and life. The rituals of Pesach and the Seders form an essential part of that – they are cleansing and liberating – the air is fresh. As the poem in our prayer book says, it is eternally Egypt and we – and others – are constantly being freed. This annual cycle gives me hope – I hope it does for you as well. Enjoy the warmth, appreciate the first flowers, the longer days and the greening of the trees.

New Israel series at the synagogue

Israel has been in the news extensively over the last number of months. The leadership is aware that events taking place in Israel may raise questions and concerns from a range of different perspectives.

In this light, the Adult Education Committee has been working on a new series, set in April and May, that focuses on how to have conversations about Israel and Palestine in ways that are constructive, emotionally safe and fruitful. You will be able to read more about this initiative in this April Bulletin and we look forward to your interest and engagement.

GIFT SHOP NEWS

Joanne Margolin

As Passover is almost here, I want to remind you that things are still on sale in the Gift Shop. All of the cards remain at 10¢, and the Seder plates, wash cups, and the beautiful matzah covers are all half-price. We have plenty of haggadahs, including a lovely children's haggadah which is good for the whole family!

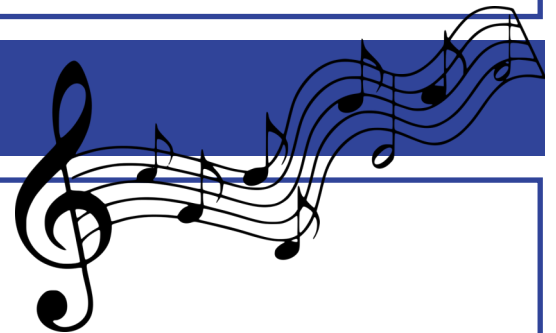
The Gift Shop is available to you any time there's someone in the synagogue office. Please let me know if you have questions or if I can help in any way!

Joanne Margolin

319-351-2181 or jrmargolin@gmail.com

SONG CIRCLE

Join us for an inclusive Song Circle on Shabbat on **Saturday, April 1 at noon!** All are welcome to join after morning services or drop-in for the circle. This is an opportunity to connect with others in the community through music and spirituality, and we look forward to singing with you there! For any questions reach out to Josh Hare: joshnhare@gmail.com.



COVID COMMENTS

Bob Wallace, Barcey Levy, & Jane Zukin

COVID-19 infections are still occurring in the community. While last month the CDC had rated Johnson County at a low level of risk, it is currently (as of Mar. 24th) back up to a risk level of MEDIUM. The number of reported cases in the County is about 12 per day, and on average, about 33 persons are hospitalized with the infection. While the reasons for this are never fully clear, it is possible that the re-opening of schools upon return from spring break is causing some of the increase. Because of this, we are maintaining our current synagogue use recommendations—encouraging mask wearing when entering the synagogue, social distancing, staying away if you are sick for any reason, keeping your current vaccinations up-to-date, etc.

With regard to vaccinations, it's possible that one or a few new vaccines may be appearing in the next few months, although at this writing, they have not been released. These may include protection from the newer Omicron strains and/or recommendations for persons with higher than usual risk of infection, such as those who have problems with immune function. We will keep you apprised as these vaccines appear, but as always, please seek medical advice when deciding on receiving these vaccines. Their release is very likely to be highlighted by local, general news media.

To your health!

IYAR YOGA

Announcing Iyar Yoga: Light, Healing, and Preparation

In this three-session drop-in class, we will join Yogic practices and Jewish wisdom to explore Iyar's themes of light, healing, and preparation. We will come away from each gathering with a simple movement practice that we can add to our daily routine.

Everyone is welcome. No previous Yoga experience necessary! Join us for as many sessions as you like.

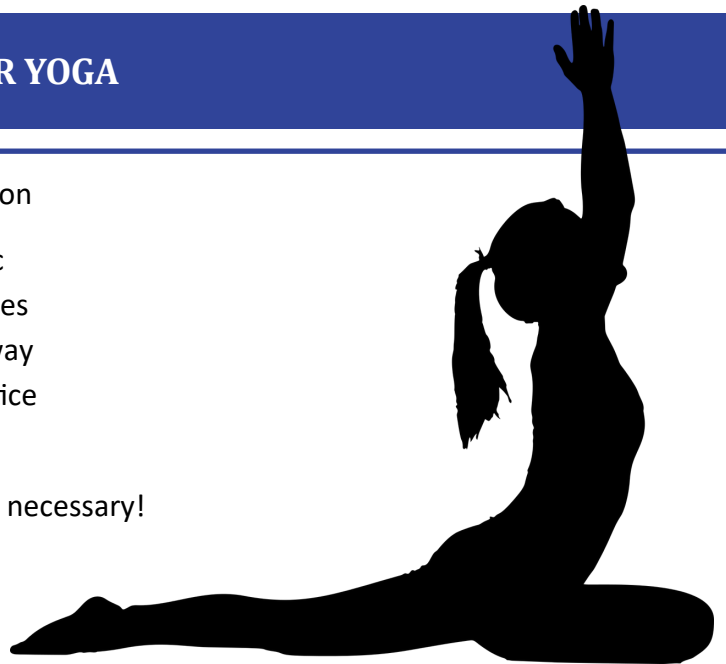
Dates: Sunday April 23rd, Sunday May 7th and Sunday May 14th, all at 2pm (NO class Sunday April 30th - come to the Early Keyboard concert instead!!)

Location: Agudas Achim Congregation, 401 E Oakdale Blvd.

Bring: Yoga mat, large towel, or blanket (optional, but nice to have)

To register: rsvp@agudasachimic.org

For more information: leslea-collins@outlook.com



SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

One of the things that I enjoy most about Purim is that it is always so delightfully homemade.

Hamantaschen! Games that do not beep or flash!
Zero strobe effects! Not a whisp of dried ice!
Balloon animals! We had it all.

It really takes a village to raise a Purim carnival. I am so grateful to everyone who baked or made candy, too many to mention here. Setting up the carnival is an athletic event all its own. We couldn't have done it without David Cunning, Steve Wolcott, Ari, and Logan, who set up the games and tested them. Hadassah and Mira covered the walls with red and white tablecloths to suggest a circus tent. It was a genius idea. The social hall is a huge, empty space where only big, bold decorations make an impact. Unfortunately, while the idea was great, the tape was weak. The tablecloths slid right off the walls overnight. Lori McMann to the rescue! She put the decorations back up while I delt with Sunday School. Naomi Greyser did lovely face paintings for all the kids. Balloon Man Lucas contributed a seemingly endless supply of balloon animals and swords.

Of course, no Purim is complete without a spiel! Hersh Rephun tightened up last year's spiel, and we the old spiel gang got back together! As is traditional, they did not kill the spontaneity of their performance by rehearsing too much. The kids booed Haman with gusto.

After Spring Break, it still felt like Purim to many of the kids. They wanted to twirl their groggers

instead of settling down. But Passover is practically tomorrow, so we hit the ground running, which is to say, chanting. **The two younger classes** practiced the Four Questions with appropriate gestures to represent *hametz* v. *matzah*, *yerakot* v. *marror* not to mention *yoshvin* and *missubin*. We had a lively discussion of what counts as *hametz* and what does not. Many kids were not too sure what yeast is, it turns out. ("Eww. Really?") Judaism is great for teaching so much about the basics of life!

Kitah Gimel, meanwhile, is considering which rain barrel to buy with the \$245.00 they raised from the Purim bake sale. The most excellent of all rain barrels will make the synagogue more sustainable, an act of *tikkun olam* that will benefit our little piece of the planet for years to come.

Kitah Gimel is also working on a unit about Jews in India, which introduces them to a little geography and world history as well as giving them a taste of a different kind of Judaism. Indian Jews are especially devoted to Elijah the Prophet. Even in America, Elijah is a mysterious figure in the Passover seder. The class moved naturally to a discussion of the messiah. They are still debating how to understand the messianic age, whether as something miraculous or humanly achievable.

And so, Purim leads naturally to Passover. Or maybe they are just two sides of the same coin. I wish you all a raucous Passover filled with inspiration, family, and community.

MEETING WITH RABBI HUGENHOLTZ

[We've set up a Calendly link here](#) for setting up meetings automatically with Rabbi Hugenholtz. We are reserving Wednesday and Thursday from 4-6 for B-Mitzvah meetings specifically, but feel free to schedule a meeting with her if you'd like. Meetings can be via Zoom, via telephone, or in person.

A BUDDHIST LENS – ADULT ED EVENT

A Buddhist Lens: April 9 at 12:30 p.m. at the synagogue

We are continuing an adult ed event on the spiritual perspective of Buddhism, led by Naomi Bloom

Buddhism and Judaism appear to have had very little interaction until the 20th Century, but the interface has become fairly robust and quite interesting in recent decades. What is spiritual practice, at its root? Can insights from Buddhism enhance our spiritual practice as Jews? Let's explore these questions by hearing what may be some new ideas, trying out some brief meditations, sharing, and discussing together.

Everyone is welcome. No previous experience with or knowledge of Buddhism is necessary.

4/9/23 at 12:30pm

BEIT MIDRASH ON JEWS, PALESTINIANS, AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Would you like to be part of a learning community grappling with the complex – and so often heartbreaking – issues surrounding Israel?

Lisa Heineman will lead four sessions exploring the topic from the Biblical Era; through the emergence of modern Zionism, statehood, and the post-1967 era; to the crisis in government today.

We'll work with primary documents (with optional at-home reading), and our method will be structured discussion in chevruta (study partnerships). This will not be a lectures series or a debate club. Instead, we'll follow the Jewish tradition of wrestling with the things that are most difficult – and most meaningful – with an attitude of curiosity, moral urgency, and deep engagement with the wisdom of people who bring a wide variety of perspectives and life experiences. Writing exercises will help us to explore our own relationships to the topic, so bring a pen and paper!

The Beit Midrash will be especially rewarding for those who can attend all four sessions, but we'll also welcome drop-ins to single sessions. The series will be in-person only, at Agudas Achim.

We'll gather for lunch at noon and segue from lunch to our Beit Midrash at 12:30. The dates are: **April 23, April 30, May 7, and May 14.**

EARLY KEYBOARD SOCIETY CONCERT

An Early Keyboard Society concert will be held on Sunday, April 30 at 3:00 p.m. featuring Marcia Hadjimarkos, clavichord.



YIDDISH STUDY GROUP

The Yiddish Study Group meets Mondays and Fridays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.

[Contact the office](#) for more information.

WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

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

[Contact the office](#) for information.

WARM UP AMERICA

The members of Warm Up America send Passover greetings. As we know, Passover means spring cleaning. And spring cleaning means discovering items long forgotten. We're hoping that if you find synthetic yarn during spring cleaning, you'll consider donating it to our yarn bins in Agudas Achim. We'll meet again in the social hall on April 2 & 16, and May 7 & 21, 10:30a.m. - noon. We welcome congregants, their family members and friends to help us organize, assemble, and finish the afghans we donate to those in need.

We say that masks are optional, but they may be a good idea because we work together closely.



DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Sue & Ken Blackwell: In memory of Ethel Rothstein and Mark Rothstein

Ray & Lindy Buch: In memory of Allen Buch

Doug & Beverly Jones: Sale of Chametz

Barry London & Linda M. Cadaret: In memory of Edith London and Benjamin London

Bernard Miller & Sonja Hauter: Sale of Chametz

Michelle & William Mueller: Sale of Chametz

Bob & Donna Rodnitzky: In memory of Dorothy Pliner

Nathan Eugene Savin & Susan Enzle: In memory of Reuben Savin and Lucile Potter

Nancy Sprince: In memory of Sari Sprince, Ben Sprince, & Belle Coster

GENERAL GIFTS

Jody & Janie Braverman: In memory of David Braverman, Ellie Breggin, Corrine 'Corky' Miller, Moshe Dovid Richman, Arnold Breggin & LaVerne Siebuhr

Sally Ann Drucker

CEMETERY FUND

Katherine & Dwight Keller: In memory of Corinne Chapman

Sam & Marj Kuperman: In memory of Donia Kuperman

Michael & Joanne Margolin: In memory of Benjamin Hertz

LOUIS GINSBERG YOUTH FUND

Mark & Vickie Ginsberg: In memory of Rose Lee Pomerantz

SIM & SARA STRAUSS MEMORIAL FUND

David & Penny Strauss: In memory of Sara Strauss and Susan Strauss

Richard Strauss & Ellen Herman: In memory of Sara Strauss, William Herman & Anna Markovitz

Stephen Strauss: In memory of Sara Strauss, Anna Markovitz, Dinah Markovitz

LIBRARY NOTES

Teresa Weiner

Passover will be here soon! Since Haggadah means "telling", this is an especially good month to recognize the importance of storytelling

- Your Agudas Achim Libraries have a diverse collection of Haggadot—please stop by, take a look, and borrow! "How is this Haggadah different from all others? It is said that there are more variations of the haggadah than any other Jewish text." (<https://jewishchronicle.timesofisrael.com/how-is-this-haggadah-different-from-all-others/>)
- PJLibrary has free family Haggadot to download, as well as many other wonderful Passover resources for families with young children (<https://pjlibrary.org/haggadah>). And as always,

please consider donating to Agudas Achim's PJLibrary budget.

- More about storytelling at National Geographic's education resource article, "Storytelling and Cultural Traditions", in which the opening image is a family seder! <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/storytelling-and-cultural-traditions/>. Agudas Achim Libraries' thousands of books are a small but mighty sampling of our Jewish culture's stories. Check them out (literally)!
- Library Committee members are Becky Gelman, Rabbi Jeff Portman, Esther Retish, Sonja Spear, and Teresa Weiner. Email us at library@agudasachimic.org.

APRIL 2023

Sat	1	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM	Mon	17	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Song Circle	12:00 PM	Wed	19	Ritual Committee Meeting	7:30 PM
Sun	2	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM	Thur	20	Board Meeting	7:00 PM
		Sunday School	9:15 AM	Fri	21	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
		Warm-Up America	10:30 AM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM			Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
Mon	3	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM	Sat	22	Intergenerational Family Service	9:30 AM
		Pre-Pesach Pizza Party	6:00 PM			Young-ish Jew-ish Group	7:30 PM
Thur	6	Festival Service	9:30 AM	Sun	23	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM
		Second Seder Meal	6:30 PM			Sunday School	9:15 AM
Fri	7	Festival Service	9:30 AM			Beit Midrash	12:00 PM
		Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Iyar Yoga	2:00 PM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM	Mon	24	Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM	Wed	26	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Sat	8	Zabner Torah Service	9:30 AM			Mussar Course	11:00 AM
Sun	9	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM			Free Lunch	11:30 AM
		A Buddhist Lens	12:30 PM			Book Group	1:00 PM
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM	Fri	28	Seniors Group	11:00 AM
Mon	10	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM
Tue	11	Festival Service	6:30 PM			Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM
Wed	12	Festival Service	9:30 AM	Sat	29	Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM
		Mussar Course	11:00 AM	Sun	30	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM
Thur	13	Festival Service	9:30 AM			Beit Midrash	12:00 PM
		Executive Committee Meeting	5:30 PM			Early Keyboard Society Concert	3:00 PM
Fri	14	Yiddish Study Group	10:30 AM			Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM
		Shabbat Schmooze	6:30 PM				
		Shabbat Evening Services	7:00 PM				
Sat	15	Shabbat Morning Services	9:30 AM				
		LGBTQ+ Mimouna	7:30 PM				
Sun	16	Talmud Study Group	9:00 AM				
		Sunday School	9:15 AM				
		Warm-Up America	10:30 AM				
		Dungeons & Dragons Group	3:30 PM				

SYNAGOGUE VENMO

We Have Venmo! Our Venmo account: @AgudasIC. (There are other Agudas Achims out there, so be sure to choose the one with IC at the end.) Since we are a business account, we do have a 2-3% charge on each donation in case you'd like to add a bit more. [You can donate via Venmo at this link.](#)
[We also have Paypal here.](#)

A LIFETIME OF SHABBOS DINNERS

Ray Buch

Reprinted from the Detroit Jewish News

Many perspectives are incorporated into the ways the Sabbath is celebrated. Some people celebrate it as the most important holiday in the Jewish calendar. Some say, since it is the most frequent holiday, it is the most important. Others say because it is the only holiday mentioned in the Ten Commandments, it is therefore the most important. Still others might point to the fact that since an entire book of the Talmud is devoted to the Sabbath, this alone points to its importance. I can't say that I agree or disagree with these educated and intellectual perspectives. What I do know is that my family has regularly celebrated the Sabbath nearly every Friday night of my life. And, because it is something so very special, I have, on my own, celebrated it nearly every week of my life. While it may be true that its specialness is its importance, it seems to me more the other way around. That is, because it is so ordinary and regular, week in and week out, the regularity and very ordinariness is that which makes it so unique. However, even in my lifetime, many of the elements of the celebration have changed. In my grandfathers' homes, the men came home from work as early as possible. They washed and bathed, so they could put on fresh clothes and were ready to sit down for supper as near to sundown as they possibly could. I remember my grandmother lighting the Shabbos candles, gently waving her hands as if beckoning the good spirits into the room. My dad and my uncles sang the prayer welcoming the peace and solemnity of the day of rest, and then the extended Shabbos blessing over the wine. Then there was a succinct "Ha motzi" blessing thanking God for the grain from the earth. Then the orderly mayhem of feeding 14 individuals a three-course chicken dinner with hot tea and dessert. The five baby girls had already been fed, diapered, swaddled and lined up in the hall next to the dining room. The three boys were dismissed to the living room where the eldest tuned in the 14-inch black-and-white TV to I Remember Moma and The Friday Night Fights, all while the grownups sipped their hot tea and argued politics, exchanged

family news and teased one another as they had for the 20-some years they'd been having Shabbos dinner.

THE NEXT GENERATION

When I was 5 or 6, my grandmother's age and infirmity dictated she could no longer prepare such a feast on a weekly basis. Each of the five couples of my mother's sibship held their own very similar Shabbos dinner, diminished mostly in scale. At our house, the major alterations were a few small changes in the melodies of the prayers and blessings, the absence of hot soup during the spring and summer, and the bent of the after-dinner conversation, which mostly meant that my sister and I stayed at the table because there was nothing of redeeming value on TV at that hour. As I grew older, the major changes in Friday night dinner were mostly secular in that we were expected to have opinions during the after-dinner conversations. Conversation ranged from the importance of following directions to the meaning of political parties and from favorite flavors of ice cream to the underlying principles of Kashrut, the Jewish dietary laws. And, rather than the kids retiring to the couch, my father practiced his post-prandial somnolence while we washed and dried the dinner dishes. There wasn't anything novel or unusual about Shabbos dinner. Our Catholic friends ate fish on Friday, and our Protestant friends had Sunday dinner after church. As we entered our teenage years, we learned that permission to attend a dance or social event was highly unlikely to be granted on a Friday evening. In later years, when we were living at school, a call home was expected on Friday evening, and you could expect a thorough grilling if you forgot.

MY OWN SHABBOS DINNERS

Another 10 years further on, on the drive back to Ann Arbor after our honeymoon, my wife, Lindy, and I had a relatively brief but serious discussion about

(Continued on page 14)

A LIFETIME OF SHABBOS DINNERS

Ray Buch (cont.)

(Continued from page 13)

Shabbat dinner. I was surprised to hear myself say, “I can’t quite explain why, but Shabbat dinner is important to me, and I’d like to make it a family time.” This led to a conversation about which rituals and traditions we liked and might include in our own Friday evening rite. It turned out that we both wanted surprisingly similar elements in our own Shabbat ritual. We’d light candles with the candlesticks her mother gave us. We’d sing an abbreviated version of the blessings over the wine and bread. Lindy despised Mogen David concord wine. Initially we did not live near an established Jewish bakery. So, Lindy got in the habit of making our challah bread. The habit became a tradition to the extent that we can count with our fingers the number of Shabbat dinners where we have not had a home-baked challah. And, so within a couple of weeks, we’d found and assembled the pattern of a lifetime of Shabbat dinners. Oh, of course, there have been additions and alterations. Along the way, we found a set of beautiful but basic travel candle holders, so whether we’re canoe camping three days from the nearest road or in Vietnam, we can still

light our Shabbat candles. There was one stretch of time when our kids were in high school that their friends knew our kids could not go out on Friday evening until after Shabbat dinner had concluded. Knowing that we regularly had homemade pie for dessert, their friends would drop by just as dessert was being served. The teenagers got so engrossed in the after-dinner conversation that they stayed at the table talking long after the dishes were done and we had begun thinking about getting ready for bed. Lately, we’ve begun to realize that the Friday evening Shabbat family dinner might have an even longer life-span than we expected. Our children and grandchildren have slowly begun to make it known that they would like to be included in our Shabbat family dinner. Once again, the elements of Friday night Shabbat family dinner are being examined, reformed and adapted to the family we are becoming.

Ray Buch is a retired social worker from Oakland County. He and Lindy split their time living in Iowa City, Iowa, and Berkeley, California, where their kids are raising families. They are about to celebrate their 50th anniversary.

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