



Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241

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www.AgudasAchimIC.org

February 2024 / Shevat-Adar 5784

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

At the synagogue, there is a beautiful display with the history of our congregation, put up by dedicated volunteers. It is still incredible to me that this vibrant, plucky synagogue is over a hundred years old; 106 years old to be exact, deeply woven into the fabric of our city. Time, and its passage, have been on my mind lately as I come close to my seven year anniversary as the rabbi of Agudas Achim and it makes me wistful and grateful: we have been through a lot together as a congregation and have always persevered.

David Lubaroff, our wise and thoughtful President has written a beautiful reflection on the passage of time in his life and the blessings of (s)aging. I am privileged to partner with David every day and to benefit from his menschlikeit. I encourage you to read his reflection since it is a tender and honest one, with a hopeful message at its core. I know these thoughts have been generated for him recently since we both share a birthday month and are a literal 'generation of the wilderness' (40 years) apart.

Time is the most precious of commodities and our tradition knows it well. That is why we Jews mark it obsessively through our calendar and our feast and fast days. Readers of the Monthly Bulletin know that I like talking about the unique features of the Jewish calendar, so please bear with me.

Did you know that this year is a so-called 'shanah me'uberet', a 'pregnant year'? The 'baby' is the intercalated 13th month which the Hebrew calendar

inserts seven times in a 19 year (metonic) cycle in order to integrate solar and lunar rhythms.

What it means in practice is that this year, we have the extra month of Adar II, pushing Purim into March (instead of February) and giving us a glimmer of hope for warmer weather by Pesach. (The downside is that the High Holidays will be late this year, so brace yourselves to get rained on in the sukkah!)

All this to say: we have time. Extra time; a delightful luxury. This additional month of Adar gives us an extended 'late winter/early spring' season of relative quiet before we start planning our Pesach seders. Which, in turn, is a wonderful opportunity to do other great things in community life during this seasonal 'lull'. As the days grow longer and milder, we at Agudas Achim are rolling out great programming both at the synagogue and downtown and I'm excited to tell you about it.

What many of you may not know is that in the Spring of 2023, I was accepted into a selective, national fellowship for 'mid-career' rabbis (talking about the passage of time!) who are committed to create thriving and innovative communities. This fellowship is called 'CLI' (Clergy Leadership Incubator) and involves mentorship, retreats, cohort learning, the theory of community building, and an innovation project. My innovation project looks to build on what I have been doing quietly for many years: developing a downtown presence in

(Continued on page 2)

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Iowa City in parallel with the beautiful campus we have in Coralville. This symbiotic relationship will help us bind our synagogue community together, reach new and previously unaffiliated people, and provide opportunities for members to connect with us in a different environment. All this to say: watch this space.

Meanwhile, as I am preaching two (more) sermons on the present and future of synagogue life (I've already included a sermon exploring synagogue history: see elsewhere in the bulletin), this is an excellent opportunity for our leadership, both rabbinic and lay, to partner with our membership and draw close to each other in these complex times. To that end, we are organizing some of the following programs. See the Adult Education report for full details.:

Facilitation sessions (at the synagogue): We are organizing more facilitation sessions on the Israel-Gaza crisis. We piloted the program with a single session and it fulfilled a clear need in our community. This has led the Adult Education Committee to organize at least three more sessions with a new facilitator who is able to create a long-term relationship with the facilitated group.

Special service February 24 (at the synagogue), followed by Havdalah and bowling at The Chauncey: It's a bit awkward for me to write about this, but I am delighted and honored that a service is being organized to celebrate my (nearly) seven years with Agudas Achim. It's my birthday weekend (hence the date) and there will be nosh and good cheer. Please join us! Later that evening, we will make Havdalah and sing at Fix Coffee Shop and then go bowling/enjoy drinks at Spare Me in The Chauncey building downtown. (for more details, see elsewhere in the bulletin).

Adult Torah Learning (in February, at the synagogue): Do you want to grow your 'synagogue

skills,' like understanding the ritual of a traditional Jewish service, leading prayers, and perhaps even reading Torah? We have a new course taught by the Rabbi and the Principal. It will be an excellent way to deepen your connection to ancient tradition and make it meaningful in our own experience.

Big Ideas Book Club (in April, at Iowa City Public Library): are you trying to make sense of your Jewish place in the world today? Be inspired and challenged by two 'counterpoint' texts to help us in the present moment: 'People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present' by beloved novelist and author Dana Horn and 'The Necessity of Exile: Essays from a Distance' by well-known academic and rabbi Shaul Magid. If you want to participate in these sessions, you are welcome to order the books and get started.

We will have a Megillah reading for Purim, as well as a Sunday School Shpiel and Carnival at the synagogue, and, for the first time, a 'LGBTQI+ Purim Party' at a downtown club. Lots of Adult Education sessions coming up from both lay teachers and myself: on the Free Lunch Program, on Death and Mourning (taught by myself), on how to make hamantaschen and spiritual journaling for Purim and the Omer Period. With the weather warming up, I am also making plans to be available for regular downtown coffee meetings with congregants and celebrating what this beautiful city and community have to offer.

Time is a remarkable thing. Here we are, almost seven years later. Rising antisemitism, COVID, and geopolitical turmoil notwithstanding, we will continue to root ourselves in all the beautiful things Jewish life in Iowa City and Coralville has to offer. Agudas Achim is your home-away-from-home, be it in our light and modern sanctuary, over coffee at Bread Garden, or at the Iowa City Public Library. There are many more adventures to come.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

David Lubaroff

I have chosen an unusual topic for my monthly message – age. The age of the presumed presidential candidates is 80 and 77 and is the topic of whether either of them can function as effective leaders at their ages and continue for four years, making them 84 and 81. The subject is important to me. It has been said, even before I agreed to become president-elect, that I am too old to lead a synagogue congregation and I am crazy for wanting to be the president. Just because I am old does not mean I am less competent than someone 10 or 20 years younger. Age is more than a number; more important is the physical and mental health of an individual. Is the person active or frail, mentally adept or hesitant, able to think coherently, to make decisions, and have stamina? Some in their 80s can be frail, forgetful, or they can be as strong in all of these characteristics as he/she were when they were 10 or 20 years younger.

Research and publications from the Brookings Institute address the challenges and promises of productive aging. They conclude that “The aging process is characterized by plasticity. The term plasticity refers to the potential to change in response to one’s experiences. Research suggests that specific activities can affect the rate of change for some abilities. For example, regular exercise affects physical functioning. Research also shows the neuroplasticity of the brain and its ability to change with experience over time.”


The National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) asks the question: “What is productive aging?” It is an approach that emphasizes the positive aspects of growing older. It recognizes how individuals can make important contributions to their own lives, their communities, organizations, and society. The aging process is multidirectional and involves both losses and gains. As individuals age, some aspects of functioning may decline, while others may improve or stay the same. For example, physical stamina slowly decreases with age, but accrued knowledge or “wisdom” tends to increase.

There is an age diversity in any working environment. Older people are benefitted by working alongside those younger than he/she. The reverse is also true so that the diversity works better when the knowledge and experiences of the older individuals benefits the younger and the energy and incite young people improves the productivity of the elderly. The latter is particularly important for new knowledge and methods of which the older person may not be familiar with. I have personally benefitted by working in concert with those younger than me. Our current board of directors is very diverse with respect to age, experience, and knowledge. I have learned much from our interactions and our diversity has benefitted the synagogue.

Three stages of life are recognized: school, work, retirement. In the current work environment this sequential model has given way to a more flexible model where learning, leisure, work, and caring takes place across our whole life. This better accommodates transitions during longer careers.

Turning back to “old” me; I became an Emeritus Professor (“retired”) at 78 years of age but am still very active. I am the Founder and Chief Scientific Officer for a startup company to enable me to continue my cancer immunology research; I continue to obtain training grants to fund summer cancer research programs for underrepresented minority students; and I continue my love for Agudas Achim by serving on many boards and as the current president of the board of directors. I benefit from my interactions with the diverse board, our rabbi, our religious school principal, and the office staff, all younger than I am. It is a synergy that benefits us all.

So, I ask of you to see me, or any older person, not as biologically old but as a partner in our quest to be the best synagogue in which to pray, learn, and socialize.

A decorative border made of watercolor-style illustrations of green leaves and small white flowers, framing the text on the page.

You Are Invited
To a Shabbat Service and Luncheon
To Honor and Show Appreciation for

Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

Saturday, February 24, 2024
Agudas Achim Congregation
401 E Oakdale Blvd
Coralville, Iowa

The luncheon will begin at approximately 12 noon in the Social Hall. If you wish to attend the Reform Shabbat service, it begins at 9:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

Please join us to show our appreciation for the kind, steadfast, passionate, and inspiring leader we call Rabbi Esther.

Please RSVP no later than Thursday, February 15 to rsvp@agudasachimic.org.

Childcare will be available.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

In a further attempt to keep the Agudas Achim Congregation informed of actions and events in the synagogue we are beginning a monthly report on one of the standing committees. These committees are: Adult Education, Membership, Religious School, Ritual, Social, Tikun Olam, and Youth.

The report for February is the Adult Education Committee, Chaired by Lisa Heineman.

Adult Education Committee – 2023

Adult Ed organized several events toward the end of year:

1. November 5: Conversation on “What’s the Campus Environment for Jewish Students?” led by Lisa Heineman. 3 attendees (plus the Rabbi and Lisa).
2. November 12: Guided tour of exhibit “Hi I’m Bill” at UI Library Gallery, organized by Rachael Carlson. 13 attendees with special comments by Rabbi Jeff.
3. December 1: Oneg session on History of Hanukkah Games, led by Doug Jones. Ca 12 attendees.
4. December 16: Facilitated session on Israel, led by Prof. Barry Schreier. There were 16 attendees, who expressed a desire to continue such programming.

Preliminary plans for several winter/spring events:

- Biblical Hebrew / Siddur / Torah study group to begin in January. We had 2 preliminary meetings with potential participants in December and will nail down a (probably) biweekly time for in-person meetings.
- Feb 2 Oneg – Kai Kaiser will speak about hunger in JoCo and ICCSD Free Lunch Program (joint programming with Tikun Olam)
- Doug Jones will present an Oneg (date TBD) on Iowa Jewish History

- Following up on our visit to the “Hi I’m Bill” exhibit at the UI Library, we are planning a series on Disability and Jewish Life. It will include some or all of the following:
 - ◊ Screening & discussion of the documentary film “A Friend Indeed: The Bill Sackter Story”
 - ◊ Discussion (Oneg?) by Chuck Friedman on Jewish Institutions and Disability
 - ◊ Text study led by Corvin Green or Lisa Heineman
 - ◊ Screening & discussion of the film “Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution,” regarding the life of Jewish “mother of the disability rights movement,” Judy Heumann (1947-2023)
- Curator-guided museum visits, including one or both:
 - ◊ UI Library exhibit “Making the Book, Past and Present,” which includes artwork inspired by the Cairo Geniza
 - ◊ Tour of Stanley Museum of Art, with special attention to Jewish-related artworks
- Spiritual Writing for Tu B’Shvat, Purim, and Omer, led by Corvin Green
- Talks by scholars of Sephardic Medieval History Dr. Isaac Amon and Dr. Jesus Jambrina. Both are also active in Sephardic Heritage Work (eg tracing ancestry, tourism, issues surrounding Spanish citizenship). Hosted by the University of Iowa April 8-10; we are consulting on a synagogue-based event.
- Shavuot all-nighter June 7-8
- Visit to the LGBTQI+ Archive at the Close House in conjunction with Pride in June.

ADULT EDUCATION UPCOMING EVENTS

Lisa Heineman

Big news! This month we'll inaugurate our Adult Learners' Group. You can think of this initiative as "After Intro to Judaism – Then What?" Guided by Rabbi Hugenholtz and Principal Sonja Spear, we'll split our time between language learning and other study, beginning with a deep dive into liturgy.

We'll meet in person on alternate Mondays from 6:00-7:00 p.m., beginning on February 12. If you're interested in joining the class, contact Lisa at lisa.heineman.1945@gmail.com.

We'll also have another set of Facilitated Discussions on Israel, following up on the terrific resonance of our December session. Please see the separate article about this series elsewhere in the Bulletin.

Other programming for February includes:

February 9: Oneg talk by Kai Kiser on the Free Lunch Program, in collaboration with Tikkun Olam

February 16: Oneg talk by Doug Jones on Jewish Iowa History

February 17: Facilitated discussion on Israel, 12:30-2:00 p.m., after the Shabbat Morning Service

And planning ahead (with detail to be announced):

March 2: Facilitated discussion on Israel, 12:30-2:00 p.m., after the Shabbat Morning Service

March 3: Hamentashen-baking session led by Charles Packard (You can freeze them!)

March 22: Spiritual journaling for Purim led by Corvin Greene. We're going to move our spiritual journaling sessions to Friday evenings before services – a warm-up to get into the mood for Shabbat.

March 30: The first of two **sessions on death, dying, and mourning in a Jewish context**, led by the Rabbi. March 30 will be dedicated to the topic of death and mourning, and a subsequent session will focus on the Chevra Kadisha – the 'holy society' that provides dignified care for the deceased in accordance with Jewish law, custom, and tradition.

April 3: Big Ideas in Jewish Books at ICPL. We'll discuss Dana Horn's People Love Dead Jews.

April 6: The second of two **sessions on death, dying and mourning**

April 14: Curator-guided tour of Making the Book: Past and Present at the UI Library Gallery – including a piece inspired by the Cairo Geniza

April 17: Big Ideas in Jewish Books at ICPL. We'll discuss Shaul Magid's The Necessity of Exile. Unless otherwise indicated, all events are at the synagogue.

FROM THE CARING COMMITTEE

Nancy Goldsmith, Susan Lutgendorf, & Teresa Weiner

Agudas Achim's Caring Committee coordinates volunteers to support members of our congregation and community. Volunteers offer comfort, connection, and assistance through participation in Meal Trains, in-person and phone visits, providing rides, making deliveries, and other ways of reaching out to each other.

May we add you to our volunteer list? Please email your contact information to us!

Can our volunteers help you? Don't hesitate to ask— just email your request to us!

Contact us at caring@agudasachimic.org

JANUARY ONEG HOSTS

Thank you to January oneg hosts!

Sue Weinberg & Robert Armstrong; Lisa Heineman

If you'd like to sponsor an oneg, contact the office!

MAHJONGG

Join us for Mahjongg from 2-4 P.M. in the synagogue. Bring a Mahjongg card if you have one. Please RSVP to the listed host for each date.

February 11 2-4 pm hosted by Karen
February 18 2-4 pm hosted by Corvin

[RSVP to Corvin](#)

[RSVP to Karen](#)



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.

NEW DISPLAY OPENS

Please enjoy a new display in the synagogue history foyer case "Agudas Achim Leaders - The First Hundred Years 1857 -1957" You'll see photos and information about the earliest few members of the Jewish community in Iowa City, photos of the first and second synagogues which were both torn down long ago, and meet some of the our early rabbis, the first Jewish members of the UI Department of Religion, and the development of the pre-Hillel Jewish student organizations. Questions? Please contact Jane Zukin.



SYNAGOGUE DIRECTORY

We've made the decision to move the publishing of our synagogue directory to the summer months going forward. This does apply to this year's directory. We'll send out requests for database updates and information about advertising in the directory when the time comes.

LOST AND FOUND



Missing something? Your coats, books, board games, toys and more miss you as well! Please check out the lost and found shelf near the coat area the next time you are at the synagogue.

MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to Rabbi Hugenholtz, the Membership Committee and Social Committee for help with New Member Shabbat and all those who brought food for the luncheon.



SHABBAT SERVICES

[Streaming link for Zoom Shabbat services](#)

Yitro <i>(Exodus 18:1-20:23)</i>	Friday, February 2 Saturday, February 3	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative) Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Mishpatim <i>(Exodus 21:1-24:18)</i>	Friday, February 9 Saturday, February 10	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Terumah <i>(Exodus 25:1-27:19)</i>	Friday, February 16 Saturday, February 17	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Lev Shalem
Tetzaveh <i>(Exodus 27:20-30:10)</i>	Friday, February 23 Saturday, February 24	7:00 p.m. 9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah Service Honoring Rabbi Hugenholtz (Reform)

FEBRUARY YAHREZEITS

Charlotte Bernstein	Bertha Graber	Rose Lee Pomerantz
Eleanor Blauner	Vera Gutierrez	Louis Rosenbaum
Fannie Saltzman Braverman	Patricia Hass	Mark Rosenthal
Arnie Breggin	Jacob Horowitz	Sanford G. Rossen
Elizabeth Buch	Doris Johansen	Mary Saletta
Helen Chazanoff	Maurice Joselson	Gertrude Sandler
Donald Cohn	Sydney Josselson	Sam Skorton
Mike Donner	Allen Kraft	Goldie Solganick
Sara Dorfman	Lillian Kraft	Gladys Paul Spiller
Sol Elster	Betty Krantz	Gittel Tepper
Edith Davidson Estin	Albert Lubaroff	Wayne VanArendonk
Betty Fingert Freedman	Arthur Margolin	Pat Vunderink
Louis Friedman	Samuel Markovitz	Maynard "Moe" Whitebook
Sadie Friedman	Patrick McEwen	Alan Widiss
Judith Goldfein	Abraham Miller	Ralph Wingo
Samuel Goldman	Bess Millstein	Earl Yanney
Harley William Goodman	Joann Sprinkman Picard	

ONEG HOSTS NEEDED IN FEBRUARY!

We need your help with Friday night onegs!

The past 6 months we have enjoyed a wide variety of delicious onegs hosted by various congregants. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Having hosted onegs has built a sense of community and encouraged people to remain after services and chat, schmooze, and get to know each other.

We want to continue this tradition, but we need your help.

If everyone is willing to host one oneg a year we will fill our calendar to overflowing. Please consider signing up to host an oneg.

It's easier than it sounds; a written guide is emailed with your sign-up confirmation, there is not much clean-up needed, and we are always available to help. Co-hosts are welcome, invite a friend to join you! If you are unable to physically attend services, you may also financially sponsor an oneg (minimum suggested donation is \$36) and the oneg committee will shop, set up, and clean up your oneg.

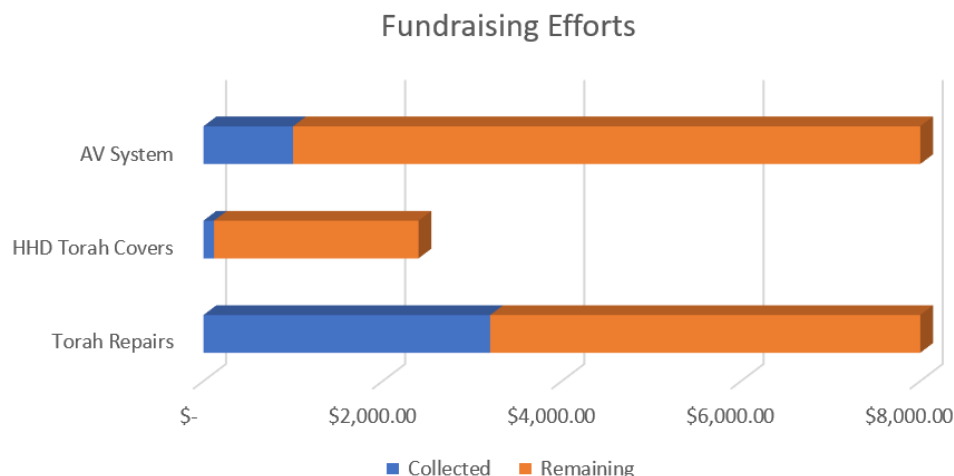
Please contact the office secretary@agudasachimic.org, Sue Weinberg sueiniowa@gmail.com, or Ari Levin arielmlevin@gmail.com with any questions.

[Sign up here!](#)



CONGREGATIONAL NEEDS FUNDRAISER

From time to time our congregation has needs that you may have a special passion for helping to provide to our space. In an effort to ensure our stability as a congregation, feel free to donate to these "smaller" important needs, as you are able. We will be noting our progress (transparently) each month to monitor where we are in reaching these goals! Note: \$2400 was previously in the Torah fund and is included here under Torah Repairs.



SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

Tu Bishvat in January always requires a leap of the imagination. It is hard to celebrate trees in their full glory when the trees are leafless trunks standing in two feet of snow. When I learned that the heat in the school wing of the synagogue was out, I could feel that ten-below chill settling into my bones. I pictured all my little students turning to icicles and considered cancelling until spring.

But if there is one advantage to having lived through the pandemic, it's that I know how to hold school without classrooms.

School met in the Social Hall. Some students never took off their coats, but we still had a great time!

We began with Camp Herzl's presentation. (Hats off to the brilliant Toe Collins, who somehow conjured Herzl's video on our video screen.) The camp's representative gave the bag of camp swag to me instead of passing it out to the kids, for which I was incredibly grateful. Now I had a prize, so naturally I organized a treasure hunt.

The older kids rushed around the synagogue, following my clues to find the Tree of Life motif in pictures and on books. My idea was to lure the kids to read the line in Proverbs, "She's a tree of life to those who hold fast to her, and all who support her are happy." Then, they would have a lightbulb moment and locate the prayer that quotes that verse, thereby identifying the Torah as the Tree of Life.

They foiled my efforts by following the clues out of order! But, eventually, they came to the Tanakh. They learned how to find a book, a chapter, and a verse in its pages. As for the Tree of Life, well, obviously it was the Torah. (My work is finished here. Almost.)

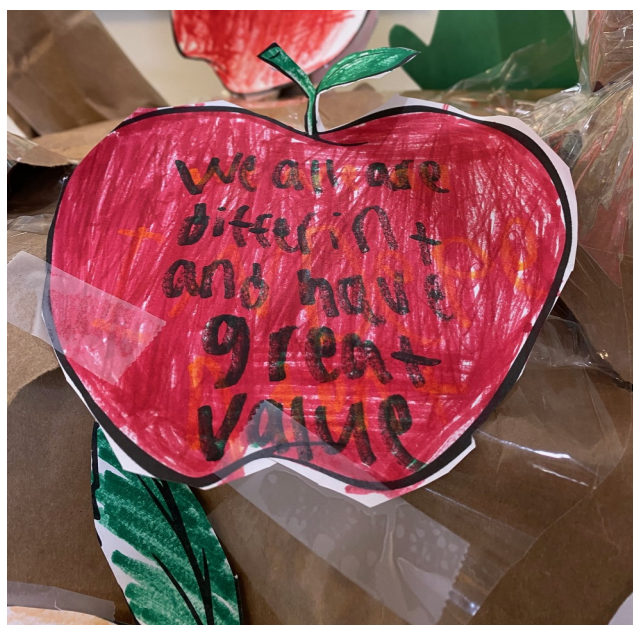
Meanwhile, the younger kids made cupcakes to celebrate the birthday of the trees. As they mixed the batter, they talked about trees, which give us shade, oxygen, and fruit. With a little prompting, they also talked about family trees.

While the cupcakes cooled, the whole school got together to build a tree out of paper bags. This turned out to be an engineering feat requiring many experiments before a very brown and stubby tree took shape. (It looked a lot like the trees outside.) The younger kids colored paper apples to hang on the tree. Older kids wrote mitzvot, values, and wishes on paper cutouts of fruit and hung these as well.

The rabbi held a very brief Tu Bishvat seder, including various blessings over many different kinds of dried fruit. (Chocolate-covered coconuts proved popular.) We frosted the the cup cakes and had a birthday feast in honor of the trees.

At the end of the day, we danced with the Torah, celebrating the Tree of Life. The little kids learned a Tu Bishvat round, which they taught to the big kids. Between the prayers and the round, the kids learned the words etz (tree), chayyim (life), pri (fruit), and boreh (creator). The older kids heard the word Tanakh for the first time.

We didn't raise the temperature in the synagogue much, but we had a great time. Maybe spring is around the corner.



WARM UP AMERICA

Warm Up America will meet on Sundays, Feb 4 and 18, 10:30-noon in the social hall. We invite you to join us, to schmooze or to help, no skill set required. Hoping to see you then.



CAMP HERZL VISIT

Camp Herzl came to Sunday School to talk to the kids about Jewish Summer camp.



HAVDALAH CITY SONG & BOWLING

Sing! Eat! Play! Bowl!

On Saturday night, February 24th, come join the fun with a downtown song-filled Havdalah at Fix Coffee Shop, (2nd floor space above Filmscene).

We will gather at 7 pm for approx. 20-30 minutes of song as we say goodbye to Shabbat and then go to Spare Me for bowling, games and food.

First drink and one bowling lane is on the synagogue.

COVID COMMENTS+

Bob Wallace, Barcey Levy, & Jane Zukin

The respiratory virus season (cough, fever, sore throat) is still with us, and, as children have gone back to school after MLKing Day, many experts believe that more outbreaks are on the way. The best prevention is still vaccination. Testing kits for COVID-19 are still available and sometimes at no cost. You should check your doctor's office or local pharmacy or grocery stores that have pharmacies for availability. You could also contact the Johnson County Dept. of Health (johnsoncountyiowa.gov/department-of-public-health; or call 319-356-6040). For the past two months, a new COVID-19 viral strain is causing most of those cases in the US, and nationally case rates are still increasing. Activity levels in the Johnson County area not clear at this time (Jan. 20, 2024), but they could easily change. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, CDC continues to recommend that you take the anti-viral medicine for five days. Please see your doctor or pharmacist about obtaining this medicine and its safe use. Flu and RSV virus rates are still occurring, as are other respiratory infections. Effective vaccines for RSV and influenza virus are available.

To Your Health!

LIBRARY NEWS

Teresa Weiner

The Jewish Book Council was founded in 1943 and “is the longest-running organization devoted exclusively to the support and celebration of Jewish literature” (<https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org>). The Council has announced this year’s winners of the annual National Jewish Book Awards (see below for some of the winners). Agudas Achim’s library strives to maintain a wide selection of classic as well as contemporary books, but only one of these award winners is currently in our collection. Kindly consider donating to the Library fund to help us continue adding books for your reading pleasure and learning!

Jewish Book of the Year:

[Time’s Echo: The Second World War, the Holocaust, and the Music of Remembrance](#) - Jeremy Eichler

Fiction:

[The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store](#) - James McBride

Modern Jewish Thought and Experience:

[The Eleventh Plague: Jews and Pandemics from the Bible to COVID-19](#) - Jeremy Brown

Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice:

[Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole](#) - Julia Watts Belser

Scholarship:

[Fractured Tablets: Forgetfulness and Fallibility in Late Ancient Rabbinic Culture](#) - Mira Balberg

Food Writing & Cookbooks:

[Kibbitz & Nosh: When We All Met at Dubrow’s Cafeteria](#) - Marcia Bricker Halperin

Sephardic Culture:

[Kantika](#) - Elizabeth Graver

American Jewish Studies:

[Walkers in the City: Jewish Street Photographers of Mid-century New York](#) - Deborah Dash Moore

Women’s Studies:

[Between Two Worlds: Jewish War Brides after the Holocaust](#) - Robin Judd

Poetry:

[When There Was Light](#) - Carlie Hoffman

Children’s Picture Book:

[Two New Years](#) - Richard Ho, Lynn Scurfield, illus.

Middle Grade Literature:

[The Dubious Pranks of Shaindy Goodman](#) - Mari Lowe

Young Adult Literature:

[The Blood Years](#) - Elana K. Arnold

FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS ON ISRAEL

December's facilitated discussion on Israel resonated deeply with participants. (See Naomi Greysor's coverage in the January Bulletin.) Those who attended enthusiastically recommended more sessions, and we've heard from congregants who would have liked to attend had it not been for scheduling conflicts.

And so we're planning three sessions to be facilitated by Dr. Holly A. Davis, Director of Clinical Services at University Counseling Service. Dr. Davis brings years of experience in group facilitation.

In order to form a trusting community, we hope those interested will attend the first session and then deepen their conversations in subsequent sessions. We do understand, of course, that scheduling conflicts may interfere with this ideal, and our first priority is to ensure that *everyone* has the opportunity to discuss Israel in a safe, confidential setting. In order to encourage open conversation, neither the Rabbi nor the Adult Ed Chair (Lisa Heineman) will be present.

These gatherings will provide an opportunity to give voice to your story: your feelings, your experiences, your viewpoints, and your reactions. The gathering will use an Open Process model where participants are invited to share their story, listen to the stories of others, and create a space where each participant's story is heard without correction. Listening to the stories of others is as important as telling our own story. We will adhere to the Circle of Trust Touchstones ([click here to view](#)) to provide a receptive space for engaging.

Our first two sessions will be **February 17** and **March 2** from 12:30-2 or 2:30. During the second session, participants will discuss the optimal timing of the third session.

LIFE CYCLE EVENTS

The congregation extends our condolences to Rody Gessner and Michelle Edwards on the loss of Myron Gessner.

SENIORS GROUP

The Synagogue Seniors will meet from 11 am to 1 pm Thursday, February 15 in the Social Hall. This month's brunch gathering will feature a presentation by Ellie Herman, who began coaching girl's upper elementary and junior high athletic teams in 1972 when Title IX legislation was implemented. Later, while working toward a PhD degree at the University of Iowa, Ellie began scoring for women's volleyball as well as spotting and scoring for women's basketball, activities she continued throughout the years when she was the Coordinator of Field Experiences in the UI College of Education and beyond her 2016 retirement until today. We hope you will join us!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES IN ISRAEL

Jayne Sandler

As some of you may know, I was to go to Israel and volunteer to fill the void left when citizens had to leave their homes and jobs to defend Israel. Iowa weather prevented that. Because there continues to be the need and opportunities in Israel to volunteer, I have rescheduled my JNF-USA (Jewish National Fund) Volunteer Mission to mid-March. Those that have made the journey have said that it is life changing for them and not like any trip they have taken. I want to encourage others that there

are many opportunities that are subsidized to help the people of Israel in the sustaining and rebuilding of our Jewish homeland. We might even consider getting a group together to share this experience. If you are interested in finding out more, please feel free to contact me at Jayne Sandler, 319.331.9934 or click on the link below for www.jnf.org/volunteeril or checkout and follow the Facebook group, Volunteer Israel. Am Israel Chai!

LGBTQI+ GROUP

Adrien Kaplan is taking over leadership of the LGBTQI+ group– welcome Adrien!

The LGBTQI+ group will be hosting a queer Purim party on Saturday, March 23rd, at 9:30pm (after the Megillah reading) at Studio 13 in Iowa City. This will be an opportunity to shmooze, watch drag performances, and enjoy holding space as queer individuals and allies! We will be reserving a booth, meaning a bottle of champagne, for us to kick off the night.

Studio 13 is an age 19+ gay bar located at 13 S. Linn St #1, Iowa City, IA

Info regarding reserving a booth at Studio 13:

<https://www.icnightlife.com/product-page/vip-booth-reservation>

For more information or to join the group, please contact Adrien Kaplan-Mazur (he/they) at aydiakaplan@gmail.com

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

We would like to thank those who contributed food to make the New Member Kiddush luncheon such a delicious success: Karen Charney, Mallory Hellman, Beverly Jones, Meyer Lehman, Ari Levin, David & Martha Lubaroff, Lori McMann, Joan Nashelsky, Hannah Sandler, Jayne Sandler, and Sue Weinberg. (It was wonderfully hosted by the Membership Committee!)

Save the date for an upcoming Shabbat Dinner (prior to services), 6:00 p.m. Friday March 29, 2024, provided by the Social Committee! We hope you can all join us, and you will be encouraged to RSVP (so we can plan appropriately for food). Watch for more details in March!

BUDDY SYSTEM

Agudas Achim Buddy System

A famous rabbinic saying (Pirkei Avot 1:7) states: ‘U’k’nei lecha chaver’ - ‘and make for yourself a friend’. Friendship and peer-to-peer relationships are the foundation of Jewish community life and Agudas Achim is looking to strengthen these.

Our synagogue community has a ‘good problem’ - our membership is growing! With new members, come new opportunities to get to know each other and make each other feel welcome in the community. At the same time, we want to honor and take care of our longstanding members without whom our community would not exist. They too may want to reconnect with fellow members in new ways.

With this in mind, we are launching the Agudas Achim ‘Buddy System’. What is the ‘Buddy System’? A ‘buddy’ commits to a minimum of three engagements with their assigned friend: 1) a phone call, 2) a coffee date, 3) a (Shabbat) dinner invite. This limited, timebound commitment makes it easy for you to sign up and create new relationships. Of course, you can remain someone’s buddy for much longer than this!

Likewise, if you want to receive a buddy as a member of the congregation, please sign up. We will assign you a buddy for these three engagements. If you enjoyed connecting to your buddy and want to become a buddy in turn for someone else, let us know! Looking forward to all of us acquiring new friendships in our beautiful Jewish community.

Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz and the Membership Committee (Karen Lipman, Jane Zukin, Nate Mullin, Karen Charney, Shawna Levy and Chuck Friedman)

If interested, complete and mail to Agudas Achim, or email to rsvp@agudasachimic.org.

☐ I want to be a buddy

Name	Contact info

☐ I want to receive a buddy

Name	Contact info

HAVDALAH

Bowling

Join us at Fix Coffee Shop for a brief song session saying goodbye to Shabbat, followed by bowling at Spare Me. 1st drink on the synagogue.



rsvp@agudasachimic.org

24 FEB, 2024 - 7:00PM

Havdalah: Fix Coffee Shop above FilmScene
Bowling: Spare Me Cafe, Chauncey Building, Iowa City
rsvp's = helpful but come as you are!

Join Us!

Agudas Achim Synagogue Seniors

THURSDAY February 15
11 AM TO 1 PM
SOCIAL HALL

*The Synagogue Seniors will meet from 11 am to 1 pm Thursday, February 15 in the Social Hall. This month's brunch will feature a presentation by Ellie Herman, who began coaching girl's athletic teams in 1972 when Title IX legislation was implemented. Later, while working toward a PhD at the University of Iowa, Ellie began score-keeping for women's volleyball as well as spotting and score-keeping for women's basketball, activities she continues today. We hope you will join us! Bring your questions for Ellie. **PLEASE RSVP BY Monday, February 12 so we can plan for brunch. Reserve your spot by emailing: janezukin@gmail.com***

Coffee, Conversation, and a Nosh

- However you define "seniors" is up to you
- Bring a friend
- Make a new friend
- Group meets third Thursday of the month
- To reserve your spot, email: janezukin@gmail.com



Jeanne Cadoret - Phyllis Petchers - Jane Zukin

Please RSVP to janezukin@gmail.com.

DONATIONS

CEMETERY FUND

Jack Snider: In Memory Of Herman Snider

Rich Haendel: In Memory Of Goldene Haendel

Sam and Marj Kuperman: In Memory Of Boris Kuperman

FINE ARTS FUND

Dick and Nancee Blum: In Memory Of David Blum Garden & Landscaping Fund

Carrie Z. Norton: In Memory Of Morris Ziskind

GENERAL FUND

Constance and David Berman: In Memory Of Doris Hoffman

Loretta Fingert: In Memory Of Gary Fingert

Jody and Janie Braverman: In Memory Of LaVerne Siebuhr & Arnie Breggin

Irwin and Pat Levin: In Memory Of Harry Levin & Sol Elster

Linda Kerber: In Memory Of Pauline Kerber and Sylvia Kaufman

Kathy Jacobs

Michael Huber: In Memory Of Gary Fingert

Joshua and Jennifer Gersten

JoAnn and Robert Miller

Jeff and Janet Weingarten

David and Martha Lubaroff: In Honor of Linda Kerber's Bat Mitzvah

PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Susan Groff-VanArendonk: In Memory Of Wayne VanArendonk

Victor Landweber: In Memory Of Louis Landweber

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Gary and Judy Galluzzo: In Memory Of Char Bernstein

Ray and Lindy Buch: In Memory Of Joyce Schiller
Len Sandler, Lucy David, Hannah Sandler and family: In Memory Of Gertrude Sandler

Jeffrey Whitebook: In Memory Of Janet Whitebook

Bob and Donna Rodnitzky: In Memory Of Nathan Rodnitzky

Jonathan and Susan Simon: In Memory of Our Parents

Steve and Barcey Levy: In Memory Of Ruth Levy

SAFETY FUND

Sanctuary Community Church

Second Century Fund

Richard and Phyllis Braverman

Sim & Sara Strauss Memorial Fund

Richard Strauss and Ellie Herman: In Memory Of Isaac Strauss & Simeon Strauss

Steven Strauss: In Memory Of Meyer Markovitz

TIKUN OLAM FUND

Loretta Fingert: In Memory Of Betty Fingert Freedman

TORAH ENHANCEMENT FUND

Bernie Miller & Sonja Hauter: In Memory Of Abraham Miller

NEW JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Great news: Beginning in fall, 2024, undergraduates at UI can earn a Certificate in Jewish Studies. Congregant Lisa Heineman was half of the team that developed the program, which has been years in the making. Students can take courses ranging from The Hebrew Bible to Jews, Judaism, and Social Justice; from Film and Literature of the Holocaust to Global Jewish History. We're glad to have this addition to UI's curriculum!



IOWA CITY FREE LUNCH

Join Fellow Congregants at Iowa City Free Lunch

On **Wednesday, February 21**, Agudas Achim will be joining the [Iowa City Free Lunch Program](https://iowacityfreelunch.org/), cooking and serving fresh food alongside other members of the community. We are looking for volunteers to arrive at Free Lunch at 9:30, help cook/prepare the food in the Free Lunch kitchen, and serve lunch to community members in need. Volunteers can expect the experience to end at about 1:30.

If you are interested in signing up, please click here: <https://iowacityfreelunch.org/>. You will receive an email with more detailed information once you are signed up. Carpools with other congregants are available, and spouses/family members are welcome.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

JANUARY BOARD MINUTES

January board meeting minutes can be found [here](#).

CLARIFICATION OF EXTERNAL INVITATION

Some of our congregants received or are aware of an email invitation to attend a recurring monthly “*Hawkeye Minyan*.” We simply wanted to clarify that this event and all future events associated with it are not associated with, or sponsored by, Agudas Achim.

AGUDAS ACHIM CELEBRATES FOODIE FEBRUARY

The Agudas Achim tikkun olam committee is proud to announce a partnership with Think Iowa City for their annual [Foodie February](#) “Fill-anthropy” event. Throughout the month of February, Think IC will be gathering donations of non-perishable foods to be distributed among our area’s three food banks: CommUnity (IC), the North Liberty Community Pantry, and the Coralville Community Food Pantry.

Please make your donations between **February 1 and February 28** by leaving a box or bag of donated goods in the Agudas Achim lobby. Think Iowa City has identified need for the following items:

Thanks in advance for your contribution!

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--|
| · Canned fruit | · Pasta | · Canned meats |
| · Rice | · Soups | · Canned vegetables |
| · Cereal | · Peanut butter | · Other shelf-stable, non-perishable foods |

FEBRUARY SPECIAL EVENTS

Event	Location	Date	Time
Oneg Talk about The Free Lunch Program by Kai Kiser	Synagogue	Feb 9	After services
Sunday School	Synagogue	Feb 11	9:15 am
Mahjongg	Synagogue	Feb 11	2 pm
Rosh Chodesh Yoga	Synagogue	Feb 11	2 pm
Adult Learners (synagogue skills) – alternate Mondays	Synagogue	Starting Feb 12	6-7
Mussar Class	Synagogue	Feb 14	11:30 am
Board Meeting	Synagogue	Feb 15	7 pm
Oneg Talk about Jewish Iowa History by Doug Jones	Synagogue	Feb 16	After services
Facilitated session #1 on Israel-Gaza	Synagogue	Feb 17	12:30-2
Sunday School	Synagogue	Feb 18	9:15 am
Warm Up America	Synagogue	Feb 18	10:30 AM
Mahjongg	Synagogue	Feb 18	2 pm
Mussar Class	Synagogue	Feb 21	11:30 am
Free Lunch Program	TBD	Feb 21	TBD
RABBI HUGENHOLTZ APPRECIATION	Synagogue	Feb 24	9:30 am
Public Space Iowa City Havdalah	Downtown/ TBD	Feb 24	After Sunset
Sunday School	Synagogue	Feb 25	9:15-12:15

RECURRING GROUPS WITH FIXED TIMES/DATES– [CALENDAR ON WEBSITE](#)

Yiddish Study Group Mondays and Fridays at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom.	Book group Fourth Wednesday of every month at 1:00 on Zoom.	Intro to Judaism Class Mondays at 7:30 p.m.	Talmud Study Group Sundays at 9:00 a.m. on Zoom.	Adult Learners Group Alternate Mondays 6:00-7:00 p.m. starting February 12.	Seniors Group Third Thursday of every month at 11:00 a.m.
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RABBI HUGENHOLTZ'S SERMON FOR PARASHAT YITRO

Not too long ago, there was a viral internet meme about 'how often men think about the Roman Empire.' TikTok, Instagram and Facebook lit up with people asking the males in their lives how often they contemplated the legacy of Romulus and Remus. Suffice to say, I asked my own husband, who responded with 'huh?' and then 'uh, never.' Apparently, at the base of this pop culture moment was an analysis of a certain mythological masculinity that gave the Roman Empire appeal.

But you know who else think of the Roman Empire a lot? Rabbis. Every time, a Jew learns a rabbinic text, from the Mishnah onwards, or late Second Temple literature, we engage with the legacy and influence of ancient Rome.

Do not worry: this is not a sermon about the Roman Empire. It is, however, a sermon about the institution that Judaism built against the cultural and historical backdrop of Antiquity. I will be talking about the rise of a remarkable Jewish innovation: the synagogue. These next three weeks, we will explore the past, present and future of this important and enduring Jewish project.

Synagogues were a vibrant and well-represented part of the Roman Empire (Roman synagogues had inscriptions dedicated to the Emperors!). However, synagogues actually stretch further back. It is reasonable to assume that the first 'proto-synagogues' were founded during the Babylonian Exile, shortly after the destruction of the first Temple in 586 CE. Exiled from their land and bereft of their temple, our displaced ancestors would become the world's first Yehudim – Jews; not just tied a theology of place but innovating a greater, more transcendent covenant. The Book of Daniel already records how Daniel would pray three times a day in front of his open window, hearkening his heart to a ruined Jerusalem yet uttering his prayers to a God Whose presence is felt in Babylon as much as Judea. We can easily imagine the exiles congregating in homes, establishing the first informal centers of learning and prayer. Out of the exilic community in Babylon, the community of Amoraim – rabbinic Talmud scholars – would form, coalescing around great Babylonian centers of learning like Sura and Pumbedita.

Likewise, in the Land of Israel and the Mediterranean sea basin, the idea of a synagogue took root. It was Ezra and Nechemiah who rebuilt the Temple, but by this time, a parallel institution of synagogue life was already forming. We have much historical evidence for the vibrancy, creativity and cultural context of ancient synagogues. We have letters of the ancient Jews of Elephantine to the myriads of God-fearers worshipping alongside Jews in Rome to donor lists (yes! Already then!) of patrons (born Jew and proselyte alike) to the synagogues in the Levant to the beautiful Zodiac-inspired mosaic of a 4th century Galilean house of worship. According to credible historical estimates, 10% of the Roman Empire was Jewish. Ancient synagogues radiated a 'sacred magnetism' that drew outsiders in, either through cultural sharing and polemics or through instances of active proselytism. The integrated, globalized world of Late Antiquity was not so different from our own.

In this week's parashah, we will not read about synagogues, but we will read about Matan Torah, Revelation, and how that Revelation will lead to the construction of something that in some ways foreshadows the synagogue: the portable Tabernacle. While in our people's collective historical imagination, the fixed Temple in Jerusalem is often seen as the direct successor of the Mishkan (Tabernacle), I would actually argue that the synagogue is the true inheritor of a portable, mobile and adaptable form of sacred gathering. Parashat Yitro offers us a lot of insight into 'synagogue management'; lightening the load, delegating, empowering the holy community to be a 'Kingdom of Priests and a holy

(Continued on page 23)

RABBI HUGENHOLTZ'S SERMON FOR PARASHAT YITRO

(Continued from page 22)

nation.' There is something both ancient and radical about the synagogue; a place of direct democracy, civic engagement and ongoing learning. The synagogue, both ancient and new, has a quality that gives it endurance.

It can be comforting to know that the needs of our ancestors are not so different from our own. They, too, lived in a complex world brimming with choice and competition. They, too, were trying to figure out ways to build mutual support, orient their lives to sacred values and create lasting community. They, too, pondered questions of integration and assimilation and turned to Torah to buffer them against the upheavals of their time.

And, as we sit among the bright windows and clean lines of our very modern synagogue – a decade old now – we can take comfort and pride that we also sit amongst something very ancient; not bound by walls or architecture, but undergirded by an idea. I think few cultures can lay claim that a foundational institution surviving and thriving today going back 2500 years.

It is the privilege and prerogative of being Jewish that we get to take part in something so ancient and yet so cutting edge. Out here in Iowa, in our galuta b'galuta, the heart of our Diaspora, we have every right to take pride in our synagogue; within these walls and beyond them, and cast a vision of all the beautiful and magnificent things yet to come.



Sound of Friendship
Concert and
Dessert Reception

Saturday, February 17
Doors Open 6:30p / Concert Begins 7:00p

St Andrew Presbyterian Church
140 Gathering Place Ln
Iowa City, 52246

Tickets: \$25
Available at the door or online:
www.compeerjohnsoncountyiowa.org

FEATURING:
Al Zimmerman
Kol Shira
Two-Bit Maniac
Old Capitol Chorus
The Tanya English Band

Compeer | Johnson County
Mental Wellness Starts With Friendship



PATHWAY TO THE INNER LIFE

Pathway to the Inner Life: An in-person Mussar class offered by The Mussar Institute and facilitated by Lea Haravon Collins

Wednesdays 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. from Feb 14 – April 17 at the Agudas Achim Congregation, Coralville

Join Lea Haravon Collins, Ph.D., certified Mussar facilitator, yoga instructor, and cantorial soloist, to learn about and practice the Jewish spiritual practice of Mussar.

[Registration Link](#)

[For more information](#)

[Lea Bio](#)

[Contact Lea](#)

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Facilitated session #2 on Israel-Gaza	Synagogue	Mar 2	12:30-2
Hamantaschen baking with Charles Packard	Synagogue	Mar 3	4-5 pm
Spiritual journaling for Purim with Corvin Greene	Synagogue	Mar 22	TBD
Purim Megillah reading	Synagogue or Hillel (TBD)	Mar 23	After sunset
LGBTQI+ Purim Party	Downtown (Studio 13)	Mar 23	9:30 pm
Death and Mourning #1 (Burial & bereavement) Lunch & Learn	Synagogue	Mar 30	After services

ROSH CHODESH YOGA

Join us for Rosh Chodesh classes to welcome Adar (two Adars this year!) followed by a full month of Nissan Yoga.

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 2:00-3:00 p.m. February 11, March 17, and all Sundays in April

Location: Agudas Achim Congregation

Optional, but nice to have: Yoga mat, large towel, or blanket

For more information: Leslea-collins@outlook.com



[Donate via Venmo](#); [Donate via Paypal](#)

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Administrator	John Wertz	Custodian	Amos Kiche
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