



Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241

Phone: 319-337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

April 2024 / Adar II-Nisan 5784



Pictured: a transplanted tree behind the synagogue flowering. Photo courtesy of Myra Clark

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

The time between Purim and Pesach is perhaps a strange one. Coming out of the raucous revelry of Purim, we shift gears to the more serious business of liberation. Purim and Pesach have connected themes of course; staving off genocidal tyrants and Jewish catastrophe. Their end points, however, are different.

Whereas the Megillah has an ostensibly 'happy ending' in an almost theatrical, carnivalesque way (the tone of the Book of Esther borders on satire), it provides us with little moral vision for the future. Haman is defeated, Mordechai and Esther are triumphant, and that is the end of the (somewhat violent) tale. The Exodus story, however, pulsates with a majestic vision of liberation. It, too, has moments of violence and retribution, but it breathes a revolutionary vision of human dignity: the emancipation of slaves, the promise of ethical monotheism, the lure of active and collective redemption.

It is no wonder, then, that the Exodus story of the Passover season doesn't end with the splitting of the Sea of Reeds but rather culminates with the receiving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. In short, we are liberated because we are called to a greater purpose. In these dark and difficult days, it is extraordinarily important to hold onto that purpose, and that central call to ethics: 'love the stranger for you were strangers in Egypt.' In other words, we are called to transmute profound trauma into radical empathy.

We are called to hold space for both: trauma and empathy – the pain of our own and the pain of others. It is not a zero-sum game.

Please read our President's heartfelt article in this bulletin. It is not easy to wrestle with the Israel-Gaza war, but David Lubaroff does so with honesty, integrity and humanity. David's voice amplifies ours, because we all grapple with our own voice; our own experience and truth. We are a community of many voices, and David's sharing of his voice is an invitation for all of us to honor our own, even and especially if we disagree with each other.

It is eerie and unsettling to see the violence of some of our core texts made manifest in our lived experience. I had the honor to sit with Jayne Sandler and see her photos from her mission trip to Israel. There were photos from the area of the Nova Festival where the Hamas massacre took place; a living, breathing, real-time memorial to unbelievable trauma, scattered with mementos to the dead and the hostages; yahrtzeit candles, stones, photos, flowers. Among the peace and beauty of spring-green trees, the Angel of Death threaded through the branches.

At the same time, I follow the news on the devastating situation in Gaza; pockets of crippling famine in the north and different levels of starvation and food insecurity through the entire Strip. We see the destruction of our screens. We see hungry, displaced families. Wherever we fall on the political spectrum; whatever our analysis of the crisis, there is no denying that the witness of trees and broken buildings speaks to the desecration of our common humanity.

This is an extraordinarily hard thing for us to hold; yet this is exactly what the Torah commands us.

How do we celebrate Passover this year? It is a question that keeps me up at night. The hostages have not yet been returned; the war is ongoing; the level of human suffering and dehumanization is heartbreakingly cumulative. I don't think this is a surprise to the congregation, but I too, have frequently wrestled and wept these last almost-six months, and continue to do so. My heart breaks over and over again. I struggled with Hanukkah, I struggled with Purim, and I expect that many of us will be sitting at our Passover Seders with complex, raw emotions and muted joy. We do not require justification for what we feel: it is real and authentic to us, and as those of us know who counsel the bereaved: we all mourn loss and death in different ways. Sometimes there are sorrowful tears; sometimes there is a deep and eager drinking from the well of joy.

(Continued on page 3)

FROM THE RABBI *Esther Hugenholtz (cont.)*

(Continued from page 2)

This is the mission of community: our ability to hold both. As we say in Dutch: 'shared sorrows are halved sorrows' (is there an equivalent maxim in the USA?). We hold each other through the pain, listen to our unique and differing voices. And we amplify our moments of joy. We remind ourselves of what our great calling is.

In that light, you are cordially invited to a host of meaningful, fun, exciting and engaging activities. I am continuing to meet people downtown on Wednesdays, so please stop in at the BreadGarden between 10:30 am and 2:30 pm for a cup of coffee (or tea!).

We have done our first session on Death and Mourning at the synagogue, and the second session on the Chevra Kadisha (burial society) will follow suit shortly.

The Big Ideas Book Club at the ICPL is about to launch, and of course, we have our Communal Second Seder to look forward to (please RSVP – and RSVP on time, by April 8th, so our caterer – Hillel – can get their orders in!).

We are also organizing a Peace Seder during the tail-end of Passover with our friends at Trinity Church where we will focus on building strong relationships with the interfaith/intercultural/humanist community locally as well as raise funds for coexistence initiatives in Israel-Palestine. (We are raising funds for 'Standing Together', an Israeli-Palestinian peace and coexistence movement I've talked about before, and for 'The Parents' Circle', also, an Israeli-Palestinian bereavement/coexistence group who has spoken to our congregation during the pandemic).

After Passover, we are going to be looking toward more programming (stay tuned!) culminating in another fantastic Urban Shavu'ot Retreat.

Please keep your eyes peeled for the upcoming Passover Bulletin which will list all the details for the Passover season. Passover is late this year, so here's hoping the weather will be lovely and warm. After the frost, green sprouts inevitably will bloom. Please God, may it be so for us also. I look forward to a happy and restorative Passover for all of us. May we see days of peace and healing soon.

THE U.S AND THE HOLOCAUST- *Iowa City Senior Center*

The Iowa City Senior Center is presenting a three-part, six hour PBS documentary series that examines America's response to one of the greatest humanitarian crises of the 20th century. Americans consider themselves a "nation of immigrants," but as the catastrophe of the Holocaust unfolded in Europe, the United States proved unwilling to open its doors to more than a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of desperate people seeking refuge. Through riveting firsthand testimony of witnesses and survivors who as children endured persecution, violence and flight as their families tried to escape Hitler, this series delves deeply into the tragic human consequences of public indifference, bureaucratic red tape and restrictive quota laws in America. Did the nation fail to live up to its ideals? This is a history to be reckoned with.

Fridays, April 12-26, 9:30 am – 12 pm

Iowa City Senior Center, 28 S. Linn St., Iowa City; Room 302.

[Register online](#) or call 319-356-5220.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

David Lubaroff

This is a hard message to write and may also be a hard message to read. I have avoided making any statements about the Israel-Hamas war for several reasons. I wrestle with myself about how I feel about what has and continues to happen, and that changes constantly as the conflict continues. What I write here is not a political statement, these are my feelings at the moment and nobody else's.

There is no doubt in my mind that the initial massacre of Israelis, both regular citizens and members of the military; men, women, and children, was a barbaric act by Hamas. People were slaughtered or taken hostage, with most of the latter still held by their captors. They are nothing but human pawns, used by Hamas to end the war under their terms, at least one of which is to return Hamas to political power in a rebuilt Gaza. No matter how we feel about the past and the present, a continuation of a Hamas-controlled territory adjacent to Israel is unacceptable. Like so many Jewish people in our congregation, in Iowa City, and throughout the world, we were devastated by the horrible attacks and their outcomes. It felt like an attack on each of us. We lived through both the 1967 war and the 1973 Yom Kippur war. The October 7, 2023 invasion is different from those two conflicts. The former were military events, army against army whereas the current invasion was, for the most part, a heinous attack on innocent Jewish civilians, slaughtered or captured. Yes, we were nervous and frightened in '67 and '73, but we had confidence in the Israeli military. But now – there is no way to describe the emotions we feel following the attacks.

We knew, from past experiences, that Israel was going to retaliate against Hamas. That retaliation has been going on for the past five and one-half months and has brought additional emotions to the forefront. In the beginning of Israel's response, I agreed with the plan of destroying Hamas' infrastructure and killing its leaders and barbaric terrorists. There was no doubt in my mind that this was the only way to assure the future safety of the country and its citizens. But as the bombings and ground attacks of Gaza by the IDF continued with the associated loss of

30,000 lives that include women and children and the destruction of 50% to 60% of all buildings, I am personally conflicted. I love and have always supported Israel. It is the country that represents me to the world, the country that was and is a sanctuary for Jews that had no home. These include survivors of the Holocaust, those escaping political and religious persecution in many countries (Russia, Ethiopia, and more), and Jews around the world who wanted to make Aliyah and live in a Jewish country.

Despite my undying allegiance and support of Israel, I am saddened by the loss of innocent lives as a result of its military actions that have lasted so very long, not only deaths by bombings and shootings, but from a famine that now exists. My sadness is now accompanied by intense frustration. I am frustrated by an inability to find an end to the conflict, to find an assurance of safety for Israel, and an end to the killings. I am a person that seeks solutions to problems, but this continued war leaves me frustrated because this is a problem I cannot solve. We can contribute to appropriate charities or write letters to people that may be able to have leverage to end the carnage while, at the same time, punishing those responsible for the massacre on October 7, 2023. I know – pie in the sky. It is evident during the recent weeks that there are people and countries that want this outcome, but there are others, on both sides of the conflict, that stonewall those efforts.

I have purposely avoided placing blame for why the events started and why they continue. Yes, it is frustrating that they happened and why they continue with tragic outcomes. What I have discussed in this message is how I feel about the tragedies and the chaos that jeopardizes the survival of a country that is important to not just Jews but to the world. It is a democracy surrounded by kingdoms and dictators, a safe haven for millions of people. These include the Jewish majority (74%), Arabs (21%), and non-Jewish, non-Arab (6%). We must assure that all of these people have independence and safety.

Let us pray for an end to killings, the release of Israeli hostages, and the survival of our Jewish State of Israel.

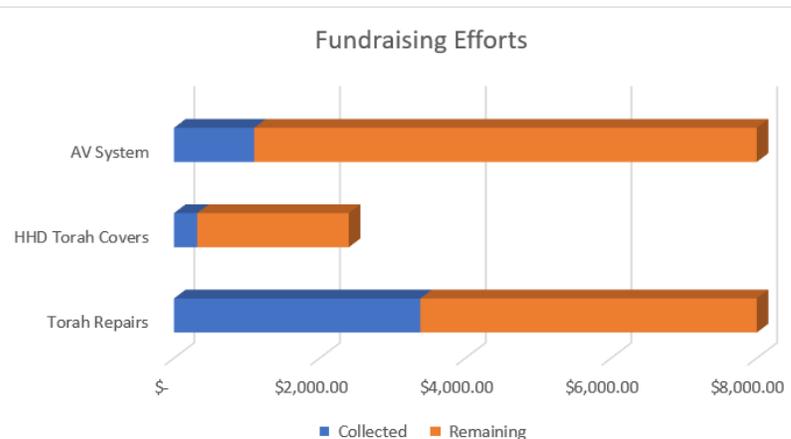
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR BUILDING

To keep everyone up to date on changes in the building please note the following:

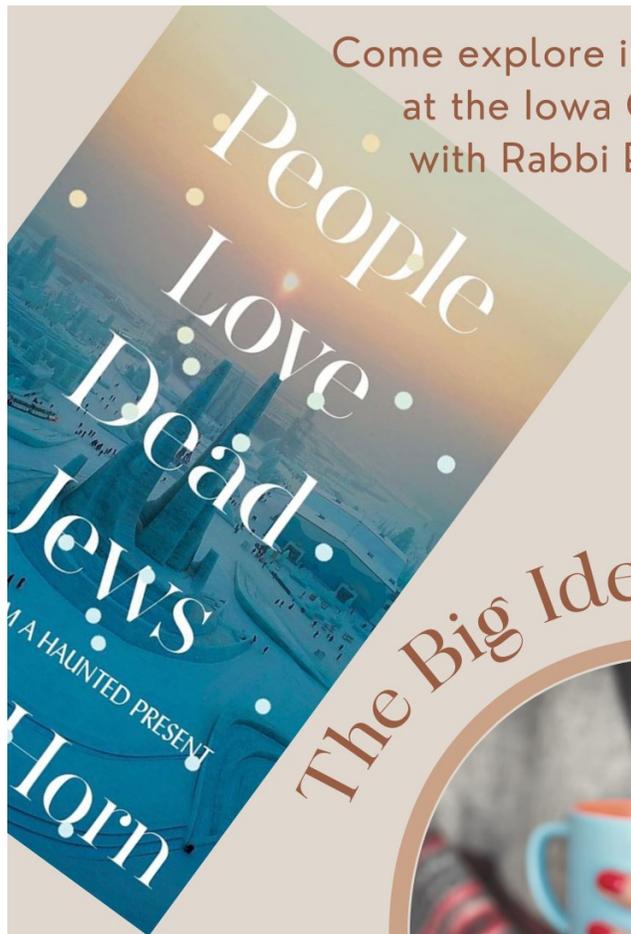
1. Several major repairs and maintenance are occurring at the same time. The heating and air conditioning units on the roof require replacement or repair; the repairs to the boiler that supplies hot water to the floor heating system are underway; repairs to the window frames in the classrooms are underway; repairs to some of the front doors (not always latching completely) are underway; we are investigating how to repair the handicapped door switch without compromising building security; repairing the plumbing in the restrooms and kitchen; and fixed a small gas leak in the kitchen. Once all the repairs and replacements are completed, we will work with the contractors and David Berman of the Facilities Committee on a regular maintenance schedule for all the major equipment and systems.
2. We are in the process of replacing the current Zoom computer system. The new system will have a new up to date, high quality camera that we can control remotely. It will be mounted in the rear of the sanctuary to provide a better view of the bema and the ark. The microphones will be upgraded to include a clip-on mic for the Rabbi, a repair to the current goose-neck mic, and a ceiling mic that will pick up voices in the congregation, and all tied into the building speaker system. The current large computer will be moved into the control room adjacent to the sanctuary and operation of the Zoom communications will be through a tablet such as an iPad. Not only will we have a better and more compact system, we will also not have the unsightly computer cart and all the associated wiring for a more beautiful place to pray.
3. In line with that beautification of the sanctuary we are planning a building cleanup. A small committee consisting of the president, Marcus Nashelsky, Hannah Sandler, and Chuck Friedman will begin the task this spring. Anyone else interested in helping can contact Hannah at secretary@agudasachimic.org.
4. Finally, we must purchase a fourth Yahrzeit board since plaques have been ordered for the last open spaces. David Berman (Facilities Committee) and Alan Weinstein (Art Committee), along with the office staff are working on the project.

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.



Come explore important Jewish ideas
at the Iowa City Public Library
with Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz



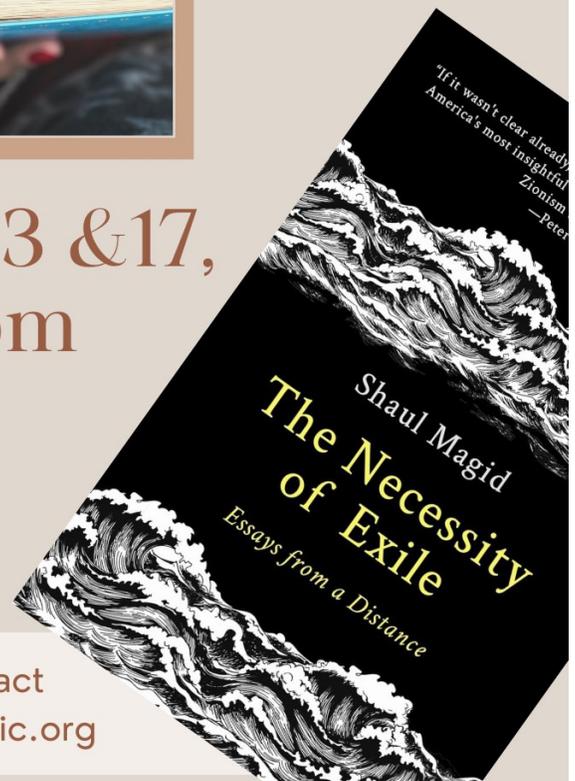
Dara Horn,
'People Love Dead Jews'
April 3, Room B

The Big Ideas Book Club



ICPL, April 3 & 17,
6-7:30 pm

Shaul Magid,
'The Necessity of Exile'
April 17, Room D



More info? Contact
rabbi@agudasachimic.org

ADULT EDUCATION

Lisa Heineman

What's Happening in the Wonderful World of Adult Education?

We have some terrific plans for April:

April 3 @ 6:00-7:30 p.m.: Big Ideas in Jewish Books **at ICPL**. We'll discuss Dana Horn's *People Love Dead Jews*. You can find a copy at the library or purchase it from a vendor of your choice.

Note: an April 5 oneg talk and April 14 guided tour have been postponed to a later date. More information to come.

April 17 @ 6:00-7:30 p.m.: Big Ideas in Jewish Books **at ICPL**. We'll discuss Shaul Magid's *The Necessity of Exile*. You can find a copy at the library or purchase it from a vendor of your choice.

... and stay tuned for programming related to the counting of the Omer – perhaps involving some Mussar learning – between Passover and Shavuot.

Getting geared up for Shavuot!

We're going to reprise our Tikkun Leil Shavuot – our overnight Shavuot learning - at Brown Street Inn on Friday-Saturday, June 14-15. We'll start with a potluck dinner and end with a sunrise Shabbat service. This time we'll have the whole Inn, so we'll have more space – and we won't have to worry about making noise.

Do you have an idea for a session? Consider leading us in study, crafts, movement, creative writing, song ... use your imagination!

And just as a note: Iowa City Pride is June 15. Perhaps that prompts an idea for a session? Those of us who are still standing can stagger downtown for the parade at noon.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES: RITUAL COMMITTEE

At our High Holiday services last fall, I shared my commitment to honoring our traditions while also making space to innovate our collective worship. From October through January we trialed alternating service affiliations and liturgy for each Shabbat service. Then we collected thoughts and perspectives from members and analyzed your feedback. The survey revealed that 69% of respondents preferred the alternating schedule and supported making this a permanent change. Furthermore, there was a recurring theme that congregants expressed an enthusiasm for musical elements accompanying services.

Our committee is pleased to share that starting in May we will implement a service schedule that uses the Lev Shalem prayerbook for 50% of Saturday

morning services and Mishkan Tefillah for the other 50% of Saturday morning services. In addition to the musical elements normally present at Reform services, the Rabbi will add musical flourishes to the Friday evening Conservative service once per month.

Service affiliation/liturgy will continue to be posted in the weekly emails and monthly bulletin. We hope this modification will continue to strengthen our community's diverse spiritual needs. Finally, our minyan is always on the lookout for additional Torah or Haftarah readers! If you are interested in participating, or thinking about volunteering but would like to learn more please send us an email at ritual@agudasachimic.org.

FROM THE CARING COMMITTEE

Nancy Goldsmith, Susan Lutgendorf, & Teresa Weiner

It's been a busy fall and winter, with many new babies and some health issues among our congregants, and we were able to help them all. However, the Caring Committee wants to expand the services offered, and that where you come in:

1. We would like to have a roster of volunteers who stand ready to support members of our congregation. Volunteers would offer comfort, connection, and assistance through, in-person and phone visits, providing rides, making deliveries, and other ways of reaching out to each other.
2. As you are hopefully aware, we use Meal Trains to provide meals to those dealing with stressful times such as childbirth and planned surgery. However, there can be situations that arise where help is needed, and we don't have time to organize a Meal Train. To that end, we would like to create a list of people who we can call upon at short notice to provide a meal when needed.

If you would be willing to help, please email us at: caring@agudasachimic.org with your contact information and what you would be willing to do. And, as always, if you need help, don't hesitate to ask – just use the same email address and let us know.

Thank you,

The Caring Committee

Nancy Goldsmith, Susan Lutgendorf & Teresa Weiner

COVID COMMENTS+

Bob Wallace, Barcey Levy, & Jane Zukin

There is good news in that the number of patients going to the hospital or emergency rooms because of COVID-19 infection in the US has declined during March, 2024. However, there are still too many cases. CDC notes that 1.8% of all deaths in the US are due to this virus. CDC and other national health authorities are still recommending that all appropriate persons receive the latest booster vaccination. The current booster has been available since the fall of 2023, but its original priority was intended for persons with immune-related conditions. However, this latest booster is now generally available, and is recommended to prevent serious illness for all persons five years and older. For those 65 years and older, CDC recommends that if a person had this "current" booster (a vaccine from 2023-2024) it should be repeated if it has been more than four months since the last one. You may wish to check your records or that of your health care provider, pharmacist or wherever you have received the vaccine, in order to verify whether an additional booster dose is needed.

Also, there are several respiratory viruses circulating in the community other than COVID-19, so if an acute respiratory illness occurs, a home or medical care testing kit for COVID can still be useful.

To Your Health!

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

We booed Haman, cheered Esther, and ate too many cookies! The school had a wonderful time during Purim.

One of the things that always amazes me about Purim is how much fun the kids have with the simplest games. Nothing beeps, needs batteries, or connects to the internet, but kids of all ages still put balls through hoops, played hopscotch, and tossed beanbags. The Purim wheel of fortune always attracts a long line, even though it is really nothing but a brightly painted wheel. The colors catch the eyes, though, and little hands instinctively reach for it.

When it comes to simple magic, nothing beats the Purim spiel. This year, teacher and director extraordinaire Hersh Rephun made sure that the students really practiced. He held auditions and real rehearsals. To my joy (and surprise) the students took responsibility for knowing their parts. Some even took their scripts home to practice. The result was a wonderfully assertive Vashti, a sweet and stern Esther, and Ahashuarus splendid in a bathrobe with martini glasses on it.

In a world of snapchat, AI, and smart boards, the Purim spiel felt truly old-fashioned. Or maybe it felt timeless. The audience sang along to some outrageous parodies of pop music. The kids dressed in homemade costumes. In some ways, homemade Purim is the essence of the school. We don't have a

lot of bells and whistles. But the kids learn by making things themselves.

It takes a lot of people to pull off something that looks so simple. I am particularly grateful to Karen and Richard Lipman for helping to set up. Lori McMann and Hannah Sandler were absolute rocks in set up and clean up. Robyn and Josie turned out to be talented face painters. Avery delivered a lesson on Jews in Persia that seemed to draw in adults as well as kids. Her father Meyer and her brother Orin made absolutely killer chocolate chip cookies. (I had one, or maybe three.) The teachers,



including Mallory, Logan, Shawna, and Hersh went above and beyond the call of Purim duty. Rabbi Esther, splendid in pink, seemed to be everywhere at once. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to everyone who contributed to the bake sale. If I know who you

are, I'll send you a personal note. Here, I would like to offer a special thank you to the person who made the delicious and beautifully packaged GF chocolate chip cookies.

Next week, we will learn about the more solemn, but joyful, feast of Passover. I'm looking forward to making matzah, learning about the meaning of freedom, and practicing the Four Questions.

MAHJONGG

Join us for Mahjongg from 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the synagogue on the dates below. Bring a Mahjongg card if you have one. Please RSVP to the listed host for each date. New players are always welcome!

April 7 & 14– hosted by Karen

April 21 & 28– hosted by Corvin

[RSVP to Corvin](#)

[RSVP to Karen](#)

MARCH BOARD MINUTES

[Minutes from our March Board Meeting can be found here.](#)

MARCH ONEG HOSTS

**Thank you to March's oneg hosts: Lori McMann and James Blum;
Joan and Marcus Nashelsky!**

[Sign up to host an oneg at this link.](#)

SMALL GROUP CHATS

Under the guidance of President David Lubaroff and Vice President Jayne Sandler Agudas Achim has begun a series of informal small group chats, the purpose of which is to meet with members we have not met before and reacquaint ourselves with members we have known for many years. We want to put faces with names, meet with spouses/partners and exchange ideas. We want to know how long you have been a member, what is your background- how did you get to Iowa City, what is most important to you about being Jewish, why are you a member of the congregation, what do you want out of the congregation, and what social and spiritual activities you participate in and what activities you would like to see.

Invitations have been sent to groups of members and followed up by telephone calls to schedule a date convenient for you. We began with families that have children in the religious school and are now concentrating on long-time members (≥ 20 years). Please be patient; your group may be next, and please be receptive to participating in these groups.

SYNAGOGUE SENIORS

The Synagogue Seniors will not meet in April, but we hope you will join us on Thursday, May 16, from 11 am to 1 pm in the Social Hall where Miriam Gilbert, UI Professor Emerita, will present on "How Teaching Shakespeare Informed My Life." Please watch for more information coming soon.

NISAN YOGA

Join us for 3 weeks of Nisan yoga.

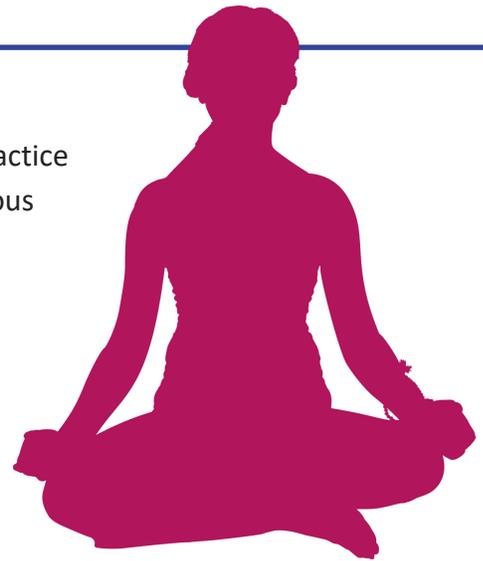
We will come away from each gathering with a simple movement practice that we can add to our daily routine. Everyone is welcome. No previous Yoga experience necessary! Join us for as many sessions as you like.

Dates: Sundays 2:00-3:00 p.m April 7, April 14, April 21

Location: Agudas Achim Congregation

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

For more information: Leslea-collins@outlook.com



WARM UP AMERICA

Last month, Warm Up America donated 12, yes 12, afghans to United Action for Youth, a local agency offering counseling and youth development programs for teens and their families.

Labels on the afghans state that they were "Handmade for you by Warm Up America, Agudas Achim Congregation and Friends, Iowa City/Coralville."

We are proud to contribute to our community this way. We'll meet on April 14 and 28. Please join us, to help or just to schmooze in the social hall, from 10:30a.m. to noon. We appreciate your support.



THE GIFT SHOP

Joanne Margolin

Passover will be here in a few weeks and we have seder plates, wash cups, haggadahs, and matza covers waiting for you to find them!. Do you send Passover cards? Consider looking at our selection of lovely cards, all at 10¢ each - you can't beat that! If there's anything else you need help finding, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Happy Spring, everyone!!

AGUDAS ACHIM PARENTS TEXT THREAD

Synagogue members who are parents of young kids have started a casual text thread for coordinating meet-ups around town (at playgrounds, children's museum, kid-focused events, etc.) If you're a parent of young kids and you'd like to opt in to this text thread, you can do so [here!](#) The thread has been fairly quiet over the winter months, but we hope to coordinate more meet-ups as the weather warms up.

SCREENING OF *THE MAN WITHOUT A WORLD* WITH ORIGINAL LIVE MUSIC

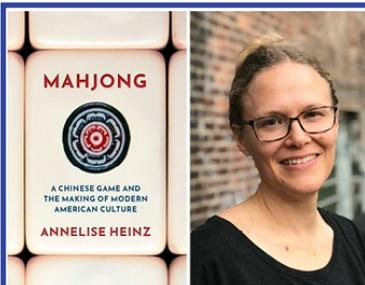
Monday, April 15, 7 p.m., FilmScene (Chauncey)

One of the most unusual, artistic and fabulous films from American Indie history, *The Man Without a World* is credited to legendary Soviet director Yevgeny Antinov...but that is far from the whole truth. Directed by performance artist and filmmaker Eleanor Antin, *The Man Without a World* is a moving, comic melodrama set in a typical shtetl in Poland. The Jews' struggle against poverty and racial hatred is complicated by their own division into hostile political factions of the religious orthodoxy, assimilationists, socialists, Zionists, anarchists and survivors. While the Jews of the shtetl pursue their loves, politics, religion, business and dreams for the future, the Angel of Death is ever near.

Restoration funding provided by the Sunrise Foundation for Education and the Arts. New score composed and performed by Alicia Svigals (violin) and Donald Sosin (piano). Digital picture restoration by Illuminate Hollywood. Restoration supervised by Ross Lipman in consultation with Eleanor Antin.

LIBRARY NEWS- New To Our Library

Teresa Weiner



"Annelise Heinz narrates the history of this game to show how it has created a variety of meanings, among them American modernity, Chinese American heritage, and Jewish American Women's culture."

Thank you to Linda Kerber and Karen Lipman for calling our attention to this book!

ISRAEL SOLIDARITY MISSION TRIP

Jayne Sandler

Many of you are aware that I recently returned from a JNF-USA Volunteer Mission. There are many adjectives that I have used to describe the roller coaster of experiences- transformative, meaningful, powerful, emotional, etc. But none of these fully express the inner feelings that I experienced this time over other trips I have taken to Israel previously.

I went to Israel to assist in any way I could. I felt in my heart that I had more to give than a voice here in America and a checkbook. (Not that those aren't important and critical!) So when the opportunity came to volunteer (boots on the ground) for 4.5 days, doing the things that I knew would help the people and not necessarily take a political stand- I signed up! There were so many encounters that I could write for hours- but for now I will tell a couple of stories.

Our bus of 30 volunteers were "stationed" in the Negev in S'de Boker (about halfway between Beersheva and Mitzpe Ramon. The beautiful Kedma hotel where we stayed is situated next door to Ben Gurion's desert home. The hotel also housed two different groups of evacuees. One 30-family group from the Eshkol region in the Negev (near Gaza) and the other from the North (near the Lebanon border.) So, children were everywhere playing, going to school every morning and making new friends. In the middle of the week, we spent one evening sitting with the evacuees hearing their stories and getting a sense of their ongoing plight. Yifat, a mother of three from Yesha, a Moshav, part of the Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip, in the Israeli Envelope (Israel is trying to rename the Gaza Envelope to reflect Israeli ownership.) By education Yifat is a therapist and even though she has helped PTSD and dysfunctional families, she herself cannot work more than two days a week at this point and also with those affected by the massacre. The evacuees from the Negev at Kedma have been in single room accommodations for over five months and each family shares one hotel room. They long for their own space, their privacy, their kitchens and so much more. As Yifat said, "We just need to get through this grieving process and since we are still living in trauma, we cannot mourn." Each of them sees a therapist- the children, as they have lost their best friends, the women because they have lost colleagues, friends and children, and the

men because they couldn't protect their loved ones and the members of their kibbutzim and moshavim- and all of them lost family. Each of the communities are being worked on to clean up, repaint and refurbish so that these families can return, if they want, as quickly as possible. That is what we are doing as volunteers.

We went into the cleared communities and began to bring these places back to life. Rebuilding **OUR** Israel together. Whatever needed to be completed. When the evacuees from Kibbutz Erez were leaving their single room youth hostel accommodations, we helped pack boxes and bins of the items they had accumulated (toys, clothes, school supplies, etc.) and been given over the past three months. When they fled their homes they only had a suitcase. They were moving once again, but now to temporary apartments in yet another area of Israel, until they can return safely. There they would be able to prepare their own meals, gain some privacy, and celebrate Shabbat together. Families are broken up in many cases, as there are those that are still guarding their communities and some working, even if only a couple of days a week, and others called up to serve.

And the farmers - they are really struggling. Initially, food was rotting on the vines. The crops needed to be harvested, planted and weeded. One of our groups harvested lemons, while we weeded tomato vines in order to keep the produce growing and marketable. The farmers no longer have the Palestinian workers helping in the fields (which accounted for about 80% of their labor force) and the small percentage of Thai workers are just beginning to return to Israel, after their government banned them from working in Israel after their kidnapping by Hamas. Agriculture is critical to Israel's economic sustainability. These farmers are all over Israel, not just in the Negev.

There are so many more stories and experiences. I will from time to time be discussing these experiences in the near future. But for those interested and those wanting to be a part of helping our Israeli family - and we are all family - volunteer opportunities are abound and I am happy to offer any information on how you can be more directly involved.

Am Israel Chai

PURIM FUN FOR ALL



P
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AGUDAS ACHIM

YOUTH GROUP

Who: 7th-12th graders

What: Fun events, snacks, games
& more

When: Activities offered varying
days and times

FOR MORE INFO, EMAIL:

secretary@agudasachimic.org



APRIL SPECIAL EVENTS

Big Ideas in Jewish Books ('People Love Dead Jews')	ICPL Meeting Room B	Apr 3	6-7:30 pm
Death and Mourning #2 (Chevra Kadisha/the burial society)	Synagogue	Apr 6	12:30-1:30 pm
Nissan Yoga	Synagogue	Apr 7	2-3 pm
Seder Swap/Recipe Rollout	Synagogue	Apr 10	6:30-7:30 pm
Warm Up America	Synagogue	Apr 14	10:30 am- Noon
Nissan Yoga	Synagogue	Apr 14	2-3 pm
Free Lunch Program Volunteer		Apr 17	8 am-1 pm
Big Ideas in Jewish Books ('The Necessity of Exile')	ICPL Meeting Room D	Apr 17	6-7:30 pm
Board Meeting	Synagogue	Apr 17	7 pm
Nissan Yoga	Synagogue	Apr 21	2-3 pm
Second Seder	Synagogue	Apr 23	6:30 pm
Peace Seder	Trinity Church	Apr 27	6-9 pm
Warm Up America	Synagogue	Apr 28	10:30-12

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS- MAY

Warm Up America	Synagogue	May 5	10:30-12
Public Space Havdalah	TBD	May 11	8-9 pm
Seniors Group	Synagogue	May 16	11 am-1pm
Board Meeting	Synagogue	May 16	7 pm
Warm Up America	Synagogue	May 19	10:30 -12:30

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 (in person this May-October)	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 Esther is downtown for coffee on Wednesdays! ♥



Every Wednesday, Rabbi Esther is downtown (at Bread Garden) to meet with you for coffee.

Do you want to connect in an informal, relaxed, Iowa City-based setting?

Come to the Bread Garden from 10:30 am till 2:30 pm.

If you want to book a slot, please book through the Rabbi's Calendly link.



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.

Rabbi Esther is also available through email and text message. You can always send the rabbi an email at any time! A gentle reminder, however, to only use text message for urgent matters (if it can wait, please put it in an email) and within reasonable working hours (10 a.m. till 6 p.m.). The rabbi's day off is Tuesday. Text messages or emails will not be dealt with on Tuesdays, Shabbat or Sunday afternoon. Thank you for keeping our lines of communication open and respectful!

Jewish Stories of Identity and Belonging: Spain, Portugal, and the Americas

Monday April 8, 3:30-5:00, Old Capitol Senate Chamber

Jewish Studies Undergraduate Certificate Launch and a discussion of
Sephardic history, identity, and citizenship with:



Dr. Jesús Jambrina

Professor of Spanish, Viterbo University,
LaCrosse, Wisconsin
Founder of the Centro Isaac Campantón



Dr. Isaac Amon

Director of Academic Research,
Jewish Heritage Alliance
Adjunct Professor, Washington University
School of Law, St. Louis, MO

Tuesday April 9, 3:30-5:00, in 318 Phillips Hall

"The Legacy of Sefarad: (Crypto) Jewish Experiences in Spain and Portugal," Dr. Isaac Amon
"Zamora Sefardí: Jewish Legacy in Zamora, Spain," Dr. Jesús Jambrina

Wednesday April 10, 12:00-1:30, UCC 1117

"In the Shadow of the Inquisition: The US Constitutional Right to Liberty of
Conscience," Dr Isaac Amon

Sponsors

The Jewish Studies Working Group • The Anne Frank Initiative
International Programs • Obermann Center for Advanced Studies
Center for Human Rights • Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Department of History • Department of Religious Studies • Department of Classics

IOWA

All events open to the public. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa-Sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this event, please contact denise-filios@uiowa.edu

The Second Seder

AT AGUDAS ACHIM

Tuesday April 23, 6:30 p.m.

SEDER LED BY RABBI HUGENHOLTZ



ADULT MEMBER: \$60

ADULT NON-MEMBER: \$70

CHILD UNDER 12: \$20

Please let the office know if you'd be willing to donate towards meals for others. If payment is an issue, please contact the office.



**RSVPS DUE BY APRIL 8 TO RSVP@AGUDASACHIMIC.ORG
SORRY, LATE RESPONSES CANNOT BE ACCOMODATED**

Catered by:



MENU

Starters

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

Main

[Please specify brisket or mushroom]

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)

Dessert

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





AGUDAS ACHIM CONGREGATION INVITES YOU TO AN
INTERFAITH & HUMANIST
PEACE SEDER

SAT APRIL 27 6-9 PM, TRINITY CHURCH

Honoring the liberatory message of
Passover & lifting up voices of peace &
coexistence in Israel/Palestine

Participatory program 6 pm; Festive meal around 7:30 pm

Please bring a vegetarian dish (no flour or pasta products)
to share. If you need a kosher for Passover meal, let us know.

Come as you are - but please leave any flags, signs, and
banners at home.

Free-will donations welcome for
Parents Circle-Family Forum and Standing Together, two
peace & reconciliation organizations in the region.

Address: 320 E College St, Iowa City.
Seating is limited - rsvp@agudasachimic.org

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

DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Barry London and Linda Cadaret: In Memory Of Benjamin & Edith London

Bob and Donna Rodnitzky: In Memory Of Dorothy Pliner

Sue Blackwell: In Memory Of Mark Rothstein

Gene Savin and Susan Enzle: In Memory Of Lucile Potter

Joel and Nancy Caplan: In Honor Of Rabbi Hugenholtz

GENERAL GIFTS

Caplan Family Foundation: In Memory of David Caplan

Chuck and Karen Friedman: In Memory of David Caplan

Kathy Jacobs: In Honor of Rabbi Hugenholtz

Mel and Diane Sunshine: In Memory of David Caplan

Jody and Janie Braverman: In Memory of David Caplan

Gary and Cathy Cohn: In Memory Of Donald Cohn

Joni Caplan: In Honor Of David Caplan, from his Friends & Family

Bernie Miller and Sonja Hauter

Mark Graber and Hetty Hall: In Memory Of Harriet Blakeslee Hall

Joel and Nancy Caplan: In honor of Jeanne Cadoret, Beverly Jones, and all those who help behind the scenes with Meals of Condolence, Oneg Shabbat, and Kiddush

Jerry Sideman: In Memory of David Caplan

BUILDING FUND

Mark and Jayne Sandler: In Memory of Jay Sandler

CEMETERY FUND

Julia Gelfand: In Memory of Miriam Gelfand & Elizabeth Ifland

Michael and Joanne Margolin: In Memory of Benjamin Hertz

Kathy Chapman Keller and Dwight Keller: In Memory Of Corinne Chapman

GARDEN FUND

Dick and Nancee Blum: In Memory of Joseph Rose

LIBRARY FUND

Elliot and Jeanne Abrons: In Memory of David Caplan

PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Gene Savin and Susan Enzle: In Memory Of Reuben Savin

SIM & SARA STRAUSS MEMORIAL FUND

Steve Strauss: In Memory of Sara Strauss

David and Penny Strauss: In Memory of Sim & Sara Strauss

Richard Strauss & Ellie Herman: In Memory of Sara Strauss

Richard Strauss & Ellie Herman: In Memory of William Herman

SAFETY FUND

Mindy and Gary Russell: In Memory Of Jean Leiberman Lenett

TIKUN OLAM FUND

Jonathan and Susan Simon: In Memory of David Caplan

Paul and Rae Wallach: In Memory of David Caplan

Karen and Tom Brady: In Memory of David Caplan

TORAH FUND

Nancy Sprince: In Memory of Sari Sprince

Mark and Jayne Sandler: For Torah Repair, for the Rabbi's Birthday

SHABBAT & PESACH SERVICES

[Streaming link for Zoom Shabbat services](#)

Shemini <i>(Leviticus 9:1-11:47)</i>	Friday, April 5	7:00 p.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative)
	Saturday, April 6	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
Tazria <i>(Leviticus 12:1-13:59)</i>	Friday, April 12	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, April 13	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Metzora <i>(Leviticus 14:1-15:33)</i>	Friday, April 19	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, April 20	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Pesach Service	Tuesday, April 23	9:30 a.m.	
Pesach Service	Wednesday, April 24	9:30 a.m.	
[Chol Hamoed Pesach]	Friday, April 26	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, April 27	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Pesach Service	Monday, April 29	9:30 a.m.	
Pesach Service	Tuesday, April 30	9:30 a.m.	

APRIL Yahrzeits

Allen Buch	Evelyn Madison	Mildred Brenner
Amy Barnum	Fannie Pearl Shedle	Milton Reece
Anna Markovitz	Friedrich Westheimer	Phyllis Eisenberg
Asher Bar-Lev	Hollis DeVoe	Rae Lieberman
Bernard Vernon	Hy Schumeister	Rebecca Ziskind
Corrine "Corky" Miller	Hyman Fingert	Rosetta Standig
Dale Wilhelm	John Sawyer	Roslyn Klein
David Braverman	Joseph Rubenstein	Ruth Berman
Donald Dorfman	Leo Schapira	Sara Middleman
Dorothy Donner	Mark Armstrong	Sol Crandell
Ed Singer	Mark D Armstrong	Stanley Weinberg
Ellie Breggin	Mary Frances Russell	Warren Stroh
Erna Luwisch	Mary Gantz	William Melton
Esther Sandler	Mauricio Lasansky	

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

STAFF

Rabbi	Esther Hugenholtz	Office Secretary	Hannah Sandler
Administrator	John Wertz	Custodian	Amos Kiche
Principal	Sonja Spear		

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President	David Lubaroff	Religious School	Lisa Heineman
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Adult Ed	Lisa Heineman		