



Agudas Achim Congregation

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www.AgudasAchimIC.org

February 2025 /Shevat 5785

FROM THE PRESIDENT

David Lubaroff

This past month of January 2025 the Des Moines Register published an [Opinion article about one of my favorite people, Richard Kerber](#). It was beautifully written by colleagues of Kerber, James Merchant and Dianne Atkins, Professors Emeritus/Emerita at the University of Iowa. Dick Kerber died unexpectedly in 2016, and he has been missed by many. His many contributions to medicine and to his patients can be found in the article. We are all beneficiaries of his research and cardiology practice through his promotion of lifesaving techniques of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the automated external defibrillator (AED). Dick's wife Linda Kerber carried on with his passion, organizing CPR and AED training and placements of the AEDs in public spaces. One of those resides in the synagogue's entryway.

The Kerber and Lubaroff families have been friends for decades, our children attending Hebrew School together. Dick was our friend as well as our cardiologist. He cared for us as friends and as patients. It is not an exaggeration to say that Martha would not be alive today if it hadn't been for Dick's outstanding care. The DM Register article made me think of friendship and it stimulated my thinking about the positive affect of friends.

Friends are the family we choose, not inherit. Friends support each other in good times and bad times. They make life pleasant by their dedication to bettering the lives of those they care for. Friendship is a core value in Judaism and is considered a primary relationship in life. The

importance of friendship is reflected in Jewish texts, history, and tradition. It can help people develop into the best versions of themselves, help people grow spiritually, be important for mental health, and is a key part of Jewish communal experiences. The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) ran a series in 2024 under the title *Two Are Better Than One: Friendship in Jewish Text and Tradition*. The introduction to the series stated: "Friendship is a critical component of our daily lives, our mental health, and our Jewish communal experiences. Ecclesiastes (4:9) posits, 'Two are better than one,' underscoring the significance of companionship and partnership in Jewish tradition and the role they play in a life well-lived. In this series, JTS scholars explore the concept of friendship through Jewish texts, history, and thought. They consider friendship in times of joy and times of crisis, both with those in our inner circles and with our neighbors and fellow citizens more broadly. They also offer several important paradigms for friendship and discuss the values we can distill from these models of friendship." The series included such titles as *Paradigms of Friendship: What Philosophers and Rabbis can Teach Us*, *Friendship During Crisis: Learning from the Book of Job*, and *Across the Atlantic: Lifesaving Friendships during the Holocaust*, plus others. One of the most famous friendships of the Bible, is that between David and Jonathan where Jonathan saved David from the murderous intentions of his father, King Saul. In the Mishnah, we find advice on the importance of

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

David Lubaroff (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

selecting one's friends: "Come and learn—which is the straight (right) path to which a person should adhere? A good friend."

I have had many friends throughout my life but only a few good friends. What is the difference? For me a good friend is one who is like a family member, someone that is supportive through the good and the bad, someone that will offer both tangible and intangible help to you and you would also do for him or her. I have had friends through my place of employment, through my synagogue, and others. For instance, through my years of running and biking I have had multiple partners but only one would I call a good friend. We ran together daily, during training for a marathon, and during that long distance event. But perhaps my best examples of good friends are Jon and Susan Simon. We were next door neighbors for many years, shared family

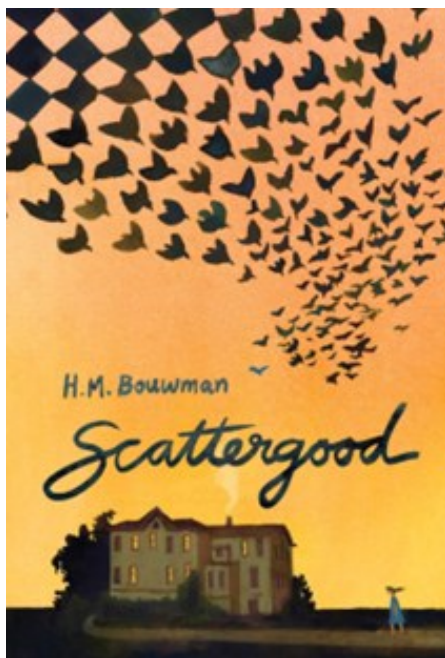
traditions, religious holidays, and more. We co-built a Sukkah at which we shared many meals, even in cold weather. Even after they moved to the east coast, we remain good friends, continuing to share the good and the not so good. We still attend important life events together. Both Martha and I have weekly Zoom conversations, Martha and friends with Susan, me and friends with Jon.

I am also blessed to count members of the Agudas Achim leadership and staff my friends. I have written in the past about what a wonderful board we have and how we all work together for the betterment of not only the synagogue, but for each of us individually. To me, this is true friendship. It is my hope that all of you have many friends and have made some of them good friends with all the benefits described here. You certainly have my friendship.

Regards,
David

LIBRARY NEWS

Teresa Weiner



NEW in our library!

SCATTERGOOD | By H.M. Bouwman | (Ages 10 and up)

““Scattergood” is a brave, beautiful book, wise enough to reach for something beyond certainty.”

[-NY Times Book Review](#)

SCHOOL NEWS

Sonja Spear

It is twelve below zero, the ground is hard as rock, and there are no leaves on the trees. So, naturally, it is time to teach the kids about Tu Bishvat!

Nothing says, "let's plant trees" like a good, hard frost, after all.

The Tu Bishvat challenge comes up every year. How do you celebrate trees in the dead of winter? One year, we planted sunflower seeds on Tu Bishvat. My daughter took hers home and tended it until the soil was warm enough to plant the sunflower. It was the biggest, most vibrant plant in the garden – until a deer ate it. Devastating Tu Bishvat fail! The next year, we tried olives and dates. Apparently, dates are practical jokes that grow on trees. The kids slipped them onto chairs to see what would happen if someone sat on them. They hid them in nooks and crannies. We were still coming across dates in odd places weeks later. Not exactly a Tu Bishvat success. Long explanations about how the seasons are different in Israel met with glazed looks and indifference. I get it. When it's so cold, it's hard to believe that it is warm anywhere or that it will ever be warm again.

But it will be warm again. The sap will run. We will make maple syrup before the cold has even faded. The life hidden in the seed will burst out. That's

what Tu Bishvat means in the northern hemisphere, a celebration of the slowly lengthening days and a promise of abundant life to come. Just not quite yet.

So, this year, we will hold a Tu Bishvat seder and, following a suggestion from PJ Library, organize it around the seasons. We will divide the seder into four learning stations with information about the holiday, the seasons, and the opportunity to talk about how small deeds (*good deeds, I hope!*) sometimes grow into great things. For each station, of course, there will be a fruit to taste and grape juice to sample. Just as in an adult Tu Bishvat seder, we will change the color of the juice with each station. The older kids will plan some elements of the stations.

Of course, we will also continue to work on Hebrew/*tefilah* (prayer). This coming session is our last review of the Torah service for now. Beginning in February, we will learn parts of the Kabbalat Shabbat (Friday night) service to prepare for a family Shabbat some time in May.

Of course, Purim is practically tomorrow (counted in Sundays), and Passover is just around the corner! It's enough to get the sap running already. We just have to get through this cold spell first.

SENIORS GROUP

The synagogue seniors group will meet on February 20. More information to come.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Trying to reach the office or someone else at the congregation?

Hannah: office@agudasachimic.org

John: administrator@agudasachimic.org

Rabbi Hugenholtz: rabbi@agudasachimic.org

Sonja: principal@agudasachimic.org

ADULT EDUCATION

Lisa Heineman

Do you work or volunteer for a local non-profit? If so, we want to hear from you! We'd like to put together a panel of congregants who can teach us about the important work going on in our vibrant community. Send an email to AdultEd@agudasachimic.org.

February – May: Torah for our Time: This eight-part series, located at Public Space One, will begin on February 5. Please see details elsewhere in this mailing.

Feb 15: Immigration and Deportation: What do we need to know? What is our role? Special oneg on current developments and local action, with guests Mazahir Salih (Immigrant Welcome Network of Johnson County) and Ayman Sharif (Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa). Collaboration with Tikkun Olam.

Later this spring – save the date!

Mar 2, afternoon: Being Trans, Being Jewish. Special educational program on non-binary gender identity, Jewish teachings, and current legislative developments. Collaboration with Tikkun Olam.

Mar 27, evening: Beyond Chrismukkah: Interfaith Families, with special guest Prof. Samira Mehta, historian and Director of Jewish Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and author of Beyond Chrismukkah: The Christian-Jewish Interfaith Family in the United States. We're pleased to have been awarded a grant from the National Center to Encourage Judaism to support this program.

April 6, evening: Peace Seder @ Senior Center

May 30, overnight: Tikkun leil Shavuot @ Sacred Collective

FEBRUARY YAHRZEITS

Abraham Miller
Alan Widiss
Arnie Breggin
Arthur Margolin
Barbara Jean Bunnell
Belle Coster
Benjamin Sprince
Betty Fingert Freedman
Boris Kuperman
Celia Wolf
David Moyer
Doris Hoffman
Doris Johansen

Earl Yanney
Gittel Tepper
Gloria Gelman
Goldie Solganick
Harry Levin
Helen Chazanoff
Isaac Strauss
Jack Joseph Brown
Joseph Greenberg
Judith Goldfein
Lama Shetzer
LaVerne Siebuhr
Marvin Marcus

Maurice Joselson
Patrick McEwen
Rose Goldman
Ruth Levy
Samuel Markovitz
Sara Dorfman
Simone Kay
Sol Elster
Sydney Josselson
Sylvia Kaufman
Tamara Mazur
Wayne VanArendonk
Webster Gelman

City Jews & Agudas Achim Synagogue present

Torah for our Time

How does the Jewish tradition of questioning, exploring, and revising ancient wisdom address urgent questions of our day? Torah for our Time is for everyone - Jewish, Jew-ish, Jew Curious, or Just Plain Human.

- Feb 5 Democracy: Disagreement for the Sake of Heaven*
- Feb 19 Immigration: Welcoming the Stranger*
- Mar 5 Racial Justice: Moses's 'Dark' Wife*
- Apr 2 Reproductive Justice: Life & Personhood*
- Apr 16 Climate & Environment: Healing the World*
- Apr 30 Israel & Palestine: All in the Image of God*
- May 7 Gender Identity: Androgynous Adam*
- May 21 Economic Inequality: Opening our Hands*



For more info:
adulted@agudasachimic.org

Wednesdays 6-7:30 pm
Public Space One
538 S. Gilbert St.

Attend the whole series -
or drop in and out as you like!

City Jews:
***Building community, fostering Jewish culture & learning,
and deepening spiritual connection in downtown Iowa City***

Special Oneg event

Immigration and Deportation:
What do we need to know?
What is our role?

Saturday, February 15 following services

With special guests:



Mazahir Salih
(Immigrant Welcome Network
of Johnson County)



Ayman Sharif
(Center for Worker Justice
of Eastern Iowa)

Presented by Tikken Olam and Adult Education

TU BISHVAT

TOT SHABBAT & DINNER

FEBRUARY 7
SERVICE 5:30 PM
DINNER 6 PM

JOIN US FEBRUARY 7 AS WE
CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAY OF THE
TREES! PIZZA DINNER SERVED
AFTER SERVICES.

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES & THEIR
FAMILIES WELCOME, HOWEVER;
SERVICES ARE GEARED TOWARDS
AGES 5 AND UNDER.

PLEASE RSVP BEFORE FEBRUARY 4



FAMILY LOUNGE

Families with young children are invited to come play, sip coffee, and meet other parents in the family lounge behind the Becker Room. Come to as many as you would like!

JANUARY 26 10:15-11:15 AM
HOSTED BY SAM BROTMAN

FEBRUARY 9 9:15-10:15 AM
HOSTED BY LAUREN KANNER

FEBRUARY 23 10:15-11:15 AM
HOSTED BY SAM BROTMAN

Shevat Yoga

Nurturing Self, Igniting Potential

In this drop-in class, we focus on self-nurturing and realizing our potential as the winter days get a little shorter. We will come away from this gathering with a simple movement practice that we can add to our daily routine. Everyone is welcome. No previous Yoga experience necessary!

Date: Sunday February 9th, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: Agudas Achim Congregation

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

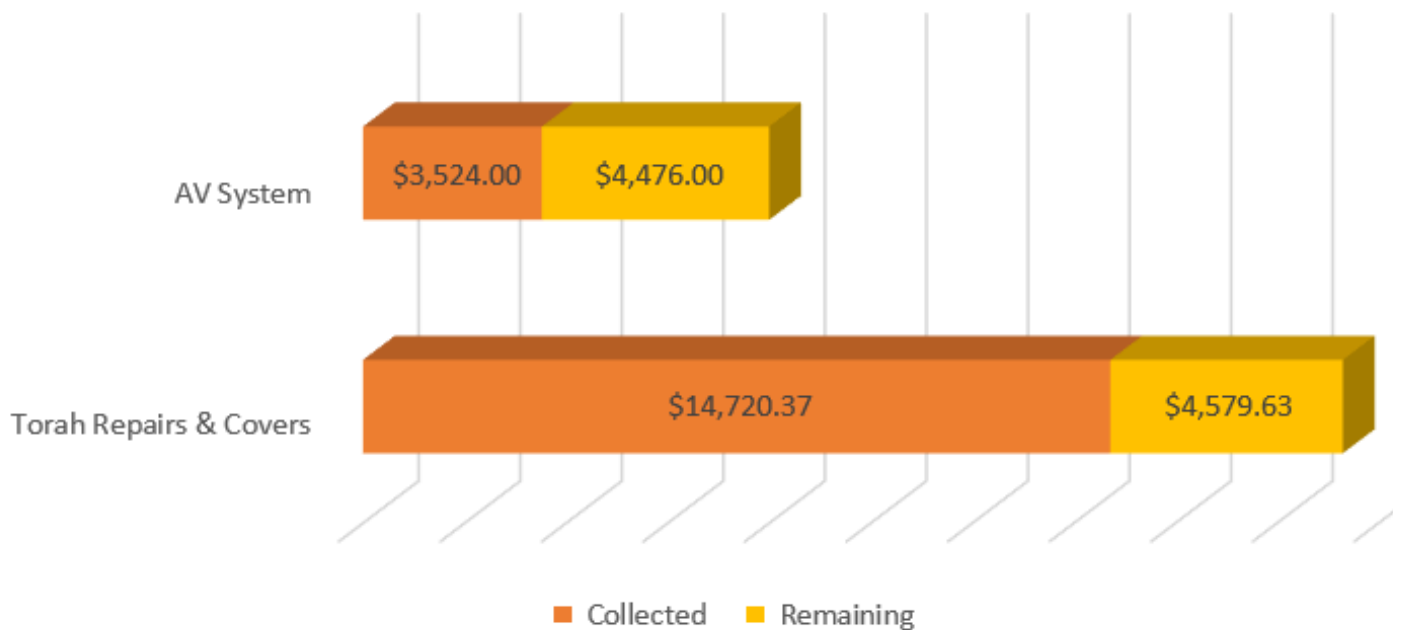
For more information: Leslea-collins@outlook.com

CONGREGATIONAL NEEDS FUNDRAISER

This space is dedicated to our congregation's smaller projects, and for people that may have a special passion in these areas of need to help us. Our Torahs were repaired recently by a Sofer, but one of our torahs now has a tear in the parchment that tore through the Hebrew writing, making the Torah not Kosher and therefore unusable for the time being. Further funds will be needed to repair this.

Additionally, our AV System has been installed and we are still needing donations to complete this fundraising project. We now are able to successfully ZOOM our services regularly straight from the Bimah.

Fundraising Efforts



NEW AGUDAS ACHIM INITIATIVE- INTERFAITH FAMILIES

Agudas Achim is planning a new initiative designed to encourage member families of interfaith marriages to participate in synagogue events. We are well aware that some non-Jewish spouses/partners are hesitant to join in activities offered by Agudas Achim.

We want to address this issue so that all members feel comfortable at our offerings. We want to hear from members wishing to attend a gathering to discuss the needs and wants from leadership.

Interested in participating in an initial meeting? Send an email to president@agudasachimic.org.

WARM UP AMERICA
*Therese Guedon, Jeanne Cadoret, &
 Jeanne Abrons*

Warm Up America will meet on Sundays, 10:30 a.m. to noon, February 9th and 23rd in the social hall to work on the afghans we donate to area charities. Also on March 9th and 23rd. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us. No skills necessary.



MAHJONG

Join us for Mahjongg at 1:00 p.m. in the synagogue on the dates below. Bring a Mahjongg card if you have one. It is helpful to know by the Friday before the Sunday game who is planning to play so please email the host if you plan to play. Beginners and walk- ins are always welcome.

Upcoming Dates

- February 16- Jayne
- March 2- Jayne
- March 9- Jayne
- March 16- Karen
- March 23- Corvin
- March 30- Corvin



[RSVP to Karen](#) | [RSVP to Jayne](#) | [RSVP to Corvin](#)

JANUARY ONEG HOSTS

Thank you to January's oneg hosts:

Beverly & Doug Jones

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

BOARD MINUTES

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

BUDDY SYSTEM

Interested in having a buddy or being a buddy?

Information can be found [here](#).

SERVICE SCHEDULE FOR 2025

The schedule for 2025 can be found [here](#).

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

Save the Date: Saturday March 29 for Membership Shabbat! This is where we honor old and new members followed by a lovely lunch.

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 p.m.	Talmud Study Group Sundays at 9:00 a.m. on Zoom.	Seniors Group Third Thursday of every month at 11:00 a.m.
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FEBRUARY SPECIAL EVENTS

Torah for our Time: Democracy	Public Space 1	2/5	6:00 p.m.
Tu Bishvat Tot Shabbat	Synagogue	2/7	5:30 p.m.
Family Lounge	Synagogue	2/9	9:15 a.m.
Shevat Yoga	Synagogue	2/9	2:00 p.m.
Warm Up America	Synagogue	2/9	10:30 a.m.
Mahjongg	Synagogue	2/16	1:00 p.m.
Torah for our Time: Immigration	Public Space 1	2/19	6:00 p.m.
Family Lounge	Synagogue	2/23	10:15 a.m.
Warm Up America	Synagogue	2/23	10:30 a.m.

SHABBAT SERVICES

[Streaming link for Zoom Shabbat services](#)

Bo <i>(Exodus 10:1-13:16)</i>	Friday, January 31	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
	Saturday, February 1	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative)
Beshalach <i>(Exodus 13:17-17:16)</i>	Friday, February 7	7:00 p.m.	Lev Shalem
	Saturday, February 8	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah
Yitro <i>(Exodus 18:1-20:23)</i>	Friday, February 14	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, February 15	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Mishpatim <i>(Exodus 21:1-24:18)</i>	Friday, February 21	7:00 p.m.	Lev Shalem
	Saturday, February 22	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah
Terumah <i>(Exodus 25:1-27:19; Numbers 28:9-15); Exodus 30:11-16)</i>	Friday, February 28	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, March 1	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem

JANUARY DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Bob and Donna Rodnitzky: in memory of Ann Rodnitzky
Victor Landweber: in memory of Louis Landweber
Richard Strauss and Ellen Herman: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
Bob and Donna Rodnitzky: in memory of Nathan Rodnitzky
Stephen Strauss: in memory of Phyllis Braverman

BRAVERMAN TALMUD TORAH FUND

David and Martha Lubaroff: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
Eloise McCuskey: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
Richard and Jeanne Levitt: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
David and Shirley Goodman: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
Carla Kestler: in memory of Phyllis Braverman

GENERAL FUND

Harriet and Stephen Swartz: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
Linda Kerber: in memory of Pauline Kerber, Sylvia Kaufman, and Alan Widiss
Julia Gelfand and David Lang: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
Jody and Janie Braverman: in memory of Phyllis Braverman
Ellen Lewin and Lizabeth Goodman
Aaron Andrew & Lana Zak

LIBRARY FUND

Caplan Family Foundation: in honor of Joel & Nancy Caplan

SIM & SARA STRAUSS MEMORIAL FUND

Richard Strauss and Ellen Herman: in memory of Sim & Belle Strauss

TIKUN OLAM FUND

Jeffrey and Laura Spear

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

STAFF

Rabbi	Esther Hugenholtz	Administrative Assistant	Hannah Sandler
Administrator	John Wertz	Custodian	Amos Kiche
Principal	Sonja Spear		

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President	David Lubaroff	Religious School	Sonja Spear
President Elect	Lori McMann	Social	Lori McMann & Sue Weinberg
Vice President	Jayne Sandler	Tikun Olam	Mallory Hellman
Treasurer	Mindy Russell	Ways & Means	Mindy Russell
Board Secretary	Chuck Friedman	Youth	Hannah Sandler
Membership	Karen Lipman	At Large 1	Sue Weinberg
Ritual	Bernie Miller & Corvin Greene	At Large 2	Marcus Nashelsky
Adult Ed	Lisa Heineman	At Large 3	Ruth Nathanson