



Agudas Achim Congregation

401 E. Oakdale Blvd., Coralville, IA 52241

Phone: 319-337-3813

www.AgudasAchimIC.org

September 2025 / Elul 5785-Tishrei 5786



Spring Into Hebrew, Agudas Achim's Summer Hebrew camp, successfully ran the week before Iowa City area schools resumed. Six kids aged 10 and up worked on their Hebrew skills, including prayers, decoding and trope with the religious school principal, Sonja Spear, as well as with Rabbi Esther, other volunteers from the congregation, and Toe and Ari Collins.

AT-A-GLANCE EVENT CALENDAR THROUGH YOM KIPPUR

Selichot	9/13	9:00 p.m.
Dreaming in Jewish	9/14	10:30 a.m.
Big Ideas Book Club @ ICPL	9/17	6:30 p.m.
Young Families Park Meetup @ Centennial Park	9/20	3:30 p.m.
Challah Braiding & Baking	9/21	12:00 p.m.
Rosh HaShanah Wine & Cheese Reception	9/22	7:00 p.m.
Erev Rosh Hashanah	9/22	8:00 p.m.
Not Just Honey Cake Oneg	9/22	after service
Rosh Hashanah Day 1– Conservative	9/23	8:30 a.m.
Rosh Hashanah Day 1– Reform	9/23	9:30 a.m.
Children’s Service	9/23	10:00 a.m.
Rosh Hashanah Evening 2	9/23	8:00 p.m.
Rosh Hashanah Day 2	9/24	8:30 a.m.
Tashlich @ Lower City Park Pavilion 12	9/24	3:00 p.m.
Shabbat Shuvah Mussar Oneg & Panel	9/27	12:30 p.m.
Kever Avot	9/28	11:00 a.m.
Kol Nidre	10/1	6:00 p.m.
Yom Kippur Morning Conservative	10/2	8:30 a.m.
Yom Kippur Morning Reform	10/2	9:30 a.m.
Children’s Service	10/2	10:00 a.m.
Yom Kippur Learning Sessions	10/2	after service
Yizkor & Yom Kippur Afternoon	10/2	4:30 p.m.
Yom Kippur Break-Fast	10/2	after service

Services in blue. Excludes Shabbat services. See [High Holidays Bulletin](#) for more information on all events. [Register here](#) for High Holidays services.



Images from our recent board retreat

FROM THE RABBI

Esther Hugenholtz

This little humble September Bulletin exists in the towering shadow of its forbear, the High Holiday Bulletin, so I urge our beloved readership to refer back to the High Holiday Bulletin for all of our Elul and Tishrey High Holiday programming.

But that doesn't mean this Bulletin has nothing to say! First of all, please read the incredibly powerful message of our President who writes insightfully on our High Holiday theme of 'growth'. Her words are worthy of consideration.

August has not been a quiet month. We had an invigorating Board Retreat with our new Board where we analyzed, took stock and brainstormed about leading our community at this time and the times to come. There was an Oasis-catered lunch and plenty of sticky notes and even some singing! The pleasure of working with Boards for a consecutive eight years as the Rabbi is that you get to see the growth (pun intended) of our communal lay leadership as we upgrade our structures, upskill in non-profit management and envision how we can serve the Jewish population of the Iowa City/ Coralville area. Staying connected to the latest trends in Jewish non-profit management, and to experts only a Zoom-call away makes sure that even if we are geographically isolated, we can still grow in both competency and vision.

August also saw us kick off High Holiday (or rather, pre-High Holiday) programming. It was a joy to see members join us for the Introduction to Judaism sessions on the season, swelling our ranks and the passion of our discourse. The synagogue is humming in the background like a well-oiled machine. Rosh haShanah challahs are being baked, silver is being polished, cards are being printed and liturgy reviewed. Our professionals in the office are giving the very best of themselves at this time; kind of like swans—unflappable and poised in the water, and some frantic flapping of feet under the surface!

September will continue to bless us with opportunities for growth. Lisa Heineman's

'Dreaming in Jewish' will provide us with a space to dream about the Jewish future. Building on Rabbi Benay Lappé's 'Crash Theory' (the idea that Jewish history, like all history, goes through a series of crashes and paradigm shifts), Lisa will take stock of our current moment in Jewish history and allow for envisioning of Jewish futures during this day-long retreat. If you're interested in exploring 'meta-questions' or just want a place to experience Jewish joy, please come to this event. No prior knowledge or experience is needed. An rsvp for lunch purposes is helpful. (Contact the office).

The Big Ideas in Jewish Books club will reconvene again at the ICPL to read Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg's 'On Repentance and Repair'. I discussed this book in a High Holiday sermon a few years ago and now we can read it as a congregation as we revisit some of its core ideas to truly repair relationships: on an individual and collective level.

Charles Packard will return with his Challah Baking/ Braiding course, so please join us for that. Your High Holiday challahs will not taste better than under the stewardship of our inhouse professional baker! (How many synagogues get to say that?)

I know I am forgetting a lot. Please read Principal Sonja Spear's article on our 'Spring Into Hebrew' pilot program where we created a fun camp-like intensive experience for our pre-B-Mitzvah cohort to become more confident in Hebrew. It was our first time offering this program and we had a blast!

This is it from me. I have sermons to write and emails to answer and congregants to support. I am excited to spend the High Holidays with you and look forward to seeing you very soon at our beautiful services.

With immense gratitude to both our professionals, lay leaders and volunteers for making us 'hum' and for making the Agudas Achim wheels turn. We could not do it without you!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Lori McMann

In the last article I wrote for the High Holidays Bulletin, I observed that synagogue preparations run the gamut from the expressly sacred to the seemingly pedestrian. September will be filled with these preparations. So many services and activities fill the calendar around the High Holidays. It makes me think about how varied our paths through the High Holidays may be.

When you look at your own path at this season, what do you see? It is easy for some people to think of the traditions to which they feel most attached. For me, it is Erev Rosh Hashanah dinner, which was my earliest introduction to the High Holidays, always at my in-laws' table in Michigan. For the 50th year this fall, our High Holiday and Passover dinners have been shared with the same core group of chosen Jewish family. Several are no longer with us (may their memories be a blessing) and others—including me—have joined the family by marriage or birth. (Our two families came together in Detroit when the matriarchs of each family discovered that they had played together as children in the Polish village where they grew up.) Another touchstone for me is the Kol Nidre. It is such a profound spiritual moment, which only comes once a year, that Yom Kippur feels incomplete if I miss it. You might call these my emotional “mile markers” as I move through the holidays.

Growth is the theme highlighted in this season's High Holidays services and activities. In our everyday lives, growth is often visible only in hindsight. We all think of children, who seem to have grown most when we haven't seen them for a while. I've already begun to talk about this summer

in the past tense. I can attest to the tremendous growth of the weeds in my yard due to our prodigious rain and heat, but I'm only aware of it when thinking of how they have gotten so much taller than they were! Growth seems like an unintended consequence of other events and processes, and we have little influence over it.

But instead of letting growth just “happen”, how can we grow with intention? If we wish to explore our own growth, we have to actively seek it out. Try something new. Invite someone along with you. If baking challah is something you simply never do, perhaps joining our challah-baking session in the synagogue kitchen might persuade you to try it (again?) and have a little fun. If you have never built a sukkah, please come help build Agudas Achim's sukkah! Perhaps this will be the month when you finally go to the Big Ideas Book Club for the first time. Maybe you will come for the panel discussion about learning Mussar. One thing which is a “reach” beyond my comfortable past experience is joining in the Kever avot service at the Agudas Achim cemetery.

As September begins, I hope that each of you consider some questions when planning how to take part in the High Holidays. “What new opportunities do I see?” “What have I written off before because I felt uncomfortable or uncertain?” “What might I find rewarding, even if I don't usually attend?” “What do I have to lose?” Most of all, I hope that these questions might lead you on a path of growth.

L'shanah tovah!

LIBRARY NEWS

Books for study and reflection during Elul? Options for adults and children are right here in our library- stop in and borrow some books today!



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Sonja Spear

When I was a kid, I didn't understand why New Year's Day fell on the first of January. What's January, after all? It's the dead of winter. No hopeful crocuses poking through the ground, no gold and orange leaves. Winter has hung around so long that even fresh snow has lost its charm. January is gray and old. Slushy.

The Jewish new year made so much more sense. Rosh Hashanah was usually in the first few weeks of school. New pencils, new teachers, new shoes crunching the newly fallen leaves. My new outfit for Rosh Hashanah was also my new outfit for school. The first day of school was always exciting and a little scary. School promises the opportunity for change and growth through a process of judgment, *er, evaluation*. Sound like any holidays you know? Rosh Hashanah is bittersweet, a combination of feasting and repentance or, as an old rabbi of mine once said: "Half for God and half for us." (Who gets which half? He didn't say.)

As an adult, I'm even more tied to the school year – and the Jewish year! – than I was as a child. This fall, my daughter will go back to school. My husband will return to teaching. I will greet a fresh flock of Sunday School students. In short, the approaching High Holidays mean that it's time to get back to work!

The thing that I didn't realize as a student is that a teacher's work begins long before the school doors open. I've been planning the coming school year all summer. I dreamed up a four-day intensive for pre-B-Mitzvah kids. I imagined how to get more Torah stories into the Sunday School curriculum. Over the summer, I wrote out how to realize these visions, step by step. By the time you read this in September, I will know how my plans turned out. I will have cute stories to share, triumphs to celebrate, and undoubtedly a few frustrations. (Those I will probably keep to myself.) But right now, I have this bulletin article to finish and not much to say. I have nothing to share but some plans.

Spring Into Hebrew, our inaugural "camp" for kids 10-13, will meet (or, from your perspective, will have met) in August. We will work on easy and confidence sounding out Hebrew, play vocabulary games, and learn a little trop, a little midrash, and a little bit about navigating Scripture. My plan is for the kids to learn a lot and have fun. Their plan, I imagine, is to sulk and complain about giving up the last of their free time. I will ask them to write an Oy Vey Song in English, using as many Hebrew words as they can. If they incorporate ten words or more, the rabbi and I will have to sing it. It will be the smash hit of the summer!

A few people have expressed disappointment that their kids have to miss Spring Into Hebrew because they have other summer plans. If it goes well, we will run the program again next year. Once your kids hear the Oy Vey Song, they'll be begging to join the class!

Sunday School begins September 7 and meets during the academic semester from 9:15-12:15. The full calendar is on the synagogue website under the School tab. If you missed the first day, don't panic. You can still join the school once classes have started.

In Sunday School, the kids learn *tefilah* (prayer), Hebrew vocabulary and decoding, Jewish stories and Jewish ethics. Kids are divided into classes roughly by age. But our focus is collaborative learning, so sometimes classes come together to work on a project. The classes are taught by community members who bring a range of talents and experience to the task.

Most importantly, the Sunday School is the core of our children's Jewish community. It's where they make Jewish friends, meeting caring Jewish adults, and learn to see the world through a Jewish lens. Also, of course, they have a good time.

Have an easy new school year and a sweet Jewish new year. I look forward to seeing the kids and hearing all about their summer adventures as we begin the new year for real.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

Karen Lipman

Welcome to recent new members

Robin and Steve Ungar

Steven Gross

Leah Lee Caplan and Aaron Caplan

Share Your Simcha News!

We love celebrating the joyful moments in our community — weddings, births, graduations, happy life events, special anniversaries, and more non-work related news. If you or your family have a simcha (happy occasion) to share, let us know so we can announce it in our monthly bulletin for the next 6 months. Please email membership@agudasachimic.org with the information to share by the 24th of the month. Let's spread the joy!

Sharing Simchas

Mazel Tov to Karen Charney and Ben Coelho on the engagement of their daughter Liliana to Wyeth.

Congratulations to Renee Zukin on the publication of her new book *Every Day, I'm Brave*.

Mazel Tov to Karlene and David Katz on the engagement of their daughter, Eleni to Gabe.

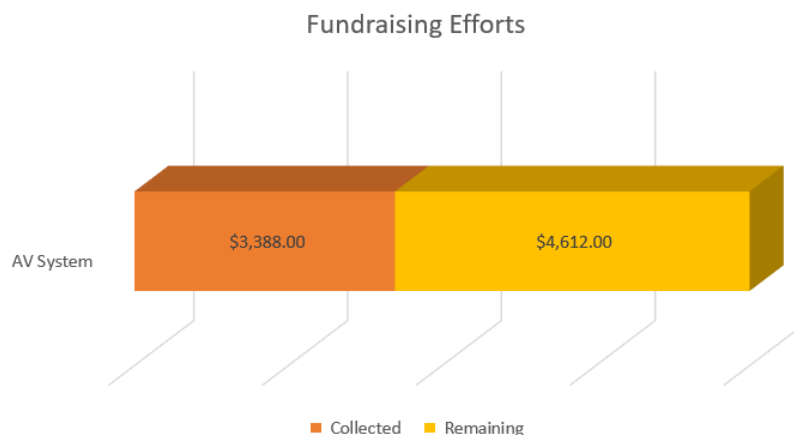
Mazel Tov to Hannah and Solomon Jones on their recent wedding.

CONGREGATIONAL NEEDS FUNDRAISER

Our congregation regularly undertakes smaller fundraising initiatives that require support. Contributions of any size are welcomed and typically meet the immediate needs of these projects. If you have a particular interest in a specific initiative, we encourage you to consider offering your support.

Thanks to generous donations, we previously met our target for Torah Repairs.

The installed AV system currently lacks complete funding. Additional support for the fundraising effort would help to reach this funding goal.



SYNAGOGUE SENIORS

Thanks to member Ryan Bobst, director of the North Liberty Community Pantry, on his wonderful presentation to the group. Thanks to all the members who brought in donations for the pantry. The Synagogue Seniors enjoyed a tasty potluck gazpacho and Summer salad brunch while the Religious School Spring Into Hebrew students picknicked out back. Just another busy multi-program weekday at Agudas Achim!

The Synagogue Seniors will next meet in October. Shana Tovah u Metukah!



MAHJONG

Melissa Hill Jones will be teaching a learners' MahJongg table for new players at the synagogue. All ages and life stages are welcome to join us. Experienced players, as always, are welcome to join a player's table. Please bring your 2025 card if you have one.

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

Upcoming Dates

Sept 7- Corvin
Sept14- Karen
Sept21- Jayne
Sept 28- Corvin



Big Ideas In Jewish Books Club

More info?
Contact
adulthood@agudasachimic.org



Come explore important Jewish ideas at the Iowa City Public Library

June 24

'Judaism Without Tribalism' by Rabbi Rami Shapiro

July 23

'A Short History of the Jews' by Michael Brenner

August 20

'Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza' by Peter Beinart
&

'For a Time Such as This' by Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove

September 7

'On Repentance and Repair' by Danya Ruttenberg



Dreaming in Jewish: A Retreat on Third Era Judaism

What happens when old systems crash, when the world as we know it is no longer sustainable?

Judaism's history is one of crashes and reinventions: reinventions that draw on ancient wisdom for the purpose of radical transformation.

Today's Judaism is again in the midst of a once-in-a-millennium transformation - to what Modern Orthodox Rabbi Yitz Greenberg calls "Third Era Judaism."

Join Lisa Heineman for a one-day retreat to learn about and participate in this radical transformation.

Sunday, September 14, 10:30-4:30 pm, at Agudas Achim.



Lunch provided.

Please plan to commit to the full length of the program.

RSVP to <https://forms.gle/KbqpCJACoJNK2Xiq5>

[RSVP here.](https://forms.gle/KbqpCJACoJNK2Xiq5)



PRE-ROSH HASHANAH PARK MEETUP

Join Agudas Achim Young Families for a pre-Rosh Hashanah park playtime on Saturday, September 20 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. at Centennial Park in North Liberty

Children 6 and under welcome, as well as their families, siblings and grandparents.

Snacks and a holiday craft provided.

**RSUP TO NICOLE AT NNAGIN3@GMAIL.COM
WITH NAMES OF ATTENDEES AND AGES.**

Saturday,
September 27
12:30-2:00
p.m.

Shabbat Shuva Mussar: Is it for you?

Join current Mussar students,
and facilitator Lea Haravon
Collins, after services on
Saturday, September 27 for an
Oneg luncheon and student
panel to learn about Jewish
ethics & the spiritual wisdom of
Mussar.



Lea Haravon Collins

Ph.D., certified Mussar facilitator, yoga instructor, and cantorial soloist

Questions? Email Lea at leslea-collins@outlook.com

WALK-IN-WALKIN'

L'shana tova. Did you know that 3 out of 3 Iowa City doctors recommend at least two things for promoting good health:

- Exercise
- Interaction with other people.

Agudas Achim has provided a way to do both. The Synagogue is available 11:00a.m. - 1:00p.m. on Tues. and Thurs. when the office is open, for Walk-In Walkin' alone or in groups. Contact your friends and meet to walk, talk, and enjoy. Walk on hard surfaces or carpeting, alone or with someone else. Try it, you may like it. And you will make at least 3 Iowa City doctors happy.



YOUNG FAMILY GROUP

Thank you to Lindy Buch for leading our Summer Story Time. Books and snacks were very much enjoyed.



AUGUST ONEG HOSTS

Thank you to August's oneg hosts:

Ruth & Doug Nathanson

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

BOARD MINUTES

July board meeting minutes can be found [at this link.](#)

August board meeting minutes can be found [at this link.](#)

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.](#)

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

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.

Intro to Judaism Class

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

SHABBAT SERVICES

[Streaming link for Zoom services](#)

Ki Tetze <i>(Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19)</i>	Friday, September 5	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah (Reform)
	Saturday, September 6	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem (Conservative)
Ki Tavo <i>(Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8)</i>	Friday, September 12	7:00 p.m.	Lev Shalem
	Saturday, September 13	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah
Nitzavim <i>(Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20)</i>	Friday, September 19	7:00 p.m.	Mishkan T'filah
	Saturday, September 20	9:30 a.m.	Lev Shalem
Vayelech <i>(Deuteronomy 31:1-30)</i>	Friday, September 26	7:00 p.m.	Lev Shalem
	Saturday, September 27	9:30 a.m.	Mishkan T'filah

SEPTEMBER YAHREZITS

Abrons, John
Aizenberg, Hannah
Armstrong, Serena
Bardach, Janusz
Bar-Lev, Rina
Baskin, Jerome
Boyers, Mary "Vera"
Braverman, Eli
Brecher, Victor
Breckner, Pamela
Brodsky, Leonard
Canter, Ida
Caplan, Iylene
Corwin, Stanley
Dougherty, Gail

Frank, Eleanor
Ginsberg, Douglas
Ginsberg, Louis
Graff, Kenneth
Kean, Pat
Klausner, Milton
Krachmer, Marilyn
Levin, Jacob Louis
Levin, Joseph B.
Levine, Celia Hubelbank
Levine, Mortimer
Lewin, Fannie
Marcus, Benjamin M.
Milavetz, David
Nashelsky, Joan

Portman, Etta Dubin
Rose, Selma G.
Roston, Sylvia
Roston, Walter
Schochet, Sydney
Schoenberg, Bernard
Sellz, Michael
Sideman, Irene T.
Silversteen, Miriam
Snider, Herman
Thurston, Robert
Weiner, Murray
Weinstein, Maurice
Zwerling, Lillian

AUGUST DONATIONS

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Tova Vitiello: in memory of Gail Dougherty

Steven and Barcey Levy: in memory of
Robert Thurston

Nathan Eugene Savin and Susan Enzle

CEMETERY FUND

Linda Levey

Ewa Bardach and Hani Elkadi: in memory of
Janusz Bardach

Lorraine Dorfman: in memory of Morris Tiss

GENERAL FUND

Robert and Vida Brenner: in memory of
Diane Sunshine

Marcus and Joan Nashelsky: in memory of
Joan Nashelsky

Murray and Meryl Cohen: in memory of
Marilyn Krachmer

Ellen Lewin and Lizabeth Goodman: in memory of
Fannie Lewin

Gary and Cathy Cohn: in memory of Charlotte Cohn
Emily Johnson

Linda Kerber: in memory of Janusz Bardach

Irwin and Patricia Levin: in memory of
Rose (Rae) Levin

Sam and Marj Kuperman: for Warm Up America

LOUIS GINSBERG YOUTH FUND

Mark and Vickie Ginsberg: in memory of
Marvin Pomerantz & Louis I. Ginsberg

HIGH HOLIDAY FUND

Jeffrey Whitebook: in memory of Julie Whitebook

LIBRARY FUND

Jaime Kean: in memory of Pat Kean

Stanley and Jane Zukin: in memory of
Diane Sunshine

PORTMAN PROGRAM FUND

Richard Levine: in memory of Mortimer Levine

SAFETY FUND

Richard Levine: in memory of Mortimer Levine

SCHOOL FUND

Pamela and Bill Kutschke: in memory of
Donald Herbach

TIKUN OLAM FUND

Steven Gross: for Immigrant Welcome Network
Gala

WARM UP AMERICA

Therese Guedon, Jeanne Cadoret, & Jeanne Abrons

Warm Up America welcomes people of all ages.

No experience or skills are necessary.

We'll meet on September 7 and 21, 10:30 a.m. to noon, in the social hall.

Many of our members knit or crochet our all-synthetic 9" x 7" afghan patches, sew patches into afghans, or create borders at home.

We meet in the social hall for other steps, before delivering to local agencies like Houses to Homes, DVIP, Action for Youth, and Shelter House.

Join us?

[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	Lori McMann	Religious School	Joseph Chase
President Elect	Lisa Heineman	Social	Margaret Phillips
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Membership	Karen Lipman	At Large 2	Chuck Friedman
Ritual	Ezra Hendelkin & Bernie Miller	At Large 3	Sue Weinberg
Adult Ed	Barney Sherman		