



# Agudas Achim Newsletter

## August 2025

E-mail: [agudasachim@hvc.rr.com](mailto:agudasachim@hvc.rr.com) or Telephone (845) 439-3600

**Friday, August 1st** 7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice with Ira and Julia  
7:30 PM Services **via zoom and in person led by Rabbi Rebecca Shinder**

### Message from Rabbi Rebecca Pomerantz Shinder

The summer months for Congregation Agudas Achim are often filled with tremendous programming, joyous worship, and various opportunities for the wider community to gather for fellowship and fun. A highlight of this season has already taken place when Adela Blaustein led us in worship and was called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah in July. What a community to begin its celebration of its centennial year! As the Talmudic passage fabulous way for our suggests, Addie “*stands upon the shoulders*” of her teachers and her beloved family members even those - perhaps especially those who were not physically present with us on that sensation Shabbat.

As we prepare for the next stage of this season, I am reminded of how many folks choose to reflect upon their lives with the proverbial binary choice of a glass being either half full or being half empty. Yet many theater loving folks prefer to face life while keeping in mind the improvisational exercise of facing a challenge not as an “either/or” proposition, but rather one best expressed as “yes/and.” That is to say that more than one thing can be true at one time.

On August 1, our Shabbat celebration will also kick off our 100th anniversary celebration of this magnificent temple. *Yes*, there is much to mention, *and* this will include how your beloved Rabbi Fred, my dad passed away peacefully last year. *Yes*, Rabbi Fred’s eloquence, wisdom, and vision transformed this historic temple into a congregation, *and* his larger-than-life presence and love is missed meteorically. *Yes*, we will say Kaddish for our rabbi *and* we will toast a l’chayim or two in his honor. *Yes*, his legacy will be remembered for a blessing, *and* we will celebrate how Rabbi Fred transformed the musicianship and menschlekite of Julia and Ira to be your spiritual leaders of today and tomorrow.

Please join us for Shabbat on August 1 to lift up a glass and a memory or two with our congregation. Julia and Ira will begin our Sabbath Experience at 7:15 pm with Shabbes music in advance of our 7:30 pm service. The Pomerantz/Shinder family welcomes you to join us for an Oneg in honor and memory of our husband, father, and Saba.

*L'Shalom,*  
*Rabbi Rebecca Pomerantz Shinder*

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

It's August already! There are some significant events and opportunities coming up in the next couple of months, please mark your calendars and join us

- On August 1, Rabbi Rebbeca Shinder will lead the Shabbat service as we celebrate the life of her father, Rabbi Fred Pomerantz. Please join us in person or via zoom as we pay tribute to his memory.
- On Thursday, September 1 we are sponsoring the one-woman performance of "Picking up Stones, An American Jew wakes up to a nightmare." **Picking Up Stones** is a raw, urgent 70-minute (no intermission) piece from award-winning writer and performer Sandra Laub (LA Idyllwild Film Festival; Providence Fringe). This powerful *cri de coeur*, confronts the opposing truths of two peoples, one land, and too much death on both sides. Laub channels 34 characters — from Golda Meir to a Palestinian 3-year-old boy. Set against the backdrop of October 7th and a future still heartbreakingly uncertain, **Picking Up Stones** travels through history and into the fractured present — from Israel, to Gaza, to the lives of innocents caught as pawns in conflict, yet still courageous in resistance and hope that there is a better way.

**A limited number of tickets are available. Be sure to get yours! \***

### To purchase tickets

Call Lynn Skolnick at 845-798-2389 and send a check

Go to [congregationagudasachim.org](http://congregationagudasachim.org) and click 'get your tickets here'

**\* We are seeking sponsors and/or someone to help promote the show** which will be held at the Hurleyville Performing Arts Center. **Please reach out to me to volunteer for either or both.**

- High Holidays are around the corner. Consider joining us in person or via zoom at our very special High Holiday services. In the coming months I will be sending a separate letter for a high holiday appeal which will include an opportunity to remember the name of a loved one that has passed.

Judy Siegel, President  
Congregation Agudas Achim  
845-798-0783

### FINAL CRAFT BEER AND SPIRITUALITY HAVDALAH of the season!

- You have one more chance to join the fun-our final CBS Havdalah will be held on Saturday, August 16. Community is the best of what we are ... join us at The Smoke Joint on August 16 at 3:30 pm for good music, good food and good people!

### A Message from The Levins:

We are so grateful to share so many meaningful, bright moments with you all this summer. We begin this month by joining together with Rabbi Shinder and the Pomerantz family to celebrate the life of our dear Rabbi Fred Pomerantz, z'l. It will be a joyful Shabbat service filled with music, as Fred would have truly loved. It will surely remind us all of how fortunate we are to draw from the well of Rabbi Fred's wisdom, as well as the gifted guidance of Rabbi Rebecca, as we continue to grow and move forward towards our High Holidays. Please come raise a glass with us!

Gathering together while we sing, play and pray as a unified presence, does this "body" good, individually and as a whole. The more we revel in these moments, the more we appreciate and truly benefit from the community of Agudas Achim. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Love and Shalom,  
Ira and Julia / The Levins

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#### UPCOMING SERVICES and EVENTS

**Congregation Agudas Achim provides zoom services every month.**

email [virtualshabbat@gmail.com](mailto:virtualshabbat@gmail.com) for zoom link. HINT: It's the same every month

<b>Friday, August 1</b>	7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice with Ira and Julia. 7:30 PM Services <b>via zoom and in person led by Rabbi Rebecca Shinder</b> <b>Celebration of life, Rabbi Fred Pomerantz</b>
<b>Saturday, Aug. 16</b>	Craft Beer and Spirituality (CBS) Havdalah, Smoke Joint, Livingston Manor
<b>Thursday, Sept 4,</b>	7:00 PM: Hurleyville Performing Arts Center (HPAC) 'Picking Up Stones: An American Jew Wakes to a Nightmare' Go to <a href="http://congregationagudasachim.org">congregationagudasachim.org</a> for tickets or call 845-798-2389
<b>Friday, Sept 5</b>	7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice with Ira and Julia. 7:30 PM Services <b>via zoom and in person</b>

The Congregation Agudas Achim Community is invited to [these events at Temple Sholom, 5 Dillon Road, Monticello.](#)

- Thurs., Aug. 14th, 6:00 pm, Honoring **Survivors** exhibit. Admission is free; donations are accepted.
- Thurs., Aug. 14th, 7:00 pm, **Children of Survivors panel discussion**; more details to come through Hadassah.
- Sun., Aug. 17th, 12:30 pm-1:30 pm, **Honoring Survivors** exhibit. Admission is free; donations are accepted.
- Sun., Aug. 17th, 2:00 pm, **Chai on Music, Klezmer style**. Contact Temple Sholom for reservations and suggested \$15 donation goes towards future collaborations, exhibits, and events.
- Temple Sholom, (845) 794-8731, Monday and Thursday, 10-3:30 pm.

## BACCALAUREATE

In June, Temple Agudas Achim was proudly represented by Michele Hemmer at the final baccalaureate service for the Livingston Manor School District. The event brought together about 70 attendees, including graduates, families, school officials, clergy, and members of the wider community, for an evening of prayer, music, and thoughtful readings prepared by the students.

This year's service held particular significance, as it was the last under the Livingston Manor name. The district has now officially merged with Roscoe to become the Rockland Central School District. Clergy and representatives from each local house of worship participated in the program, offering blessings and reflections to the graduating seniors. Michele Hemmer spoke on behalf of Agudas Achim, continuing the congregation's longstanding tradition of community involvement in this meaningful celebration.

It was a moving sight to see the graduates in their caps and gowns, surrounded by a diverse and supportive group of worshipers, receiving words of wisdom and encouragement from each speaker. The service served as a reminder of the strong interfaith connections that exist in the local community—and of the value of marking life's transitions with shared spiritual support.

Agudas Achim is proud to be part of a community where such traditions continue to bring people together in celebration and unity.

### **Happy Anniversary**

Ray Croney & Hope Blecher 8/8  
Neil & Lea Schwartz 8/23  
Ron & Tedda Lindeman 8/30

### **Happy Birthday**

Hope Blecher 8/1  
Kathie Sachs 8/11  
Randy Katz 8/13  
Natasha Hirschhorn 8/14  
Linda Berkowicz 8/22  
Susan Schiff 8/25  
Lynn Skolnick 8/26  
Karisa Yoli 8/30

## Jewish Education News

My friend, who lives on a large open piece of land in Georgia, is always sending me pictures of her sunrises and sunsets. She is in awe of the ever-changing beauty of the sky. She speaks of the magnificence of the sights and the awesomeness of God. She is grateful.

Have you stopped to look at how beautiful sunsets can be? Whether you live in Sullivan County, another state or in Israel, each sunset is unique. They are never the same. Each evening, we get the gift of a beautiful painted sky. Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso wrote the children's book, "God's Paintbrush". She described the beauty one sees at the rising of the sun and at its setting.

When you take the time to stop to see, really see the sunset, be mindful that what you are looking at is a from God. A line from one of my favorite psalms says, "The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky proclaims God's handiwork." Psalm, 19.1.

I think about the sunset and wonder if this was meant to be this way, to have this type of beauty at the end of the day. We know our days can be difficult; there are stresses of family, work or health. We can be rushing, overwhelmed, with too much to fit into our days. Then sunset comes. We are given a few minutes to let us know, it will all be okay. Perhaps your day was wonderful, filled with acts of kindness, or celebrations, or calmness. You had a good day, then the sunset becomes a beautiful ending to a wonder-ful day. (Jewishly, our days end at the setting of the sun, and a new day begins in the evening. Think of Shabbat beginning on Friday evening, first Seder for Passover, lighting first Hanukkah candle the evening before the first day.) No matter what type of day you have, if you slow down, stop, look, and take a deep slow breath, you will see the awesomeness, and the beauty of this gift that the Eternal Holy One has given us. I am grateful for this gift, a daily reminder that God is with us.

However, and wherever you are spending your summer, take the time to appreciate the awe, the beauty and uniqueness of these moments of God's blessings.

Our Zoom Hebrew school will resume in September. Our first session will be Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. If you know someone who would like to be part of our school, please let me know.

Enjoy the rest of your summer.

Love and Blessings,  
Rabbi Tobi Innerfield  
Director of Education

## **INVOLVEMENT**

The future of Agudas Achim is in your hands! If you would like to be more involved in a big or small way, we welcome you. Feel free to reach out at [virtualshabbat@gmail.com](mailto:virtualshabbat@gmail.com)

## **DONATIONS .... Please consider.**

Our in-person contact (and thus our fundraising efforts) are limited. Our philosophy has always been to maintain low dues and keep an open-door policy so that anyone can join us in person when available or now virtually. But that philosophy depends on generous donations from people like you. Please consider donating to Congregation Agudas Achim ... no amount is too large or too small! You can donate and designate it to one of the following:

Security \*Outreach \* Building fund \* Cemetery fund \* Endowment fund \* Mailing costs  
Mitzvah fund \* Tzedakah fund

or consider donating in honor or memory of a friend, a loved one or someone you care about with a lasting memorial donation by purchasing an honorary:

Rosh Hashanah Prayer Book \$36 \* Yom Kippur Prayer Book \$36 8 Custom Donations; your choice or email [virtualshabbat@gmail.com](mailto:virtualshabbat@gmail.com) for ideas!

## **BEST WAY TO DONATE:**

By Check: mail to PO Box 714, Livingston Manor, NY 12758

By Credit Card website ([congregationagudasachim.org](http://congregationagudasachim.org)) scroll down and click **donate now**

\*If you have any questions about donations please contact our treasurer, Gary Siegel at 845-798-2188

August  
begins our  
4<sup>th</sup> year

# Havdalah Service

If you haven't been to Rabbi Tobi's Zoom Havdalah,  
you don't know what you are missing. Warm, spiritual, welcoming and musical.  
What a wonderful way to spend 15 minutes.

**Havdalah** is the Jewish ceremony held at the end of Shabbat.  
Join us and be part of our growing Zoom community.

## **Summer Schedule!   Save the dates!**

Saturday, August 23 @ 8:30 pm

Saturday, September 20 @ 8:30 pm

Use this Zoom Link to come into the Havdalah.



<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71950737639?pwd=yDFMo4a1KYbcnHNgZSr1BUQRmrU621.1>

Meeting ID: 719 5073 7639   Passcode: OveXyi

By phone: 1-646-931-3860

Or use this abbreviated link: <http://bit.ly/3XWsL2l>   or this QR Code:



To heighten your personal Havdalah experience, you may choose to have sweet-smelling spices with you....cinnamon, cloves or allspice. Some people will take an orange and stick whole cloves into it.

We look forward to your joining us on Zoom!

RSVP not required!

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Judy Siegel, President

Michele Hemmer, Vice President

Bob Freedman, Immediate Past President

Gary Siegel, Treasurer

Lynn Skolnick, Secretary

Don Simkin, Member at Large

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## **Thank you to the following who help guide and serve Congregation Agudas Achim**

Spiritual Leaders, Ira Levin and Julia Levin, Rabbinic Consultant, Rabbi Rebecca Shinder, Director of Education Rabbi Tobi Innerfield, Alan Blocker, Karen Blocker, Bonnie Katz, Lynne Freedman, Hope Blecher and Larry Karstadt.