



Agudas Achim Newsletter

July 2025

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

Friday, July 11

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**

A message from the Levins:

The summer is off to a spectacular start! We can't tell you how heartening and beautiful it was to see so many of you at our sweet shul for our June service. It was especially poignant and fulfilling to all be together while we honored Bob Freedman, our president emeritus, who was one of the pioneers of Congregation Agudas Achim from its Orthodox roots into our heartfelt Reform community. Over the coming months, we look forward to continuing to herald and commemorate many others that have contributed over the past decades to the well-being, sanctity and strength of our congregation.

Join us in July as we welcome Rabbi Rebecca Pomerantz Shinder! It has already been an honor working with her throughout these past few months and we are looking forward to co-leading with Rabbi Rebecca this summer, as we move forward in the celebration of our century-old temple. We imagine that the ruach instilled in those walls is vibrating in harmony with every service, especially as we receive Adela Blaustein as a Bat Mitzvah this month! She has been guided by Rabbi Tobi Innerfield and Cantor Lois Kittner, and we all look forward to coming together with Adela's family, friends and the congregation to witness this very sweet milestone mitzvah.

To continue to gain momentum with this fabulous revival of our chevrah, חברה, we would like to reiterate that there are opportunities to sponsor Shabbat Onegs, which gives us the gift to gather after services, to nosh, kibbutz and catch up! This time together strengthens our bonds, as does our Craft Beer and Spirituality Havdalah Experiences on the third Saturdays of July and August. Plans for the celebration of life service for Rabbi Fred in August, as well as our High Holiday preparations, are well-underway. It's a busy summer full of myriad simchas and celebrations! Let's revel together in every moment.

In the in-between time, may your hours be expansive and sweet.

Love and Shalom,
Ira and Julia / The Levins

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

What a fantastic time we had at the recent Craft Beer and Spirituality event! It was truly wonderful to see so many gather for great music, lively conversations, delicious tastings, and meaningful connections. From the engaging discussions to the shared laughter, the energy was heartwarming. Events like these remind us of the incredible importance of connecting together as Jews. In these unsettling times, coming together as a community provides us with much-needed strength, comfort, and a sense of belonging. Sharing experiences, whether it's through spiritual exploration or simply enjoying each other's company over a plate of wings and a beer, reinforces the bonds that tie us together and strengthens our collective spirit.



More opportunities to gather and connect are coming! Please **check out the upcoming Services and Events on page 4** – your participation is what makes these events so special and ensures we can keep offering them. We truly hope to see you there!

On that note, Agudas Achim has arranged for a showing of Sandra Laub's one woman show *Picking Up Stones* on September 4th at the Hurleyville Performing Arts Center. (HPAC) – 219 Main Street in Hurleyville.

***Picking Up Stones** is a raw, urgent 70-minute (no intermission) piece from award-winning writer and performer Sandra Laub. 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'.*

This is an incredible opportunity, and we are pleased to bring this show to the community. **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. We're just a little Schul in the Northwest corner of the county, trying to keep something special alive.**

L'Shalom

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

Message from Rabbi Rebecca Pomerantz Shinder

This month, our congregational family of Agudas Achim will begin to celebrate our 100 years of providing a beautiful sanctuary (both literally and spiritually!) for members of the Jewish community in Sullivan County. There is much to celebrate and learn about what my dad called this amazing little shul in the country. This community has traveled along the Jewish cycle inspired by many teachers & preachers, guests & gabbai's. Over a century, Agudas Achim have been guided by spiritual leaders with a panoply of professional experience, knowledge of Jewish tradition, as well as a mastery of musical connections to that tradition.

For all of the Jewish professionals who inspired this congregation over the past 100 years and have elevated worship and learning in this sacred space, the lights have been kept on by a small but mighty band of dedicated volunteers. Of course, Bob Freedman and Judy Siegel get top billing for their work as due to their supportive spouses Lynne and Gary!

Moses lived to be 120 years old and there is a Jewish birthday custom to wish for people to live that long. We say, "ad me'ah v'esrim." Yet we see for the birthday of Agudas Achim - 120 is not long enough! Here is to the next 100 years!

L'chayim!

Rabbi Rebecca Pomerantz Shinder



Adela Blaustein
Bat Mitzvah Saturday, July 12, 2025

Addie Blaustein is a high schooler living in Bethel, NY. She lives with her sister, mom, stick bugs, and two cats. She loves skiing, hiking, visual art, music, poetry, and lumberjack activities. Her favorite subjects are psychology and philosophy. Addie's currently learning Spanish, Hebrew, and German. She's won two awards for her poetry and looks forward to every opportunity to share her work!

UPCOMING SERVICES and EVENTS

Congregation Agudas Achim provides zoom services every month.

email virtualshabbat@gmail.com for zoom link. HINT: It is the same every month

Friday, July 11

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**

Saturday, July 12

10:30 AM Bat Mitzvah of Adela Blaustein

Saturday, July 19

Craft Beer and Spirituality (CBS) Havdalah, Smoke Joint, Livingston Manor

Friday, August 1

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**

Celebration of life, Rabbi Fred Pomerantz

Saturday, Aug. 16

Craft Beer and Spirituality (CBS) Havdalah, Smoke Joint, Livingston Manor

Thursday, Sept 4

7:00 PM: Hurleyville Performing Arts Center (HPAC)

'Picking Up Stones: An American Jew Wakes to a Nightmare' Go to

congregationagudasachim.org for tickets or call 845-798-2389.

The Congregation Agudas Achim Community is invited to these events at Temple Sholom, 5 Dillon Road, Monticello.

- Sun., July 20th, 12:30 pm-1:30 pm, **Honoring Survivors and Their Rescuers Through the Generations** exhibit, Admission is free; donations accepted.
- Sun., July 20th, 2:00 pm, **Fisher and Kean** perform. Contact Temple Sholom for reservations and suggested \$15 donation goes towards future collaborations, exhibits, and events.
- 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.

Happy Anniversary

Richard & Wendy Schwab 7/12

Ronald & Susan Elinoff 7/16

Happy Birthday

Joseph M. Galli 7/9

Dayra Lederer 7/9

Simon Hirschhorn 7/12

Carl Tishler 7/12

Joanna Brody 7/14

Will Brody 7/15

Marian Kleinman 7/21

Heidi Leunissen-Rivera 7/24

Daniel Hemmer 7/28

Jacques Nadeau 7/28

Sarah Nadeau 7/28

Amy Lavine 7/30

Jewish Education News

It is our job as parents to help our children grow, and to teach them. We teach them to look both ways before crossing a street. We teach them, not to talk to strangers. We teach them how to read, how to question, and how to learn about the world. And as Jewish parents, we teach our children about their religion.... its history and holidays, to do mitzvot, about the Torah and God.

As children, it is easier to find that sense of spirituality within ourselves. But as we grow older, each person's own search for spirituality in everyday life becomes harder. As we grow up, there are distractions, we are constantly being bombarded by new information, some of this is contradictory to the spiritual self that develops as a child. It is said we live in the age of technology, the information age.

David Wolpe shares a Chasidic tale in his book "Teaching Your Child About God". The child of a rabbi used to wander in the woods. At first his father let him wander, but over time the father became concerned. The woods were dangerous. The father did not know what lurked there. So, he decided to discuss the matter with his child. One day the father took the boy aside and said, "You know, I have noticed that each day you walk into the woods. I wonder, why do you go there?"

The boy said simply to his father, "I go there to find God." "That is a good thing," the father replied gently. "I am glad you are searching for God. But, my child, don't you know that God is the same everywhere?" "Yes," the boy answered, "but I am not."

We are not the same everywhere. We are busy being so many different people. Parent, teacher, wage earner, cook, chauffeur, friend, helper and more. Is it a wonder that so many can't find that spirit within our daily life? Sometimes it takes "some time". For some all that is needed is just a moment; for others, it might take a walk in the woods.

When I am here in the Catskills, where there are many trails to hike, beautiful lakes, surrounded by trees, or when I am sitting on the beach, at the shore, small waves touching my toes, I am different. There in these spaces, these sacred spaces, I can be quiet and hear the sound of nothing but nature around me. I can feel how small I am, and how great and awesome the Eternal Holy One is.

In Genesis 28:16 Jacob had a dream. He dreamt of angels going up and down ladders from Heaven to Earth. When Jacob awoke, he said. "Surely, God is in this place, and I did not even know it."

Jacob was able to find that sanctity in a resting-place.

Sometimes to find that belief one has to again look at life through the eyes of a child. To balance intellect and faith. Not being blinded, lost by the concepts taught and misconceptions of our daily lives. We must take the normal occurrences of life and change the way we look at them. In changing the way, we view our problems and the world around us, by lifting the veil of restraint, and removing the wall in front of us, one can discover the real wonders of the world. We can again begin to find God and spirituality in our everyday lives.

Our small congregation in Livingston Manor is such a place, where one can come to feel connection to the holy.

Join us on Shabbat morning July 12th, as Adela Blaustein is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah. I look forward to seeing you then.

Love and Blessings,
Rabbi Tobi Innerfield, Director of Education

AN EXTRA NOTE ABOUT August 1, 2025

Friday, August 1, 7:00 PM we will be celebrating the life of Rabbi Fred Pomerantz at our August Shabbat service. If you would like to share in planning that celebration, please reach out to Judy at 845-798-0783 or email virtualshabbat@gmail.com

SULLIVAN COUNTY COALITION AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

Thank you, Lynn Skolnick, for representing Agudas Achim in the recently formed Sullivan County Antisemitism Coalition. This coalition, now nine congregations strong, meets monthly to ensure a rapid and unified response to any acts of antisemitism. Its formation was prompted by a surge of social media outbursts from a Jeffersonville business owner last fall which highlighted the need for a collective voice and a concerted effort to educate the community and foster a safe environment for everyone.

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

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 for ideas!

BEST WAY TO DONATE:

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

By Credit Card website (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
4th year

Havdalah Service

If you haven't been to Rabbi Tobí'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, July 19 @ 8:30 pm

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=yDFMo4a1KYbcnHNngZSr1BUQRmrU621.1>

Meeting ID: 719 5073 7639 Passcode: OveXyi

By phone: 1-646-931-3860

Or use this abbreviated link: <http://bit.ly/3XWsL2I> 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!

LEADERSHIP BOARD

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