

SONS OF JACOB BULLETIN



Upcoming Services with Rabbi Kushner

Saturday
November 18th
7:30pm

Sunday
November 19th
9:30am

(please note this is different
that what was listed previously)

Saturday
December 16th
7:30pm

Sunday
December 17th
9:30am

Honoring our Past...Looking to our future

By Bobbi Kazenelson, President,
Sons of Jacob Synagogue

State of the Congregation Speech - presented on Kol Nidre

Tonight, as we sit in this synagogue for the last time on Kol Nidre, we need to look at the ways that we can honor our past and simultaneously, at how Sons of Jacob Synagogue can remain viable and vital in the future. The past year has been especially historic. Our congregation made the difficult decision to put our property for sale last March at our Annual Meeting. Ultimately, at last month's special congregational meeting, we approved an offer from Living Stone Church to purchase our buildings, with a March 31, 2023, closing date.

First, let us look at where we came from. In 1905, fifteen people joined together to organize the first Jewish congregation in the Cedar Valley. Initially, the Sons of Jacob community held services in the former Christian Science Church on 5th Street in Waterloo. Thanks to the growth of manufacturing and commerce during the first half of the twentieth century, many newcomers moved to the Waterloo metropolitan area. By 1949, the congregation of Sons of Jacob had grown to 153 families,

and we moved into our current building on September 6, 1953, almost 70 years ago. Over the years, membership numbers have diminished. Seventy families belonged to Sons of Jacob in 2004, when we celebrated our centennial. Since then, membership numbers have continued to decline. Today, only 26 local families (or 30 voting members) belong to Sons of Jacob. We are grateful that last year, we regained a valued synagogue member who moved back to Waterloo. We are relieved that last year, none of our members passed away. It's almost like we have come full circle to when our congregation started in 1905, with relatively few members. Unlike 1905, however, many of our members are elderly and the local economy is less attractive to young Jewish families.

As we begin this new year 5783, let's join together to build a new sustainable future, in new home that is more suited to the size of our congregation. At the same time, let us find ways to continue honoring our legacy. We are indebted to those who preceded us, the righteous, hard-working, Jewish women and men who made significant contributions to Sons of Jacob and for generations.

Our main priority during the next few weeks is to find the best possible new home for our congregation. We have already documented all of our inventory—art, artifacts, and household items. Once we know where we will move, we can start planning what we can take with us. We welcome volunteers to help us build community and prepare for the future.

We welcome your assistance in unifying our community.

We welcome your assistance as we comfort one another, grieving a transition which obliges us to vacate the building where we had worshiped for 70 years.

We welcome your assistance in packing boxes and helping the leadership team navigate practical details of our relocation.

In the months to follow, we will honor our history and demonstrate our hope for the future.

- We will hold a ceremony to bury non-kosher holy books in our Jewish cemetery.
- We will plan and schedule a Deconsecration service to which SOJ members and families of current and former members from across the country will be invited. We also plan to invite guests from other Iowa Jewish communities and our supporters from the local gentile community.
- During the Deconsecration service, we will move our Torahs and Mezuzahs from our current building to our new home.
- We plan to provide meaningful Jewish experiences as we begin this chapter in our history. While we will not be in this building our memories and cherished artifacts and most importantly all of us will be there.

According to the Talmudic sages, moving to a new location brings a change of mazal (luck, fortune). We pray that will be the case for us.

Today, I want to especially thank those who serve on the Board because without them, we would no longer have Sons of Jacob. Thank you, Roberto Swazo, Ira Fratrick, David Lederman, Naomi McCormick, Laura Praglin, and Jackie Herrick.

In addition, I am grateful to the Long Range Planning Committee which includes Naomi (the Chair), along with Board members--Ira, David, Laura, and myself and also Erin Maiden Paige and Andrea Fratrick. I also thank John McCormick for many hours of volunteering.

Next, I would like to thank those of you who continue to be members of Sons of Jacob. Each of you remains vital for the future of our synagogue and conveys the importance of a Jewish presence in our community.

Finally, I thank Rabbi Rebecca for her continued service to Sons of Jacob and I thank you, Rabbi Ora, for leading our High Holiday services for several years. We hope that next year, Rabbi Rebecca and Rabbi Ora will continue to lead us in worship in our new home.

May your year ahead be blessed with good health and happiness.

Today Rabah

Today rabah to Leo Feldman, for trimming the bushes around the sign at the front of the synagogue.

Today rabah to Sharon Offman-Meyers who donated for a directory greeting and was inadvertently omitted from the page.

Today rabah to Susan Nashel, who donated pulpit flowers for High Holiday services, in memory of her parents, Frances & Harry Blindman.

Today rabah to Jacob Lederman for sponsoring a special luncheon following the services on October 28th.

Yahrzeits

The yahrzeits of these beloved, departed relatives listed below should be observed on the Friday and Saturday of the week listed.

Oct 30 - Nov 5:

Frances Blindman
Ben Barg
Max Leonard Alpern
Sol Algase
Charlotte Rosenthal
Frances Slivken
Jake Kanofsky
Ervin Myers
Ricka Wolf
Hnery Cutler

November 6 -12:

Barbara Ratute Myers
Herschel Gellerman
Lillian Westerman
Alex Margulis
Sam Shrago
Jacob Weissman
Birl Maxwell
David Weinberg
Maurice Cohn
Bess D. Cohn
Rachel Nathanson

November 13 -19:

Joseph Lederman
Louis Cecil Hurwich
Mary Libby Margulis
Morris Feldman
Meyer Sidney Lederman
Ida Levi
Meyer Ritter
Peshe Goldie Cohen
Samuel Goldberg
Meyer Widerschein
Rabbi Stanley Rosenbaum

November 20 -26:

Bessie Rosenbaum
Arnold Farber
Sheva Sophia Katz
Anne Krensky
Ivan Milner-Brage
Nancy Unger

Nov 27 - Dec 3:

JSam Cohen
Jack Lachman
Minnie Cohen
Harold "Hal" Wohl
Ben Kramer
Jeanette Kushner
Ruth Ritter
Joseph Siegel
Sarah Goldstein
Jeffrey Levin
Sol Lipkin
Rebecca Feldman
Rosemary Greenberg
Phil Cohn
Alfred Rothschild
Harry Blindman



We gratefully acknowledge the following contributions:

EDELMAN, Jesse & Lisa -

In memory of grandmother, Ethel McGlaughlin

GOLDNER, Norman -

In memory of father, Aaron Goldner

LEDERMAN, Jacob & Family -

High Holiday Donation

Donation to sponsor luncheon on October 28th

NASHEL, Susan -

In memory of mother, Frances Blindman

In memory of aunt, Ruth Blindman

In memory of grandmother, Rose Blindman

STICKFORT, Allen

Donation to the General Fund

TABACH, Barney & Barbara -

In memory of uncle, Robert Vidis

Alas, Madeleine...could we meet at tea-time?

There are famous artists, whose voices seem to be speaking to me directly, although we had never met. Their acting, their music, their writings made the connection seem so real. When I heard of their passing, I would catch my breath, intensely disappointed and truly angry that this person and myself were never going to miraculously be able to share a personal conversation over a cup of tea.

Personalities such as the magnificent actor Sir Peter Ustinov, the esteemed Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, the idiosyncratic ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev or the marvelous writer Madeleine L'Engle... They are gone from this plane of existence; however, I only need to revisit films, or reach for books on my bookshelf such as Madeleine's "Genesis Trilogy" to hear their wise and creative voices again.

November 9th is nearing soon; the frightening season of the Nazi book-burning, Kristallnacht, and all the violent shadows of Jew hatred. Recently I found an original edition of Erich Kästner's delightful book "Emil and the Detectives." I brought it home with me. Not that I was necessarily fascinated by a classic children's story, be it ever so well told, but simply because Kästner's books had, as so many others, been condemned to the flames. I felt the same way when I discovered the original version of Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn," which I immediately rescued from a Little Free Library before it would no longer be available. The original version is still online, but since much of the language is challenged by contemporary thinking, I'm glad I have the original at home to grapple with. This controversy was raging even in Mark Twain's times; his testy response was: "Censorship is telling a man he can't have a steak just because a baby can't chew it!"

I'm reminded that our Holy Scriptures have frequently been not only redacted, but actually censored. Examples of this are the highly condensed version of the Bible by Thomas Jefferson, sections of the Talmud and our Siddur purged (physically blacked out! I've seen these editions with my own eyes) by ancient Christian editors and entire liturgical verses missing in Reform editions of modern prayer texts.

So, returning to artistic connections with people who I never personally met: Censorship always has a goal: to remove anything annoying or disturbing. But it also removes from us the ability to learn from offensive or difficult passages. As my would-be friend Madeleine L'Engle writes:

"It is the ability to choose which makes us human. People must be free to choose, even if they sometimes choose badly or wrongly. Others cannot make those choices for someone else. It is bad enough when individuals or institutions vigilantly guard their borders: When we censor out most of the world in order to protect our own little version of it, we are creating a kind of hell." (The Genesis Trilogy) Well said, my almost-friend Madeleine! My most beloved places in our holy texts are those I don't understand, perhaps some I even dislike. However, I don't want them removed by some allegedly well-meaning editor, who wants to do my thinking for me. "Yisrael" is someone who wrestles with God and prevails!

As we enter November, I invite us all to grapple with the dark forces, the objectionable words, the troubling thoughts. It's how we grow!

L'Shalom,
Rabbi Rebecca

JEWISH CONNECTIONS BOOK CLUB



The Jewish Connections Book Club meets once a month.
Please call or email the SOJ office if you are interested in joining.

SELECTED BOOKS FOR 2022-2023:

November 2022:

Peony: A Novel of China

By Pearl S Buck

1948 The John Day Company; Reprinted by Moyer Bell 2006

December 2022:

The Last Rose of Shanghai

By Weina Dai Randel

2021, Lake Union Publishing

January 2023:

Fear No Evil

By Natan Sharansky; Translated by Stefani Hoffman

1988, Random House

February 2023:

Davita's Harp

By Chaim Potok

1985, Random House/Ballantine; Reprinted 1996

March 2023:

A Little Girl is Dead

By Harry Golden

1965, Avon

April 2023: (Holocaust Selection)

The Warsaw Orphan: A WWII Novel

By Kelly Rimmer

2021, Graydon House

May 2023:

The Book of Sarah

By Sarah Lightman

2019, Myriad Editions New Internationalist

June 2023:

To Repair a Broken World: The Life of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah

By Dvora Hacoen

2021, Harvard University Press



High Holidays

5783 - 2022