

First Unitarian Portland
Service for the Days of Awe
ROSH HASHANAH SERVICE
(adapted from All Souls, NYC)



Gathering Music

Opening Words

Chalice Lighting

We kindle the flaming chalice, symbol of our faith.
May its light remind us that we are connected through mystery and miracle
to an eternal light that moves with us from one generation to the next.

Reader A: This is the festival of Rosh Hashanah, the celebration of the birth of the world and the head of the year. This is the moment when the world changes: one year ends, another begins. The air is cluttered with the past and potent with possibilities. Here we are: poised somewhere between what we have been and what we wish to be. *(Richard N. Levy)*

Reader B: With the setting of this evening's sun, let us proclaim a new year of hope. May the light of the divine shine forth to lead us, to show us the good we must do, the harmony we must create. Let the fire we kindle be for us a warming flame, whose brightness shows us the path of life.

Reader A: Let us kindle these festival lights and say:

(TRANSLITERATION)

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzivanu l'hadlik
ner [shel Shabbat v']shel Yom Tov*

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם
אשר קדשנו, במצותיו וצונו
להדליק נר של [שבת ושל] יום טוב

All: Blessed art thou, our Source, our God, creator of the universe, who hast sanctified us by thy commandments and hast commanded us to kindle festival lights.

Creator of beginnings, as you created the world on this day, uniting fragments into a universe, so help unite our hearts. Illumine our lives, for by your light do we see light. May we be granted this year a glimpse of the light of redemption, the light of healing and of peace.

Reader B:

(TRANSLITERATION)

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech
haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu,
v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׁהַחַיְנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

All: Blessed art thou, our Source, our God, creator of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

Hymn #280 Haleluhu

Reader A: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, there shall be a sacred assembly, a day of commemoration proclaimed by the sound of the shofar.

Reader B: Sound the shofar when the new moon appears, at the turning of the year.

(The shofar sounds)

Reader A: The sound of the ram's horn is wild, piercing. It is like no other sound. It breaks through the barriers which imprison the heart.

Congregation: May my heart and mind be open to what this night and this day ask of me. May I be prepared to speak, with my mind and my heart.

(The shofar sounds again)

Reader B: These holy days are traditionally called the Days of Awe.

The great Jewish teacher, Abraham Joshua Heschel, said:

Awe is a way of being in rapport with the mystery of all reality.... Awe enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the divine, to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to feel in the rush of the temporal the stillness of the eternal.

Congregation: May our hearts be open to the wonder and the mystery of life.

Reader A: The experience of awe is only the beginning. Our wonder at the mystery of life becomes religion when we become conscious that something is asked of us.

Congregation: May we have the courage to accept the gifts of freedom and responsibility.
Life's harsh winds uproot the weak. Let those who stand support those who are falling.

Reader A: To the sick, let us bring healing; and to those who are bound, release.

Congregation: We give thanks for the power to live and to act, and for the blessing of love
which is stronger than death.

Reader B: Source of life! In the twilight of the vanishing year, we lift up our hearts in
thanksgiving.

Congregation: As the new year begins, our souls are stirred by the memory of joy.

Reader A: We were sustained by love and kindness. We were comforted in times of sorrow.
We found happiness in our homes and gladness with our friends. As the new year begins,
we lift up our hearts in thanksgiving.

Congregation: As the new year begins, our spirits rise in grateful song.

Reader B: But there were dreams that came to naught, and times when we refused to dream.
These, with much regret, we now remember, as the new year begins.

Congregation: Some of our days were dark with grief: alas for the ties which were broken.
We look back with sorrow, as the new year begins.

Reader A: Yet we look ahead with hope, giving thanks for the daily miracle of renewal, for the
promise of good to come. May this Rosh Hashanah, birthday of the world, be our day of
rebirth into life and ^{peace}, and serenity and safety.

Congregation: As the new year begins, so is hope reborn with us!

Reader B: May we lie down this night in peace, and rise up to life renewed. May night spread
over us a shelter of peace, of quiet and calm, the blessing of rest.

All: May we know a time when morning will bring no word of war or famine or anguish.
May we know a day of happiness, of contentment and peace.

Praised be the Source of joy within us, the night and its rest, the promise of peace.

Source of life, you are present, not on peaks of vision alone. At any moment we may
turn, and find you. The whisper of a thought, the most humble touch of being, may lead
us to you. So, endlessly revealed amid your concealments, you stand awaiting our search,
to lead us, with many a fall, upward to heights we tremble to climb.

Reader A: Jewish tradition tells that on Rosh Hashanah, the new year, our destinies for the year
to come are written in the book of life.

Reader B: On Rosh Hashanah it is written, on Yom Kippur it is sealed. How many shall pass on, how many shall come to be. Who shall live and who shall die. Who shall see ripe age and who shall not. Who shall be poor and who shall be rich. Who shall be humbled and who exalted.

Reader A: But, the liturgy goes on, repentance, prayer and charity can temper judgment's severe decree. During the ten days following Rosh Hashanah-the Yamim Nora'im, or Days of Awe- the Book remains open while we reflect on our lives. At the last sound of the shofar at the end of Yom Kippur, says the legend, the book of life for the year to come is sealed.

Reader B: The Hebrew word for "repentance," *teshuvah*, also means "to turn" and "to return." We are called upon in these Days of Awe to turn away from choices which have compromised our integrity and to return to our true best selves. Nor does the turning need to be radical: "A subtle shift now, of even just a fraction of a degree out of 360, can take one on a vastly different path over the course of a life's trajectory." (*Betsy Platkin Teutsch*)

Reader A: Every word, every act inscribes itself in the book of life. Freely we choose, and what we have chosen to become stands in judgment over what we may yet hope to be. In our choices we are not always free. But if only we make the effort to turn, then every force of goodness, within and without, will help us.

Reader B: The Hebrew word for prayer, *tefila*, also means "mirror." To pray is to seek the truth, to know ourselves, to evaluate what we can expect of ourselves.

Congregation: In the coming year, may we grow in awareness and wisdom.

Reader A: *Tzedakah*, the Hebrew word for charity, means "righteousness." It is a recognition of the obligations and mutual respect we owe each other as members of one human family. *Tzedakah* is not something we give, it is something we do: we are to help others in a way which enhances their dignity as human beings.

Reader B: To live, and nothing more, would be enough to make us glad. Yet morning, noon, and night, a task awaits us:

Reader A: Find the lost and feed the hungry. Heal the sick and cheer the sad. Build and keep a peaceful world. Blessed is the gift of life. Blessed is the Source of life and all its tasks.

All: On this Day of Remembrance, we pray for awareness. May love and compassion grow among us, and goodness be our daily care. May we this day find well-being.

Reader B: We worship the power which unites the universe into one great harmony. That oneness, however, is not yet fully present: we see imperfection, disorder, and evil all about us. But before our eyes is a vision of perfection, order, and goodness: these too we have known in some measure. There is evil enough to break the heart, beauty enough to exalt the soul.

Reader A: When will redemption come? When we master the violence which fills our world. When we look upon others as we would have them look upon us. When we grant to every person the rights we claim for ourselves.

Reader B: The festival of Rosh Hashanah is barely mentioned in the Bible. But in later years, the tradition arose that the beginning of the month of Tishre was the anniversary of Creation, the birthday of the world. The Book of Genesis relates that the human race was created first in a single person. According to rabbinic tradition, this story is intended to teach us that each human life is of infinite value: that to save one life is to save the whole world.

Congregation: In the coming year, may we grow in reverence for life. May our thoughts, our words, and our actions affirm the inherent worth of every human spirit.

Reader A: We give thanks that we have been called to the service of life. May our eyes be open to its nobility and its sacred opportunities for service. May we have the grace to show forbearance toward those who offend us. When wrong and injustice sadden our hearts, may we seek shelter in knowledge, truth, and compassion. May no trial, however severe, embitter our souls or harden our hearts. May we work for the day when the world will no longer know injustice and hate, but will know only love, peace, and mercy.

Congregation: May that day come sooner rather than later. We ask for strength, that we may serve ourselves and each other, and be part of the merciful and forgiving tide of life.

Reader B: We give thanks that we may serve. For the essence of life that is in each of us, we give thanks.

Congregation: May we know peace, the most precious gift of life. May we be messengers of that peace, in our homes, in our places of work and service, in our communities, and in our country, and our world. May our nation be a stronghold of peace and benevolence. May contentment reign within our hearts; health and happiness within our homes. May the bonds of love and friendship be strengthened among all peoples. May love of life be known and shared by all. May we be inscribed in the book of life and know peace. Praise be to those who bring peace and joy to their neighbors.

Hymn #215 Praise to the Living God (*Yigdal*)

HOMILY

Symbolic Tashlich Ritual

Reader A: Spirit of Life! Our Source, our God, hear our voice.

(Antiphonal reading, alternating left and right)

L: We have been less than we could be.

R: We have kept silence in the face of injustice.

L: We have spoken ill of others and acted in disharmony.
R: We have failed at compassion when it was called for.
L: We have distorted the truth to our own advantage.
R: May we know mercy for our wrongs of omission and commission.
L: May the past teach us but not enslave us.
R: May all who are broken be healed.
L: May we have the strength to forgive others.
R: May we drive hate and oppression from the earth.
L: May we replace them with love and freedom.
Unison: May we know a year of serenity and peace.

Reader A: The shofar sound heralds yet another day, whose promise is our hope. Then shall begin the time of peace of which we dream. A world of truth shall be revealed to us; and together we shall rejoice in the kingdom of God.

Reader B: The shofar sound reminds us of the power God gives us to imagine and transform the future. (*Arthur Waskow*)

Reader A: The shofar sounds, and the still small voice is heard: our voice and God's voice, for an instant fused into a single silence.

Reader B: Let the sound of the shofar awaken the voice of conscience; may our common worship unite us in love. May our hearts be moved enough by the misery of others to dare what must be dared.

Reader A: Distant is the goal; at times it fades from sight. For we are free: free to love and build the kingdom, free to hate and tear it down. And yet the dream is not forgotten, the vision does not fail--it is the meaning of our lives. Come what may, we shall hold fast to it. Even when hope seems lost, we shall say: The kingdom of heaven could begin today, if we would harken to the Source of life and peace.

Reader B: We long for the day when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind. May we all know that we are all siblings, that we are all one in spirit, destined to be united as one.

Reader A: A year has come, a year has gone. In the history of the world, a thousand years are but as yesterday. Our own lives are but grains in the sands of time. Yet, though generations come and go, life remains. We are returned to the earth as dust, yet earth endures. Loved ones have passed through the doors of life and have returned to the earth.

Reader B: As we turn from thoughts of death to tasks of life, may we, like those who came before us, be builders of the beloved community, a world of justice and joy. All of us must tread the same path, though we know not when our time of parting comes. May we live so that when that time does come, we shall be ready.

All: The departed whom we now remember have entered into the peace of eternity. May the beauty of their lives abide among us as a living benediction. May the Source of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort to all who are bereaved.

Reader A: Love is the thread which binds our lives into a fabric which time shall fray,

Reader B: Which time shall fray, only to be rewoven by each generation.

Reader A: Each generation will lift the fallen to their feet and hold them as they learn to walk again.

Reader B: As they learn to walk, the sickness of our time will be healed by those who drink deeply from ancient wells of truth.

Reader A: From ancient wells of truth, they will draw strength to keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Reader B: We praise the Source of life and power, who has implanted within us immortal yearning and undying hope.

All: We pray for wisdom to treasure all creation. We ask for insight to see its glory; we hope for courage to trust its goodness; we yearn for grace to fill the world with gladness; we seek the strength to help redeem it.

Reader A: This is the day of the world's beginning. May we use these present Days of Awe to reflect upon who we have been, who we are, and who we hope to be. May we be reawakened to the mystery of creation and the inexplicable gift of life.

Reader B: Holy is life, awesome its Source. One mind unites all beings; one law rules all creation.

All: Blessed is creation, and blessed the love which sustains it.

Reader A: And now, at the beginning of a new year, we pray for blessing:
The spirit of wisdom and understanding
The spirit of insight and courage
The spirit of knowledge and reverence.

Reader B: May we overcome trouble, pain, and sorrow, May our days and years increase.

All: Eternal God, renew us for a good year.

So may it be. L'shanah tovah!

Closing Music

Join us in Buchan Reception for a social hour with traditional foods (with blessings)

Tradition Foods and Accompanying Blessings

Kiddush - Blessing Over the Wine



*Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam,
borei p'ri hagafen.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַגֹּפֶן פְּרִי בּוֹרֵא

**Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
Sovereign of the Universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.**

Hamotzi - Blessing Over the Challah



*Baruch atah, Adonai
Eloheinu melech haolam,
hamotzi lechem min haaretz.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

**Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
Sovereign of the Universe,
who brings forth bread from the earth.**

Special Blessings for A Sweet New Year

Pick up a slice of apple, dip it in honey, and say:



*Baruch atah Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha-olam,
borei p'ri ha-eitz.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

**Blessed are You, Adonai our God,
Sovereign of the Universe,
creator of the fruit of the tree.**

Then add:



*Y'hi ratzon milfanecha,
Adonai Eloheinu v'Elohei
avoteinu v'imoteinu,
shetchadesh aleinu
shanah tovah um'tukah.*

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁתַּחַדְּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה.

**May it be Your will, Adonai our God,
that this be a good and sweet year for us.**

Haleluhu

♩ = 63 Unison

Ha - le - lu - hu, ha - le - lu - hu, be - tsil - tse - lei sha - ma.

Ha - le - lu - hu, ha - le - lu - hu, be - tsil - tse - lei te -

ru - a. Kol ha - n'sha - ma te - ha - leil yah,

Ha - le - lu - yah, ha - le - lu - yah! ha - le - lu - yah!

Words & music: Traditional Hebrew
 ⊕ Music arr. by Mark Slegers, 1948-

HALELUHU
 Irregular

215 Praise to the Living God

$\text{♩} = 138$

1. Praise to the liv - ing God! All prais - ed be The
 2. Un - formed all love - ly forms de - clare God's love - li -
 3. The spir - it flow - eth free, high surg - ing where it
 4. E - ter - nal life hath God im - plant - ed in the

Name, which was, and is, and is to be, for
 ness; no ho - li - ness on earth can e'er The
 will; in proph - et's word did speak of old, and
 soul; such love shall be our strength and stay while

aye the same. The one e - ter - nal
 Name ex - press whose love en - folds us
 speak - eth still. The To - rah rests se -
 a - ges roll. Praise to the liv - ing

God ere aught that now ap - pears: the
 all; whose laud the earth dis - plays. Yea,
 cure, and change - less it shall stand, deep
 God! All prais - ed be The Name which

first, the last, be - yond all thought or time - less years.
 ev - ery - where, a - bove, be - low, is per - fect praise.
 writ up - on the hu - man heart, on sea and land.
 was, and is, and is to be, for aye the same.

Words: Daniel Ben Judah, 14th cent.
 Music: Synagogue melody, adapt. by Meyer Lyon, 1751-1797

LEONI
 6.6.8.4.D.