



CONGREGATION FOR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM  
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[www.HumanisticJews.org](http://www.HumanisticJews.org)  
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# *Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Fairfield County*



## **Rosh Hashanah Family Service 2016/5777**





**Congregation for Humanistic Judaism**  
Fairfield County, CT

### **Statement of Purpose**

We are a welcoming, supportive community, founded in 1967, in which secular Jews and their families can affirm, celebrate and enrich their Jewish identity and values.

We subscribe to Humanistic Judaism, one of the five branches of Judaism recognized by the United Jewish Communities of North America. We are affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism and the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews.

#### *Humanistic Judaism defined:*

- A humanist believes that a Jew is a person of Jewish descent or any person who declares himself or herself to be a Jew and who identifies with the history, ethical values, culture, civilization, community and experiences of the Jewish people. (Adopted by the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews, October, 1988.)
- A humanist believes that each person, whether or not he or she believes in God, is responsible for leading a moral, ethical life that will add to the greater good of humanity, without reliance on supernatural forces or theological authority.
- Humanistic Judaism combines the Jewish values of loving-kindness (Gemilut Chassadim), charity (T'zedakah) and making the world a better place (Tikkun Olam) with the recognition that the responsibility for putting them in practice lies in one's own hands.

#### *Congregation Practices at CHJ:*

Our community functions as a cooperative. Through Sunday School programs for our children and diverse adult programs, we:

- Educate ourselves and our children in Jewish history, culture, tradition and values;
- Celebrate and observe Jewish holidays and mark important life cycle events in meaningful, non-theistic ways;
- Engage in social action and community service;
- Explore philosophic and ethical issues in group discussion;
- Keep current on issues of concern to Jewish people and support Israel in its quest for peace;
- Foster an understanding of Humanistic Judaism in the broader community; and
- Dedicate ourselves to creating a compassionate community whose members treat each other with respect, dignity and caring.

*(Excerpted from the CHJ Statement of Purpose, revised June 2002)*

**CHJ Rosh Hashanah Family Service  
October 3, 2016**

**Leader:** Today is Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah is the first holiday of the Jewish year. In Hebrew, Rosh Hashanah means “head of the year” or “new year.” It is also called Yom Harat Olam, meaning the day the world was created or the birthday of the world.



A Jewish holiday reminds us that we are part of the Jewish people, members of the Jewish family which began over five thousand years ago. Jewish heritage is rich with stories and traditions, heroes and heroines.

**Reader 1:** Nowadays Jews live in many different countries, and today, just like us, Jews all over the world are gathering together to celebrate the New Year. Let’s start our celebration with a song that means “how pleasant it is to dwell together.”

**Sing Together:**

**Hineh ma tov**

Hi-neh ma tov u-ma na-eem  
She-vet a-cheem gam ya-chad.



**CHJ HIGH HOLIDAYS CALENDAR 2016**

**Oct. 2 (Sunday) 7:30 PM**  
(doors open at 7pm)

**ROSH HASHANAH SERVICE** (*Oneg to follow*)  
*Featuring Jeff Greenberg, flute, Igor Pasternak, piano, and Anna Slate, vocalist*  
Speaker: Steven Getz  
“ ‘Letters to Self’ – A Rosh Hashanah Story”

**Oct. 3 (Monday)**

**ROSH HASHANAH DAY PROGRAM\***

**1:00 – 1:45 PM**

**Rosh Hashanah Family Service \*\***

**2:00 – 2:15 PM**

**Tashlich: Parting with our bad ways at the water’s edge**  
*Led by Alan Katz (Gather at far right corner of parking lot)*

**2:30 – 3:30 PM**

**Jews and the Environment from Ancient Times to Today**  
*A presentation by Kurt Zeppetello, Seymour High School science teacher*

**Oct. 11 (Tuesday) 7:30 PM**  
(doors open at 7pm)

**YOM KIPPUR KOL NIDRE SERVICE**  
*Featuring Jeff Greenberg, flute, Darilyn Manring, cello, Igor Pasternak, piano, and Anna Slate, vocalist*

**Oct. 12 (Wednesday)**

**YOM KIPPUR DAY PROGRAM\***

**1:00 – 1:45 PM**

**Yom Kippur Family Service \*\***  
*Featuring Marcia Kosstrin, storyteller*  
“In the Jerusalem Shuk”

**2:00 – 3:15 PM**

**The Challenge of Ethical Blind Spots**  
*A presentation and interactive discussion with Dr. David P. Schmidt, Director, Center for Applied Ethics, Fairfield University*

**3:30 – 4:30 PM**

**Meditation**  
*Led by Gail Ostrow (Bring a pillow or mat if you like)*

**4:45 PM**

**Memorial and Closing Services**  
*Featuring Igor Pasternak, piano, and Anna Slate, vocalist*

**5:45 PM (approx.)**

**Break-Fast**

\* Childcare and supervised activities will be provided on October 3 and 12 after the Family Services. Casual dress is suggested for daytime programs.

\*\* Family Services are appropriate for families with children aged 4 to 14. Each Family Service includes readings and music and lasts approximately 30-45 minutes.

All services and programs take place at the Unitarian Church, 10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport, CT. Check the CHJ newsletter and [www.humanisticjews.org](http://www.humanisticjews.org) for updates, membership, and upcoming events.

**Leader:** Our final song means, “Peace, dear friends, until we meet again.”

**Sing Together:**

**Shalom Chaverim**

Shalom chaverim  
Shalome chaverim  
Shalom, shalom  
L’hit-ra-ot  
L’hit-ra-ot  
Shalom, shalom

**Leader:** Thank you for coming to our service today and L’Shanah Tovah!

**All:** *L’Shanah Tovah!*

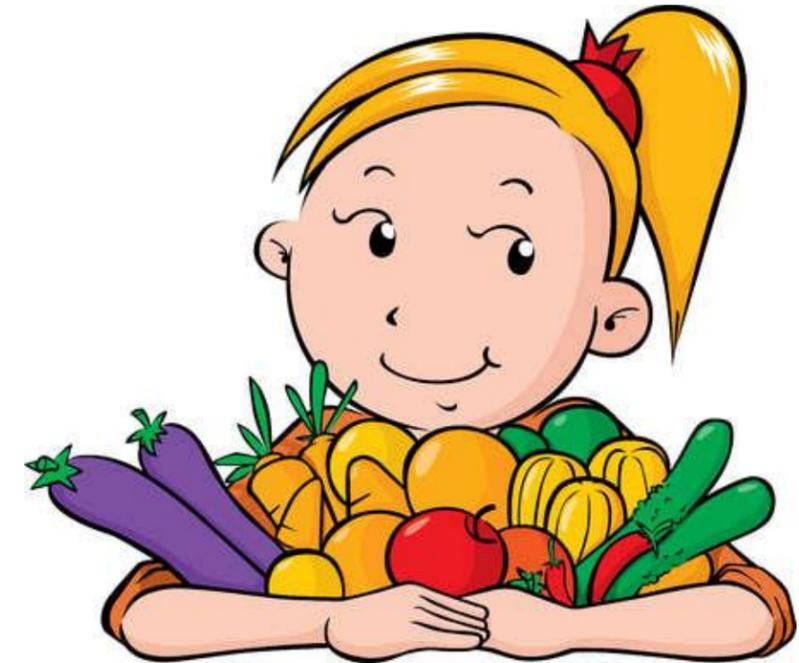


Leader: Jennifer Ginsberg  
Shofar: Hannah Ulman  
Featured Presenter: David Shafer  
Song leader: Bradley Snow

Readers: Ariel Battelstein, Elijah Battelstein, Zoey Greenbaum, Julian Zeppetello  
Service revised by Jennifer Ginsberg, 2016

**Reader 2:** Why do we celebrate New Year in the fall? It started a long time ago – thousands of years ago – when our Jewish ancestors were farmers near the banks of the Nile River, in what is now Egypt. Every year, after the fall harvest they would hold a special festival to celebrate the end of one year’s farm work and the beginning of another. In later times, that festival came to be called Rosh Hashanah.

**Reader 3:** If you think about nature, a New Year in the fall makes a lot of sense. At this time of year plants are bearing their fruit. We can enjoy delicious farm-fresh foods such as apples, peaches, corn and tomatoes. The trees paint a colorful picture. Wherever you look, you see beautiful green, gold, red, yellow and orange leaves.



**Reader 4:** On Rosh Hashanah we wish each other a “sweet new year.” Now we will sing a song about some sweet foods we eat on this holiday.

**Sing together:**

#### Apples and Honey

Apples and honey for Rosh Hashanah  
Apples and honey for Rosh Hashanah  
A good new year, a sweet new year  
Apples and honey for Rosh Hashanah

Ta-pu-him u-d’vash l’Rosh Hashanah  
Ta-pu-him u-d’vash l’Rosh Hashanah  
Sha-na to-va, sha-na m’tu-ka  
Ta-pu-him u-d’vash l’Rosh Hashanah



**Leader:** On this Rosh Hashanah afternoon, we have sat together, sung together and thought together. Let us now listen once again to the shofar’s voice, as it awakens us and calls us to action.



**Reader 3:** The sound of the shofar reminds us that we are thankful for the time we have spent with one another and urges us to remember what we have learned today.

**Reader 4:** The first call, *t’kee-ah*, means “blast,” as in a note played loudly on a wind instrument. *T’kee-ah!*

**Shofar sounds:** *T’kee-ah!*

**Reader 4:** The second call, *she-va-reem*, means “breaks.” This call is made up of little broken notes. *She-va-reem!*

**Shofar sounds:** *She-va-reem!*

**Reader 4:** The third call, *te-roo-ah*, means “trumpet” or “announcement.” *Te-roo-ah!*

**Shofar sounds:** *Te-roo-ah!*

**Reader 4:** The final call, *t’kee-ah G’do’lah*, is the greatest one of all. This means “the great blast.” *T’kee-ah G’do-lah!*

**Shofar sounds:** *T’kee-ah G’do-lah!*

**Leader:** As Humanistic Jews, we know that we ourselves are responsible for our actions. We know that we make mistakes, and that making mistakes is very human. The important thing is to learn from the mistakes that we make. Today let's think of some things that we did in the past year that we would like to change.

(Silent reflection)

**Leader:** Now we can resolve to do better in the coming year.

**All:** *We need to change our actions. We need to make fewer demands on our parents. We need to be more helpful to our brothers and sisters. We need to share more openly with our friends. We need to organize our time better for study and games.*

**Reader 2:** False resolutions don't require any effort. They only use the mouth and the tongue. They substitute words for actions. Good resolutions are hard work. They use our hands and our feet and our brains. They force us to change. They make us take risks. They might even make us uncomfortable.

**All:** *Let us make good resolutions. Let us start with words, but let us finish with actions.*

**Sing Together:**

**Hevenu shalom alechem**  
*(We bring peace to you)*

Hevenu shalom alechem  
Hevenu shalom alechem

Hevenu shalom alechem  
Hevenu shalom, shalom  
Shalom alechem

**Reader 1:** In our modern culture, fall is still a time of new beginnings. After the relaxing, laid-back days of summer, the fall brings a sense of newness. We feel refreshed, rejuvenated and ready to start a new school year. The coolness in the air energizes us, challenging us to look forward to new experiences: new teachers, new friends, maybe even a new school. It's a new season for sports, a new season at concert halls and theaters – even a new season on TV. A New Year in fall makes a lot of sense for us, just as it did for our farmer ancestors.

**All:** *On Rosh Hashanah, we look forward to the upcoming year with hope.*

**Reader 2:** "Hope"

I'm old, old enough to play baseball or football. I'm not eight yet. My mom told me that when you start baseball, you aren't going to be able to run fast because you had an operation. I told Mom I wouldn't need to run that fast. When I play baseball, I'll just hit them out of the park. Then I'll be able to walk.

- Edward J. McGrath, Jr.



**Reader 3:** So what year is it that we are starting today? Not 2016 or 2017, but the year 5777! You see, the Jewish calendar began counting 3,761 years before the common calendar.

**Reader 4:** You might wonder why Rosh Hashanah is on a different date every year. The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, which is different from our regular solar calendar.



**Reader 1:** A lunar calendar counts one month as the amount of time it takes for the moon to revolve around the earth, which is 29½ days. Some years have 12 lunar months, but others have an extra month, or leap-month. That’s why this year the Jewish Holidays are later than usual compared to our secular, solar calendar.

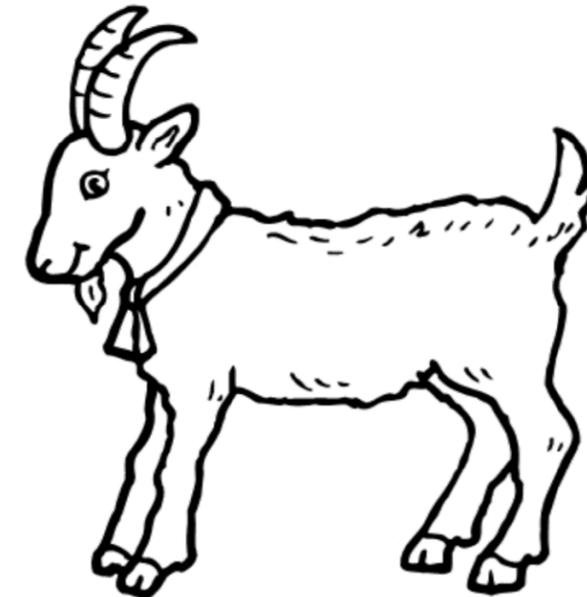
**Reader 2:** So Rosh Hashanah is always on the same day in the Jewish calendar, the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, but it is not always on the same day on the solar calendar that we use in the rest of our lives.

**Reader 3:** “The Voice”

There is a voice inside of you  
That whispers all day long,  
“I feel that this is right for me, I know that this is wrong.”  
No teacher, preacher, parent, friend  
Or wise man can decide  
What’s right for you — just listen to  
The voice that speaks inside

(Shel Silverstein, *Falling Up*, p. 38)

**Reader 4:** The days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur give us a chance to stop and think about the year that has passed. In ancient times, people did this by symbolically putting their “sins” onto a village goat. The goat then stood for what the people had done wrong in the past year.



**Reader 1:** The people believed that by transferring their sins onto the goat, they would be cleansed. The goat was then sacrificed. This is the origin of the term “scapegoat.”

**Leader:** Of course, there really is no such Book of Life that determines what will happen to us, but thinking about our lives in this way helps us to change ourselves. Are last year's pages full of wrinkles and blotches, creases and stains, lies and fighting, teasing and yelling?

Most of us think that we have been pretty good. We probably think we always treat others fairly, especially members of our own family -- our brothers and sisters, our parents, our children, even our pets. Probably we think we are always polite and kind and fair. We think we are just fine, and that's what we want to believe.

**Reader 2:** "Tell Me"

Tell me I'm clever,  
Tell me I'm kind.  
Tell me I'm talented.  
Tell me I'm cute.  
Tell me I'm sensitive,  
Graceful and wise.  
Tell me I'm perfect —  
but tell me the truth.

(Shel Silverstein, *Falling Up*, 154)

**All:** *Maybe we are fooling ourselves, because we don't like to admit our mistakes. But the truth is, none of us is perfect.*

**Leader:** Rosh Hashanah has many meanings and many names. It is also known as Yom Ha-Zikaron, the Day of Remembering. On this day, we remember the loved ones who are no longer with us.

**Reader 3:** In the rising of the sun and in its going down,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** In the beginning of the year, and when it ends,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** When we are weary and in need of strength,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** When we are lost and sick at heart,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** When we have joys we yearn to share,

**All:** *We remember them.*

**Reader 3:** So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as

**All:** *We remember them.*

- Rabbi Burt Jacobson

**Sing Together:**

**Na'aseh shalom**

Na-a-seh sha-lom ba-o-lam  
Na-a-seh sha-lom a-ley-nu.  
V'al kol ha-o-lam  
V'im-ru, im ru sha-lom.

Na-a-seh sha-lom  
Na-a-seh sha-lom  
Sha-lom a-ley-nu,  
V'al kol ha-o-lam.

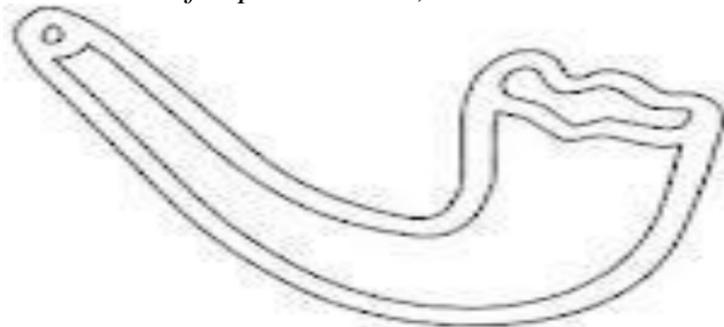
Na-a-seh sha-lom  
Na-a-seh sha-lom  
Sha-lom a-ley-nu,  
V'al kol ha-o-lam.

*(Let us make peace and friendship for all the world.)*

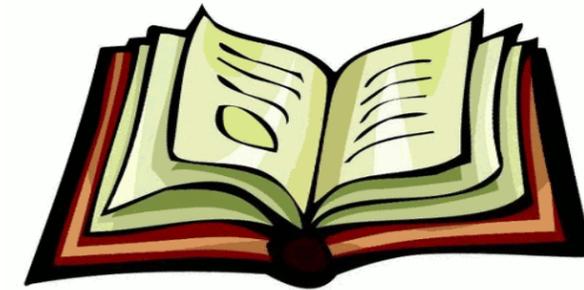
**Leader:** Another name for Rosh Hashanah is Tom T'ruah, the Day of the Shofar. The shofar was the first musical instrument of the Jewish people, made from a ram's horn. In ancient times, it was used to warn people of danger, to call them to battle against attacking enemies, to summon men and women to public meetings, and to announce the election of new rulers.

In celebration of Yom T'ruah, the Day of the Shofar, we will now have a presentation by our Congregation's shofar experts, David Shafer and Hannah Ulman.

*(sit back and listen to the shofar presentation)*



**Reader 4:** Yet another name for Rosh Hashanah is Yom Ha-Din, the Day of Judgment. According to Jewish legend, everything we did in the past year is examined. If we have been good, the legend tells us, we will be inscribed in the Book of Life for a good new year. If not, our new year will be full of problems, struggles and just plain bad days.



**All:** *We think about the good and the not-so-good days we had.*

**Reader 1:** "Life Happens"

Bad hair days and mixed-up romance,  
Told that there's gooey stuff stuck to your pants,  
Getting a sister when you wanted a brother,  
Finding that "life skills" is taught by your mother,  
Slipping and falling and ripping your jeans,  
Discovering your sister has ruined your things.

Sometimes life gives us days full of laughter.  
And then we have some that are filled with disaster.  
Some things that happen aren't part of our plans  
We have to roll with it and just throw up our hands.  
What life will bring next is predicted by none,  
Which makes it exciting and often more fun.

*(Irene Dunlap and Patty Hansen, Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul II 2, 121)*