



Portland's UnShul Monthly Newsletter



Dedication to Hope & Contribution to Community

by Rivka Gevurtz, Board President on November 24

At this time of year we are inundated by donation pleas from every organization we've ever been in contact with, but lately I've had cause to explore the difference between donation and contribution. For one of my seminary classes I have been looking at innovative models of religious engagement, and in particular at some of the best known innovators in Judaism today.

I was delighted that our young community has a lot in common with these pioneers. Like UnShul they share a commitment to deep learning; they share our commitment to praying with their feet; and they place greater value on welcoming people of all genders, ages and gifts into the community than on being tied to an "edifice complex".

But something we can learn from them is that membership is more than yet another donation; it is about dedicating our time as well as our money. It is a covenantal relationship, to contribute to the community which sustains us, through times of joy and of challenge. Like the Maccabees of old, in their own time of assimilation and subjugation, contributing and dedicating ourselves to a community of fellow spiritual seekers is a radical act of hope. Are you ready to contribute to your UnShul community? If you are ready to dedicate your learning, justice-seeking and, yes, financial contributions to growing our community, contact me at UnShulRivka@asthespiritmovesus.com!

A Bissel Torah from our Rabbah

The hymn Maoz Tzur is a staple of Hanukah but the English words usually sung for the first stanza do not actually translate the hymn. They seem to integrate later stanzas into the first.

What if we were in relationship with the actual text?

The English we sing is:
Rock of Ages let our song, praise your saving power;
You amidst the raging foes, was our sheltering tower.

Furiously they assailed us, But Your arm availed us

And Your word broke their sword, when our own strength failed us.
And Your word broke their sword, when our own strength failed us.

The actual translation is:
O strong rock of my salvation, to praise You is delight.
Restore my House of Prayer, and there we'll bring a thanksgiving offering.

When You'll have prepared the offering (or slaughter) for the foe so offending,

Then I'll complete with a song of hymn the altar's dedication
Then I'll complete with a song of hymn the altar's dedication

Rather than a song of defeating the enemy, we could have words of a sacrificial offering being prepared for the enemy. Our rededication of our holy alter can only be complete when we have a sacrificial offering from those who would harm us, prepared by Yah. Is the offering their death, or is the offering their chatat offering, their sin offering, their repentance offering?

What if we sought repentance and repair from those who harmed us. What if we sought an offering for the offence, rather than slaughter/evisceration/annihilation? What if that notion infiltrated our consciousness so that we couldn't even imagine punishment or revenge?

What would it look like today to pursue victory through reconciliation and healing rather than defeat? Would our outcome be more sustainable, more enduring? Would the differences that seem insurmountable today diminish to trivialities because our victory brought our hearts together instead of driving our souls apart?

Share your thoughts on our FaceBook page!

Love and Chag Urim Sameach! Happy Festival of Lights! (Chanukah)
Rabbah D'vorah

Tikkun Olam

Vigils, marches and gatherings are popping up every week! Stay tuned via this newsletter and our [Facebook page](#) and catch weekly action alerts [on our website](#). **Keep up with the latest Spirit Led Justice Alliance Action Alert [HERE!](#)** Or sign up to receive the Portland Spirit Led Justice Alliance Weekly Action Alert right to your email [HERE!](#)

Fundraising and Friendraising

The UnShul is an inspiring, truly grassroots community that works on a small budget to pay for only the essentials needed: a few bills and the small salary of our Rabbi, someone we can be proud to call our leader in faith and social justice. But, we are much larger than the support we give to our leaders, we are a growing community of individuals who are each pouring our love and energy into something larger that in turn feeds us all. The donations we give bolster our community, but they also have the power to bolster our individual spirits. There are a lot of things we **have to** pay for in our lives. The UnShul is one important way we can exercise empowering **choice** in where we spend our money. Paying into the UnShul which then in turn pays us back tenfold in spiritual growth and mutual support is exponentially beneficial to you, our community and the intersecting communities to which we belong. If you haven't joined as a congregational member yet, reach out and make it official! Visit our website to join and learn more: <https://www.asthespiritmovesus.com/unshul/> and/or make a donation today! <http://bit.ly/2uFu9N1>

What is upcoming?

Want to join The UnShul's new conversion class in January 2019? Email Rabbah D'vorah for a syllabus and all the details: RabbiDebra@asthespiritmovesus.com

Havdallah & Chanukah!

Saturday, December 8th at 5:30 PM – 7 PM
2146 NE Rodney Ave, Portland, OR 97212

Meet us at the home of Charlie Rosenblum - bring your chanukiah, candles, friends and latkes and we'll light and eat after the teaching and discussion. We will continue with our tradition of having Chanukah be queer themed so the teachings will definitely include something that celebrates LGBTQ+ lives AND folks should feel free to bring a favorite teaching or story that connects to re-dedication, miracles or the might of the few overcoming the tyranny of the many that is queer connected.

Afterward we'll head over the Jewish Pride Greater PDX for Chanukah Happy Hour! (more details here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/752478208431180/>)

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, December 15th 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
3651 SW Custer St., Portland, OR 97219

Lyrical, musical, joyful, meaningful, heart opening, transcendent—all words used to describe Shabbat morning davenning with Rabbah D. On Third Saturdays we lift our voices in prayer together from 10-12 and then explore the Torah portion from 12-12:30 using the lush foliage outside the windows. This service integrates one of the best qualities of our previous Torah hikes and elevates our intraconnectedness with nature and all of Creation. And once again, if you yearn for a beautiful Shabbat morning service in an intimate environment, this service is for you. Can't wait to see you!

Friday Night with the Rabbah at the home of Linda Rifkin

Friday, December 21st, 7:00 pm

710 SE Franklin St., Portland, OR 97202

Join us at the home of Linda Rifkin! After a virtual candle lighting, we will gather in beloved community to learn a little, sing a little, talk a lot and eat a beautiful meal.

Please bring the following according to last name:

A-E: Entrée (fish or vegetarian)

F-G: Gluten free dessert

H-M: Entrée (fish or vegetarian)

N-O: Vegetable side dish no dairy

P-S: Salad

T-Z: Wine or Juice

[Be sure to keep up with the latest Spirit Led Justice Alliance Action Alert HERE!](#)

Vigils, marches and gatherings are popping up every week! Stay tuned via these emails, the Spirit Led Action Alerts and [our Facebook page!](#)

Want to support Portland's UnShul? Donate using our PayPal link:

<http://bit.ly/2uFu9N1>



As The Spirit Moves Us & Portland's UnShul

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