



What to do in Shul, What to do out of Shul

For even the most shul-attending of us, there's still more time 'out' than 'in.' And some of us won't be able to be 'in' at all. 'Out' goes first.

Candles make a wonderful way to mark the coming, and going, of sacred time. To pause and look at a flame is to meditate on the beauty and passing nature of our lives and warmth and danger intertwined in existence. I recommend candles.

Food is always good. There is a semi-canonical list of foods, Simanim, eaten because of propitious qualities; honey for a sweet year, round challah to mark the yearly cycle - that sort of thing. There's a list here <https://family-friends-food.com/guide-to-the-simanim-symbolic-foods-for-rosh-hashanah/>. Some of the list are based on very bad puns, which we try to replicate at home – for whatever you have on the table; conjure a wish. Eat humous so we should have year of being chic and living in peas. It will amuse you, even if no-one else.

Cast away sins. Tashlich is a wonderful way to come together, share, be in nature – around running water – and let go of the things we wish to be rid of in the year to come. I'm delighted to share that Rabbis Benji Stanley and Leah Jordan, some of our newest members, will be leading the New London Tashlich on Sunday afternoon, more info on the ticket, or message me for the time and location.

Read. You'll find plenty of extraordinary Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur content on-line. My substack <https://rjgordon.substack.com/> will have my RH sermon from around midday (and today carries a post about my experiences at Ground Zero on 9/11 twenty-five years ago). Rabbi Natasha posts here - <https://www.rabbinatasha.com/>.

Stream our services. I'm always deeply touched to get feedback from those who watch on from across Europe and unable to get to the building for a range of reasons. We've invested again in our sound equipment and hope that, if you can't be in the building, you will nonetheless feel something of what it means to be part of our community at this special time. www.newlondon.org.uk/digital - the pictures will play automatically, click in the image to turn on the sound.

If you can join us...

Sit. We try to be engaging, it's wonderful to feel us all singing along together. But communal prayer – over these long services - is supposed to open a space for a quiet internal reflection. It's not and it's not supposed to be entertainment. Bring a book, sure. Check in with your neighbour, of course. But be prepared to make space for quiet reflection. I recommend coming for the evening services (6:30pm) or a little earlier (we start at 8:30am) to really get a chance to immerse in the day.

Aside from a full range of Children's Services (starting at 11:30), we offer four **seating options**. In the sanctuary, we offer both mixed seating (upstairs and downstairs in the middle section) and men-only and women-only options. We also have some seats reserved by members. If you do not have a specific reservation, please understand if you are asked to switch seats. **In the hall** (starting at 11:00am First Day only) we offer a shorter and more

participatory service, led by Rabbi Natasha and our teens. Yoav and Alex Games will be with me in the sanctuary on the first day. On Second Day I'm so excited to welcome some of our youngest adult members to provide leadership, alongside Yoav and Rabbi Natasha who will be giving the sermon, in the Sanctuary service. First Day Rosh Hashanah being Shabbat, Shofar blowing is only on second day.

We have a large number of Koren Machzorim for use – but not enough for everyone. If you have a Machzor to bring, please do and, perhaps, if we run out later in the day be willing to share (did I mention it's good to turn up early? 😊)

To our amazing professional team who have worked so tirelessly to bring us to this point; Phil, Michelle, Anna, Gabriella, Lenin and all our caretaking support – thank you. To Rabbi Natasha, Yoav, Alex our Torah and Haftarah readers, Wardens, Shamashim and and everyone who taking on leadership roles in the service – thank you. To everyone who has volunteered for the security and greeter rotas, the beauty of our gardens, the quality of our children's services ... it's a very long list.

It's a privilege to come to this special time with such a special community to celebrate with. May these Rosh Hashanah services herald a year of sweetness, peace and health for us all,

Shabbat Shalom and Shannah Tovah

Rabbi Jeremy