



SYNAGOGUE RESOURCE CENTER

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**Title: Installations of Synagogue Board of Trustees
and Officers**

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
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Come Home to Conservative Judaism

INSTALLATION CEREMONY #1

Discharge of previous Board and officers.

Our installation ceremony is based upon the Book of Psalms. Psalms 120 to 134 are entitled “*Shir Ha-ma-a-lot*,” which has been translated as “Songs of Ascents” or as “Pilgrim Songs,” referring to going up to “the mountain of the Lord,” since the Temple in *Yerushalayim* was located on a hill.

It has also been suggested that these Psalms were sung by the Choir of Leviim on the fifteen steps that led from the Temple Court to the Sanctuary. The title of these Psalms could indeed be translated as SONGS OF THE STEPS.

In yet another translation, tradition holds that King David sang these Psalms when he excavated the foundations for the Temple.

Men and women who dedicate themselves to their congregation, who are elected to lead the synagogue, have ascended STEPS LEADING TO GREATNESS; they have gone up *ma-a-lot*, a stairway to the Mountain of the Lord.

This is the theme of our installation ceremony. Our officers and board members are starting out today on a road that may be challenging, on a course requiring sincere effort and selfless consecration. It is a road which can lead to true greatness. As they continue going up the steps of leadership, we hope that their stature will grow and the success of our synagogue will grow with them.

INSTALLATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

As I introduce each newly elected member of the Board of Trustees of Congregation _____, will you please stand and remain standing in your places.

- To introduce _____ (individual’s name) _____ I quote from Psalm 133:

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” We pray that the meetings of our Board be graced by harmony and friendship as becomes brothers and sisters who work together for Judaism both within and outside our synagogue.

- To introduce _____, I quote from Psalm 122:



“I rejoiced when they said unto me: ‘Let us go unto the house of the Lord.’ ” May your work for (Congregation) _____ and hours you will spend within these sacred walls, ever be a source of joy to Board members.

- In introducing _____, I quote from Psalm 125:

“Do good, O Lord unto the good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.” May those who consecrate themselves to the service of our Congregation merit the abundance of God’s goodness.

- To introduce _____, I quote from Psalm 123:

“Unto thee I lift up mine eyes, O Thou that are enthroned in the heavens.” May our leaders seek the inspiration of prayer to our God in Heaven when troublesome problems tax their judgment.

CHARGE TO THE BOARD MEMBERS

It is my privilege to install these trustees into the duties to which they have been elevated by their fellow congregants and the constitutional provisions of our Congregation. I charge you with the performance of all the duties and functions required of you by virtue of the constitution and traditions of Congregation _____. May I impress upon you that the spiritual and fiscal conditions of the Congregation are your responsibility. Congratulations and *mazal tov*.

INSTALLATIONS OF OFFICERS

As we resume our ascent to the higher regions of congregation leadership, there comes to mind a passage from *Pirke Avot*: “Know what is above you – a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and all their deeds written in a Book.” The Secretary of the synagogue must have a seeing eye, an attentive ear, and must record all the deeds of the Board in a book. When this function is faithfully and accurately fulfilled, the Secretary becomes the conscience of Congregation _____. I call on _____ to take his/her place as Secretary of the Congregation.

The office of Financial Secretary is associated with the qualities that inspire confidence and trust. In the words of Psalm 101: “Mine eyes are upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; He that walks in a way of integrity, he shall minister unto me.” We read in Psalm 125: “They that trust the Lord are as Mt. Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains are round



about *Yerushalayim*, so the Lord is round about the Jewish people from this time forth and forever.” I call on _____ to take his/her place as Congregation _____’s Financial Secretary.

I summon our Second Vice President, _____, with these words from Psalm 15: “Lord, who shall sojourn in Your tabernacle? Who shall dwell upon Your holy mountain? One who walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart, that has no slander upon her tongue, nor does evil to her fellow, but honors them that fear the Lord.”

- And introducing _____, I quote from Psalm 124:

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” May the people who labor for the welfare of our Congregation _____ be strengthened by the conviction that God is their helper in the ‘sacred work which combines material and spiritual values, heaven and earth.’

With these words from Psalm 65, I call upon _____ to take his/her place as Vice President of our Congregation. “Happy is the person whom You choose and bring near to dwell in Your courts; may he/she be satisfied with the goodness of Your house.

Step by step we have traced the path of leadership in our Congregation. We now reach the summit, the highest position that may be achieved by a member of the Congregation. Will _____, our new President, please step forward as we read in Psalm 24: “Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord? And who shall stand in God’s holy place? One who has clean hands and a pure heart and shall receive a blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” In his/her many years of dedicated and consecrated service to this Congregation, _____ has given evidence of the qualities required of the person who will guide us on the coming year: “sincerity, honesty, purity of heart and intentions, and selfless dedication to the welfare of our congregation and to each and every one of its members.”

CHARGE TO OFFICERS

In a synagogue, as in other democratic organizations, leadership means service. It is not for glory and honor, but for service that you have been chosen; the greatness inherent in your positions will be yours and add to your personal stature in the measure that you devote yourselves to the service of the Congregation.



May Almighty God, who bestows glory to flesh and blood, bless you with life, health, and happiness, and fulfill you with respect to the promise of Psalm 92. "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree; and grow mighty like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the Lord, they shall flourish in the courts of our God. Even in old age they shall bring forth fruit; they shall be full of vigor and strength, declaring that the Lord is just, my rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness."

Pledge yourselves to perform all the duties, responsibilities, functions and services demanded of you in the constitution and devote yourselves wholeheartedly to the service of the Congregation. Congratulations.

TO BE READ BY ALL THOSE INSTALLED

We reaffirm our convictions and rededicate ourselves.

Eternal God, in whose service we are enlisted and in whose name we have gathered, lift our thoughts that we may renew our minds; lead us beside the still waters that we may restore our souls.

We thank You, O Lord, for our hallowed memories and for our abiding hopes.

Help us to show that we are Your children by giving ourselves faithfully to Your tasks.

We thank You for this *Beit Tefilla*, *Beit Midrash* and *Beit Kneset*, our synagogue and community, and for the sustenance and spirit we draw from each.

Help us to transform our sentiment into convictions and our convictions into conduct and commitment.

We thank you for the Torah and its laws of righteousness and love.

Help us to narrow the gap between its principles and ours and between our principles and our actions.

We thank You for the privilege of being part of an eternal people, men and women of shared history and hope.



Help us to appreciate how good it is to dwell within the community of Jacob and to worship in the Sanctuary of Israel.

We thank You for devoted leaders who give time, energy and wisdom to the service of Your sanctuary and Your people.

Help us acknowledge their service by serving with them and sharing together the joys of Jewish experience and aspirations of the Jewish people.

We thank You for all our blessings, material and spiritual, for our daily sustenance and sense of purpose, and for the will to continue at our tasks.

Help us to carry our successes with humility, to face our setbacks with courage and to align our purposes with Yours.

Keep us from arrogance which blinds the mind and from the anger which darkens Our heart.

Make us loyal to our convictions in the face of false challenges, and enable us to speak the truth fearlessly and in love.

On this installation and rededication, draw us closer to Your teachings, closer to each other and closer to YOU.

Adapted and edited from Likrat Shabbat

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS #2

DISCHARGE

The following officers/directors have served us well in 20 _____. Please stand as I call your name:

(President, Vice President, names are called and all stand)

RABBI: "Thank you for a job well done!"

INSTALLATION

The following officers and directors to be presented before you now have been called to leadership to serve in 20___. Upon them the mantle of leadership will now be placed. As I call your name, please come forward and take your place on the Bima:

(Names of incoming officers and directors are called -except for the office of President)

RABBI: As you are being presented for public consecration, this is the charge we lay upon you:

Be faithful, to the extent of your ability, to all the duties and responsibilities revolving upon you as leaders of this Congregation.

Resolve to be consistent in your attendance, cheerful in your service, wholehearted in your concern, open-minded in your planning, patient in the face of trials and persistent in the face of challenges. May your actions by example and value promote unity among all members of our Congregation.

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS RESPOND: In the presence of our congregation and before God, I accept the responsibilities which have been conferred upon me. I promise to serve our Congregation to the best of my ability; to uphold with dignity and courage the ideals for which it stands; to place the interests of the Congregation on the highest plane. I will conduct myself at all times to bring honor to our Congregation, to the household of Israel and our Torah.

Strengthen me, O Lord, in all these endeavors. Amen.

RABBI: We charge you to remember Israel's past, to cherish its heritage of Torah. We charge you to remember Israel's future, to bring light unto the world and glory to the name of God. We charge you to remember that the present is the narrow bridge that binds our glorious past to the future which we seek to build.



Amid the daily tasks of leading our Congregation, amid worries and frustrations that often arise from these responsibilities, we charge you to be mindful of the vital meaning of our Congregation's life.

I declare you all installed as officers and directors of Congregation _____.

RABBI CONTINUES: For President, we have elected _____.
I present him/her before you...

Upon your shoulders falls the task of highest leadership. We charge you to pledge loyalty to the work not only of this synagogue, but of the entire Jewish people, being mindful that we are a part of *K'lal Yisrael*, the entire household of Israel. Remember, as you guide the leaders of the Congregation, that the effort of our Congregation must be linked at all times with the historic aspirations of Judaism. May God grant strength and courage in pursuing these ideals.

I declare _____ installed as President
of Congregation _____.

ALL WHO WILL SERVE IN 20 __, PLEASE JOIN IN THE (RESPONSIVE) READING WITH THE CONGREGATION.

LEADERS: We accept our office as an honor, as a trust and as a sacred obligation.

CONGREGATION: You are to welcome every opportunity to serve our Congregation, dedicated to God, to the people of Israel and to Torah.

We are prepared to give generously of our time, our means, and our counsel to bring added strength.

You are to strive to do everything to make our Synagogue a source of spiritual strength for our children and grandchildren; to young people, adults and senior adults.

We shall promote a program of Jewish education on behalf of ourselves and others with devotion and with generosity.



You are ever to be zealous of our Jewish heritage, of the teachings and the traditions of our people.

We shall sustain The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and our rabbinical seminaries as guardians and inspiration of Jewish learning and living and as authentic interpreters of tradition by and for World Jewry.

You are always to be alert to attain the realization of our ideals as a people.

We stand ready to serve for the betterment of the Jewish people and the wider community and for the glory of God.

Let us then rededicate ourselves to this great task:

In humility we accept the sacred responsibility entrusted to us. We ask for spiritual strength to administer the affairs of our Congregation with integrity. May we merit the respect of our brothers and sisters. May we help our Synagogue to strengthen ancient and hallowed ideals of God, Torah and Israel.

RABBI: I now present President _____ . (Followed by President's message)



INSTALLATION CEREMONY OF NEW OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS #3

(Newly installed officers and Board of the Congregation will stand and join with the President in the following [responsive] reading.)

O Lord, give us fearless individuals!
Individuals to meet the trials of life
With faith and vision, steadfast hearts and willing hands:

People who dare to do the right,
And yield not truth to wealth or power.

O Lord, give us righteous men and women
Those who are just, those who are free,
Those who respond to their people's needs:

Who work together with resolute will
To speed the approach of Your kingdom on earth.

O Lord, give us steadfast individuals!
Individuals like Joseph, who though great in the land,
Remembered his kinsmen in time of distress.

Who seek out their people, offering the hand
Of kinship and kindness, of rescue and strength:

Who harbor no malice nor sanction revenge,
Forbearing, forgiving, forgetting past wrongs;

Who contribute richly to the land of their birth
Yet never forgetting Zion, Israel's ancient, but modern, land.

O Lord, give us inspired individuals!
Individuals like Moses and Miriam who hearken to Your voice,
Revealing Your eternal truths and teaching us Your Law.



Lord, give us leaders, faithful to Your Will,
Pathfinders through life's bewildering maze.

Give us individuals to teach us, ones to make us know,
That Torah is a way of life, and righteousness our goal.

With such leaders to guide us, our faith shall never fail,
Our courage never falter; our future is assured.

PLEDGE RECITED BY BOARD AND OFFICERS TOGETHER

In Your Sanctuary, O God, in the presence of this Congregation, we accept the honor and the responsibilities which have been conferred. We promise to serve our Congregation to the best of our ability; to uphold with dignity and courage the ideals for which it stands; to place the interest of the Congregation on the highest plane of communal endeavor; to so conduct ourselves at all times as to bring glory and honor to our Congregation, to Israel and to You.

Strengthen us in all our endeavors to fulfill this pledge.

AMEN.

INSTALLATION CEREMONY OF NEW OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

The story is told of a Hassidic rebbe who went to the circus and saw there a man walking a tightrope. When one of his students asked, "Why's that man risking his life in this way?" the rebbe answered, "I do not know why. But I know this. As long as that man is walking along that tightrope, he is using his whole mind and soul to concentrate on walking along it. If for one moment he stopped to worry about the money that he is earning by walking the tightrope, he would be lost and would fall. Only when he concentrates on the task at hand, the work that he has to do in walking the thin cord, can he hope to succeed. "

We are all like the tightrope walker. If we stop to worry about the reward of doing this task as opposed to the reward for doing another, we will fail to accomplish any task. Instead, each of us must work with *kavannah*, directing his or her entire mind and soul to the work that he or she alone can do. We may never succeed in completing it, yet we are not free to simply not do it.



Just as no one else can share the sense of satisfaction for having done a good thing, so no one else can perform the task for you--the task is yours to choose and it is yours alone to do.

THE NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS PLEASE STAND:

You have accepted the challenge of being the leaders of our Congregation. It will be your leadership that will create an environment in which every member sees meaning in what he/she is doing, receives satisfaction and feels a part of a team. As it is stated in *Pirke Avot*, "Be not like servants who serve their master because of the expected reward, but be like those who serve a master without expecting a reward."

WILL THE NEWLY ELECTED TRUSTEES AND BOARD MEMBERS RISE AS WELL:

You have accepted the challenge of leadership from your fellow congregants. It is important that you realize that the attitudes of the members depend upon your attitudes.

If you care about what you are doing and believe in it, they will.

If you are interested in and enthusiastic about your activities, they will be.

If you cooperate with others, they will learn to cooperate likewise.

_____, as President, you accept the greatest responsibility of all and will be the lead person walking on the thin cord. In this capacity, lead your board members and trustees.

SAMPLE DVAR TORAH INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Shalom. It is my pleasure to be here with you today and to participate with the membership and leadership of the Temple in this installation ceremony. The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Region are proud to count the Temple among our affiliated congregations. As the association of Conservative synagogues in North America, we value the involvement of the Temple in our regional and international programs. Your leadership has always understood the value of being a part of the larger Jewish Community, especially in our Conservative Movement, and my first charge to the newly elected leadership is to cite the words of *Pirke Avot, Al Tifrosh Min Ha Tzibur*, Do not separate yourselves from your community, I hope that the Temple's leadership will continue to participate actively with us in the United Synagogue in the many programs, seminars and conventions offered to our members.

DISCHARGE OLD OFFICERS AND BOARD

As newly elected officers and board members of your congregation, you have an extremely important role to play in the future of our Jewish people. It is the synagogue, after all, which is the central institution in the Jewish community. It is the synagogue, as a *Bet Knesset*, a house of Assembly, a *Bet T'fillah*, a house of prayer, and a *Bet Midrash*, a house of study, which has been the focal point of Judaism throughout our history. It is the synagogue which is the foundation on which Jewish religious life continues to be built. And it is the synagogue to which Jews turn for the most important events in their lives. For Judaism to flourish and continue to be meaningful in our lives, we must have strong and vibrant synagogues. Qualified, vibrant, active lay leadership is critical to the success of our congregations. Yours is a vital role and a major responsibility.

All of our synagogues need leaders who are willing to lead. Leaders must be willing to do, not only to say. Too often, our boards have individuals who think that their only responsibility as board members is to come to a meeting and tell others how they should do their jobs. A Midrash tells us that when the Jewish people came to the shore of the Red Sea, they panicked. Moshe began to pray, and as God instructed him, he held up his rod over the sea. But the Midrash tells us that the sea did not yet part. At that point, Nachshon Ben Aminadav, one of the tribal leaders, proceeded into the sea. At that moment, the sea parted and the Children of Israel were able to cross on dry land.

The lesson of this Midrash conveys the essence of Jewish leadership. Prayer and talking are important, but real solutions come only when leaders are willing to "take the plunge" and get to work. God's intervention came when He saw that one person was willing to act.



In a similar vein, the Talmud teaches us, "*Lo Hamidrash Ha Ikar, Ellah Ha Ma Aseh*". It is not our prayers that God desires of us, but our action. The message is that it is not only prayers which bring divine forgiveness, but the change in our behavior (that is, a return from sinning). The message is that synagogue leaders must be willing to work for their congregations. They must be willing to serve on committees, to attend services, to attend programs, and to provide financial support at a level meaningful for their circumstances.

But leadership does not lead alone. There must be members who will follow the example of the leaders. When Nachshon Ben Aminadav jumped into the sea, there were many who followed his lead. His inspiration and his faith were enough to move people to action. Temple members must also be willing to follow the lead of their new officers and board members and become actively involved in all that the Temple has to offer.

These are strong statements and a difficult challenge. But your congregation deserves the finest leadership that its members have to offer. Members and leaders are up to this challenge. Just as with Nachshon's action God stepped in and parted the Red Sea, with the actions of members and newly elected officers and board members, God will guide them to new and greater heights.

INSTALL NEW OFFICERS AND BOARD

On behalf of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Region, I want to congratulate the Temple on the installation of your Officers and Board members. The United Synagogue stands ready to assist in your important mission. May the Almighty continue to inspire your members and your leaders for many years to come.