

## Torah Thoughts,

"Life Inside the Trash Compactor"

My favorite scene from the original Star Wars movie is not the light saber fight between Obi Wan Kenobi and Darth Vader or the proton torpedo shot that destroys the Death Star, but instead the near death experience that the four central heroes - Luke, Hans, Leia and Chewy - have in a garbage chute. With the walls caving in on them, and the slimy worm like creature the dianoga pulling Luke under the refuse, the situation looks grim. At the last second, R2D2 with the help of C3PO manages to stop the mechanism, saving his friends from their horrific fate.

In almost every story, there is always a moment when all could be lost, and, somehow, miraculously it isn't. These Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) are what give the central characters of any story the strength and the faith to persevere. The famous Crossing of the Sea we read about in this week's Torah portion, Beshalach is just such a moment. Pressed between their own version of a trash compactor, with the Pharaoh and the Egyptian Army forming one of the walls and the Dead Sea the other, our ancestors' situation is dire. Just like in Star Wars: A New Hope, we can feel the walls caving in with nothing to stop them, until Moses raises his staff and the waters finally part. It doesn't take the magic of Cecil B. DeMille to truly feel the tension of that moment in history.

We have all had moments where we looked disaster in the face and somehow prevailed. They need not be Near-Death Experiences to be an existential crisis. Now that the Buffalo Bills season is over we can all take a deep breath for all the times this past season they should have failed, but somehow pulled victory out of the grasp of defeat, and, of course, the one time, they were not able to do so. This is why the last game hurts so much more, but also why the season was so spectacular nonetheless. One day, God willing, it will go our way and we will find a way our way to the football Promised Land. In the meantime, always remember what the characters in Star Wars taught us, sometimes we have to go through the muck to make our way to glory. May it be so, May it be so!

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Alex

## In Memoriam

### Sheloshim

Elaine Cohen  
Dr. Kenneth Krackow  
Fred Leyland, friend of Rich Legalbo  
Nancy Nitka, mother of Jennifer (Jason) Perri  
Peter Solender, Father of Lisa (Jack) Flick and Max (Gretchen) Solender

### Yahrzeits

Adelle Abelson	Thomas Gordon	May Tripi
Sherri Beth Abelson	Sol Haber	Adele Vogel
Phyllis Ables	Helen Heskins	Susan Wehle
Yvette Berger	Elsa Huttner	Dr. Leonard Zombek
Dr. Alexander Bloch	Robert H. Jacobson	
Joanne L. Capone	Sydney Klein	
Nello Capone	Frieda Lieberman	
Meredith Carpman	Rose Markel	
Shirley Cavior	Eli W. Mitnik	
Sarah Cohen	Bella Morris	
Hilde Collin	Mark Plon	
Max G. Covett	Harry Posterman	
Marilyn Dudek	Clayton Robinson	
Jerome R. Ellis	Morris Schnittman	
Esther Falkowitz	Leah N. Schweitzer	
Herman Feller	Ruth Serota	
Sam Freedman	Walter Stein	
Milton Freudenheim	Louis Stringer	
David Gellin	George Swadron	
Anna Eisenstein	Rose Swadron	
Gordon	Alice Teplesky	

**Erev Shabbat Service**  
**Friday, January 30, 2026/13 Shevat, 5786**  
**7:00pm**



Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein  
Cantor Arlene Frank  
Executive Director Joanne Marquisee  
B'COL Religious School Director Rabbi Einav Symons  
President Joseph Glickman

**CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM**  
In Person Events & Virtual Services

**Saturday January 31st**

9:00 am Torah Study— offsite and via Zoom  
10:45 am Shabbat Morning Service and Kiddush Luncheon— offsite

**Sunday February 1st**

9:00 am B'COL Religious School  
9:30 am Men's Group Meeting  
10:15 am Confirmation Class  
11:30 am Junior Choir  
12:30 pm Resetting the Table— offsite  
1:00 pm Purim Spiel Rehearsal

**Monday February 2nd**

Office Closed

**Tuesday February 3rd**

1:30 pm Rabbi Alex and Rev Bill Hennessey at The Amberleigh  
7:00 pm Executive Committee Meeting via Zoom only

**Wednesday February 4th**

11:00 am Religious Traditions on Creation— Offsite  
2:00 pm Tikkun Olam Committee Meeting with Rabbi Alex via Zoom only  
7:00 pm Mussar Class via Zoom only

**Thursday February 5th**

7:00 pm Membership Committee Meeting via Zoom only  
8:00 pm Talmud Study via Zoom only

**Friday February 6th**

6:00 pm Erev Shabbat Super Bowl Family Service and via Boxcast, Facebook and YouTube  
7:00 pm Tailgate Oneg Shabbat

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**The B'COL Junior Choir** led by Morah Zahava Fried and Cantor Arlene Frank will be on most Sundays after Religious School at 11:30 am. Please RSVP using the Junior Choir Contact Form. Junior Choir performances will take place at both synagogues. The next session is on Sunday, February 1st at 11:30 am.

**Resetting the Table** will be on Sunday, February 1st at 12:30 pm at Panera Bread on Transit Road. Join Rabbi Alex and Pastor Eric Farley in discussion to transform political divides and build a shared future. Everyone is welcome

**Religious Traditions in Creation** will be on Wednesday, February 4th at 11:00 am. Join Rabbi Alex Lazarus- Klein and Pastor Bill Hennessy for a joint class at North Presbyterian Church as they discuss Religious Traditions on Creation. Both sessions are open to the community. Please RSVP to Joanne at joanne.marquisee@gmail.com. The second session will be on Wednesday, February 11th at 11:00 am at Congregation Shir Shalom

**L'Chaim- A Celebration of Jewish Life** will be on Friday, February 13, 2026 at 7:00 pm. Join us for a special service in which Rebecca, Lillie and Ella Greene will discuss their B'nei Mitzvah experience based on their segment of Rebecca's podcast, Whinypaluza along with Harvey Horowitz, B'nei Mitzvah Tutor extraordinaire. The Oneg Shabbat is sponsored by Michael Berger and catered by The Bloom and Rose

**The Families Havdalah and Game Night** will be on Saturday, February 28th at 5:30 pm. The evening will start with a Havdalah Service followed by a Complimentary Pizza Dinner. Activities will include Pickleball, Foosball, Ping Pong and Board Games. Please RSVP to Joanne at joanne.marquisee@gmail.com

**The Pop Star Purim Pandemonium** will be on Monday, March 2, 2026. A Complimentary Pizza Dinner will be provided at 6:00 pm followed by the Purim Spiel and Megillah Reading at 7:00 pm and an Oneg with Hamantaschen at 8:00 pm. Please RSVP to Joanne at joanne.marquisee@gmail.com.

**Our Mission Statement, as a congregation, is to be a welcoming community and to enhance all aspects of Jewish life.**

The Board of Trustees of Congregation Shir Shalom  
**COMMITMENT STATEMENT**  
We, the Board of Trustees, pledge to unite and to enrich the lives of our congregation.

We will proceed in our commitment to Congregation Shir Shalom, to create an inclusive and open environment for the entire congregation.

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Cantor-Arlene Frank

Executive Director-Joanne Marquisee

Religious School Director-Rabbi Einav Symons

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Sheila Bernard-Tucker

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Tara Karch Cross

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Evie Weinstein

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**Prayer for those who lead our congregation**

O God, this congregation has honored us with the task of leading them, and of serving You with them.

May we strive to be fit for this sacred task.

May we lead well and may we serve well.

May we hear the quiet as well as the active voices, and may we heed the call and follow the paths of what we, after honest searching, feel to be the right things to do.

May we listen to each other, and may we listen to You, as all of us together make this synagogue a *kehillah kedusha*, a Holy place.

**Congregation Shir Shalom is Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism and Reconstructing Judaism.**