



Jewish Community Center of Paramus  
Congregation Beth Tikvah  
304 E. Midland Avenue ~ Paramus NJ 07652- 201.262.7691

## A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Arthur Weiner

Friday October 31, 2025 ~ Parshat: Lech Lecha

Dear JCCP/CBT family,

### Before Shabbat Begins, Tell Congress to Feed the Hungry

This week's Torah portion, *Lech Lecha*, marks the true beginning of the Jewish story. God calls to Abram,

***“Lech lecha mei’artzecha u-mimolad’techa u-mi’beit avicha el ha’aretz asher ar’eka”***

**“Go forth from your land, your birthplace, and your father’s house, to the land that I will show you.” (Genesis 12:1)**

With those words, Abram begins the process of becoming Abraham, the first to take the moral risk of walking into the unknown. He leaves behind comfort and certainty, trusting that God’s promise will unfold through him.

But the very next verses remind us that even the righteous are not spared hardship:

*“There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt.” (12:10)*

Food insecurity, it seems, is as old as civilization itself. And from the beginning, the Torah has demanded that we respond to it with urgency and compassion. Abraham’s journey to Egypt foreshadows the moral journey of our people from famine to plenty, from slavery to freedom, from indifference to justice.

This week, our nation faces a different kind of famine. Not one caused by drought or blight, but from political paralysis. If the federal government shutdown is not resolved by tomorrow, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the program that helps more than 40 million Americans afford food will be suspended. That means millions of families could wake up unable to buy groceries. Parents who already stretch every dollar will face empty shelves. Seniors who depend on modest benefits will have to choose between food and medicine. In some states, school meal programs that rely on federal funding may be interrupted.

No family should face hunger because of politics.

The headlines describe this as a “budget impasse,” a bureaucratic standoff. But we would call it something else: a moral test. When a society allows the most vulnerable to go hungry, it violates the covenant that binds human beings together. The first responsibility of a community is to make sure people can eat.

If the shutdown continues past November 1, at least half of all states — including New Jersey — have warned that SNAP benefits will stop. This would leave more than 800,000 New Jersey residents without food assistance, forcing families to make impossible choices between paying rent, filling prescriptions, or putting food on the table.

As Abraham showed, faith begins with action. There is a small but important step we can take right now. Please sign the [petition](#) urging our members of Congress to protect SNAP and ensure that benefits continue without interruption during the federal shutdown.

This is how we honor our covenant: by translating compassion into deeds.

If the Torah teaches anything, it is that holiness is found not in the heavens but at the dinner table, in the marketplace, in the way a society treats the poor. This Shabbat I want you to consider that the true measure of faith is not what we believe, but whom we feed.

May this Shabbat remind us that our covenant begins with compassion and that faith is measured right now by the food we help place on another’s table.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Arthur D. Weiner