Opening Remarks - October 7th Community Memorial
Rabbi Dan Moskovitz
Temple Sholom - Vancouver BC Canada
October 5, 2025

Good evening, I am Rabbi Dan Moskovitz, the Senior Rabbi of Temple Sholom, and I want to welcome you to this sad but sacred gathering of friends, and allies.

During our ceremony this evening members of the Rabbinical Association of Vancouver, our Cantors and leaders and volunteers in our community will be coming forward to share prayers, songs, memories and reflections on the events of October 7, 2023, and how many of them were personally impacted by the horrors of that day and the war that has followed. I thank them for their courage and presence to participate and share this evening. We are sadly blessed to have so many in our community for whom October 7th is tragically and heartbreakingly personal.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks once wrote that “History is about facts; memory is about identity.”

History tells us what happened — the dates, the numbers, the sequence of events.
But memory tells us who we are.

Tonight, as we gather to mark two years since October 7, we are not here simply to remember what happened that day. We are here to remember who we are — as Jews, as a people bound by covenant and compassion, as witnesses who refuse to let the lives lost become statistics.

History belongs to the past, but memory is alive; it shapes our future.
Memory insists that the victims are not just part of history, but part of us — their stories live in our hearts, in our prayers, in the way we walk through the world.

Judaism is a religion of memory. The command zakhor — remember — echoes more than 160 times in the Torah. We remember slavery, we remember deliverance, we remember Amalek, we remember Sinai.

Tonight, we add another zakhor to our people's chain of memory.
We remember October 7.
We remember the terror and the tears, the courage and the faith, the lives stolen and the lives forever changed.

And we do so not to remain trapped in grief, but to affirm life — to say that our story continues, that our people endure, that the light of memory will outlast the darkness of that day.

Joining us tonight are members of our provincial and civic leadership. I want to welcome and acknowledge

- David Eby, Premier and President of Executive Council
- John Rustad, MLA for Nechako Lakes and the Leader of the Official Opposition
- Heather Maahs, MLA for Chilliwack North and the Official Opposition Critic for Children and Family

Development – Indigenous Self-Government in Child and Family Services

- Sarah Kirby-Yung, Vancouver City Councillor
- Taleeb Noormohamed, Liberal MP - Vancouver Granville
- Cst. Kat Dauncey, attending on behalf of Chief Steve Rai

We thank you for your presence here this evening as friends, allies and leaders charged with protecting all Canadians and in this most dangerous and harrowing of moments Jewish Canadians.

To all of us elected officials, civic leaders and members of our community I want point out that there is a danger, maybe even a proclivity to emphasize the horrors and traumas that have befallen the Jewish people throughout history.

The author Dara Horn wrote a book with the provocative but not inaccurate title “People Love Dead Jews” and we often only hear about our community in the context of the

Holocaust or memorials like these, memorials that are becoming to common place.
But as Rabbi Sacks reminds us, we are not defined by our most tragic events in history. We are defined by the covenant that binds us — by the moral imagination that refuses to let cruelty have the last word. We are the people who turn mourning into mitzvah, grief into generosity, suffering into solidarity.
The story of the Jewish people is not the story of what others have done to us. It is the story of what we have done in response.

Every generation has faced its Pharaoh, its Haman, its Amalek, and yes for more than 75 years Israel has faced the constant threat of annihilation — and yet, every generation has also rebuilt, replanted, rejoiced, and renewed.

When others sought to erase us, we wrote books, built communities, and sang new songs.

When the world tried to make us afraid, we chose to raise children who are proud to be Jewish, who carry memory not as a burden, but as a light.

And so tonight, as we remember October 7, we do so not only with tears, but with resolve — to build, to comfort, to protect, and to live as Jews unafraid.

May the memory of those we lost be a blessing — not only because we say it, but because we make it so: by living lives of meaning, courage, and compassion.
May our remembrance be active — a commitment to the future, a defiance of despair, and a sacred promise that Am Yisrael Chai — the people of Israel lives.