



Beth Shalom Weekly Update

Thursday, November 18, 2021 to Wednesday, November 24, 2021

Hazzan Lance H. Tapper Shabbat Parashat Vayishlach

Shabbat Service—Friday, November 19, 7:30 p.m.

SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday Evening 7:30 pm

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

The Beth Shalom office will now be open on Wednesdays and Fridays. Erica will work from home on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our office phone and email will continue to be attended to Tuesdays through Fridays.

9:00a-4:00p Tuesday-Friday
562.941.8744

bswoffice@verizon.net

Yahrzeit

Myra Becker
in memory of grandmother
Bella Bell

Jay Devore
in memory of mother
Edna Devore

If you know of someone who is ill, had surgery, or just needs a call now and then, please let us know so we can reach out. Thank you.

Happy Birthday

Samuel Gonzales—Nov. 24

Clergy Schedule

Virtual Services: www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier

*Services and events are once again open to in person attendance with proof of vaccination and a mask. Services will continue to broadcast on Facebook simultaneously for those who cannot attend in person.

November 19-- 7:25 pm Prelude; 7:30 pm Service Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

November 29-- 7:25 pm Prelude; 7:30 pm Service Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

December 3-- Shabbat Hanukkah 7:25 pm Prelude; 7:30 pm Service Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

December 10-- 7:25 pm Prelude; 7:30 pm Service Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

Shabbat Hanukkah Celebration

A Gala Dinner and Service

Friday, December 3

Dinner 6:00 p.m., Prelude: 7:25 p.m., Service 7:30 p.m.

*See flyer on page 4.

Name your Blessing

Torah Reading: Genesis 32:4 - 36:43

**Haftarah Reading: Obadiah 1:1 - 21
Parashat Vayishlach**

By: Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, posted on November 10, 2011

There is a remarkable scene in this week's Torah portion that calls our attention. Alone in the dark, anticipating a reunion with his brother after a multi-decade rift, Jacob spends the night wrestling with another man, stopping only as dawn was breaking. Who exactly he is wrestling with - a man, an angel, himself - is understood in unique ways by different commentators. Regardless of who it is, however, at the end of this long night of wrestling, Jacob tells him: "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So, what happens next?

He [the man] said 'What is your name?' He said, 'Jacob.' He said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob rather Israel, for you have struggled with God and with man and you have been victorious.' Jacob asked, and said, 'Please tell me your name.' He said, 'Why are you asking for my name?' And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the place Pniel [God's face], 'for I have seen God face to face and my soul was saved.' The sun rose as he left Pniel. And he was limping because of his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel do not eat the hip tendon until this very day, for Jacob's thigh joint was afflicted at the hip tendon. [Genesis 32:25-32]

Though the text eventually tells us that he blessed Jacob, what he says doesn't sound like a blessing at all. It is not clear that he is invoking God's favor or expressing a hope, a dream, a desire, the things we are used to associating with blessings. He doesn't make articulate a request for what he wishes for Jacob, or a prayer that Jacob aspire to become something.

Beth Shalom Services: We are now open for in person services. Vaccinated people with proof may attend in person. Masks are required in accordance with the current LA County Public Health Dept. guidelines. All others may watch on our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**. When there is a livestream taking place, you can click on it and watch. If you are not yet comfortable coming to services in person, please tune in virtually and feel free to leave a message of greeting to others who are watching.

Directions for viewing livestream services: If you are a current Facebook subscriber, you need only to go to our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**, to view these announcements and videos. If you are not a current Facebook subscriber, you need to go to www.facebook.com and sign up with a username and password and then you can access our page at that point. Always log in 5 minutes ahead of the video start time.

ROSE HILLS CEMETERY PLOTS
If you want to do your family the mitzvah of pre-planning, please call the office. They can give you information as to what gravesites are available and what steps to take to secure your plot(s). Plots are \$3500 each.

Book Club: We are meeting on Tues, December 7th at 1:00 p.m., at Michelle's home. (Note time change). No book selected. Everyone has been asked to suggest 3 or 4 possible future reads. We will then discuss and vote on our preferences. The meeting will be in-person and virtual, with all in-person attendees being vaccinated. The Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys Jewish Book Festival started October 26th and will run through November. This year's Book Festival will be virtual so everyone can attend, BUT you need to register so that you will receive the Zoom information to attend the events. Register and check out the Books & Authors at www.jewishsgvp.org.

Tribute Cards: To send a Tribute Card, please contact Michelle Hess. Her e-mail is: michelleh3532@gmail.com

PayPal Donations: Paypal donations welcome: bswoffice@verizon.net

Rather, in saying 'your name shall be...', his words read more as a statement of reality as if to say 'this is how things will be...': Yet, the text tells us 'he blessed him there' and through that Jacob is able to see the place as God's face.

As I re-read the parashah this year and look at the comments of Rashi, I think the real blessing comes in one word, and in a word from Jacob himself. Jacob asks for a blessing, the man asks his name. And, Jacob tells him I am 'Jacob'.

The last time Jacob sought a blessing, the blessing of birthright, he used trickery by answering falsely to his own father whose vision was dimmed by blindness. When Isaac asked him who he was then, he lied. Moreover, after that episode, he worries with Rebecca that he will get caught. He doesn't worry that he did something wrong, he worries that he might have to answer for it. But, this was not the only occasion on which Jacob uses underhanded means in his attempts to get what he wants. When he departs from his father-in-law, Laban, he tricks Laban into giving him the choicest parts of the flock. He even tries to use underhanded measures to tip God's hand, when, in an earlier narrative, he pledges his allegiance only so long as God provides for him.

So, after years of wandering and years of fighting with his brother, Jacob is about to see Esau again. Like anyone who comes face to face with their past, he faces a moment of truth. Will he stay the course he has followed, continuing his pattern of self-destructive, entitled trickery? Or, will he look at himself, see his past, and realize that he has power over his own transformation by admitting his actions, participating in self-reflection and changing his pattern of behavior to forge a new path of truth into the future?

But, it is not simply a question of mindset. For Jacob, it is truly a question of his name. The name Jacob comes from the Hebrew root meaning heel or supplanting. So, as the commentator Rashi teaches us in telling Jacob that his name will no longer be Israel, he is acknowledging that Jacob will no longer be known as the one who gets what he wants by supplanting, tricking or deceiving others. And, unlike in the earlier encounters when Jacob was unable to receive the blessings as they were meant to be, here he will achieve his blessings through nobility and openness, through truth: truth about himself and about God. From this, as the Torah tells us, his soul is saved, and he is ultimately changed as marked by the limp he carries with him from that night.

Each of us is b'nei Israel - a child of Israel. And, as we enter this Shabbat, may we remember that this too is our legacy. Like our forbearer Jacob, we face moments in our lives that our own moments of truth, moments when also have to decide whether we will continue to live defined by who we have been and the limits of our past behavior, OR if we will move forward to receive the blessing in saying our own names in openness, recognizing our own mistakes, and confronting our past with a willingness to grow. So, may we have someone who will bless us to become Israel.

Shabbat shalom!

Memorial Plaques: We have brought all of the memorial plaques into our office, from the storage unit. If you would like a family member's plaque, please contact the office and let us know the name on the plaque. We will find it and arrange for you to pick it up. If you know of anyone who might have had loved one's plaques on our memorial board, please let them know that they are available to be picked up.

Beth Shalom of Whittier Shabbat Hanukkah Service

Friday, December 3, 2021

Prelude 7:25 p.m.

7:30 p.m. Shabbat Hanukkah Service with Hanukkiah Lighting

All are welcome to attend with proof of vaccination

First Friends

13205 Philadelphia Street, Whittier 90601

Officiants:

Hazzan Lance H Tapper, Spiritual Leader

Ty Woodward, Organist