



Beth Shalom Weekly Update

Thursday, December 7, 2023 to Wednesday, December 13, 2023
Hazzan Lance H. Tapper, Hon DMus Shabbat Parashat Vayishlach

Shabbat Hanukkah Service - December 8, 2023 - 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

YAHREZIT

Hope Greenwood
in memory of father
Isaac Leiboff

Rita Rubin
in memory of sister
Gail Goodstein

Steve Baptista
in memory of mother
Dorothy Baptista

Myra Becker
in memory of uncle
Lou Binke

Arlene Norton
in memory of brother
Arnold Winett

Shabbat Hanukkah Dinner

This Friday:
December 8th.

Must have made a reservation to attend.

Please note: during these troubled times, in person services and events will only be open to members, former members and anyone who is known to our Board of Directors. We will continue to have security guards on the premises and reserve the right to inspect any bags or purses. Please do not bring backpacks or anything of that type with you to services. If you do, you will be asked to leave them in your car.

Clergy Schedule

Virtual Services: www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier

*Services and events are once again open to in person. Services will continue to broadcast on Facebook simultaneously for those who cannot attend in person.

December 8--Shabbat Hanukkah--6:00 pm--Shabbat Hanukkah dinner in fellowship Hall (by reservation only!); Sanctuary--7:25 pm--Hanukkah Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward
December 15-- 7:25 pm Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward
December 22-- 7:25 pm Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward
December 29--7:30 pm Service--Rabbi Kenneth Milhandler
January 5--7:30 pm Service--Rabbi Kenneth Milhandler

The Lights of Hanukkah

Hanukkah

By Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, posted on November 29, 2021

Each December, the blood pressure of the Jews of America rises.

Once a year, we feel like outsiders in our own country – bombarded by songs announcing the birth of the “king of Israel,” watching the seasonal eruption of good cheer and kindness (soon forgotten in the drunkenness of New Years,) returning home to unlit, treeless houses amidst the stirring color, smells, and lights of Christmas.

December can be a depressing time to be Jewish.

Yet December also provides evidence for the uncanny sense of the Jewish People to institute whatever it takes to survive as a people, whatever it takes to keep our faith and our heritage strong.

December, you see, witnesses the American/Jewish invention of mega-Hanukkah.

In the Talmudic period, Hanukkah was a minor festival, celebrating the liberation of Israel and the Temple from foreign domination, the restoration of sacred worship in place of pagan desecration, and the ensuing political autonomy of the Maccabees and the Jewish people.

Beth Shalom Services: We are now open for in person services. If you are not yet comfortable coming to services in person, please tune in virtually by visiting our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**. When there is a livestream taking place, you can click on it and watch.

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.

Book Club: Our next book will be “The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store” by James McBride on Monday, December 11th, at 12:30 pm. If you haven’t read “The Color of Water” by James McBride, you might like to learn more about James McBride. “The Color of Water” is his memoir and his first book. We are continuing to meet on Zoom. Everyone is welcome to join in our discussion. If you have any questions, please call either Michelle or Myra. Happy Reading Everyone.

Simcha Sharing Let the office know of your good news and we will share it in the next weekly. Weddings ★ Births

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

Happy Birthday

David Starkman—December 11

Happy Anniversary

Alita & Jim Sevin
December 7 - 38 Years

From the time of the Maccabees (around 160 B.C.E.) until our century, Hanukkah was celebrated simply – one menorah, a few coins for the kids, and oily foods (like latkes) to remember the miracle of the oil that burned for seven days. Lighting the candles was the talmudically-instituted mitzvah that defined the celebration: the Rabbis instructed each household to *pirsum ha-nes* (proclaim the miracle) by placing their hannukiyot – their Hanukkah menorahs – in the window so its light would shine out to the world.

But our century provided a unique challenge to American Jews. Surrounded by a welcoming yet imperial culture – one which accepted anyone who would take on its ways – Christmas became a major threat to Jewish peace of mind and survival.

How did the Jews respond?

Some reacted by melting in – by putting up “Hanukkah bushes” (can you imagine how offensive that must seem to pious Christians?!) Most Jews, however, reacted by feeling uncomfortable with the season and with their Jewishness.

Some reacted by putting up festive blue and white lights on their roof, their windows, and around their homes. They purchased electric menorahs to shine through their windows, while some even built Maccabee statues for the front lawns.

Rather than passing a few small coins to the kids, they began giving significant gifts – not just once, but on every day of the holiday.

While we may not all share this aesthetic style, there is something wonderful about its zest and brazenness – a refusal to be an outcast, to feel ashamed in their own country. There is something stirring in seeing a Jewish family that responds to feeling threatened not by diminishing their Jewish celebration but **increasing** it.

The rabbis of the Talmud established lighting the hanukiyot to proclaim the miracle for all to see. They used candles – the brightest lights of their age.

Who knows, if they lived in our time, they might have mandated big blue light bulbs on the roof and a giant Hannukiyah in every window.

There is nothing wrong with using the building blocks of our Jewish traditions to strengthen Jewish resolve and to defend Jewish living. Our people have always expressed their determination to thrive by utilizing whatever rituals or customs were at hand. We are witness to that same dynamic unfolding in our midst.

This year, let your lights shine!