



Beth Shalom Weekly Update

Thursday, July 8, 2021 to Wednesday, July 14, 2021
Hazzan Lance H. Tapper Shabbat Parashat Matot-Masei

Shabbat Service—Friday, July 9, 7:30 p.m.

SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday Evening 7:30 pm

SYNAGOGUE OFFICE HOURS

While the Beth Shalom office will be closed during the Covid 19 Shut Down, our office phone and email will continue to be attended to during regular working hours:

9:00a-4:00p Tue-Fri.
562.941.8744
bswoffice@verizon.net

Yahrzeit

Maxine Berkowitz
in memory of father
Fred Blankstein

Susan Lieberman
in memory of father
Nat Arnold

Michelle Hess
in memory of aunt
Dora Sandler

Miriam Brookfield
in memory of brother-in-law
Werner Brookfield

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.

Clergy Schedule

Virtual Services: www.facebook.com/bethshalomofwhittier

July 9--7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson

July 16--7:25 pm prelude; 7:30 pm service Rabbi Kenneth Milhander

July 23--7:25 pm prelude; 7:30 pm service Rabbi Kenneth Milhander

July 30--7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson

August 6--7:25 pm organ prelude; 7:30 pm service

Hazzan Lance and Mark Peterson

Save the Date

Beth Shalom of Whittier Shabbat Reopening!

Shabbat Dinner & Service ★ August 13th.

See attached flyer - page 3.

As with all of our in-person events at this time, proof of vaccination will be required to be shown at the door.

Day Before You Die

Torah Reading: Numbers 30:2 - 36:13

Haftarah Reading: Jeremiah 2:4 - 28, 3:4

Parashat Matot-Massei

By: Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, posted on July 31, 2019/5779

In the first of this week's double portion, Matot-Mas'ey one verse catches my attention: "*Avenge the Israelite people on the Midianites after which you will be gathered to your kin.*" ([Numbers 31:2](#)) Once Moses completes this task, he will die.

Given where this appears in the narrative, it doesn't seem so unusual. As we approach the end of the Book of Numbers, our ancestors are poised to enter the land of Israel. Knowing as we do that Moses will not enter the land, it is not surprising that we begin hearing about his death. At the same time, it is a bit curious that in the next verse, Moses takes immediate steps to rally the troops from all twelve tribes to fulfill the Divine command to seek vengeance against Midian, working on what is to be his last task.

According to the rabbinic commentary, *Sifre*, Moses did understand that once he completed this final act, his life would indeed end. Wouldn't it be natural to expect that he would hesitate and do whatever necessary to delay his death, even if just for a little while? In fact, in the words of Rabbi Yehuda: "Had Moses desired, he could have lived many more years, for the Holy One blessed be He told him 'avenge' and 'afterward you shall be gathered.'" (Midrash Rabbah 22:2) In other words, maybe he could have staved off death? Yet, with no hesitation and with what appears to be eager participation, he jumps into the task, beckoning members of the tribes.

Beth Shalom Services: Because of COVID-19, we continue to livestream our Shabbat and Festival services on our Facebook page, **Beth Shalom of Whittier**. When there is a livestream taking place, you can click on it and watch. We encourage everyone to continue to tune in each week and take part in our services virtually and leave messages of greeting to other who are watching. This is one way we can all stay in touch.

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 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: Our next meeting is Wednesday, July 14th at 12:30pm. We will be reading "Concealed" by Esther Amini, another CSP presentation author.

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

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

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

Happy Birthday

Hope Greenwood—July 9

Lila Held—July 10

Happy Anniversary

-0-

Some want us to think that this is proof that Moses understood his role as a public leader and put national welfare over his own such that he understood his own death was important for ongoing communal continuity. In other words, had he delayed his own demise, it would have caused the Children of Israel to linger in the desert even longer. Consequently, he takes off on his final mission, knowing that it means his death would be imminent.

As I read this verse today, I am reminded of another essential lesson. Even as we live our life, fulfilling our life's work and divine mission, consciousness of (and even discussion of) death need not be taboo. For many talking about death holds superstition that the very mention will make it happen. Yet, the one thing of which we can all be assured is that our end will come and no one of us is immortal. In the words of Socrates "To fear death... is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know. No one knows whether death may not be the greatest of all blessings for a man, yet men fear it as if they knew that it is the greatest of evils."

It is true – we don't know what happens when we die. After all, no one has ever come back to tell us of the experience. And, we want as much time on this earth with our loved ones as we can possibly get. Certainly, our tradition teaches us *u'vecharta b'chaim* - in the face of life and death, choose life. But, the many stories we have of people who know they are dying spending their last days sharing their wishes, planning their own memorial, saying final goodbyes, coming to peace with their demise, and drawing together family and friends remind us that there can be intrinsic holiness in dying and we are the agents in experiencing that holiness for others and for ourselves.

Contrast, if you will, this type of experience of loss to one that is more unexpected after an accident or unanticipated illness. In addition to the trauma and confusion of the unexpected, decisions that have to be made and many feel cheated by not having had an opportunity to say goodbye, to express love, and/or to know what the loved one wanted in the final chapter.

The second century apocryphal writer, Ben Sira, reminds us of the fact that "we are all destined to die. We share it with all who have ever lived and all who will ever be." We have no control over when it will come, or how it will come, but we do have the choice of whether we will have found ways to address our own end with our loved ones. So, as I read this verse this year, I am reminded anew of the need for advance planning, stating our end of life wishes, having the important conversations of love and reconciliation that open us to another aspect of holiness even as we continue to participate with joy and gusto in fulfilling our divine mission. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom



BETH SHALOM OF WHITTIER
SHABBAT REOPENING!

AUGUST 13, 2021

THIS WILL BE OUR FIRST SHABBAT IN PERSON WHERE ALL WHO COME WITH PROOF OF VACCINATION MAY ATTEND

First Friends
13205 Philadelphia St, Whittier, CA 90601

FELLOWSHIP HALL

6:00 PM—WELCOME BACK KOSHER SHABBAT DINNER

NO COST, BUT RESERVATIONS ARE MANDATORY BY **AUGUST 3, 2021
IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE AT **562-941-8744****

MEETING HOUSE

7:25 PM—PRELUDE

7:30 PM –SHABBAT SERVICE

**PRELUDE AND SERVICE WILL BE SIMULTANEOUSLY BROADCAST
ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE: **BETH SHALOM OF WHITTIER****

OFFICIANTS:

Hazzan Lance H Tapper, Spiritual Leader
Mark Peterson, Organist