



Beth Shalom Weekly Update

Thursday, January 19, 2023 to Wednesday, January 25, 2023
Hazzan Lance H. Tapper, Hon DMus Shabbat Parashat Vaera

Shabbat Service January 20, 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

Sidney Paul
in memory of
Bertha Paul, step-mother
Evelyn Resnick, sister

Christel Mergruen
in memory of husband
Siegbert Mergruen

Susan Lieberman
in memory of grandfather
Samuel Rubins

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!

Susan Lieberman
January 19

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.

January 20--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

January 27--7:30 Service--Rabbi Kenneth Milhander

February 3--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

February 10--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Aryell Cohen

February 17--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

February 17--7:25 pm--Prelude; 7:30 pm Service--Hazzan Lance and Ty Woodward

Gratitude in Good Times and Bad

Torah Reading: Exodus 6:2 - 9:35
Haftarah Reading: Isaiah 66:1 - 24, 23
Torah Portion: Vaera

By Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, posted on January 27, 2007

One of the blindnesses of human nature is our recurrent ingratitude and our appalling lack of memory. Saying please always comes more readily than stopping to say thank you. Somehow, acknowledging assistance never seems as urgent after we've already gotten the help we wanted in the first place.

We seem capable of recalling our dependence on others only during moments of weakness (which we insist are transitory and brief), but during periods of health, prosperity, or abundance we revert to the mistaken idea that somehow all of that abundance is purely the result of our own intelligence, ingenuity or strength.

What is true for human dependencies is all the more apparent in the realm of the sacred. There may be no atheists in foxholes, but once the victory celebration is seriously under way, its hard to find any God-fearers either.

We all have the need, it seems, to believe in our own invulnerability. And since dependence on others is susceptibility toward those others, we deny it as quickly as we possibly can.

Similarly, in moments of illness, poverty, or terror, we readily pour our hearts out to God. But after the crisis has passed, after the cure has taken hold, how many of us remember the urgent promises we made to God? How many of us live up to the implications of our own deliverance?

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Save the Date

Lunch & Learn

Saturday, February 25th.

See flyer on page 2.

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: On Tuesday, March 21st the Book Club will be reading "Remarkably Bright Creatures: A Novel" by Shelby Van Pelt. We are continuing to meet on Zoom. Anyone is welcome to join us.

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

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

Apparently, what is true of today's people was no less true in ages past. The human heart has not changed, only the means of our own self-deception.

Today's Torah portion addresses that ingratitude, looking at the example of Pharaoh, as he is confronted by Moses and the insistence that the Israelite slaves go free.

Unwilling to accept the liberation that Moses demands, Pharaoh determines to keep the Jews as his slaves. As a way of educating him beyond his stubbornness, God begins the series of plagues which will culminate with the death of the Egyptian firstborn males.

The first few plagues leave Pharaoh unmoved. But then God sends a rain and hail so powerful that crops are leveled and those upon whom it falls are killed. The Torah recounts that this was "a very heavy hail, such as has never been found in Egypt from the day it was founded until now."

Terrified by the devastation it produced, Pharaoh summons Moses and Aaron and admits his guilt before God. He then asks Moses to intercede on his behalf, to persuade God to stop the storms. As soon as he leaves the palace Moses does so, and the rains immediately cease.

And Pharaoh, what of his terror-induced piety? What of his newfound insight?

The Torah relates the sad truth of human nature: "When Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he became stubborn and reverted to his guilty ways, as did his courtiers."

There is a little Pharaoh in each of us. As the rabbis of Sh'mot Rabbah observed: "So it always is with the wicked: As long as they are in trouble, they humble themselves. But as soon as the trouble passes, back they return to their perversity."

Independence is an illusion. Each of us is dependent on countless others: the many who preceded us and who paved the way for us; our parents and grandparents, who nurtured and raised us; our siblings and friends; our teachers and peers; our community and our faith, our nation. Every day, we depend on people we don't know to provide us with the necessities to live and function in the world.

And beyond our human dependencies remains our total dependence on the Holy Blessing One, Who bestows health, sustenance, and shelter, Who makes the world a habitable place.

In the midst of our busy lives, our dependence on others and on God may not be big news. But can we remember to say thank you after the busy day ends?

Shabbat Shalom!



LUNCH & LEARN

Beth Shalom Lunch & Learn

with Hazzan Lance H Tapper, Hon DMus

*Rebeca Orantes will talk about her Kulanu Guatemala Community.
There will be a question and answer period afterwards.*

Saturday, February 25, 2023
12:00-2:00 p.m.

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall at First Friends.
Lunch will be served.

RSVP to the Temple office by February 17th.