

JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

February 16, 2022

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Brittany Bither

Last Sunday (2/13), Last Sunday we broke into small groups and discussed 1 Corinthians 15:12-26,35-57.

This Sunday (2/20), We will be having a pulpit exchange with First Mennonite. Craig will preach there while Monica Miller will be here preaching from Esther 4:11-5:1 with a title of "Who knows?: Glass Ceilings and Genocide,"

Next Sunday (2/27), Brian will be preaching from Exodus 34:29-35 & 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 about the way in which God transforms us as we look upon Christ.

As the church looks towards reopening for in person services, it is a great opportunity to consider serving in new ways. We will be sending out a formal survey in the months to come. However, a more urgent need is to plan for the music in our services. Do you sing or play an instrument and would like to help with worship singing or worship ensemble on Sunday mornings? We are considering some alternative ways of providing this part of our worship service and would love old and new involvement! If you might be interested, please send an email to Brittany Bither at brittany.n.bither@gmail.com, letting her know how you might be willing to participate and how often you see yourself helping.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

CALENDAR

Sunday, February 20

--- 9:30a - Sunday School: "Group discussion of our thoughts, beliefs, and experiences" led by Carol Bither and OlaJowon Turentine

--- 10:30a - *Pulpit Swap with First Mennonite*. Shalom will have the opportunity to hear a sermon from First Mennonite's new pastor, Monica Miller, while Craig Oury preaches at First Mennonite. The worship service will be on Zoom.

Sunday, February 27

--- 9:30a - Sunday School: "Goal-setting: What might our next steps be?" led by Carol Bither and OlaJowon Turentine

--- 10:30a - *Communion Sunday*. During our Zoom worship service, we will be offering virtual communion. We invite you to bring your own bread (or other food) and juice (or other drink) so that you can participate in communion from home during the service.

Wednesday, March 2 (Ash Wednesday)

--- 7pm - Joint Ash Wednesday service with First Mennonite **in-person at Shalom** (Note: This may be converted into a virtual service if VAT decides that it is not safe to meet)

Sunday, March 6 (First Sunday of Lent)

--- **This will be our first Sunday back at for in-person church services. Please note that the Worship Services will go back to starting at 9:30a, with Sunday school resuming at 11a.**

--- 9:30a - Worship service **in-person at Shalom** with a streaming option available for those who want to participate from home (Note: This previous JT incorrectly stated it would be at 10:30a, but it will actually begin at 9:30a)

--- 11a/after church - Congregational meeting to give feedback to our delegate about the resolutions under consideration at the Special Assembly meeting

Celebrations

Mon, Feb 21 -- Barbara Abebe

Tue, Feb 22 -- Brenda Smith

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships

Chair: Martha Yoder

Children's Sunday School will begin on March 13. Classes offered will be Pre-K for age 3-5, K-3rd grade (can include 5 year olds that are in Kindergarten), and combined JYF/MYF.

We continue to seek one more co-teacher. Please reach out to Laura if you can be part of our teaching team. harms.laura@gmail.com

During our Sunday school session on Feb. 13, someone asked about Mennonite Central Committee and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and their policies as regards inclusion of LGBTQ persons. I was not able to find any mention of LGBTQ inclusion on MCC's website. Here's the link to the AMBS page on diversity and inclusion: <https://www.ambs.edu/diversity/>

Since Shalom's conversation on the history of LGBTQIA issues several weeks ago, I have made some more revisions of the summary I made available. It is attached for anyone to read or print. Brad Yoder

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Zenebe Abebe

Natasha Diener is moving to a new area of Mexico. See her attached update letter for more information.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

Chair: Joyce Troyer

The Sunday school class on Spiritual Gifts Discernment will begin on March 13. If you have interest in discerning your spiritual gifts prior to then, or if you prefer a format other than a group class, please contact Joyce Troyer at troyers_hj@hotmail.com.

Vision and Accountability Team

Chair: Cheryl Martin

VAT met on February 15, 2022 to discuss the meeting planned for March 6 during the Sunday school hour. Beginning on March 6, worship will begin at 9:30 am like before Covid and Sunday school will follow. The meeting will be to address the 4 resolutions coming before the MC USA special session in May of this year. During the meeting, there will be time to share your insights and concerns about each of the resolutions. There will also be a way provided to send these insights and concerns prior to the meeting anonymously. There will be a Google form which you can fill out and send, you can write out your thoughts and send them to the church, or you can write your thoughts and bring them to the meeting where they will be collected and read anonymously. Additionally, a link will be available for each of the 4 resolutions so you can read them. Please watch for the links to the Google form and resolutions in the Journeying next week

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vacation

Pastor Craig will be on vacation from February 21-28. Please contact Pastor Brian if you have any concerns

during that time at Brian@shalommennote.com

Also Mike Wigginton will be compiling Journey Together for February 23 send him any newsletter info for next week at mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net

The Repentance Resolution : As mentioned at church this past Sunday, our church belongs to a larger church network called the Mennonite Church USA, and this May, MCUSA's delegate body is going to discuss a resolution called "A Resolution for Repentance and Transformation" (linked [here](#)) and decide whether to vote on it at that meeting. (CORRECTION: An earlier version of this announcement said that the Resolution would come to a vote at the July 2023 Mennonite Convention. While that is a possibility, there is also a chance that the Delegate Assembly will put it in effect by the end of May. ~ Brian)

This resolution asks the church to repent for its past mistreatment of LGBTQ+ individuals, calling on us to abolish church policy that prohibits LGBTQ+ exclusion, and demanding LGBTQ+ representation on all future boards and programs sponsored by MCUSA.

Newest Update: In addition to the Repentance Resolution, a second resolution has been proposed called, "Clarification on Mennonite USA Polity and the Role of Membership Guidelines in MCUSA" (linked [here](#)) This resolution also calls on the church to abolish the Membership Guidelines which forbid the blessing of same-sex relationships, but it does not take a position on repentance and LGBTQ+ representation like the Repentance Resolution does. In addition to these, an "[MCUSA for Justice](#)" resolution and an "[MCUSA Accessibility](#)" resolution will be considered.

MCUSA is recording a series of Zoom sessions to prepare delegates for the upcoming special delegate assembly. Anyone is welcome to view the recorded sessions. You can also read the materials for the special session on the MCUSA website.

It was clarified that passed Resolutions are not binding on conferences, congregations or individuals in MCUSA. The Resolutions are invitational to conferences and congregations. They are only binding on the Executive Board and Staff. The work of the Executive Board and Staff is directed by the Resolutions. For those interested in further study, the Mennonite Church is offering webinars relating to each of these resolutions. Information can be found on www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/delegate-resources-special-session-may-2022/

Church Women United hold services throughout the world on the first Friday in March for the World Day of Prayer. Details for participating in Indianapolis will be included in next week's Journeying newsletter.

First Friends

Nancy Scott of First Friends reports that the Afghan family they co-sponsored is settling in well in California. First Friends made contact with a Quaker meeting in that area and they have been helping with immediate needs like blankets, cookware, crayons, and cleaning supplies. The family has connected with local agencies as well as with other Afghans in the area. The children are in a school that is accustomed to helping English language learners. First Friends is preparing to co-sponsor another family in the Indianapolis area. They thank us for our support.

In addition to our podcast, Shalom has a **YouTube channel**, and many of our Zoom Sessions including the sermons in the "Story of the Bible" sermon series and the "Facing Hard Questions" sessions - can be found there. This is an easy way to share the good news with church members past and present, visitors and newcomers, and even outsiders. Check it out at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEn30AED17Q_ReoskuxUXA!

Video recordings (MP4) of our Zoom worship services are available online. A link to the worship service recordings is on the Member's page of our website.

Sam Bixler manages our church directory, email address list, and telephone numbers. You can email changes or additions to the office at office@shalommennonite.com or bixlersc@gmail.com.

Craig Oury now compiles *Journeying Together* each week. You can continue to send information to

office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday. Craig is managing our Zoom calendar, church calendar, and uploads minutes on the church website. If you need to schedule a meeting using the church zoom account or have minutes to upload, you can email the office at office@shalommennonite.com or craig@shalommennonite.com.

REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

God Will Not Fail You

“God is not a human being, that he should lie, or a mortal, that he should change his mind. Has he promised, and will he not do it? Has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” – Numbers 26:19

Humans lie. Humans change their mind. Humans make promises and fail to keep them. We all know this, but this knowledge doesn't make human betrayals hurt any less. When we discover that a leader whom we had respected committed some awful offense, it causes us to question the things that we admired in them – and that is a deeply unsettling feeling. When our friends don't support us at the times when we need them the most, that makes us question our own worth and value as a human being. And when those closest to us lie to us or really hurt us, that makes us question whether love is even possible or trust is ever worthwhile. And often times, these feelings extend to God as well. “After all,” we may ask, “didn't God allow those betrayals to happen?” Or perhaps, “What good has doing things God's way ever done for us anyway?”

While it is true that every human in our lives will probably disappoint us at some point, the same does not apply to God. We may not always *like* or *understand* what God does and doesn't do. But God doesn't do anything out of neglect, forgetfulness, or flippancy. On the contrary, God is always looking out for us, providing a way for us to heal and grow even when the people around us let us down. In fact, this Bible verse makes that very point. It was uttered by Balaam, a pagan prophet who was hired specifically to curse God's people. However, even though Balaam's intentions were to harm God's people, God worked it out for their good. In the same way, we may be genuinely and appropriately angry at people for letting us down, but God may very well be using their failures to do something good for us

Even “if we are faithless, [God] remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.” (2 Timothy 2:13). When we feel betrayed and we want to give up on trust altogether, let us instead look to the only One who is completely trustworthy and put our hope and future in His hands. ~ Brian

Journeying Together is a weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church: 6100 E 32nd St, 46226; (317) 549-0577 shalommennonite.com

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