

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

December 30, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (12/27), we joined the angels and shepherds in celebrating the birth of the Messiah! After having spent so much time waiting and hoping for this to happen, on Sunday, our challenge will be to accept the message that salvation is here today.

This Sunday (1/3), J.E. Misz - a poet, licensed therapist, and converted Mennonite - will be speaking on the theme of blessings. (J.E. was Brian's roommate at Duke Divinity School and quite was influential in his own journey to the Mennonite Church.)

Next Sunday (1/10). CoraLyn Turentine will bring the message.

As of Friday, January 1, 2021, Grace Rhine will be the chair of Worship Commission.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar (*All events are Zoom meetings*)

Sunday, January 3

No Sunday School

10:30 am – Worship Service

No Facing Hard Questions

Sunday, January 10

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: How historically reliable are the gospels?

Sunday, January 17

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

Sunday, January 24

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: Topic to be announced

Celebrations

(Sun, Dec 27 – Bob Love)

Thu, Dec 31 - Remembering Tim Bixler

Fri, Jan 1 – CoraLyn Turentine

Sun, Jan 3 – Marcela Rosales Harms

Tue, Jan 5 – Zenebe Abebe

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships

Chair: Martha Yoder

Beginning on January 10, Tim and Emily Ludden will be leading a Sunday school class on the book The Bible Unwrapped by Meghan Larissa Good. If you are able to obtain a copy of the book before the first session, please read the Foreword and Introduction. Even if you aren't able to read ahead of time, please come prepared to discuss your personal understanding of and experiences with the Bible. A more detailed reading schedule will be sent out soon.

"Story of the Bible" Assigned Reading

We are taking a break from our normal daily reading assignments, but I am offering these supplemental readings from the Apocrypha for those who want to learn more about the historical context behind the Bible's story. To read from the Apocrypha for free, go to biblegateway.com and look up these references in the NRSV version.

Monday – 4 Maccabees 8-9, Sirach 36-37

Tuesday – 4 Maccabees 10-11, Sirach 38-40

Wednesday – 4 Maccabees 12-13, Sirach 41-43

Thursday – 4 Maccabees 14-15, Sirach 44-45

Friday – 4 Maccabees 16-17, Sirach 46-48

Saturday – 4 Maccabees 18, Sirach 49-51

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Brad Yoder

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM (SGDT)

Chair: Joyce Troyer

VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (VAT)

Chair: Jeanne Smucker

ADMINISTRATION

Chair: Mike Wigginton

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- In addition to our podcast, Shalom now 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** of our Zoom worship services are located online with our normal worship service recordings. A link to this location is on the Member's page of our website.
- **Please note:**

- Mike Wigginton manages our Zoom calendar, church calendar, and uploads minutes on the church website. If you need to schedule a meeting using the church account or you have minutes for him to upload, you can email the office at office@shalommennonite.com or mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net.
- 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.
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

2020 in Hindsight

It almost goes without saying that 2020 was a difficult year for most of us. All of us were touched in one form or another by the COVID-19 pandemic; many of us have been troubled by the hurricanes, wars, and political crises happening all around the world; and some of us went through some extremely trying personal crises as well. Now that we have come to the end of the year, it's appropriate for us to reflect back on it. However, rather than focusing on all of the bad things that happened, I want to use this opportunity to consider some of the ways that our church responded to the crisis.

The year started off well enough. We gathered for worship, ate fellowship meals together, advocated for creation care, and even celebrated a wedding in the first few months of the year. But then we heard about the corona virus in March and made a last-minute decision to cancel church on 3/15, not knowing that we would not come to the Shalom building to worship again for the remainder of the year. This was a difficult time for many of us, as we all had to make fast adjustments to our plans as well as protect ourselves and each other from the virus. But the congregation really came together.

First, we created an ad hoc team of doctors and nurses who agreed to take on the responsibility of deciding when and how we can safely gather. From a leadership perspective, it was an incredible relief to have medical experts in charge of making those decisions for the church, and I want to thank Linda Kandel, Jeanne Smucker, and Martha Yoder Maust for all of the effort they have put into tracking the CDC data and studying best practices to keep us safe. As you know, we purchased a Zoom account a few weeks after the worship service started and the Administrative Commission got to work immediately on finding new ways to help us remain connected, from creating a podcast and YouTube page to offering an option for online giving to our website to learning how to do church over Zoom. I want to thank the Admin Commission members and technological volunteers who made that possible too. In response to the increased pastoral care needs and decreased availability of Brian during the pandemic, the VAT decided to temporarily adopt a new pastoral care model in which a deacon was assigned to each person. They, along with the Community Life Commission, have gone out of their way to make sure that no one in our church community has been neglected. And we didn't focus only ourselves either. There was a widespread agreement that we wanted to share as much of our resources as we could with others, and the Outreach Commission created a process by which we could recommend agencies to which we could give our excess funds from the year. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

This is not to say that the year has been easy or that we "overcame" all of the problems we faced. Some people haven't been able to attend Shalom since the shutdown began, our visitors and newcomers have not really had a natural opportunity to get to know the congregation, and many of us are still suffering - whether from COVID-related issues or not. But I have never been more convinced of the resilience and value of the church than I am now. While many news outlets were reporting on the toilet-paper hoarding and political controversies surrounding the pandemic, I saw a community of generous people come together in unity to be the hands and feet of Christ. Never have I valued

prayer more than I have this year in the times we've spent praying together. Never have I been more convinced that no matter how much technology and culture changes, the church will always be needed. This church has been a spiritual, emotional, financial, social, and even physical refuge for many people this year. Thank you for allowing the love of God to flow through you to the world.
~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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