

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

August 5, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God
Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (8/2), we completed our study of the Mosaic Law by studying the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy and understanding them to be Moses' impassioned plea for us to follow the way of God for our own good.

This Sunday (8/9), Wilma Bailey will preach on the book of Joshua, when the people of God finally entered the Promised Land but did so by force and violence.

Next Sunday (8/16), Brian will preach from the book of Joshua on the danger of using religion to promote our own personal and political agendas.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom
Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar (*All events are Zoom meetings*)

Sunday, August 9

9:30 am - No adult class is scheduled, but you are welcome to have an extended fellowship time. Bring your own coffee or breakfast and catch up with others or meet a new friend.

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm - Facing Hard Questions: Do Christians ever have a responsibility to disavow certain Biblical instructions - such as God's command to kill civilians in Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua?

Sunday, August 16

9:30am - Introduction to Indiana AID (Assistants to Immigrants in Detention), a new organization designed to support of undocumented immigrants

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

Sunday, August 23

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

1:30pm - Congregational vote on whether to adopt Memorandum of Understanding between Indiana AID and Shalom Mennonite Church

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: Did the human authors of the Bible have political biases and agendas? If so, should that impact the way we read the text?

Sunday, August 30

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

Celebrations

To help alleviate the isolation felt during the pandemic, we have decided to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in Journeying Together. If you do not want your birthday to be listed, email office@shalommennonite.com.

Tue, Aug 11 – OlaJowon Turentine

Tue, Aug 11 – Julie & Donald Sanders, 2012

The Community Life Commission is seeking ideas to help our community keep in touch and interacting in our time of this new normal of Zoom meetings. Here are the ways we are currently keeping in touch:

- * Zoom Church Meetings on Sunday
- * Zoom Sunday School Meetings
- * Zoom afternoon Bible Study, the Hard Questions
- * Phone Tree
- * Zoom small group meetings, At least one small group is occasionally meeting outside and socially distancing in person at the Church weather permitting.
- * Deacons are calling church members on a regular basis
- * At times the call goes out for small work days at the church for evasive plant removal and weeding
- * We do have a youtube page where our meetings can be located and listened to. Please invite family members and friends to go to this page to see what we are all about.
- * We do have a Facebook page that has some information on it but not much activity so far.
- * The Peace Churches have set up a social media site where you can stay in touch with social justice issues. That site is peacechurches.org/free
- * Extended families are keeping in touch
- * One person is sending an email of children's activities to those parents with kids.
- * Another person is sending out Sunday school lessons for the children to color and have the parents talk about with the children.
- * There is a church retreat on the church Calendar for Oct. 3rd. But we are unsure this will happen since we are not meeting in person at this time.

Are there other ways of meeting and or communicating that our church can start or expand on in this time of not meeting personally?

- * One idea would be to expand our Facebook use. This would require one or two Facebook moderators who could edit and keep track of and stop any misinformation that may be posted when an issue like racial justice would be discussed.
- * Are there others of us at Shalom wanting to meet via Zoom with a special interest or just to meet and talk? This could easily be arranged if there is interest since the church is paying for a Zoom account.
- * Perhaps Zoom book clubs, and or other sharing times when we just got on and talked to each other such as zoom sharing of stories, cooking, etc.

Are there other ways of staying in touch that you have thought of or you have heard other churches doing during this time. If so, please share them any of the church leadership team or send a short message to the Community Life Commission.

Herb Troyer, Rose Love, or Linda Kandel

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships
Chair: Martha Yoder

“Story of the Bible” Assigned Reading

Throughout our “Story of the Bible” sermon series, we will recommend daily readings at home. Next week’s readings are:

- Monday: Proverbs 16:27-30, 17:11-12, Judges 1-5
- Tuesday: Proverbs 1:8-19, Judges 6-9

Wednesday: Psalm 101, Proverbs 19:19, Judges 10-12
Thursday: Proverbs 6:20-35, Judges 13-16
Friday: Proverbs 26:11-12, 28:1-2, Judges 17-21
Saturday: Ruth 1-4, Psalm 128

Frank Kandel and Carol Bither will be teaching a baptism exploration class this fall. They will use the book *God's Story, Our Story* by Michele Hersberger (we have some copies available). The class will meet (virtually) on Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:30 AM, on September 26, October 10 & 24, November 7 & 21, and December 5. The class is open to adults and teens who are interested in exploring the meaning of baptism and what it means to follow Jesus.

If you are interested, please contact Frank Kandel, Brian Bither, or Martha Yoder Maust.

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom
Chair: Brad Yoder

It's August & time to commit yourself to walk virtually for the Crop Walk on Sunday October 4th. To participate you will need to register online with this link:

<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/indianapolisin>

When registering find Shalom Mennonite Church as your team & start sharing your page!

To walk virtually we will walk 3 miles on Sunday October 4th sometime during the day! If you feel comfortable you can form a small group or just walk with your family! Please email me at Juliekins7182@hotmail.com if you have any questions! ~ Julie Sanders

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) 100 celebrations report is attached.

Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT)
Chair: Joyce Troyer

SGDT recommends the following individuals for the positions indicated. Please communicate your affirmation or other feedback regarding these recommendations to Joyce Troyer (email: troyers_hj@hotmail.com; phone: 317-446-4353) by August 10.

- Mike Wigginton: Chair of the Administrative Commission for a two-year term.
 - Please note that this means Mike will need to be replaced on the SGDT. The VAT is aware and will fill this position.
- Brad Yoder: Chair of Outreach Commission
 - Brad has agreed to continue as chair of the Outreach Commission for another two-year term.
- Grace Rhine: Chair of the Worship Commission beginning January 1, 2021 through August 30, 2021.
 - Linda Showalter will remain on the Worship Commission as a member but requested to leave the chair position: Linda will serve as chair until January.
 - Emily Fox Ludden: Member of Worship Commission for a two-year term.

Also, SGDT is in the process of filling the VAT Congregational Representative position. Please keep this process in your prayers. Submitted by Joyce Troyer for the SGDT

Announcements

About a year ago, Pastor Brian was invited to meet with a few other Indiana leaders to discuss the possibility of creating a visitation program for undocumented immigrants. They created Indiana AID, a volunteer organization that seeks to provide visibility and community support to detained persons in the state of Indiana who are under ICE hold. After creating the group, its leaders became aware of the need for Indiana AID to attach itself to a larger charitable organization, and the group has proposed that Shalom Mennonite Church become that organization. This would mean that they would fall under the umbrella of our 501(c)3 status, and it would give them access to many of our church's resources.

The Outreach Commission, Administrative Commission, and Vision and Accountability Team have all been in dialogue with Brian about this, and they have decided to give the congregation an opportunity to learn about Indiana AID and vote on this proposal. On August 16, Brian and some of the other members of Indiana AID will introduce the organization to the congregation during the Sunday school hour, which will include time for questions and answers. Following that presentation, more specific details will be provided about the proposed arrangement. One week later, on August 23 at 1:30p, we will have a congregational discussion and vote about whether to accept the proposal. All of this will take place through Zoom. VAT has determined that the vote will require 65% approval of those who attend the August 23 Zoom meeting in order to pass. (If you would like to vote but are unable to attend that particular meeting, please contact Jeanne Smucker.) Please prayerfully consider whether God is calling us to "adopt" this organization.

- 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 [here](#)!
- **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.
- Mike Wigginton is now managing our Zoom calendar and uploading 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 him at mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net.
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

Reflections on the Journey

The End of Act II

"I went down to the nut orchard, to look at the blooms of the valley, to see whether the vines had budded, whether the pomegranates were in bloom. Before I was aware, my desire set me in a chariot beside my prince." – Song of Songs 6:11-12

In the past few months, we have read a wide range of stories in Genesis through Deuteronomy that involved numerous characters and took place over a long period of time. So let's take a moment to return to the big picture of the love story between God and the Chosen People, which is the central storyline of the Bible.

The first Act of the Bible, Genesis 1-11, was very short. Its purpose was to help us make sense of the paradoxical world that we live in – a world that is filled with evil and suffering and yet which at the same time is fundamentally good; a world in which we find ourselves with deep spiritual longings and yet God seems so distant and mysterious to us. We are told that the world was created good and to be in intimate relationship with God, but something went and sin and evil entered the world. Unfortunately, sin and evil spread like a disease, infecting everything they touch, and making it very difficult for us to even hear the voice of God.

Then, beginning in Genesis 12, God reveals the plan to save the world. God calls Abraham and Sarah to be the founders of a new nation, an alternative community that was not under the dominion of sin and evil. By being set apart in holiness and yet engaged with the world, this community could be a source of healing, redemption, and blessing for the world. But Abraham and Sarah only got a glimpse of this vision, and it took centuries for God to call and prepare their descendants for this role.

The Exodus from Egypt was one of the key moments in their development. God taught the Israelites not to rely on the powers of this world – even the greatest Empire in the world – at the time, but on God alone. After coming out of the Red Sea, the people came to Mount Sinai, where they received a more detailed description of their calling: *“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.”* (Exodus 19:4-6) Here, they learned that God was molding them into specific kind of people with their own ethics, system of worship, and identity. The reception of the law, the receiving of manna, and the journey through the wilderness were other key experiences in this journey.

Finally, near the end of Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people that their training is complete: *“Keep silence and hear, O Israel! This very day you have become the people of the Lord your God. Therefore obey the Lord your God, observing his commandments and his statutes that I am commanding you today.”* (Deuteronomy 27:9-10). Now that they have crossed into the Jordan River, the great experiment of creating a set-apart people has begun. Let us listen very carefully to the words of God and the lessons of this story to try to discern what exactly God had in mind for them.

Brian Bither

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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Vision & Accountability Team: Jeanne Smucker, Cheryl Martin, Wilma Bailey, Rod Maust, Thad Wilson, Brian Bither

Please submit information by Wednesday, 5 pm, to office@shalommennonite.com