



JOURNEYING TOGETHER
A weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church

*** To view graphics and a more colorful version, open the attached pdf file. ***

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

CALENDAR

- Sun, September 21: Carry-in Fellowship Meal following Sunday School
- Sat, October 4: Shalom Retreat (see Community Life)
- Sat, November 15: Shalom will be hosting "A Nature Walk Down a Peace Path" as part of The Spirit & Place Festival. More info to come.
- Sat, October 3, 2026: Annual Retreat @ Jameson Camp

ADMINISTRATION

Mike Wigginton (chair), Andrew Martin, Dan Rosenberger
Pastoral Representative: Craig Oury

COMMUNITY LIFE: RELATIONSHIPS AT SHALOM

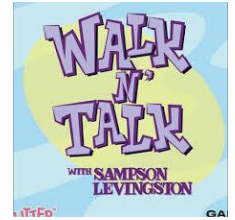
Linda Showalter (Chair), Bethany Martin, Beverly Smith
Pastoral Representative: Craig Oury

Celebrations!

- Sat, September 6: Bill & Mary Albrecht, 1959
- Sat, September 6: Bek & Dean Linsenmeyer, 1970
- Sun, September 7: Chuck Dunn

**2025
Annual
Retreat**

Join us on Saturday, October 4, as we learn about the rich and beautiful history along Indiana Avenue!



We will be guided on a 1-hour walking tour of Indiana Avenue with Sampson Levingston (through2eyes [link](#)) on a Walk & Talk that starts and ends at the Kurt Vonnegut Museum & Library at 543 Indiana Ave. Free parking is available. Dress according to the weather. (Learn more about Sampson [here](#).)

Meet at 543 Indiana Avenue by 9:45 am. If you prefer to carpool, make arrangements with others.

Beverly does not plan to participate in the walk but will be at the church at 10 am with coffee, tea and donuts all morning - feel free to join her.

Lunch will be catered by His Place, a nearby black-owned small business. After lunch, a short devotional, and then free time. Bring indoor and outdoor games!

A sign-up is posted on the sanctuary window. We'll need to know how many to expect for the Walk and the meal.



This time of year is a good time to look at our Small Groups, of which there are currently five, meeting at various times, some in person, some via Zoom. Questions for those in small groups have been sent to the group contact person.

For those not currently in a group: Do you have interest in being part of a small group? What would you like to see as content? Time of meeting? In person or Zoom? Or, would you be willing to organize / lead a group

Please feel free to contact a member of the Community Life Commission with further questions or comments. We would be happy to do what we can to make your small group experience meaningful.

DISCIPLING: GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Cheryl Martin (chair), Wilma Bailey, Matt Bauman
Pastoral Representative:

Children's Ed for Fall 2025: Fall classes will start on Sept 7.

Fall needs: The Older Elementary class needs one co-teacher (a lead teacher to split dates with Frank) and one or two assistants.

Substitute teachers may be needed for any of the four classes. Please consider adding your name to the list to fill in on occasion.

2-4s class	Early Elementary	Older Elementary	Youth
Leads: Abri and Carol W	Lead: Beverly Smith	Leads: Frank Kandel; need Co-Teacher to split coverage	Leads: Jeanne and Brad
Asst: Rose; could have 1 more to share coverage	No assistant needed	Need Asst or 2 if alternating Sundays:	Asst: Julie can assist as needed

7 kids: Zema, Abigail, Matthias, Vivienne, Allison, Nathan, Callie	6 kids: Yeshi, Luke, Elise, Kara, Junia, Lena	10 kids: Layla, Aubrey, Leo, Calvin, Eva, Lexie, Roslyn, Liam, Sydney, Karina	4 youth: Karina, Jacob, Phoenix, Caleb
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Adult Sunday School Classes:

1. Bible Study meets in the back of the sanctuary, with Zoom. Facilitated by Wilma Bailey
2. Healthy Spiritual and Mental Health Practices meets in the fellowship hall. Led by Herb Troyer.

September 7:

1. Lesson #5 - 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:1-14; 3:1-4, p 26.
2. Positive Thoughts: Evaluating our Spiritual Life, pp 58-69 pp 44-45

September 14:

1. Lesson #6 - 1 Corinthians 3:1-23, p32.
2. Positive Words: What we tell ourselves Spiritually, pp 71-75 pp 46-47

September 21:

- Antiracism Sunday led by Martha Yoder Maust and Barbara Abebe

September 28:

1. Lesson #7 - 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 6:1-8, p 38.
2. Positive Actions: Acting out of Love to Self and Others, pp 77-81 pp 48-49. Tools of Moving Forward: Finding a New Ability to Love

October 5:

1. Lesson #8 - 1 Corinthians 7:1-21, p 44.
2. Claim Responsibility: Finding new ways to Walk with Love, pp 83-95 pp 50-51

October 12:

1. Lesson #9 - 1 Corinthians 8:4-13, 10:23-11:1, p 50.
2. Let Go: Just Act in Love, pp 97 -101 pp 52-53

October 19:

- Antiracism Sunday led by Martha Yoder Maust and Barbara Abebe

October 26:

1. Lesson #10 - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, p 56.
2. For-Give: Giving to others, pp 103- 107 pp 54-55. Tools of Creation Kingdom of God, Now

November 2:

1. Lesson #11 - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, p 62.
2. What If: In Christ we put on the New, pp 119 – 123 pp 56-57

November 9:

1. Lesson #12 - 1 Corinthians 12-14, p 68.
2. Reality Check: Allowing ourselves to Fail, pp 125 – 129 pp 58 – 59

November 16:

- Antiracism Sunday led by Martha Yoder Maust and Barbara Abebe

November 23:

1. Lesson #13 - 1 Corinthians 15:1-34, p 74.
2. Ultimate Freedom: Acting out of Love, pp 131 – 137 pp 60-61

November 30: (Thanksgiving Weekend)

1. Lesson #14 - 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-58, p 80.
2. Wrap up.

Pastoral Representative:

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

Jim Showalter (chair), Angie Buller

VAT Representative: Andrew Martin; Pastoral Representative: Craig Oury

Attached are the list of commissions and its members for the new church year (Sept. 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026)

VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (VAT)

Nizeet Deiter (Chair), Andrew Martin (Vice-Ch) Sam Bixler, Charity Bauman, Abri Hochstetler

Pastoral Representative: Craig Oury

WORSHIP: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Melissa Walsh Martin(chair), Justin Hochstetler, Jeanne Smucker

Last Sunday (8/31) Frank brought the message.

This Sunday (9/7) Craig will bring the message on Luke 14:25-33.

Next week (9/14) Jeanne will bring the message.

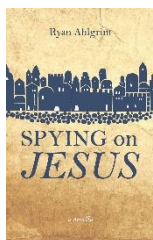
This week's Prayer List:

- **Church:** *Ann Arbor Mennonite Church* is a small Mennonite church in Ann Arbor, Michigan which is part of Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference. Pastor: Chima Ozor. Please pray that our church will continue to press on to reach new heights in our Christian journey. Pray for one of our members who has serious medical issues.
- **Organization:** *Mennonite Central Committee* is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, which shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice. (Contact: Zenebe Abebe)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are looking for persons to help with transportation for Robert in the coming months. This usually is no more than once a month or less. Two of the persons usually helping with this ministry are going to be unavailable for several months and so this need has arisen. If you can help with this, please contact Cheryl Martin at 1cmm@att.net or 913-375-6264.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. ~ Cheryl Martin



On September 10, former First Mennonite Church pastor, Ryan Ahlgrim will be in Indy and would like to have a book reading and signing event for his new book, "Spying on Jesus." We will start off the evening at 6:00 with a soup supper, and then Ryan will share about his book, and have copies available for people to purchase, and he will be happy to sign them. The event will be at FMC.

Church At The Crossroads – *Conference for Christians Committed To Peacemaking*,
September 11-13 – Parkview Community Church, Glen Ellyn, IL.

Speakers include Jemar Tisby (author of *The Color of Compromise* which we have been reading together this past year), Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Kuttub (co-founder of Nonviolence International, which sponsors Mennonite Action), and Rev. Munther Isaac (Palestinian pastor and author of *Christ in the Rubble*), and many more.

I hope to attend this either virtually or in person and would love to know who might like to join me. ~ Sabrina



We invite the church community to join us in raising funds for the ALS Foundation through the Walk to Defeat ALS in memory of our dad, Dagne Assefa, longtime founding pastor at Shalom who passed away 4 years ago on September 9 from ALS. Our family is participating in the Walk to Defeat ALS on **Saturday, September 20** at the Indiana State Fairgrounds Celebration Park. The 1-mile walk begins at 10am. Please consider joining us on the walk or donating to our team to help other families, like ours, who are affected by ALS. Info on the walk can be found here: <https://rb.gy/1ibxmt>. To donate or join our team, please visit our team site here: <https://shorturl.at/o4T6w>.

Thank you for your support! ~Lydie and Menan Assefa



We are collecting cash for Mennonite Central Committee in our "My Coins Count" jug. The donations will be taken to the Michiana Relief Sale on September 26.

REFLECTION

Public Faith and Christian Nationalism

This week I started taking a course at AMBS as a graduate audit that I can thankfully attend via Zoom. I wanted to let you all know about it since I'll likely be talking about it some over the next few months, and to also let you know why I'll be busy every Tuesday from 1:30-4:30 through mid-December. Below is some information about the course.

Public Faith and Christian Nationalism taught by Drew Strait

Course Description:

This course excavates the boundaries of Christian political participation as a medium to challenge Christian nationalism and minimize harm toward our neighbors and the earth. Special attention will be given to defining white Christian nationalism in historical and theological perspective — along with its participation in populist authoritarianism, fascist politics, neoliberalism, Christian dominionism, and Christian Zionism. In addition to defining key terms, the course animates how similar authoritarian power dynamics operated in the world of the early Jesus movement. A major course goal is to gain competency in using the biblical narrative to challenge Christian extremism and biblical authoritarianism in the U.S. and internationally through public education, preaching, testimony, counternarratives, dialogue, social media, and Bible studies

Course Objectives:

- to gain knowledge of how Mennonites (and ecumenical Christians) can leverage public faith for the common good, rooted in God's shalom.
- to gain an understanding of the historical pressures that gave birth to modern forms of Christian nationalism, the rise of authoritarianism, and democratic backsliding around the world.
- to gain familiarity with various approaches to mobilizing nonviolent civil resistance to move from authoritarianism to nurturing democratic pluralism.
- to grow in our knowledge of Scripture so that we can publicly leverage the biblical narrative for the work of deradicalization and inoculative messaging.
- to critically reflect on the prospects and limitations of public faith and political participation in democracy for minimizing harm toward the vulnerable and our climate.

- to articulate five action steps for challenging Christian nationalism.

The first session has me excited to learn more about this topic and also a little weary of having to read all of a 289 page book before next class!

Stay tuned for gleanings from what I've learned. ~ Craig

PERSON OF COLOR BIO

Vanilla is one of the world's most popular spices, and the second-most expensive after saffron. This multi-million-dollar industry is all down to **Edmond Albius** (1829–80), a 12-year-old slave from the Réunion Island. His ingenious thinking enabled artificial pollination on a mass scale, which in turn enabled the industry that we know today. However, Edmond was never compensated for his contribution, dying practically penniless, and to this day is still relatively unknown.

Edmond was born into slavery in 1829. His mother, Melise, died in childbirth, and he never knew his father. At an early age he was sent by his master to work with Ferréol Bellier-Beaumont on the Belle-vue plantation, who taught him all about the study of horticulture and botany.



In the late 1810's, Bellier-Beaumont received some vanilla cuttings. He was only able to keep one vine alive which, unfortunately, was unable to bear any fruit. While walking through his gardens with young Edmond in 1841, Bellier-Beaumont discovered two fruits on a lone 20-year-old vine. To his astonishment, Edmond claimed that he had been able to fertilize the flower by hand. Initially, Bellier-Beaumont did not believe this this 12-year-old boy had achieved something the so many had failed to do before him. A few days later Bellier-Beaumont noticed more pods developing and requested that Edmond show him his technique for hand pollination. Bellier-Beaumont realized the technique was similar to his own method for hand pollinating watermelon plants, which had shown Edmond previously.

Bellier-Beaumont stated:

“In this plant [watermelon], the male and female flowers occur on different plants, and I taught the little black boy, Edmond, how to marry the male and female parts together ... This clever boy had realized that the vanilla flower also had male and female elements, and worked out for himself how to join them together.”

Within days other planter arrived to see Edmond's technique. The young Edmond was transported around Réunion to demonstrate to slaves on other plantations. After Edmond's discovery, vanilla production on the island boomed. In 1858, Réunion was able to transport 2 tons of vanilla beans back to France; by 1898, 200 tons. By the late 19th century, Réunion was outstripping Mexico as the world's largest producer.

So what happened to Edmond? Though the French Republic had abolished slavery in 1794, that had been revoked by Napoleon in 1802. April of 1848 saw France re-abolish slavery in its colonies. It was around this time that Edmond was



freed and given the surname Albius. Bellier-Beaumont tried to secure a state pension for his services to the vanilla industry, but his appeals fell on deaf ears.

So, at the age of 19 and with only a small amount of cash from Bellier-Beaumont, Edmond moved to the northern part of Réunion. Life was hard, with no formal qualifications, and having to compete with many former slaves also looking for work.

Eventually, after some menial work as a laborer, Edmond found a job as a kitchen boy, but this was short-lived. A robbery took place at the house one night, and a white woman was injured. Though several men were involved, Edmond was blamed and sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labor. Due to Bellier-Beaumont's appeals and the support from the local Justice of the Peace, Edmond was released early. He returned to Belle-vue where he stayed until he was married.

Edmond died at age 51, not receiving any type of stipend for his monumental contribution. The *Moniteur* newspaper stated:

“The very man who at great profit to this colony, discovered how to pollinate vanilla flowers, has died in the public hospital at Sainte-Suzanne. It was a destitute and miserable end.”

The frustration doesn't end there. Several people refused to believe, and some actively discredited, Edmond's achievement. A French botanist claimed he had developed the same method of hand pollination earlier, and that when he visited Réunion to demonstrate it to other horticulturists, Edmond must have witnessed it. Yet again Bellier-Beaumont comes to Edmond's rescue, writing

“How could Mr. Richard have taught the young boy this technique in 1838 – when he was only eight years old? And if he did so, why would a botanist ... keep such a lesson to himself, sharing it only with this young boy and not with myself and other planters?”

There was still controversy as late as the early 20th century where questions were raised as to whether Edmond, an uneducated slave, could have come up with the method. Through thorough analysis, Arditti et al (2009) later came to the conclusion that:

“There is absolutely no reason to believe that Albius could not have figured out all by himself how to pollinate the flowers. And since Ecott's [Ecott, 2004] search through the archives certainly seems to have been thorough his report should be accepted as definite. If so, there can be very little doubt that Albius discovered the pollinations on his own.”

While Edmond probably wasn't the first to come up with the hand pollination technique (it is evident that there had been several independent discoveries), he must be credited for essentially providing the key for the vanilla industry in Réunion and other French colonies and islands like Madagascar, currently the main global exporter of vanilla. Bellier-Beaumont took his island to task over Edmond's treatment in this remark: “It owes him a debt, for starting up a new industry with a fabulous product.”

<https://www.linnean.org/news/2019/10/16/edmond-albius>





Need something? Have something to give away?

ROUTINE INFORMATION

“SHARING OUR LIVES” weekly power point: We invite photo submissions of events / hobbies / interests in your lives. Send pictures to Linda Showalter at lindashowalter52@gmail.com by noon on Saturday. It will run before and after the service.

BULLETIN INFORMATION:

- Send announcements to Linda Showalter at lindashowalter52@gmail.com by Friday, 10 am.
- **Bulletins** are now attached with the Zoom link for those who are worshipping on Zoom. A link will continue to be sent out each week. If you have a prayer request or announcement you would like to share, **type your request live into the chat** feature on zoom and someone on the tech team will read it to the congregation at church.

JOURNEYING TOGETHER is compiled by Linda Showalter each week. Send information to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

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 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.

BUILDING USEAGE: If you want to use the building for a meeting or event, please check the online calendar first to be sure it's open, then email Craig at office@shalommennonite.com so he can add your item to the calendar. It's helpful to include the contact person and which parts of the building you expect to use.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: In addition to our podcast, Shalom has a Youtube Channel. 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 youtube.com/@shalommennonite55.

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.

Journeying Together is a weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church:
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Congregational Reps: Charity Bauman, Sam Bixler, Abri Hochstetler

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