



JOURNEYING TOGETHER
A weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church

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

DECEMBER 31, 2025

CALENDAR

Thu, January 8: Shalom Sister Lunch @ His Place, 11:30 am (see CLC)
Sun, February 8: Game Night @ Shalom; details to come
Sat, February 21: Arlington Woods Neighborhood gathering, 11 am – 3:30 pm
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! (Wednesday – Wednesday)

Thu, January 1: CoraLyn Turentine
Thu, January 1: Dan & Judy Rosenberger, 1978
Sat, January 3: Marcela Rosales Harms
Mon, January 5: Zenebe Abebe

The next Shalom Sisters Lunch will be on **January 8** since the 1st is New Years Day. We will meet at His Place, 6916 East 30th Street at 11:30 am. In February, we'll make reservations for The Bosphorus and try again! All women are welcome.



DISCIPLING: GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

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



This Sunday will be the Reading Program's last day to turn in reports!

Children's Education

For the 2s-3s class, it would be great to have one more teacher to share dates with Abri in 2026.

Sunday school class for the adults will be as follows:

- 1/4 - Communion from the Catholic, Episcopalian, Ethiopian, and Serbian perspectives
- 1/11 - Communion from the Quaker, United Church of Christ, Brethren, Baptist, Disciples of Christ, and Mennonite perspectives
- 1/16 - Antiracism
- 1/25 - Review of Technology

The sessions for February will be added soon. The third quarter will have 2 classes. One will be the standard Bible study series. The other will be about Zionism and Christian Zionism taught by Sabrina Falls and Brad Yoder. Be thinking about which one you would like to attend and be ready to sign up in the very near future so materials can be ordered.

OUTREACH: RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND SHALOM

(chair), Becky Wigginton
Pastoral Representative: Brian Bither

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

Jim Showalter (Chair), Angie Buller
VAT Representative: Andrew Martin; Pastoral Representative: Craig Oury

VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (VAT)

Nizeet Deiter (Chair), Andrew Martin (Vice-Ch) Sam Bixler, Charity Bauman, Abri Hochstetler
Pastoral Representatives: Brian Bither, Craig Oury

WORSHIP: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Melissa Walsh Martin (chair), Justin Hochstetler, Jeanne Smucker
Pastoral Representative: Brian Bither

The Shalom Mennonite Worship Commission invites you to complete this brief questionnaire, linked below, **by Sunday, January 4, 2026**. The responses will provide the commission with information from the congregation regarding several aspects of the worship services at Shalom. If you would like a paper version of the questionnaire, there are printed copies available at the church. Any completed paper questionnaires should be submitted to the Worship Commission mailbox. Thank you!

[Worship Commission Questionnaire Linked Here](#)

A QR code that leads directly to the online form is attached.

Last Sunday (12/28) Craig will bring the message from John 1:10-18.

This Sunday (1/4/2026) is Epiphany, Craig will bring the message.

Next Sunday (1/11) Craig will bring the message.

This week's Prayer List

- **Church: Kern Road Mennonite Church** is a Mennonite Church in South Bend, Indiana that is part of Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference.
- **Organization: Meserete Kristos Seminary** is a Mennonite seminary in Ethiopia that exists to equip men and women for the holistic transformation of the church and society.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Don't forget to sign the Voices Together for Brian! It's in Andrew & Melissa's mailbox.

Krystal's father's obituary can be read [here](#).



Mennonite Men is an organization sponsored by MCUSA and MC Canada. It has retreats and activities for men and an online newsletter. Mennonite Men is asking for help in developing a coming of age ritual for boys. If you have ideas, they would like to hear them. Below is the contact information.

Men's Retreat March 6-8

Mennonite Men will be hosting a men's retreat at Camp Friedenswald on March 6-8, 2026. The theme of the weekend will be "Becoming Malleable Men: Practicing Faith and Being Formed". Registration at friedenswald.org/retreats/

We want your thoughts on Boys Rites of Passage!

We as Mennonite Men would like to hear about rites of passage activities being created and experiences offered for boys coming of age as well as ideas for future activities, as well as what might an Anabaptist flavor look like. If you are a parent, teacher, mentor, uncle, grandparent, or coach of boys, please take this simple survey. Details and survey link [HERE](#).

Co-Coordinator for USA: Steve Thomas

stevet@mennonitemen.org

Phone: 866-866-2872 Ext. 21339 (Toll Free)

Cell Phone: 574-202-0048

Co-Coordinator for USA: Jon Zirkle

jonz@mennonitemen.org

Cell Phone: 574-612-5063

PERSON OF COLOR BIO

Watch Night or “Freedom’s Eve”



On the night of December 31, 1862, enslaved and free African Americans gathered, many in secret, to ring in the new year and await news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. Just a few months earlier, on September 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the executive order that declared enslaved people in the rebelling Confederate States legally free. However, the decree would not take effect until the clock struck midnight at the start of the new year. The occasion, known as Watch Night or “Freedom’s Eve,” marks when African Americans across the country watched and waited for the news of freedom. Today, Watch Night is an annual New Year’s Eve tradition that includes the memory of slavery and freedom, reflections on faith, and a celebration of community and strength.

Watch Night service is rooted in African American religious traditions. During the first Watch Night, many enslaved African Americans gathered to pray, worship, sing, and dance. At the time, enslaved black people could find little respite from ever-present surveillance, even in practicing their faith. White enslavers feared that religion, which was often used to quell slave resistance, could incite the exact opposite if practiced without observance. They wrote laws that restricted worship and large gatherings, such as that in the 1848 Georgia Slave Code: *“ No person of color . . . shall be allowed to preach, to exhort, or join in any religious exercise with any persons of color, either free or slave, there being more than seven persons of color present. ” - 1848 Georgia Slave Code*

Despite these laws, enslaved people sought to exercise their own religious customs, including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous faith practices reflective of the homes from which they were stolen. They convened at praise houses on plantations or secretly gathered in the woods, where they practiced their faith under the protective cover of the trees and brush in what became known as “hush harbors.”

Watch Night is customarily marked by celebrations of fellowship and a worship service, followed by a meal on New Year’s Day. Celebratory foods include a diverse collection of culinary traditions that can be traced back to Southern superstition, influenced by beliefs across West Africa. Chief among these foodways is the practice of eating collard greens, representing the promise of prosperity, and eating black-eyed peas with rice, also known as Hoppin’ John. Traditionally, Hoppin’ John consists of black-eyed peas, rice, red peppers,

and salt pork, and it is believed to bring good fortune to those who eat it. Before finding its way into American traditions, the black-eyed pea (also known as cowpea) traveled from Central Africa to the West Indies and finally to the Carolinas in the early 1700s. Many West African cultures regard the pea as lucky, and memories of its luck remained with enslaved black people in the American South and still endure today. Though Hoppin' John is a common dish prepared for Watch Night, the foods prepared in observance of the tradition are incredibly diverse and reflective of regional, temporal, and cultural differences within the African American community. Some other common dishes include candied yams, cornbread, potato salad, and macaroni and cheese.

Initially meant to welcome emancipation, today the Watch Night service encourages reflection on the history of slavery and freedom, as well as reflection on the past year—both its trials and triumphs—while also anticipating what the new year will have in store. It is a continuation of generations of faith that freedom and renewal lie ahead.

Edited from <https://www.starofzion.org/stories/holiday-tradition-and-its-significance-in-the-black-church,78603>



Have something to give away? Need something? Skills needed or to share? Tools needed or to share?

Jacob Martin is wondering if there is any job or work he can do for anyone in the community for money.

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 worshiping 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.

Brian Bither 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 Brian 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.

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| <p>Journeying Together is a weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church: 6100 E 32nd St, 46226; (317) 549-0577 shalommennonite.com Pastors: Brian Bither, (317) 332-7320; Craig Oury, (301) 302-3181 Vision & Accountability Team: Chair Nizeet Agular Deiter, Vice-Chair Andrew Martin Congregational Reps: Charity Bauman, Sam Bixler, Abri Hochstetler Pastoral Rep: Craig Oury</p> |
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