



JOURNEYING TOGETHER

A weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church

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

JULY 1, 2026

CALENDAR

Thu, Jul 2: Shalom Sisters Lunch, @ Greek Islands Restaurant, 11:30 am (CLC)

Wed, July 15: Wild Church, 10 am

Sun, Jul 19: 3rd Sunday Fellowship Meal

Sat, Jul 11: ~~Garage Sale, 9 am — 4 pm (CLC)~~

Sat, Oct 3: Annual Retreat @ Jameson Camp

ADMINISTRATION

Mike Wigginton (chair), Andrew Martin, Carl Rhine

COMMUNITY LIFE: RELATIONSHIPS AT SHALOM

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

Celebrations! (Wednesday – Wednesday)

Fri, July 3: Linda Showalter

Mon, July 6: Linda Kandel

Mon, July 6: Sydney Maust



Thursday, July 2, 11:30 am lunch will be at Greeks Islands Restaurant, 906 South Meridian Street.

The garage sale has been cancelled for July 11.

DISCIPLING: GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

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

The summer schedule for Sunday school is planned as follows:

July 5 – No Sunday school

July 12 – Intergenerational meeting in the fellowship hall with Cheryl

July 19 – Antiracism Sunday – Intergenerational meeting in the fellowship hall with Barbara

July 26 – Intergenerational meeting in the fellowship hall with Cheryl

August 2 – Intergenerational meeting in the fellowship hall with Melissa and Andrew

August 9 – Adults meet in the auditorium with Jeanne for Child safety

Young children will meet with Abri and older children will fill school kits with Carol

August 16 – Antiracism Sunday

Young children will meet with Abri and older children will fill school kits with Carol

OUTREACH: RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND SHALOM

(chair), Becky Wigginton
Pastoral Representative:

School Kits for MCC: Although summer is just starting, we'll soon be ready to begin gathering items for MCC school kits so our kids can put them together on August 9 and 16. Please bring the following items:

Contents (NEW items only)

- 4 spiral or perforated-page notebooks
 - 8.5 in x 10.5 in; 70 sheets each (US)
- 8 new unsharpened pencils
- 1 ruler (flat, good quality; must indicate 30 cm (inch markings optional)
- 12 colored pencils (in packaging)
- 1 large eraser
- 4 new black or blue ballpoint pens
- 1 small **all-metal** pencil sharpener (one or two holes)**We request you only include small metal-cased pencil sharpeners like the ones pictured.



All-metal sharpeners can be found online at sites like Amazon or in the art supply section of retail stores like Staples. Plastic case pencil sharpeners are not accepted because they are lower quality and do not last as long. If you cannot find all-metal sharpeners, please pack the kits without them and we will add the sharpeners.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

Jim Showalter (chair), Angie Buller
VAT Representative: Andrew Martin

As congregational delegate to Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, I want to share the Prevention and Accountability Resource that was introduced at this year's Summer Fest. It is available at

<https://www.mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Prevention-Accountability-Resource.pdf> and focuses on how to build a healthy congregation life (healthy boundaries, for example) and how to respond if abuses happen. ~ Martha

Changes to the Administration Commission effective September 1.

Carl Rhine (chair); **Chris Deiter** (member). We invite your affirmations and comments.

VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (VAT)

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

WORSHIP: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

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

Last Sunday, 6/28, Craig brought the message from 1 Corinthians 1:3-9.

This Sunday, 7/5, Phil will bring the message from Luke 24:13–35.

Next Sunday, 7/12, Phil will bring the message from Luke 11:1–13.

This week's Prayer List

- **Church:** *Fellowship of Hope* is a Mennonite church in Elkhart and a member of IMMC.
- **Organization:** *Mennonite Disaster Service* is an organization that strives to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those affected by disasters by rebuilding homes and organizing and empowering volunteers. Contact: Jim Showalter

PERSON OF COLOR BIO

I'm a Black American—Here's Why I'm Not Celebrating the 4th of July

Karen Greene Braithwaite, As Told to Lynnette Nicholas

Updated On June 16, 2026



The ugly truths hidden within the fabric of America's legacy are why I'm not celebrating the 4th of July—and never will. When I was growing up in the late 1970s, I didn't learn the full truth about America's history from my teachers. Back then, you only got bits and pieces of America's past. It wasn't until college that I became more informed. When the *Declaration of Independence* was signed, many Black people were still enslaved, and they continued to be used as property for the gain of plantation owners for many years afterward.

When you think of how those in power controlled and manipulated the mindsets of the enslaved for material gain, it's sickening and disheartening. So, while the government said that all men were created equal, the reality was that the state of the nation was only being changed for certain people. For that reason, the 4th of July has always been complicated for me—and its history is exactly why I'm not celebrating the 4th of July this year or any other.

Learning about history, especially the history of America, has made a lasting impression on me and changed how I celebrate holidays. While I can't pinpoint the exact time that I came to the realization that America's Independence Day was not my own, I do recall reading Frederick Douglass's speech that he gave on the 5th of July one year, and it definitely resonated with me. I was able to immediately identify that the freedoms he was discussing back then did not necessarily extend to people who look like me today. After reading that speech, the disparities between the Black and White experience lingered in my mind. Even as a child, I remember July 4th as being a holiday that did not carry much weight. We all just enjoyed the day off, had wonderful barbecues and watched the beautiful fireworks.

After completing law school and becoming a mother, my perspective changed altogether. While I used to support and go along with all the traditions associated with the American flag, "The Star-Spangled Banner" and traditional American festivities and customs, now I no longer find the holiday of any real value to me and my family.

When I think of the racist lyrics of the third verse of "The Star-Spangled Banner," which states, "No refuge could save the hireling and slave, from the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave, and the star-spangled banner in triumph we wave, o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave," I can't associate with those ideals.

"The Star-Spangled Banner" was written by one of the richest men in America at the time, Francis Scott Key, who happened to be a poet, lawyer and slave owner. Celebrating violence against enslaved people is truly disturbing, and it's embedded within our national anthem. Whether people choose to sing it or not, it is still symbolic of the larger problem we have with racism in the United States.

As a lawyer, I feel very comfortable in my decision not to celebrate the 4th of July. From a legal standpoint, I am aware that the country had to start somewhere — starting with independence and establishing this government made it so that there are elections and an election process. And today, I do believe that America really does try to adhere to an election process. I see that this country strives to make things better in society with laws, and while we have been able to change things in that way, the situation is far from resolved and the system is not perfect.

In our home, we replace the 4th of July with Juneteenth. It used to be very regional, with Southern states and towns taking it on as their own for many, many years. Now it has expanded, and I think it's really cool that Black Americans have adopted their own independence day. Initially, I felt somewhat removed from celebrating Juneteenth, but now that I have a greater understanding of what it truly means for Black people—a celebration of when we were all truly free—I totally embrace it with my family. It's a pretty significant day. I'm from North Carolina, and while it took a while for communities to start celebrating Juneteenth, it really means something to me. I think it's special that there is now more than one way to celebrate independence in America.

In the context of celebrating American history, I believe the 4th of July represents an incomplete history. It doesn't reflect the full truth about Black Americans at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed. Without holidays like Juneteenth that celebrate the real experiences of Black people, American history is incomplete. You cannot even make a logical story without it, because Black people's enslavement and labor was such an integral part of building our society and our economy. This history is embedded in literally everything—from the Constitution to our day-to-day life, local laws and

ordinances—and so much wouldn't make sense to someone who wasn't familiar with America's history.

I recognize the fact that Black people have been treated poorly and exploited yet have risen above these circumstances. And I am adamant that Black history is the history of this country. If you really listen to the words of the Black national anthem, it tells the story of America and how we had to come over a very difficult, dark path. We still do, even today. It's like Obama's election, which indeed gave us hope but did not necessarily change anything. We're still marching on for that true American ideal.

I think that July 4th should become a day of reflection for everyone about what that day in history really meant for this country as a whole. In order for any change in paradigms and for the history and holidays in American culture to have a true spirit of unity, there has to be a collective effort.

<https://www.rd.com/article/im-a-black-american-heres-why-i-dont-celebrate-the-fourth-of-july/>



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

We have a gas grill and a rototiller we are no longer using. They are free to the first person(s) who want to come get them. One or both. Call Cheryl at 913-375-6264 or Jim at 913-375-6270 to arrange pick up.

ROUTINE INFORMATION

Send email to office@shalommennonite.com for the following:

- **Church calendar** (Grace Rhine)
- **To upload minutes** on the church website. (Carl Rhine)
- **Zoom** (Grace Rhine)
- **Announcements for Journeying Together**, by 5 pm on Wednesday (Linda Showalter)
- **New/update church directory, email address list, or telephone numbers**, managed by Sam Bixler (bixlersc@gmail.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 the church office so your item can be added to the calendar. It's helpful to include the contact person and which parts of the building you expect to use.

“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 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.

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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Pastor: Phil Schmidt (574) 500-4737, phil@shalommennonite.com

Vision & Accountability Team: Chair Nizeet Agular Deiter, Vice-Chair Andrew Martin

Congregational Reps: Charity Bauman, Sam Bixler, Abri Hochstetler