

# Earth Month



## *JOURNEYING TOGETHER*

### *A weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church*

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

**APRIL 1, 2026**

#### **CALENDAR**

- Thu, April 2: Shalom Sisters Lunch, 11:30 (see CLC)
- Thu, April 2: Maundy Thursday Service, 7pm (see Worship)
- Sun, April 5: Easter Sunday Breakfast, 8:30 am, (see CLC); Worship at 10 am (see Worship),  
Easter Egg Hunt after Worship
- Sat, April 11: A Spring Walk Down the Peace Path, 4 – 6 pm (see Outreach)
- Wed, April 15: Wild Church, 10 am (see CLC)
- Sat, October 3, 2026: 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: Craig Oury

#### **Celebrations!** (Wednesday – Wednesday)

- Today, April 1: Becky Wigginton
- Sun, April 5: Herb Troyer
- Tue, April 7: Saba Lederach



Next Shalom Sisters Lunch, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, will be at Fire by the Monan, 6523 Ferguson Street, Indianapolis (Broad Ripple), 11:30 am.

**Easter Breakfast April 5th** will be at 8:30am. Look for signup sheets on back window. Rolls, bread or breakfast casserole or fruit. Have it ready to set on the tables. ~ Becky

**Wild Church** will next take place on **Wednesday, April 15 at 10 a.m.** at Holliday Park, 6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis. Park in the parking lot across from the Nature Center. We will meet under the trees. Bring a chair or cushion for softer seating. The



early Spring flowers should be in full bloom by then. Wild Church meets on the third Wednesday of each month. Locations vary.

### DISCIPLING: GROWING IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

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

Children's Education will host an Easter Egg hunt after worship on Easter Sunday. Edible treats will be peanut free/no peanut cross contamination.

**No Sunday school classes this week.**

### OUTREACH: RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND SHALOM

(chair), Becky Wigginton  
Pastoral Representative:

**A Night Without a Bed** is a fundraiser event at Family Promise. The dates for the event are from April 4, 2026, through May 2, 2026. Here is the link if members would like to participate.



<https://mail.yahoo.com/n/list/folders=1&listFilter=PRIORITY/messages/77374?.src=ym&reason=myc&listFilter=PRIORITY> ~ Solomon Abebe

### **April 11<sup>th</sup>, 4-6 pm, A Spring Walk Down The Peace Path**

Together with our Neighbors we will be learning and enjoying spring ephemerals in the Shalom Woods and on the Peace Path. All are welcome to participate and help greet our neighbors.

### SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

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

### 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  
Pastoral Representative: Craig Oury

On **Thursday, April 2 at 7 pm** we will be having a Maundy Thursday service in the church basement. It will be a service of Scriptures, singing, foot washing or hand washing, and communion. All are welcome.

On **Easter Sunday, April 5**, breakfast will be at 8:30 and worship will start at 10, no Sunday school.

**Last Sunday (3/29)** Dr. James Logan from Earlham will bring the message. Dr. Logan is Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Faculty; Professor of African and African American studies; Professor of Religion at Earlham College.

**This Sunday (4/5)** Craig will bring the Easter message from Matthew 28.

**Next Sunday (4/12)** Mike Wigginton will bring the message.

### **This week's Prayer List**

- **Church:** Sunnyside Mennonite Church is a Mennonite church in Elkhart, Indiana which is part of Indiana Michigan Mennonite Conference
- **Organization:** Peter and Delicia Bravo Wigginton are missionaries from our congregation who work with the Mennonite churches in Ecuador. (Contact: Jeanne Smucker and Martha Yoder Maust)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mennonite Men's group went to the West Bank in Palestine to plant trees just before the war started. To read about their experience or to learn how you can become involved in Mennonite men, a binational (U.S. and Canada) organization, click the link. To sign up for their email list, click here or contact Steve Thomas, SteveT@mennonitemen.org.

On Sunday Jason Gossett shared with us about his sister Brianna and her boyfriend being in a serious accident that left them with multiple injuries and out of work for months. They're facing a tough recovery and need help covering rent and bills during this difficult time. Even a quick share or a small donation can make a big difference for them—please consider helping if you can. <https://gofund.me/aead43608>

Jeanne shared on Sunday that Federica, Delicia Bravo Aguilar's mother, had been hospitalized for a hemorrhagic stroke (a bleed in the brain). She had surgery to remove the blood, and she is improving, but is still hospitalized. Delicia is with her mother now. The local public hospital did not have any beds available, so Federica had to be admitted to a private hospital, which is costing her about \$1000 a day. At the same time, Delicia's aunt is hospitalized for a heart attack, and a niece is hospitalized for intestinal surgery. The family (Delicia's siblings and extended family) does not have the resources to pay for Federica's care. Would you like to help? Please continue to pray for the family. If you would like to help financially, this would not be tax deductible, but any amount would be appreciated. Gifts can be given to Becky Wigginton to pass on to Delicia. ~ Martha, on behalf of Peter and Delicia

Dear Shalom Family,

Thank you so much for your love, prayers, and the beautiful flowers. We are deeply grateful for your care and support as we walk through this recovery journey.

Sending love,  
The Deiters

Hi, Shalom, my mother Joyce Troyer gave me your address! I am reaching out from Goshen. One of our Latina members, Kleimar Montilla, has an immigration appointment on Thursday morning in Indianapolis. She's terrified that she will be detained with her children. We would love to have as many people show up in court as possible, to be observers and show the judge that she is a beloved member of our community.

Peace,  
Anne Marie Weaver

Please hold our partners in God's work in your prayers. (see attached prayer letter from Peter and Delicia) ~ Jeanne Smucker

## REFLECTION

As we are in Holy Week, I thought it would be appropriate to reflect on something from Maundy Thursday, the last supper, more specifically Jesus washing the disciples' feet. I know that we have varied thoughts about the concept of washing each other's feet. Some find it very valuable while others find it to be weird and unnecessary. I am in both camps, I do find it weird. It is an uncommon vulnerability that can be uncomfortable. But I also find it to be a moving experience, despite being an uncomfortable task. Sometimes being uncomfortable is a good thing. Sometimes being vulnerable with trusted individuals can also be a good thing.

Foot washing was needed in every home in 2000 years ago. Why? Not only were the streets dusty and dirty, but they usually contained garbage and waste from the animals who traveled up and down the same streets. People wore sandals without socks and their feet could become very dirty. The custom was to recline around the table at the evening meal. Dirty, smelly feet could make the meal and the fellowship rather uninviting. Slaves or servants were usually provided to wash the feet of guests, and it was a mark of honor for a host to provide a servant to wash a guest's feet. To fail to provide a servant was a breach of hospitality.

Since the last supper was held in a private home, and probably as a secret meeting, we can assume nobody was present to fulfill the task. So Jesus takes it upon himself.

I can hear the responses now; see, that's why we don't need to partake in footwashing, we are not traveling by foot most of the time! We don't have dirt roads! People can now wear socks with sandals (if their sense of style allows them to)! Because of these reasons the church no longer needs to partake in this outdated practice. Which I can agree with most of that, we don't walk in sandals on dirt paths long distances each day, but I'd also say that many of the things that Jesus did and said have more than one purpose or meaning.

There are two different Greek words used for the concept of washing. There is *niptw* which was used of washing only a part of the body, such as the hands, face, and feet. This word is translated "wash" in each occurrence in John 13. The second word is *louw* which meant to bathe the body. It referred to a thorough washing of the entire body. It is used in verse 10 and is translated "He who has bathed (*louw*) needs only to wash (*niptw*) his feet." When Peter refused to allow Jesus to wash (*niptw*) his feet, the Lord responded, "If I do not wash (*niptw*) you, you have no part (fellowship) with Me."

Jesus wasn't going to cast off Peter if he didn't participate and Jesus won't be casting us off either if we do not participate, but Jesus is talking about many things on many levels. There is an intimate fellowship Jesus is seeking here. A closeness within the community where together there is no hierarchy, no gentile or Jew, no male or female, no free or slave, but God's people together, sister and brother, serving each other together. Serving each other even if it is uncomfortable as the one being served or the server.

It is also a remembering and reliving our baptism. Peter wanting Jesus to wash his body completely says there is no need, you have been cleansed already. Baptism has happened, there is no need to repeat that action again, unless of course it was the 16<sup>th</sup> century and you've been convicted by the idea of believers baptism. There is no need to baptize again because once is good enough. But sometimes sin does reappear, we sometimes put things other than God in front of us and follow whatever that may be instead of following Jesus. So washing of each other's feet is not only about taking the position of servant it is also about examining our priorities and again setting aside the things we seek that take us away from following Jesus and washing them away. In a sense a renewal of our baptism.

We are having a Maundy Thursday service this week, whether you attend or not I want to invite each of you to think of the other ways we can take the posture and attitude of servanthood. -- Craig

## PERSON OF COLOR BIO



**Susie King Taylor, born Susie Ann Baker** on August 6th, 1848, is known to be the first black nurse to serve in the Union army, as well as the first formally enslaved woman to open a school for free colored children in the state of Georgia during the war. Her family history, as detailed in her memoirs “Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33rd U.S. Colored Troops, late 1st South Carolina Volunteers”, makes it little surprising that Susie would later accomplish so much. According to her, she had five ancestors who served in the Revolutionary War on her mother’s side. Susie was the eldest of nine children, three of which died in infancy. The first seven years of her life, she spent with her mother in the care of the Grest Family in Liberty County, Georgia. She recounts that Mrs. Grest was fond of her and her siblings and even allowed them to sleep at the end of her bed until her husband came home.

When she was seven, Susie and her brother were sent to live with her grandmother, Dolly, in Savannah. Her time in Savannah became the most formative in her childhood. Her grandmother was an industrious freed woman who traded goods to earn a living, along with being a laundress and taking care of bachelor rooms. In 1874, her life savings of \$3,000 was lost during the collapse of the Freedman’s Savings Bank, a misfortune that befell many freed blacks after the war. Susie, as a young child, would also witness the horrors of slavery. She saw the regular slave auctions as those of her race were sold off like cattle to the highest bidder.

One thing that Dolly understood was that Susie deserved an education. In 1855, it was still illegal for people of color to learn to read and write, especially if they were in bondage. Blatantly breaking the law, Dolly gave Susie into the hands of Mrs. Woodhouse, another free woman of color who took it upon herself to educate those of her race.

Susie continued her studies with Mrs. Woodhouse, and had a few other teachers, including a close white friend who agreed to teach her for a few months, and their landlord’s son until he mustered into the army. With her knowledge, she was able to write passes for her grandmother. Passes were required of slaves when they were unescorted by their masters into town, but even freed people of color needed these passes to be out late at night. Susie was able to forge passes for her grandmother, thanks to her education.

In April of 1861, the firing on Fort Sumter signaled the beginning of tumultuous and hopeful times for the enslaved people of the south. With tensions high, suspicion fell on the colored citizens and any hint of rebellion was severely dealt with. Susie’s grandmother was arrested at her church for singing a freedom hymn, As a result, Susie went to live with her mother again.

After the capture of Fort Pulaski in Savannah by Major-General David Hunter, a decree was made that all enslaved people within the vicinity were declared free. President Abraham Lincoln had reproached General Fremont for doing something similar at an earlier date but did not countermand Hunter’s declaration. This also led to the establishment of the “contraband” status as more freed people rushed to the Union lines for safety. Susie’s family was no different and she soon joined up with her uncle and family to flee to the St. Catherine

Islands in April of 1862. These islands had been occupied by the Union army since 1861 as a prime location to take shelter during storms and training new recruits.

It was on St. Simons Island that she saw her first Yankee. She was also noticed and approached to start up a school for the freed slaves on the island. She gladly agreed and was given books to do so. At the age of just fourteen, she was put in charge educating forty young children – and some adults.

While Susie was there, she witnessed the recruitment of the first colored regiment. Many of Susie's family members joined up here, and it's also where she married her first husband, Edward King. Though the 1st South Carolina Volunteers were not officially recognized until August of 1862, they did become one of the first colored regiments to engage in combat in the Department of the South.

St. Simons was evacuated in October and Susie King followed her husband to Camp Saxton as a laundress, nurse, and teacher. Her memoirs, the first of its kind published in 1902, goes into detail of her life within the camp. She talks about the fact that the soldiers were deprived of pay for 18 months until they were granted half pay in 1863, then full pay in 1864. Susie, however, would receive no pay for the entire four years of her time with the regiment.

Susie talked of many harrowing experiences. On one occasion when visiting a neighboring village with a lady named Mary Shaw, their wagon was stolen and they had to walk ten miles back to camp. When Charleston fell in February of 1865, she was one of the women to go into town to help after the Confederates had burned much of it and was surprised to see the citizens snub their nose at the army that was willing to help them regardless of their Southern sympathies. It'd be something of a precursor to the prejudice and injustices she would witness after the war.

Susie and Edward went back to Savannah. She was able to start a school, earning a wage as a teacher, while her husband struggled to find work despite his skills as a craftsman. He died on September 16th, 1866, just months before their firstborn child would come into the world.

For years afterward, she would struggle to find occupation as a teacher as more free schools like the Beach Institute would entice pupils young and old from her classrooms. Susie gave herself to domestic work and hopped around different families until she found herself in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1872, she was awarded a \$100 bounty for her late husband's service in the war, but she would remarry in 1879 to Russell Taylor.

In her memoir, she goes into detail about the injustice of the Jim Crow laws of segregation in the south. One such occasion was when she traveled to Shreveport, Louisiana to take care of her dying son in the 1890s. Perhaps it was her experiences and reflections on this visit that inspired her to pen her memoir of her time as a freed slave in the service of the Union army.

Her parting words at the end of her memoir sum up the importance of studying and honoring the contribution of the colored race in our nation's history.

"I wonder if our white fellow men realize the true sense or meaning of brotherhood? For two hundred years we toiled for them; the war of 1861 came and was ended, and we thought our race was forever free from bondage, and that the two races could live in unity with each other, but when we read almost every day of what is being done to my race by some whites in the South, I sometimes ask, 'Was the war in vain? Has it brought freedom, in the full sense of the word, or has it not made our condition more helpless?' In this 'land of free' we are

burned, tortured, and denied a fair trial, murdered for an imaginary wrong conceived in the brain of the negro-hating white man... All we ask for is 'equal justice', the same that is accorded to all other races who come to this country of their free will (not forced to, as we were), and are allowed to enjoy every privilege, unrestricted, while we are denied what is rightfully our own in a country which the labor of our forefathers helped to make what it is... I do not condemn all the Caucasian Race because the negro is badly treated by a few of the race. No! For had it not been for the true whites, assisted by God and the prayers of our forefathers, I should not be here to-day."

Even further, she tells us why the story of her and her fellow negresses should not be disregarded either.

"There are many people who do not know what some of the colored women did during the war. There were hundreds of them who assisted the Union soldiers by hiding them and helping them to escape... The soldiers were starving, and these women did all they could toward relieving those men, although they knew the penalty, should they be caught giving them aid... These things should be kept in history before the people. There has never been a greater war in the United States than the one of 1861, where so many lives were lost, – not men alone but noble women as well."

Edited from <https://belleonthebattlefield.wordpress.com/2020/02/28/a-black-womans-civil-war-memoir-susie-king-taylor/>



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

## ROUTINE INFORMATION

Send email to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto: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](mailto:bixlersc@gmail.com))
- **Building Usage:** 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](mailto:lindashowalter52@gmail.com) by noon on Saturday. It will run before and after the service.

**Bulletin Information:**

- Send announcements to [at lindashowalter52@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**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](https://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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