

# 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 8, 2026**

#### CALENDAR

- Sat, April 11: A Spring Walk Down the Peace Path, 4 – 6 pm (see Outreach)
- Wed, April 15: Wild Church, 10 am (see CLC)
- Thu, May 7: Shalom Sisters Lunch at The Bosphorus, 11:30 (see CLC)
- Thu, May 7: Eastside Creation Care Network will be touring Recycle Force, 816 N. Sherman Drive, 2:30 pm (see Outreach)
- 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)

- Thu, April 9: Carol Bixler
- Thu, April 9: Laura Harms
- Thu, April 9: Gabriella Turentine
- Sun, April 12: Joann Buerge
- Wed, April 15: Krystal Johnson



MealTrain®

A MealTrain has been organized for Nizeet and Chris Deiter and family after Nizeet's recent surgery. This will continue for the next 2 weeks on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. [Here](#) is the link to participate.

**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

### OUTREACH: RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND SHALOM

(chair), Becky Wigginton  
Pastoral Representative:

#### 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.

*\*\*\*Bring a lawn chair to set around the campfire and enjoy some of Frank and Linda's famous popcorn and yes, it's kid friendly!\*\*\**



**May 7 at 2:30 pm**, Eastside Creation Care Network will be touring Recycle Force, 816 N. Sherman Drive. RecycleForce is a 501(c)(3) committed to reducing crime through employment and job training while improving the environment through electronics recycling. Since 2006, RecycleForce has safely recycled more than 100 million pounds of electronic waste and recycles up to 97% of everything that comes through its doors.

### 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

**Last Sunday (4/5)** Craig brought the Easter message from Matthew 28.

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

**Next Sunday (4/19)** Craig will bring the message.

#### This week's Prayer List

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

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

From Angie:

Thanks for all the prayers. We've been feeling your love even though we are very far away. We were expected to travel back on Thursday (4/9) however, that has been postponed to an undetermined date. Today, Joel is getting a drain tube placed and current estimated time for it to be in there is 2-4 days. We are anxiously waiting for culture results from the fluid they pulled yesterday. He's more alert today and his coloring looks better. However, he struggles to breathe with minimal exertion. Even transferring from bed to recliner he breathes heavy. The other part of our struggle was changing our travel arrangements and finding a place for me to stay. There is a huge festival happening in Hilo this weekend and all accommodations are taken. I was able to rent a bedroom via Air BnB thru Sunday and it's 30 minutes away from the hospital. The hospital rooms are small and not equipped for me to stay overnight with Joel. Even though the hospital is small, the staff at the have been awesome. They recently just got MyChart by Epic which will be a plus when we get back. Easier for info to get transferred.

That's all the news we have at this time. Thanks for all the prayers! Oh, that reminds me, we are 6 hours behind you. While we appreciate the phone calls and texts, pls try to do them after 1pm Indy time. Angie and Joel



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>

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

## PERSON OF COLOR BIO (APOLOGIES FOR LAST WEEK'S DUPLICATION!)

### How 600 Years of Environmental Violence Is Still Harming Black Communities



Thousands of children in Flint, Michigan, were exposed to drinking water with elevated levels of lead in recent years. Meanwhile, in Lowndes County, Alabama, residents live with [raw sewage](#) because basic sanitation is not affordable. The fifth district of Saint James Parish in Louisiana is known as "[Cancer Alley](#)." The concentration of industrial petrochemical plants causes high rates of cancer among local residents there.

All of these cases are in predominantly Black areas. Studies show that Black people are [75% more likely](#) to live near oil and gas refineries, and Black Americans face higher risks of premature death from power plant pollution.

Although these are examples of the modern injustices affecting Black communities, they are born from environmental exclusion and violence that began hundreds of years ago. Below are examples of this history that, together, reveal a harmful pattern that Environmental Justice movements contend with to this day.

After more than 600 years, the journeys and actions of Christopher Columbus and other European colonialists led to some of the most significant geographical and social transformations of the Modern Era. In a matter of 100 years, nearly 60 million Indigenous Amerindians died due to foreign diseases, displacement, and wars waged on them by European colonial settlers. During this period more than 12 million Africans were forcibly transported to work as slaves in the United States and across the Americas.

These events changed the physical landscape of the Americas, altered global trade, and scaled the mass extraction of natural resources from the earth. Without help from Indigenous populations, European settlers would not have been able to adapt to the American topography. Likewise, tropical African agricultural knowledge and skills were crucial to European settlers being able to successfully build plantation economies. European settlers appropriated skills and information from Indigenous Americans and enslaved Africans but largely omitted these contributions from historical records.

In 1862 the Homestead Act gave European settlers up to 160 acres of unceded Indigenous land provided they live on it, claim it, and improve it. At the time, most Black people were still legally enslaved, and 90% of Indigenous people were wiped out — neither were seen as citizens. As a result, only European settlers could take advantage of this legislation that then built wealth for their families for future generations.

As early as 1866, after the establishment of Yosemite Valley as protected wilderness, a few national parks were being overseen by Buffalo Soldiers — the entirely Black cavalry and infantry regiments of the U.S. army who were, among other duties, stationed at national parks across the Midwest and West. They were among the first Park Rangers. Despite this, national parks were not safe for African Americans, as lynching was widespread, and most national parks denied Blacks entry, anyway. Prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, people of color were legally excluded from (or segregated at) public recreational sites, including national and state parks, beaches, gardens, and lakes.

Even after slavery was made illegal, Black people were still disenfranchised from land ownership and enjoying the great outdoors. As a result, between 1916 to 1970, 6 million Black people migrated from the rural South to urban centers in the Midwest, West, and Northeast for more economic opportunities created by the World Wars. Even when Black families started moving into urban centers, they still experienced environmental racism.

Exclusionary urban planning and predatory banking practices emerged as Black migration changed the demographics of U.S. cities. Black people were forced to live in the most undesirable areas, in neighborhoods that cities divested from — near industrial sites.

This movement brought us some key environmental laws such as the *National Environmental Policy Act*. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act led the way by prohibiting racial discrimination in any activities that receive federal funds, which includes national parks. The growing mainstream *Environmental Movement* of the late 1960s and early 1970s looked very different from this.

The *Environmental Movement* was once mostly composed of and defined by middle-class White Americans advocating for the protection of wilderness, animals, and other things that were a luxury to enjoy. This type of environmentalism ignored the degradation of environments and absence of green spaces in places inhabited by Black and Indigenous populations. It did not acknowledge how colonialism and racism justify putting profit over people, natural places, and ecosystems. Despite political gains such as the Wilderness Act and Endangered Species Act, it was a movement based on privilege.

In October 1991, the First National People of Color Leadership Summit took place in Washington, D.C. This summit recognized and brought to the forefront Black, Brown and Indigenous people's leadership in protecting our environments and natural places. At this summit, [17 principles of Environmental Justice](#) were drafted and adopted.

These principles remain relevant today, as the impacts from histories of exclusion and environmental violence continue to influence communities of color. A 2018 report indicated that Black Americans make up less than 2% of national park visitors, which suggests that our nation's racial legacies are still potent in the natural places meant for us all.

**Environmentalism will only succeed** by acknowledging that injustices against Black and Indigenous people happen alongside the destruction of the earth. As the Environmental Justice and Environmental Movements grow to meet each other, we have to reckon with the past so that we do not reproduce it in the future.

Edited from <https://earthjustice.org/article/overlooked-connections-between-black-injustice-and-environmentalism>

Originally published on March 30, 2021.



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 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](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 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](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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