

JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

December 21, 2022

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Brittany Bither

Last Sunday (12/18), was the fourth Sunday of Advent, and we are going to be studying the virgin birth prophecy in Isaiah 7:10-16 as a call to take substantial steps of faith in the anticipation of Christ's coming - something that Mary and Joseph had to do right from the beginning.

This Sunday (12/25), is Christmas, and we will be serving coffee and pastries before church and have a special service beginning at **10am**. The theme will be on the joy of the shepherds - a joy in which we can still participate more than 2,000 years later.

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

Pictures. As our church family grows, we all want to be able to connect names with faces. We plan to make a bulletin board that has current pictures of everyone who attends regularly along with their names. On Sundays, you may find Jeanne Smucker asking you to pose for a picture to go on the new bulletin board. If you have a photograph that you prefer to use, please give it to her. Otherwise, smile and get your picture taken. Thanks.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

CALENDAR

Wednesday, December 21 at 7 pm, Longest Night Service in the sanctuary. We are surrounded in this season by the sounds and sights of joy – family gatherings, parties, and laughter. Many of us are reminded, by the very nature of the Christmas season, of those who are absent from our family circles. All are welcome to attend this Advent service.

Saturday, December 24, 7:00 pm, Christmas Eve service at First Mennonite Church

Sunday, December 25, 9:15 coffee, pastries, and fellowship before worship. 10:00 am Worship, NO Sunday School.

Monday, January 2 from 9a to 3p Brian's Roving Office at Northwest Panera, 2902 W 86th St, Indianapolis, IN

Thursday, January 12, 6 pm Commission Chairs

Tuesday, January 17, 7 pm Community Life Commission

Monday, January 23 from 9a to 3p Brian's Roving Office at Greenwood Panera, 789 US Highway 31 N, Greenwood, IN

Monday, January 30 from 9a to 3p Brian's Roving Office at Fishers Panera Bread - 8510 E 96th Street, Fishers, IN

Monday, February 6 from 9a to 3p - Brian's Roving Office at East Side Starbucks, 9605 E Washington St., Indianapolis, IN

Monday, February 13 from 9a to 3p - Brian's Roving Office at Downtown Starbucks, 430 Massachusetts Ave., Indianapolis, IN

Monday, February 27 from 9a to 3p - Brian's Roving Office at Northwest Panera, 2902 W 86th St, Indianapolis, IN

Bulletins are now attached with the Zoom link for those who are worshipping on Zoom. There will continue to be a virtual zoom option available for those who will be at home or away. A link will continue to be sent out each week. At this time, we will not be able to accommodate active participation from home. If you have a prayer request or announcement you would like to share, there will be two options. You can either **email** the office at office@shalommennonite.com or pastors@shalommennonite.com with the request by Saturday night and a pastor will share the request at church, or you may **type your request live into the chat** feature on zoom and someone on the tech team will read it to the congregation at church.

Celebrations

Thur, Dec 22 -- Frank Kandel
Sun, Dec 25 -- Carol Bither
Mon, Dec 26 -- Melanie Hernandez
Tue, Dec 27 -- Robert Love

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships

Chair: Martha Yoder

Children's Sunday School

The second semester of Children's Sunday School will begin on January 8, 2023. A BIG Thank you to our teachers from Fall and the teachers that will continue or being in January.

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Zenebe Abebe

Tasha Diener's Update Letter is attached.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

Chair: Joyce Troyer

Vision and Accountability Team

Chair: Cheryl Martin

Administration

Chair: Mike Wigginton

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bulletin announcements should be sent to Linda Showalter at showalter@indy.rr.com by Thursday, 10 am.

Anyone who is without plans for Christmas Day are invited to share lunch and fellowship with us in our home. Ham and potatoes are on the menu; time will be determined by when church is over. Please let us know if you can join us. Jim and Linda – showalter@indy.rr.com, 317-542-1625

In addition to our podcast, Shalom has a **YouTube channel**, and many of our Zoom Sessions including the sermons in the "Story of the Bible" sermon series and the "Facing Hard Questions" sessions - can be found there. 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 https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEn30AED17Q_ReoskuxUXA!

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.

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 compiles *Journeying Together* each week. You can continue to send information to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday. Craig 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.

Reflections for the Journey

*The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"
(Luke 2:10-14)*

When I first moved to Maryland after seminary there were times of loneliness. I was away from my family, away from the friends I had, and at times the longing for "home" and the feelings of loneliness were very much present. This would happen throughout the year. These feelings I had were surely going to be multiplied by Christmas, wouldn't they? I was sure they would, but something different happened. I realized that I was in a prime position to celebrate Christmas in way I never had before. I was going to be away from family at Christmas and I hadn't made very many friends yet. The food, the games, the laughing, the things that I associated with Christmas was not going to happen. But something else did happen. I was reminded often that God was with me. The distance, the longing, the vulnerability I was feeling made me ready to receive God with me in a new way.

Perhaps it was the first time on Christmas Day that I truly experienced that God went to great lengths to be with humanity. That God in human form came so that humanity could experience God with us. That in times of great loneliness we could know that God is with us now and forever, especially on Christmas, the day we celebrate Christ's birth. It ended up being a great Christmas. I certainly still missed the games, food, family, and fun, but I was missing those things throughout the year as is. But on Christmas I was given the great gift of experiencing God's great gift of being with me. I ended up having some of my best Christmas experiences on days where the only people I saw were those working at Hong Kong Express where I got my takeout for Christmas dinner. But in between the watching of A Christmas Story and eating Chinese food was the slow and stillness of the day comforted by God's presence and reflecting of the work of Christ in me and in the world.

Don't get me wrong. This Christmas, after our service on Sunday, I will be headed to my mom's house. I will be seeing siblings, nieces and nephews, I will be eating good food, and playing games and I'll try to remember what I have previously learned. Those things are great and fun, but they also can't replace the knowing and experiencing of God with us.

Journeying Together is a weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church: 6100 E 32nd St, 46226; (317) 549-0577 shalommennonite.com

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Vision & Accountability Team: Cheryl Martin, Carol Bixler, Frank Kandel, Grace Rhine, Mark Stocksdale
Brian Bither, Craig Oury
