

JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

November 24, 2021

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Brittany Bither

Last Sunday (11/21), Finishing the series on Numbers, Craig looked at Numbers 31 and also John 18: 33-37 and moving from fighting for earthly kingdoms to sacrificing for heavenly ones.

This Sunday (11/28), we begin the Advent season, during which we will be “daring to imagine” the good news of Jesus Christ again. Brian will be preaching from Jeremiah 33 about how we should act as agents of hope as the world waits for Christ.

Next Sunday (12/05), is the second Sunday of Advent, which has the theme of peace. Brian will be continuing the Leader series by “daring to imagine God’s embrace” in light of Malachi 4:1-3.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

CALENDAR

From Sept. 19 to Nov. 28, at 9:30, Wilma Bailey is leading us in a study of the book of Numbers.

Sat, November 20, from 9 am-noon, Fall work day at the church. Fellowship will be serving a lunch outside for our Fall Workday. So come and work up a hunger!

Sun, December 5, Congregational Budget Approval Meeting on Zoom after worship.

Sun, December 5, During the Sunday School Hour (9:30) congregation discussion about safely gathering

Celebrations

Mon, Nov 29 – John Amstutz

Opportunity to Team-Teach Sunday School: What is team teaching? It means working with two teachers for each classroom so that each teacher can benefit from schedule flexibility and extra creativity. We have some great teachers ready to re-start Children and Youth Sunday School when we return to in-person worship and they have all expressed their interest in the benefits of team teaching.

Tentative class break-down:

●□□□□□□□□PreK (3 students)

○ Layla, Calvin, Leo

●□□□□□□□□K-2nd (5 students)

○ Liam, Lexie, Mia, Sydney, Melanie

●□□□□□□□□JYF/MYF (probably 4-5 students)

- Jacob, Phoenix, Gabby, Caleb, Jason

Since we'll be using the indoor classrooms, we request that all teachers be vaccinated against Covid-19. Due to the challenges of getting 2-yr-olds to wear masks, we are not planning for a classroom setting for them at this point. There is no set date for the start of Sunday School yet.

I'll be reaching out with requests for help with team teaching but it would also be great if you reached out to me! harms.laura@gmail.com or 317-572-0017.

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships

Chair: Martha Yoder

Last spring we had a Sunday school class on Dismantling Institutional Racism in Congregations, using an online curriculum from Widerstand Consulting. You should have received an email in March inviting you to participate in Niche Academy, which provided the structure for our participation. If you would like to review any of that material, or if you would like to see their material on how to do a congregational audit, your username is your email address and your old password should still work. If you have lost your password, you can click on "forgot password" to create a new one. If you need help, email Martha Yoder Maust at yodermaust@gmail.com and I can send you a new invitation. We have access to this material until the end of February.

Mennonite Central Committee is providing a free webinar on "the complicity of the Church in racism and how all can journey as a witness and transformative presence with God's beloved inclusive global community." You can register for the December 2 webinar and view recordings of 3 precious webinars at https://mcc.org/color-compromise-honest-look-racism-church?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Great_Lakes_In_Touch_November_2021&utm_content=Great_Lakes_In_Touch_November_2021+CID_263624a36ff3d5d9defa9dbd211e902c&utm_source=CM&utm_term=Learn%20more
<https://mcc.org/color-compromise-honest-look-racism-church?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Great_Lakes_In_Touch_November_2021&utm_content=Great_Lakes_In_Touch_November_2021+CID_263624a36ff3d5d9defa9dbd211e902c&utm_source=CM&utm_term=Learn%20more>

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Zenebe Abebe

I am happy to announce that Sabrina Falls, has kindly accepted the call to serve on the Outreach Commission effective immediately. She will be serving alongside Brad Yoder, Pastor Brian Bither, Marilyn Teel and Zenebe Abebe. If and when you have any question or concerns please feel free to contact any one of us. Zenebe

One of the ecumenical organizations Shalom supports through our annual budget and in other ways is Faith in Indiana (FII). Formerly IndyCan focusing in Marion County, FII became a state-wide organization in 2017, with eight staff, and chapters in Allen, Elkhart, Hamilton, Lake, Marion, and St. Joseph Counties. FII is a partner of the national Faith in Action Network.

FII's overall mission is reflected in its Families First Campaign. Faith leaders act on our faith values to put human dignity, abundance, and equity at the center of public decisions, and involve congregations in the quest for social justice. The ecumenical, interracial, state-wide board of directors includes every faith tradition—Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, and others. Five main goals of Families First include:

- 1) restorative justice- a criminal justice system that promotes healing and reconciliation, shifting resources away from mass incarceration of people of color, immigrants, and poor people, ending of cash bail, accountable law enforcement, and rehabilitation for mental illness and addiction; universal background checks for guns, and ban of assault weapons
- 2) immigrant inclusion- welcoming people who travel to escape from danger, make a better, more secure life, access to housing, employment, education, health care, driver's licenses, and a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants
- 3) universal affordable health care- movement toward access for all to preventive and restorative health care, and reduction of costs
- 4) a caring economy- a world in which all workers earn enough to support themselves and their families, paid medical leave when needed, excellent education for all from preschool through college
- 5) fair democracy- automatic voter registration, full participation in elections, fair redistricting, responsive public officials, people at the center of politics.

As participants with Faith in Indiana, we at Shalom join with religious people from many faiths to put our faith into practice for social and economic justice, to improve the quality of life for many of Indiana's most vulnerable people. We serve to reach out as the hands and feet of Jesus of Nazareth.

Brad Yoder, for Outreach Commission

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

Chair: Joyce Troyer

SGDT is grateful for all who serve Shalom! At this time, the official positions for the church year are filled, but volunteers are always needed and appreciated. Although the pandemic limits what we can do in person, the work of the church continues. If you are interested in an area of service, please contact Joyce Troyer (troyers_hj@hotmail.com), Frank Kandel (kandel93@gmail.com), or Raphael Edou (raphaedou@gmail.com).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Safely Gathering Committee was created by the Commission Chairs in 2020. We want to have an open conversation with the congregation to explain how we have been making decisions and talk about challenges going forward. This conversation is scheduled for 9:30 AM on December 5.

Here are some of the resources that we have been using:

1. Local data from <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm>
2. County cases per 100,000 population per day from <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>
3. Centers for Disease Control individual advice at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html> as well as (months ago) some pages on community organizations that were taken down when the Delta variant became prominent.
4. Advice for churches at <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/january-web-only/church-reopening-vaccine-coronavirus-covid-advice.html>
5. Resources from The Hymn Society, especially an updated document prepared by church leadership of several denominations in June 2021 at <https://thehymnsociety.org/covid-19/> (scroll down a few lines to find

the updated one), especially pages 8 and 9.

6. Specifically about singing, a resource from Sing! The Center for Congregational Song

<https://congregationsong.org/covid-congregational-song-update-may-18-2021/>

7. Various studies of singing and masks, including

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02786826.2020.1812502>

As of 11/16, Marion County is at 26.3 cases/100,000 population/day.

Martha, for Safely Gathering Committee

AID

Last year, Shalom voted to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding with an organization called Indiana AID (Assistants to Immigrants in Detention), which is a volunteer group created to support immigrants in the state of Indiana who are detained at the Clay County jail. Up to this point, Indiana AID has not been able to reach the immigrants detained there because Clay County ended all in-person visitation for health reasons. However, we recently learned that we can connect with the immigrants detained there through a virtual visitation program, and so several volunteers with Indiana AID have spent the last several weeks training and preparing to start visiting immigrants through that program.

We are very grateful for the opportunity to meet with people virtually, but there is a downside as well: every virtual visit costs \$13, and since we hope to set up weekly visitation with several immigrants at once, those costs (as well as potential others) add up quickly. The Coordinating Committee decided that we need at least \$1000 to get this program started, and we thought we would begin by asking if anyone from Shalom would be willing to donate. You can do this by sending a check to Shalom Mennonite Church and writing "Indiana AID" in the Memo Line (all proceeds will go into the account) or by going on our website, clicking the "Giving" tab, and following the instructions that allow you to direct online donations to Indiana AID. Thank you for your support of this ministry.

Deacons

The deacon program, which was formed last year in the wake of the pandemic, consists of seven deacons who maintain caring relationships with every adult who regularly or semi-regularly attends Shalom (except for those who have asked to be exempted). Eventually, Shalom will have a congregational discussion to determine whether we want to adopt this program as a permanent part of our church structure, but for now, as the pandemic continues to disrupt our church life, the VAT has decided to renew it at least until the spring. Because there have been some changes in both the number of deacons and the membership of the church, some people who were previously assigned to the care of one deacon have been transferred to another. Each Shalom attendee who did not opt out of the program should expect contact from your deacon sometime in the next month either to introduce themselves to you or reaffirm the relationship. If you have questions about who your deacon is or want to opt out of the program, you can email Brian at brian@shalommennonite.com.

Hoosiers Concerned About Gun Violence November newsletter is attached.

Give gifts of comfort and joy with MCC!

Delight your loved ones and share God's love with our global neighbors this Christmas. Choose from unique gifts such as goats, clean water, fruit trees, books and many more. Give at mcc.org/delight or call 888.563.4676.

Advent Devotional

Mennonite Church USA is once again offering its **free Advent at Home devotional**. Written by Talashia Keim Yoder, pastor of Christian Formation at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana, the 2021 guide follows the theme of Leader magazine and is appropriate for all ages. Download your copy here. <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/adventathome>

In addition to our podcast, Shalom now 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 is now compiling *Journeying Together* each week. You can continue to send information to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday. Craig is now 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 ON THE JOURNEY

Happy Thanksgiving Shalom!

I love Thanksgiving and I have for as long as I can remember. Thanksgiving is my family's biggest holiday, we gather for two or three days playing games, eating, playing more games, eating, playing more games, eating, well you get the idea. Laughing, hugging, singing, so much joy and fun.

At different times, family members who have been going through a hard period of life have expressed how important our Thanksgiving gatherings have been during those times. That looking forward to the gathering helps, if only for a short time, as a respite to the struggles life has brought. That gathering with loved ones has been a place for support for when they have needed the ears and understanding of family.

Catching up with cousins, aunts, uncles, and as the years have progressed generations keep going, many of my cousins are grandparents so the gatherings have grown quite large and often Thanksgiving is the only time I see these extended members of family. It is neat to see how important this gathering is for so many of us. My niece is hosting this year for the first time, when her and her husband bought a house, one of her requirements was needing a good house to host Thanksgiving. It is something that is talked about for months in excitement and anticipation. In recent years as some generations sprout new and grow large, other generations are getting smaller and fewer. Aunt Eloise, Uncle Ed, my dad, people who were huge staples of these gatherings are no longer with us. Part of gatherings now are the sadness of those we have lost while being thankful for the time we had with them crying and laughing over their memories.

My dad had always lead us in singing our prayer before dinner. Since we didn't really have Thanksgiving last year it'll be the first without hearing his voice over exaggerating as a pitch pipe to try to get us on tune. I know I wont be the only one crying through "our family song" but that is helpful to have people with me who know my/our shared loss.

This Thanksgiving I am thankful for Shalom. Even though I'm still getting to know the culture and relationships, I feel that we are a family with some of those same qualities. To share grief and sadness when appropriate, but to also enjoy being with each other and thankful for each other. – Craig

(Below is the song my family sings every Thanksgiving as our prayer, maybe you are familiar with it)

Father we thank thee for the night by Rebecca J. Weston

1 Father, we thank Thee for the night,
And for the pleasant morning light;

For rest and food and loving care,
And all that makes the world so fair.

2 Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good;
In all we do, in work or play,
To love Thee better every day.

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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