

JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

December 29, 2021

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Brittany Bither

Last Sunday (12/26), Christmas Sunday, Craig looked at the lasting and unexpected Gift of God with us using Colossians 3:12-17

This Sunday (1/2), we will be experimenting with a different type of virtual worship experience, in which Brian will lead us in a discussion of Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 and we will break into small groups a few times in the service to worship through conversation.

Next Sunday (1/9), Craig will be looking at Isaiah 43:1-7 and God's promise to be with us.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

CALENDAR

Sunday, January 2 No Sunday School

Sunday, January 9 at 9:30a - Sunday School class: The Bible Project, led by OlaJowon Turentine

Celebrations

Thur, Dec 30 -- Becky & Mike Wigginton, 1978

Sat, Jan 1 -- CoraLyn Turentine

Mon, Jan 3 -- Marcela Rosales Harms

Wed, Jan 5 -- Zenebe Abebe

Administration

Chair: Mike Wigginton

Please note the following report based on our congregational decision of 12/5/2021 regarding the use of our year-end Budget Checking Account surplus:

Checking balance on 12/27/2021 was \$47,000

- \$5,000 transferred to Antiracism Fund
- \$11,000 transferred to Building Fund
- \$11,000 divided between the following mission projects
 - \$2,200 to MMN
 - \$2,200 to MCC
 - \$2,200 to MDS
 - \$2,200 to Wigginton-Bravo missionary support
 - \$2,200 to First Friends Afghan Resettlement Program
- \$20,000 left in Budget Checking Account to be carried into 2022

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.

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Zenebe Abebe

On behalf of the Outreach Commission, I am forwarding the attached Arlington Woods Neighborhood Association (AWNA) year end report.

From time to time, our congregation has been briefed on activities at the neighborhood association. For now, Shalom Mennonite church's involvement in this organization is limited to my attending monthly association meetings. However, the past couple of years, several Shalom members were involved in neighborhood cleanup days, which is very much appreciated by members of the neighborhood association.

Going forward, we hope that Shalom will be more actively involved in our neighborhood affairs.

Zenebe Abebe, for Outreach Commission.

South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu's death this week represents the passing of one of the human family's strongest, most courageous, and most persistent advocates for social justice and equality. He, along with Archbishop Oscar Romero from El Salvador, have been among my heroes since I have had the opportunity to be multiple times in both of their countries. (I visited briefly with Tutu in Cape Town in 2010.) These two never met, but each knew about, and supported, the work of the other in fighting against oppression in their own part of the Earth. Their deaths were contrasts. Romero was assassinated at the age of 63 while celebrating the Mass in San Salvador in 1980; Tutu died from the consequences of cancer at age 90. I want to share the following poem I wrote about Tutu and Romero a few years ago:

TWO GIANTS FOR JUSTICE

El Salvador and South Africa nurtured two of the human family's greatest giants for justice—

Archbishop Oscar Romero and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Did they ever meet? [No.]

Would that have been too much greatness to be contained in one room?

Would the walls have exploded because they couldn't contain

that much concentrated God-presence in one place?

Or would the walls move in and embrace Oscar and Desmond, together?

No, the walls would probably stay right where they are

Because a sign of greatness is the unobtrusive living in and among

all of the oft-unacknowledged magnificent wonder

of daily time-and-place human experience.

Brad Yoder

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

Chair: Joyce Troyer

To allow everyone to participate in congregational discussions regarding LGBTQ in January and February, the Sunday school class on Spiritual Gifts Discernment will be postponed to begin on March 6. If you have interest in discerning your spiritual gifts prior to then, or if you prefer a format other than a group class, please contact Joyce Troyer at troyers_hj@hotmail.com.

Vision and Accountability Team

Chair: Cheryl Martin

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Repentance Resolution - As mentioned at church this past Sunday, our church belongs to a larger church network called the Mennonite Church USA, and this May, MCUSA's delegate body is going to be consider whether to bring a resolution called "A Resolution for Repentance and Transformation" (linked [here](#)) to the denomination for a vote at the July 2023 convention. This resolution is unlike anything that has come to the Mennonite Church conventions before. It addresses the subjects of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, asking the church to repent for its past mistreatment of LGBTQ+ individuals, calling on us to abolish church policy that prohibits LGBTQ+ exclusion, and demanding LGBTQ+ representation on all future boards and programs sponsored by MCUSA.

Shalom Mennonite Church has never taken an official stance, one way or the other, on LGBTQ+ issues, nor have we had much teaching or conversation about these issues. In light of this development, Shalom's leadership teams have decided that it is time for us to broach these issues through a Sunday school class in January and February and some congregational conversations around that same time. We are not planning on making any statements or taking any action during this first phase of our discernment, but we invite everyone to prayerfully participate so that we can hear the Holy Spirit guide us as a body. In the spring, we will shift our attention to the anti-racism audit, but we intend to come back to the Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation conversation before the summer of 2023 with some goals that will be shaped by our conversations in January and February.

Dear Shalom Family,

We would like to share our joy with all of you. Abigail Mae Aguilar Deiter was born December 11th in the afternoon. We are doing well, just getting used to the lack of sleep. We praise God for a healthy baby.

We love you all,

Chris and Nizeet Deiter

Funds to support Gemima and daughters: Gemima has received support for the month of January but the funds are low to continue the support in February and beyond. If you would like to help, you can send donations to Shalom noting Hernández/ Trochez on the memo. Funds are not tax deductible.
Thank you, Laura Harms

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 is 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 ON THE JOURNEY

The Presence of God

“Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned.” Luke 8:37

The story of Jesus, the demon possessed person, the pigs, and the rest of the people of Gerasenes is the topic of the reflection for today. The story is such an interesting one. A person who had many demons for a long time has been healed by Jesus and the response is unpredictable, or maybe it is obvious response that I don't expect.

They saw the terrific healer, Jesus Christ. They saw the unmeasurable power, love, mercy, and grace from his actions towards the demon possessed person. The local inhabitants who came to meet Jesus were overawed by the event. They were neither joyful at the healing (they can now travel freely along the path to the cemetery and the lake) nor angry at the loss of their pigs but frightened by the presence of someone so powerful. A powerful stranger in their midst. They begged him to leave them and go back where he came from. It seems curious, doesn't it? I wonder why perhaps they didn't want to see more of this stranger.

I wonder if because people have never liked change. The people knew the evil, they knew how to avoid it. I wonder if they like having a person who could be the “bad” or “evil” in town so others could go on about their lives in perhaps “good” or “bad” ways that were being overlooked? But what will he see that is wrong with me? They may have asked themselves, or I could see myself asking. He clearly is extremely powerful, maybe he knows that I hold on to (insert whatever sin we may have) here. The power of God for good, intersects with our own lives all the time. But when it comes it can disrupt our lives. So we are tempted to dismiss that power in our lives, because our focus is the disruptiveness. I don't want to change. I don't want anything asked of me or my time. I don't want to be exposed as not being perfect. So I'm not going to let this disruptive, yet good into my life. Get out of here Jesus. Perhaps we all do that. The presence of God with us asks us to grow and change. Maybe that is a cause for fear, and an unwillingness to take an honest look at ourselves while God is doing the same. Yet, that is why we need God among us, to address the things in our lives that we may not want to deal with. So that we can then grow into God's likeness.

Merry fifth day of Christmas! -- Craig

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

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