

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

March 13, 2022

### WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Brittany Bither

**Last Sunday (3/13)**, was the second Sunday of Lent and Craig will be preaching from Luke 13:31-35.

**This Sunday (3/20)**, is the third Sunday of Lent and Brian will be preaching from Luke 13:1-9 about the urgency of repentance.

**Next Sunday (3/27)**, is the fourth Sunday of Lent, and Brian will be preaching about the freedom of confession from Psalm 32.

### COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

### CALENDAR

Sunday morning worship begins at 9:30 with Sunday School following

Adult Sunday School will be in the sanctuary and will also be available on Zoom.

**As we begin meeting in person**, 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](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) or [pastors@shalommennonite.com](mailto: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.

**Shalom encourages participants** to be connected to others in the church in multiple ways for support and fellowship. Small groups are a primary way for these contacts and connections to occur. Now that many of us are able to meet in person again, it's time to rethink small groups. Some groups have kept meeting virtually during the past two years, some have met infrequently when weather permitted, and some haven't met. Most of us have learned the basics of using Zoom and other apps to stay in touch with others. Technology will continue to be a valuable means of connecting for individuals who remain at risk, are at a distance, or have other reasons to avoid in-person meetings.

Interest has been expressed in a virtual small group that meets weekly to discuss the sermon and meditate on related scriptures. Please contact Herb Troyer ([troyers\\_hj@hotmail.com](mailto:troyers_hj@hotmail.com)) if you are interested in joining this group or want to be in a small group with a different focus. Herb Troyer

### Celebrations

Thur, March 17 -- Abri Hochstetler

Fri, March 18 -- CoraLyn & OlaJowon Turentine, 2009

Tue, March 22 -- Kara Hochstetler

Elise Hochstetler

Herb & Joyce Troyer, 1976

### DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships

Chair: Martha Yoder

We are ready to invite children back to in-person Sunday School on March 13. Classes offered will be:  
PreK class for 3-5yr olds not enrolled in school - Taught by Carol Weaver with Tania Goodloe  
Early Elementary for K-3rd grade - Taught by Debora Akotonou with Rose Love  
JYF/MYF for 6th-12th grade - Co-taught by OlaJowon Turentine and Frank Kandel with Julie Sanders  
Older MYF students will also be invited to join an adult class if they prefer.  
For any questions you can contact Laura Harms

[harms.laura@gmail.com](mailto:harms.laura@gmail.com)

March 20, 27, April 3, 10, 24: OlaJowon will lead us in Bible study using tools from BibleProject.com  
April 17, Easter, no Sunday school for adults or children

**Do you have questions about Shalom**, the Mennonite Church, or the Christian faith? Are you interested in making a deeper commitment? The Discipling Commission will be planning a baptism exploration class soon, which is designed for people who are new to Shalom, Mennonites, or Christianity to learn, ask questions, and get involved. Please email Brian at [brian@shalommennonite.com](mailto:brian@shalommennonite.com) if you are interested

### **OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom**

Chair: Zenebe Abebe

During the month of March please bring **non perishable** items to church for the Morning Star Church Food Pantry in Muncie.

Thank you!

Frank Kandel for the Outreach Commission

House Bill 1296, which would end the licensing of handguns in Indiana, is still on Governor Eric Holcomb's desk. If you agree with Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence that this bill would make us **less safe** in Indiana, please contact Governor Eric Holcomb, and ask him to **veto** this bill, as follows:

Indiana Government

Office of the Governor

Ask Eric

Complete the form with your message

If you need ideas, the following could be included:

- 1) HB 1296 will make us less safe in Indiana
- 2) Law enforcement agencies are almost unanimously opposed to this bill (Indiana State Police, Indiana Association of Chiefs of Police, Indiana Fraternal Order of Police, etc.)
- 3) There is strong evidence that gun licensing laws **do work** to keep handguns away from people who wouldn't use them safely (3.3 gun deaths/100,000 people in states that have licensing, versus 5.2 deaths in states that don't have licensing)

Thank you for considering this important social justice issue.

Brad Yoder, for Outreach Commission

ReplyReply AllForwardEdit as new

### **ARLINGTON WOODS NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION**

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 Zenebe Abebe 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.

Our involvement as a church is a positive one and has created energy and great appreciation about our partnership by the Neighborhood Association. We hope that Shalom congregation will be more actively involved in our neighborhood's affairs.

**You're Invited:**

The outreach commission agreed to have one other person from Shalom attend the Arlington Woods Neighborhood Association meeting with Zenebe. This will strengthen our relationship more, and when Zenebe is unable to attend a meeting, there will always be someone at the table representing our congregation.

All meetings are scheduled for Monday evenings once a month for about an hour and starts at 6:00 PM. The next meeting will be Monday, March 28. If interested to be part of this ministry, please contact Zenebe at (920) 602- 7339.

Zenebe Abebe, for Outreach Commission.

**Disability Awareness Month**

Although not as well-known as basketball and Saint Patrick's Day in Indiana, March also has the title of Disability Awareness Month. Shalom is a member of Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADN) whose vision is "Faith communities are transformed when individuals with disabilities and their God-given gifts and experiences enjoy full inclusion in the Body of Christ." Their website includes comprehensive resources for all categories of disabilities including caregiving and hidden disabilities: <https://www.anabaptistdisabilitiesnetwork.org/Resources/Pages/resources.aspx>.

One gem of many in ADN's resource list is the inspiring recorded webinar ***Do You Want To Get Well? Healing What Divides Us*** with Amy Julia Becker. She addresses the many social divisions in our society and how we can move beyond inclusion to belonging: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrvtYdSxvc8>.

Planning for the care of a dependent family member with disabilities is the subject of free webinar provided by ADN on March 31. It can be attended at 2:00pm ET or 8pm ET, or viewed later. For more information, please click here: <https://www.anabaptistdisabilitiesnetwork.org/Resources/Webinars/Pages/After-We're-Gone.aspx>.

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM**

Chair: Joyce Troyer

**Vision and Accountability Team**

Chair: Cheryl Martin

As we begin to gather in person for worship, there are some guidelines we will need to follow. These guidelines are meant to help us worship safely without causing illness to our fellow church members. We have planned these guidelines to be respectful to each other, to show our love for one another, and to help others feel safe. Thank you for showing your love and respect for one another in these ways.

1. Please do not attend services if you are feeling ill in any way.
2. All persons must wear a mask during the entire service and while in the building.
3. We request that only fully vaccinated individuals (if eligible for vaccination) attend services.
4. Please space yourselves in the sanctuary so there is sufficient distance between groups and individuals.
5. There will not be a coffee time between church and Sunday school at this time.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Several** Shalom households participate in a group subscription to Anabaptist World. Our subscription expires in June 2022 and we will be submitting our updated list of subscribers by the end of March. **If you would like to receive Anabaptist World, please let me know in the next two weeks** and I will add your name to the list of subscribers. It is a monthly publication and the group rate is **\$39 per year**.

Bob Love

Larissa Douglass, whose husband Will Douglas is the pastor of Howard-Miami Mennonite Church near Kokomo, was recently diagnosed with aggressive GI cancer. Treatment is not finalized but will likely include surgery and chemotherapy. They have five children ages 10 - 17, A GoFund me fundraiser has been created to help cover her medical expenses, gas for weekly trips to Indianapolis for treatment, and other family expenses. To contribute, please go to [https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-douglas-family-larissa-battles-cancer?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=pc%20share-sheet&fbclid=IwAR2oEsxd-Dyi2qy0CdrRGsvRFNW80i\\_Yv1rOA99XwmGKMpudk3XgBj4z0uM](https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-douglas-family-larissa-battles-cancer?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=pc%20share-sheet&fbclid=IwAR2oEsxd-Dyi2qy0CdrRGsvRFNW80i_Yv1rOA99XwmGKMpudk3XgBj4z0uM)

**People of Shalom** we would like to hear from you! We are looking for people to write reflections for *Journeying Together*. It can be a story, an experience, a poem, or a response to a piece of Scripture. If you would like to give a try sometime email the office at, [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) and we would be happy to schedule a week for you.

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!](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](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) or [bixlersc@gmail.com](mailto:bixlersc@gmail.com).

Craig Oury is compiles *Journeying Together* each week. You can continue to send information to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto: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](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) or [craig@shalommennonite.com](mailto:craig@shalommennonite.com).

## REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

I wrote this reflection on the "ides of March," best known as the day that Roman Senators assassinated Julius Caesar for seeking dictatorship over their republic, and it appears here on the eve of "Purim", when Jews commemorate their deliverance from annihilation in ancient Persia, a story told in the Megillah (scroll) of Esther. These dates are significant--but not planned--at least not on my part--as I felt led to reflect theologically on the stark contrast between the presidents of Russia and Ukraine.\* Along with many people over recent weeks, I have been greatly inspired by Volodymyr Zelensky. Even before becoming president, he had numerous fans as a highly successful and charming actor, comedian, and--yes--winner of the Ukrainian version of "Dancing with the Stars"! (These clips will melt your heart: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIJywp7E3Gw> ) When he became president, however, expectations of his abilities in this new role were fairly low.

Ironically, he once acted in an eerily prescient sitcom called "Servant of the People" in which he played a high-school teacher who rails against corruption and, after a student's film of him goes viral, ends up elected president! Then he actually did become president! I don't know if he's still playing a role, acting "as if" he has the power of the Holy Spirit with him. I do know that he is bravely and self-sacrificially standing with his people and up to the Russian tyrant. He appears ready to lay down his life, if need be, for his friends (John 15:13).

As I offered during worship sharing time a couple of weeks ago, I see him as an "Esther" for our time. She became Queen against all odds (unbeknownst, at first, to her king-husband) who risked her life when she learned that she was her people's best hope against extermination. Her uncle Mordecai sent her word of this impending massacre and said, "If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise from another place, but you and your family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14) Zelensky, also a Jew, is now following Esther's example.

Where does the courage of an Esther, of a Zelensky, come from? Unlike the superficial bravado of

bullies and dictators, born not of fearlessness but of fear, this is bravery, born of love, of empathy, of wisdom, of a mature and grounded faith in That Which is with us even unto death (and beyond). So, in prayer, I posed a question to God.

Me: Since we are all created in Your image (Gen 1:27), where is Your image to be found in Putin?"

God: Like all my children, he is made in My image, but he isn't in touch with that of Me within him. He is not in communion with Me.

At this, I wondered if Putin has ever known that he was made in God's image. Or if he has known on some level but rejected it, or refused it, or denied it (Proverbs 1:20-33), or has twisted it around, making his god in his image--thus worshipping not God but Satan, the idol of evil, the adversary, the opponent, the enemy of God.

Me: And You teach us to love our enemies...

Bearing God's image requires us to love even the Russian dictator. What does this mean for our own response to this situation? What would God have them/us do in this moment? On this ides of March and this eve of Purim, I pray for a free and democratic Ukraine, for the life of Zelensky and all the good people there and in Russia, and for Putin--for a total turnaround, a conversion of his heart and mind, that he would understand who God is in him and who he is in God, that he would know the deep truth of being made in the image of God and would live "in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars." (George Fox, 1650)

\*Their first names, "Vladimir" and "Volodymyr", are Russian and Ukrainian variants of the same Slavic root, meaning either "ruler of the world" or "ruler of peace."

--Sabrina Falls

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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