

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

December 15, 2018

WORSHIP

Our relationship with God

Last Sunday, December 9:

Brian preached about the "one-step guidance" of John the Baptist. When John talks to the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers in Luke 3, he answered all of their questions quickly and consciously. However, this did not resolve their need for guidance in "one step," but it gave them guidance for the next step. And this is what God promises to each of us - to give us exactly what we need to know what to do next.

This Sunday, December 16:

Frank will preach about the joyful experience that Mary and Elizabeth had when they sought the Lord together in a sermon entitled, "Where two or three are gathered..." with Isaiah 12:2-6 and Luke 1:39-45 as the main texts.

Next Sunday, December 23:

Brian will look at a new scholarly interpretation of the Christmas story and reflect on how God tends to show up the most powerfully not in our moments of strength and purity but in our moments of struggle and imperfection.

Spanish and English Bulletins:

As a part of our effort to be more inclusive, we now offer two versions of the Sunday morning bulletin, one in English and one in Spanish. If you would like a Spanish bulletin instead of an English one, the ushers can make them available to you.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Relationships at Shalom

Calendar

Sun. 9:30am Worship
11:00 am Sunday School

Dec 15 – TONIGHT Christmas Banquet: 5:30 caroling, 6:15 appetizers, 6:30 meal.

Dec 20 – Meal, 6:30pm; Bible Study 7-8

Jan 6 – Fellowship potluck after SS

Feb 3 – Pizzas for Peace lunch after SS

Marriage announcement!

Carlos Reyes and Gemina Trochez are pleased to announce that they got married in a small ceremony in their home yesterday night. They have appreciated the church's support in the past couple of years and want to share this joyful news with us.

TONIGHT Christmas Banquet:

The Christmas Banquet will be held at Shalom tonight, December 15. Before it begins, you are invited for Christmas caroling in the neighborhood at 5:30pm, and then to come back for appetizers (open to everyone) at 6:15pm. The meal begins at 6:30pm. Invite your friends and family to this rich Shalom tradition!

Membership Exploration Class:

Are you new or newish to Shalom? Would you like to learn more about who the Mennonites are, what the different Mennonite acronyms mean (MCC, MDS, MMN, etc.), and how Shalom works? Pastor Brian is preparing to hold a "Membership Exploration" class in January and February of 2019 for anyone who would like to learn more about these subjects or consider getting more involved at Shalom. If you have interest, please email him at brian@shalommennonite.com.

Christmas Eve Service:

All are invited to a Christmas Eve service Dec, 24th from 6-7pm here at Shalom. Gather with us as we journey through the birth of Jesus through scripture and song. First Mennonite will be joining us. There will be a time of

fellowship after the service with refreshments served.

DISCIPLING

Growing in our relationships

Sunday School Schedule:

- Dec. 16--Christmas hymnsing
- Dec 23 and Dec 30--no SS

OUTREACH

Relationships beyond Shalom

Proposal about Gun Safety:

Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence (HCGV), a nonprofit organization concerned about gun safety, is concerned about the number of guns sold in Indiana without background checks on the purchasers (especially at gun shows held frequently in Indiana). (Brad Yoder is a member of the Board of Directors of HCGV).

HCGV is planning to work with Indiana legislators in 2019 to introduce a bill which would require universal background checks for all gun purchases in Indiana. They are soliciting support from churches and other organizations in this effort.

Our Outreach Commission sees this as an important peace and justice issue, and we recommend that Shalom Mennonite sign on with HCGV as a supporter of this effort toward reducing gun violence and increasing gun safety in Indiana.

Giving Corner:

A huge thank you from Miracles and Blessings UMC (34th & Forest Manor) for the caps and gloves. Their give-away event on Sat., Dec. 15, was possible through your generosity.

We are continuing with Refugee Kits this month. Check the Giving Corner for items most needed.

- 4 large bars bath soap (leave in wrapper)
- Shampoo (1 or 2 bottles, totaling more than 20 oz; place in resealable plastic bag)

- - ***We already have enough!*** 4 large bars laundry soap)
- 4 adult-size toothbrushes (in manufacturer's packaging)
- 4 new bath towels (medium weight, dark/bright colors; approx. 29in x 60in)
- 2 wide-toothed combs (6–8 in)
- 1 nail clipper (good quality)
- 1 box adhesive bandages (minimum 40, assorted)
- Sanitary pads (**THIN**; 1 or 2 packages, minimum 28 pads total)

ADMINISTRATION

Congregational support systems

Administrative Assistant OPEN:

Attached to the newsletter email is the job description for our administrative assistant for Shalom. It is still ¼ time with the same position responsibilities. Please contact office@shalommennonite.com if you or someone you know might be interested in the position. Thanks for considering and sharing with your contacts!

Milepost #618

Preparing for Anything

As I explained in my sermon last week, I believe that John the Baptist had one of the hardest "jobs" out of all of the characters in the Bible, because he was supposed to "prepare the way for the Lord," even though he didn't know exactly what "the Lord" was going to do when he arrived. That must be tricky – preparing for something when you don't know what to expect! Can you imagine preparing for a wedding when you don't know anything about the bride, the groom, the expectations, or the guests? Or preparing for a competition when you have no idea what you are going to be up against? How is this even possible?

John's strategy seemed to rely heavily on the spiritual disciplines. He invited people to join him in the *solitude* of the desert, so they could *confess* their sins, and *pray to God* for forgiveness and healing. These are just three of the spiritual disciplines that we studied this year, but it is worth taking a moment to

consider their important role in this story. Because the people received John's message well and "*all the people* of Jerusalem were going out to see him," (Mark 1:5) God kept Her promise from way back in 2 Chronicles "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will *forgive their sin* and heal their land" (emphasis added). Apparently in response to the community's display of piety and humility, God did hear this request from heaven and in fact spoke from heaven, saying to Jesus (in the presence of all John's disciples), "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." With these words, God the Mother commissioned Jesus to begin his public ministry of healing and forgiveness.

None of us know exactly what God is going to do next, so there is no way to completely prepare for it. However, by practicing the spiritual disciplines, we make our selves *internally* prepared for anything that God sends our way. So let us make an effort to prioritize and practice the 12 disciplines that we have studied this year – even if we don't see a lot of practical benefit in them in the short term, for this is how we make ourselves ready for whatever God is doing *next*.

- Pastor Brian Bither

Do you have some thoughts to share about this month's spiritual discipline? The Pastoral Team invites you to share your thoughts as one of the weekly milepost entries. Please email Sabrina, Frank, or Brian to explore this further.

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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Please submit information by Thursday, 12pm, to office@shalommennonite.com