

## **JOURNEYING TOGETHER**

Shalom Mennonite Church

March 3, 2021

### **WORSHIP: Our relationship with God**

Chair: Grace Rhine

**Last Sunday (2/28)**, we heard from Craig Oury, our pastoral candidate, who preached about following the spirit of the law from the Sermon on the Mount.

**This Sunday (3/7)**, Brian will preach about the first mission of Jesus's disciples, which was directed at the Chosen People of Israel.

**Next Sunday (3/14)**, we will engage Jesus' teaching about his second coming, which was one of the last subjects that he discussed before he was crucified.

### **Lenten 2021 Resources**

For the season of Lent 2021, we are offering two Lenten resources for you to use at home:

1. A Lenten Guided Prayer resource, offered each week during the 6 weeks of Lent (see attachment)
2. A "Lent at Home" guide from MCUSA that includes ideas for at-home rituals during Lent and Holy Week, including ideas for activities to do as a family unit. The link here will take you to a website where you can download the guide:

<https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/lent-at-home/>

### **COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom**

Chair: Herb Troyer

### **Calendar** (All events are Zoom meetings)

#### **Sunday, March 7**

- 9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, Emily & Tim Ludden.
- 10:30 am – Brian Bither, The Mission to Israel.

#### **Sunday, March 14**

- 9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, Emily & Tim Ludden. READ: Chapters 23-26, Storytime (Genesis) TOPIC: How to read the Bible through the lens of Jesus and suspending judgment
- 10:30 am – Worship service via Zoom

#### **Sunday, March 21**

- 9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden. READ: Chapters 27-29 TOPIC: How do we read the Bible today?
- 10:30 am – Worship service via Zoom

#### **Sunday, March 28**

- 9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden. READ: Chapters 30-33, Storytime (Acts) TOPIC: How to read the Bible with discernment
- 10:30 am – Worship service via Zoom

#### **Friday, April 2**

7 pm – Good Friday service.

### **Sunday, April 4**

- 9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden. READ: Chapters 34-36, Storytime (Job), Conclusion TOPIC: Convictions, disagreement, and uncertainty
- 10:30 am - Worship service via Zoom

### **Sunday, April 11**

2 pm - FHQ: Does Jesus' great commission ask Christians to convince the peoples of the world to leave their own beliefs, practices, and cultural traditions?

### **Sunday, April 25**

2 pm - FHQ: What do we make of the discrepancy between the New Testament description of healing miracles - which the apostles performed frequently - and the relative absence of healing miracles today?

### **Sunday, May 2**

2 pm - FHQ: How should we respond to Biblical passages that seem to tolerate - if not defend - the institution of slavery?

### **Sunday, May 16**

2 pm - FHQ: In light of all of the false prophecies regarding the end of the world, how are we supposed to read and interpret the book of Revelation?

### **Sunday, May 30**

2 pm - FHQ: Can we still believe in the imminent return of Christ and the final judgment when two thousand years have passed and it has not happened yet?

### **Celebrations**

Sun, Mar 7 – Kim Johnson

Mon, Mar 8 – Rose Love

Wed, Mar 9 – Ariana Wigginton

### **DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships**

Chair: Martha Yoder

### **"Story of the Bible" Assigned Reading**

During our "Story of the Bible" sermon series we recommend daily readings at home. Next week's readings are:

**Monday:** Mark 13, 1 Thessalonians 1, Proverbs 10:22-30, 20:5-7

**Tuesday:** 1 Thessalonians 2-3, Proverbs 20:4, 13; 23:6-8, 26:13-16

**Wednesday:** 1 Thessalonians 4-5, Proverbs 17:27-28, 28:19-22

**Thursday:** Matthew 24, Proverbs 11:1-6, 14:22-24, 28:14, 2 Thessalonians 1

**Friday:** Matthew 25, Proverbs 19:4-7, 28:25-27, 2 Thessalonians 2

**Saturday:** Luke 21, 2 Thessalonians 3, Proverbs 16:26, 24:30-34, 25:16-17

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

Chair: Brad Yoder

The redistricting of Indiana General Assembly and Congressional Districts so that everyone is fairly represented is an important social justice issue. The Indiana Citizens' Redistricting Commission is holding a Zoom meeting Wednesday, March 3rd, at 7:00PM. We encourage you to participate. The link for the meeting is:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cq-Znm2b2qyZuVBMBJEvM5sSObnHt3HTtbE94xCyDO0/edit>

Monday, March 8th, is International Womens' Day. Take some time that day to think of the women who have been, and are, important in your life, then thank them in ways that will be valued by them.  
**Brad Yoder**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The "Safely Gathering" committee continues to monitor cases and deaths in Marion County. Falling cases and death rates and increasing vaccinations are causes for optimism, but local case rates remain high enough that indoor gatherings of groups our size are still discouraged.

On Tuesday the Commission Chairs discussed how we will re-open once it's safe. We decided against having fully vaccinated people attend sooner; we will wait until it's safe for a larger group. At that point the building will need to be thoroughly cleaned and the pipes flushed, and safely distanced seating will be marked. We will likely start with just worship, adding other functions (meals, Sunday school, etc.) gradually as local case rates decline further.

Meanwhile, once you have been fully vaccinated and have waited at least 10 days after your last dose for full immunity, you may safely visit another person who is also vaccinated (wearing masks, staying distanced, and washing or sanitizing hands), so that we can support each other while we wait for in-person meetings at our building. **Martha Yoder**

After a brief hiatus, Indiana AID has started meeting again and is renewing its efforts to reach out to detained immigrants at the Clay County jail. Now that there is a new federal administration overseeing ICE, we are hopeful that we will have more success in gaining access to the people who are being detained. We have begun reaching out to ICE and the local jail again and have restarted our monthly "Immigrant Support meetings" on the first Monday night of every month. This offers a confidential sharing space for undocumented immigrants who are impacted by the detention system. Additionally, we have created a Facebook page ([facebook.com/IndianaAID](https://www.facebook.com/IndianaAID)), which is designed to boost the legitimacy of our organization and create another means for people to connect to us. Feel free to like it and share it!

Although our formal efforts to negotiate with ICE have not yet been successful, the connections we have built among various advocacy groups have already helped several immigrant families in concrete ways. For example, one individual who came to us was directed to an agency that provided her with therapy and housing support, and an attorney with whom we've been working asked if we could provide a ride for a family to their court hearing in Chicago, which Shalom members were able to do. (Thanks Jeanne and Brad!) These are small ripples in a large system, but at least we are making some impact. I'd ask for your prayers for wisdom and perseverance as we continue to advocate for some of the most isolated people in the state of Indiana. **Brian Bither**

- 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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEn30AED17Q_ReoskuxUXA)!

- **Video recordings** of our Zoom worship services are located online with our normal worship service recordings. A link to this location is on the Member's page of our website.

### **Please note:**

- Mike Wigginton manages Zoom scheduling, church calendar, and uploads minutes to the church website. To schedule a meeting using the church account or if you have minutes to post, email [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) or [mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net).
- Sam Bixler manages our church directory, email address list, and telephone number list. Email changes or additions to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) or [bixlersc@gmail.com](mailto:bixlersc@gmail.com).

- Send announcements for Journeying Together to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) by 5PM Wednesday.

### **RELECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY**

Every Careless Word: I was raised in a conservative Christian community that put a lot of emphasis on using respectful language. In fact, I understood this to be one of the fundamental marks of being a Christian, and one of the ways in which I witnessed to my non-Christian friends at my public school was by refraining from cursing or making crude jokes. However, by the time I entered college, I started discovering that there were more “liberal” Christians out there who didn’t see anything wrong with cursing, and some preachers even incorporated cursing in their sermons or public speeches to make a provocative point. They would suggest that conservatives were too uptight about cursing and vigorously defend their use of cruder language.

On the other hand, it seems that conservatives and progressive has switched sides on this issue in recent years, which I find very disorienting. As the experiences of minority groups have become better understood in mainstream society, we are often asked to reform our language, adopting terms such as “Native Americans” or “people of color” or “Latinx,” etc. However, I have found that many conservatives are dismissive of this new use of language, arguing that progressives are overly sensitive about language and that such self-regulating amounts to “cancel culture.” They too vigorously defend their use of their language.

Admittedly, liberals and conservatives can go overboard in policing speech and making too much of minor verbal offenses. On the other hand, Jesus himself encourages us to be careful about the words we use. Last Thursday, our daily Scripture readings brought us to a text that I have always found convicting: “I tell you, on the Day of Judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36-37) This passage reminds me how much our words matter. The way we speak about things influences the way that we think about them and the dignity that we give them. Christ himself urges us to scrutinize our language to see if it reflects our love of God and love for our neighbor.

In the end, I appreciate the conservative culture that taught me not to be crude in a world that matters to God, and in the progressive culture that reveals the ways my language subtly denigrates others. One thing I am working on during this Lenten season is ensuring that even my private speech does not slip into “carless words” that treat God’s people and world with less respect than they deserve. **Brian**

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

Pastor: *Brian Bither, (317) 322-7320*

Vision & Accountability Team: Jeanne Smucker, Cheryl Martin, Carol Bixler, Rod Maust, Thad Wilson, Brian Bither