

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church May 13, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God
Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday, (5/10) we engaged the bold and beautiful poem of Genesis 1, which takes us beyond mere scientific assertions and describes the world as orderly, purposeful, and good. This sets the stage for the entire story of the Bible, by reminding us that God has always loved the universe She created.

This Sunday, (5/17) we will reflect on the tragic divide between God and creation, which is narrated in Genesis 3-11 and which has come to be known as "the Fall" by Christian theologians.

Next Sunday (5/24), Wilma Bailey will deliver a message that draws from the Book of Job.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom
Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar (*All events are Zoom meetings*)

Sunday, May 17

9:30a – 1 & 2 Kings SS class

10:30a – Worship Service on Zoom

2p – Facing the Hard Questions: Can we reconcile Genesis 1-3 with the theory of evolution?

Sunday, May 24

9:30a – 1 & 2 Kings SS class

10:30a – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing the Hard questions session

Celebrations

To help alleviate the isolation felt during the pandemic, we have decided to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in Journeying Together. If you do not want your birthday to be listed, email office@shalommennonite.com.

Next Wednesday, May 20 – David Falls

Take Them a Meal: As Julie is home with Covid 19 the CLC has set up a Take Them A Meal schedule for the congregation to provide some meals. Go to takethemameal.com to schedule. It's under the name *Sanders*, with *Shalom* as the password. Thank you! - Linda Kandel

Hernandez/Trochez fund for June and beyond:

Thank you to those who responded to our call for the Hernandez/Trochez fund. We are in good shape for June.

An evaluation was conducted with the family and it is not surprising that their needs for financial support are ongoing. So far no change to Gemina's court date has been communicated. That means she expects to have her hearing in August and may at that time apply for work authorization but not

before. We expect financial need to continue and recommend continuing to seek support funds. It is a blessing to see the response each month to this need. Contact Laura Harms with questions. harms.laura@gmail.com

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships
Chair: Martha Yoder

“Story of the Bible” Assigned Reading

Throughout our “Story of the Bible” sermon series, we will recommend daily readings at home. Next week’s readings are:

Monday: Job 4-5, Proverbs 9

Tuesday: Job 6, Psalms 54-55

Wednesday: Job 7, Psalms 13, 86, 88

Thursday: Job 8, Psalm 39, Proverbs 14:1-8

Friday: Job 9, Psalm 7, 56-57

Saturday: Job 10, Psalms 3-5

Facing the Hard Questions sermon discussion

As a corollary to our “Story of the Bible” sermon series, Brian will host a sermon discussion class at 2p on Sundays that will wrestle with the critical questions about the Bible in light of modern insights into science, history, and ethics. These sessions may be recorded and posted on the internet.

*** There will be no “Facing the Hard Questions” on May 24. ***

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom
Chair: Brad Yoder

ADMINISTRATION: Congregational support systems
Chair: Laura Harms

Minutes

Minutes from the Commission Chairs Team Meeting are [here](#).

Recorded services

For many years, Shalom has recorded our worship services and uploaded them on our Dropbox page. Because these recordings include songs that are copyrighted, personal sharing that is sensitive in nature, and announcements that divulge detailed information about our comings and goings, we keep these private in our password-protected members section, which makes them difficult to access for those who want to share links to sermons with friends and family. In order to make our sermons more accessible, Shalom has created a podcast [at this link](#), which contains recordings of just the sermons. We encourage you to check out the podcast and share it widely with anyone who may be interested in hearing the Sunday messages.

Newsletter / Calendar

Although Shalom is still searching for a part-time administrator, we are grateful that two individuals have volunteered to take on some of the administrative work until we find one.

Mike Wigginton is now in charge of managing our Zoom account and overseeing the church calendar. If you would like to reserve the Zoom account, please email him at mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net.

Linda Showalter is now putting together the newsletter each week, but you can continue to email any newsletter information to office@shalommennonite.com by Wednesday at 5 pm (note change in time).

Reflections On Pilgrimage

If you have been following the daily Bible readings, then you may have noticed that we will be breaking from the book of Genesis on Friday in order to begin reading the book of Job. This is the first time – but certainly not the last time – that we will be jumping between books of the Bible while we are in the middle of reading them. Sometimes, we will do this in order to maintain the chronological flow of the narrative. For example, rather than reading the account of David's life in 1 & 2 Samuel and then starting it over when we get to 1 Chronicles, we'll be alternating back and forth between the two accounts of David's life in order to keep the narrative moving forward. At other times, we will be splicing Biblical books in order to keep the thematic emphasis consistent from week to week. For example, the book of Acts sets the narrative agenda for most of the New Testament, and when we study Acts 8-15 – which focuses on the church's decision to include Gentiles in its ranks – we will pair it with Romans 9-16, which addresses that very subject in great depth. However, we will skip over Romans 1-8 and save it for our reading of Revelation because that half of Paul's letter has some important things to say about God's redemptive work for all of creation. Generally speaking, we'll try not to jump around more than is necessary... but this may be a good time to invest in some bookmarks.

Anyway, the book of Job, presents a unique challenge for this project because it contains *narrative material* (it tells a story that is set in a specific time and place), but it doesn't give us much information about when this story occurred. The book begins with the words, "There *was once* a man in the land of Uz" (emphasis added), which doesn't even offer enough clues to narrow it down to a specific century. Moreover, Job was not an Israelite; he was not a descendant of Jacob. Consequently, his choices don't have a direct impact on his descendants in the same way that the stories of people like Joseph and Ruth do. In case you were wondering, Biblical scholars aren't even sure where the land of Uz is. The most common guess is that it was somewhere in the land of Edom (or modern-day Jordan), but this is by no means proven or settled.

Nevertheless, Job is one of the most insightful, powerful, and masterfully written books in the Bible. It deals with what seems to be a universal human concern – the problem of evil – and it gives this concern the attention it deserves: rather than giving a single quiz answer, all forty-two chapters of the book are devoted to wrestling with it from different perspectives.

The reason that we are reading Job between Genesis 11 and Genesis 12 is because an extremely important shift takes occurs between those chapters, which will shape the rest of our reading experience. The first eleven chapters tell the story of the *entire global community*. Genesis 1 tells us that God created humanity – both male and female – in the image of God. Genesis 7 claims that all the earth was covered by the waters of the flood, and Genesis 11 says that the entire human community had one language and migrated together as one body. However, by the end of Genesis 11, the human community was "scattered abroad... over the face of the earth," making it impossible to trace the story of the entire human community anymore. So, the story then focuses in on one couple, whose descendants would take the center stage for the rest of the narrative: Abram and Sarai. Now, it is clear that God has not forgotten about the rest of the world; we quickly learn that God's goal is to save the rest of the human population *through* this family-nation. Nevertheless, the rest of humanity fades into the background while the children of Israel take center stage.

That is true – except in the book of Job. Thus, one of the functions of the book within the larger canon of Scripture is to remind us that there are still other righteous people on the earth besides the Jews, that God is still speaking to them and through them, and that they are important to God too. Job is not the only figure who reminds us of this; the story of God's people is filled with references to godly

Gentiles – from Melchizedek to Naaman the Syrian to the Magi to Cornelius – that give us a glimpse of what God is doing outside of Israel. However, it is the only *book* whose entire focus is set outside of the Jewish community. So, we will give Job's story our attention at the end of this week and all of next week, and then we will start reading it in parallel with Genesis and Exodus for several weeks. This is a good exercise for us because Christians ought to be able to switch back and forth between "global" and "local" thinking. We must remember that God is always at work throughout the world while maintaining our belief that He has been revealed to us in a special way through Jesus and the Jewish community of which Jesus emerged.

- Brian Bither

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 Wednesday, 5 pm, to office@shalommennonite.com