

## **JOURNEYING TOGETHER**

Shalom Mennonite Church

May 5, 2021

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

Chair: Grace Rhine

**Last Sunday (5/2)** Herb Troyer spoke about the persecutions the early church faced and considered why the ethic of love is such a threat to the world.

**This Sunday (5/9)** we will study a number of the later epistles in the New Testament and confront the greatest challenge that the early church - and arguably the Church today - has to face: distinguishing between false prophets who distort the gospel and true ones who speak the word of God.

**Next Sunday (5/16)** we will enter the final section of the Bible's Story - Act VII - by looking at the way the book of Revelation describes the last days before the return of Christ.

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

Chair: Herb Troyer

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

#### **Sunday, May 9**

Adult Sunday school, Dismantling Institutional Racism in Congregations - Wilma Bailey, Frank Kandel

#### **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**

May 7 - Bryan Strube; May 11 - Eirene Brubaker; May 12 - Dagne Assefa

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

Chair: Martha Yoder

**"Story of the Bible" Assigned Reading** - During our "Story of the Bible" sermon series, daily at home recommended readings for next week:

**Monday** - Revelation 4-5, Psalm 93

**Tuesday** - Revelation 6-7, Psalm 117

**Wednesday** - Revelation 8-10, Psalm 46

**Thursday** - Revelation 11-13, Psalm 52

**Friday** - Proverbs 7, Revelation 14-17

**Saturday** - Revelation 18-20, Psalm 96

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

Chair: Brad Yoder

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Eastside Creation Care Network – Saturday May 8, 9-11AM we will be holding our bimonthly meeting via Zoom. We plan to share what our congregations are doing, activities taking place in our state and a visit by a specialist with invasive plants. Please join us. **Mike Wigginton**

Last Saturday a memorial service was held at Lucas Oil Stadium to honor the eight persons killed in the FedEx mass shooting several weeks ago, and to support their families. Carol and Sam Bixler and Brad Yoder participated in the three-hour service. The Indianapolis Sikh community and the Sikh Foundation organized the service, since four of the persons killed were from the Sikh community. It

was a very moving service, with many elected leaders and many religious leaders expressing their sorrow to the surviving family members. Governor Eric Holcomb and Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett led the elected officials who spoke directly to the family members and the Sikh community. Mayor Hogsett said, "I am your mayor, and I am also your brother and your servant. When gun violence takes lives among us, it affects us all." He called on all of us to contact our US Senators to act to address the public health emergency of gun violence. (Among the elected officials who spoke, all of the Democrats addressed the issue of gun violence, and none of the Republicans who spoke mentioned how the eight people were killed.) **Brad Yoder, for Outreach Commission**

When God calls someone to leadership, a journey begins. Perhaps you are on that journey. Perhaps you are looking for mentors and companions along the way. Indiana-Michigan Conference invites you to join Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program. This program is for lay leaders, pastors, church planters, and other emerging leaders who are called without specific training for ministry or who are exploring a call to ministry. The early registration deadline to apply for fall 2021 is July 13 with the final registration deadline on August 10. For more information contact your pastor, or Dan Miller at [dan@im.mennonite.net](mailto:dan@im.mennonite.net) or at 574-534-4006, or visit [www.ambbs.edu/journey](http://www.ambbs.edu/journey)

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\\_ReooskuxUXA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEn30AED17Q_ReooskuxUXA)

**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**

### **Second and third thoughts from my sermon from last Sunday - Herb Troyer**

The sermon I gave last Sunday caused me to reflect more on what I wanted to say. I was dissatisfied with my presentation. Here is what I wanted to convey.

Jesus's call to love God and our enemy as ourselves was taught during a time of intense political and religious unrest. Jesus grew up when Herod the great and his sons who followed him were flooding Israel with Roman culture and the idolization of the Roman Emperor. This resulted in ruthless law-and-order to quell any Jewish uprising and demanded that everyone worship the emperor, which was idolatry for the Jews.

Perhaps the most strident call to change was from the Zealots, the Jewish guerilla warfare group, who wanted to throw off the Roman rule in any way possible. Shortly after Jesus ministry, the Zealots managed to do this, in the year 66 AD, due to instability in Rome when a new emperor came to power. Their hope was that the Messiah would come to make this self-rule permanent. But in 70 AD Rome destroyed Jerusalem and exiled Jews from Jerusalem. Some people today say that Jesus's teaching to love as God loves is only for times of peace. However, just as Jesus taught his followers to love God and your neighbor in an intense religious and political time, so today we follow in this teaching in the current climate of political and religious conflict.

There are two aspects of Christian persecution. The first relates to Christians being persecuted because they are Christians. The country and or persons who decide that Christians need to be persecuted have decided that they are the enemy. The fear is often that a Christian will not be patriotic enough because of what they believe. This makes the Christian into an enemy of the state. When this happens, the person being persecuted needs all the help in the world to stay true to their walk with Jesus and faith. Persecution's purpose is to force the Christian to leave his or her faith. In Roman times, the person was asked to worship the emperor by burning incense and doing a sacrifice in honor of the emperor god.

The encouragement from the Bible is to remind Christians to be faithful. In 1 Peter 1: 3-12 we read about the new life we have, how God keeps watch over us, and in death we will be healed and live with Jesus in Heaven. This will sustain us when the whole world seems against us. Throughout the New Testament there is encouragement for times of persecution.

One fact that we as Christians need to realize is that those who are persecuting us are not the enemy. The real enemy is the evil and the ideology behind the other person's fear.

The second aspect about persecution is when we unconsciously become the persecutor. This happens when we talk down to a person of color or make them feel dismissed or rejected. We are learning in our Sunday school class that white privilege is built into the system we live in. As a white person, I can travel anywhere in the USA and not worry about being targeted or threatened. This is not the case for a person of color or a person with an Asian look. Whenever we allow an ideology or a prejudiced idea to become dogma, we lose the ability to see other humans with compassion.

When I see another person as the enemy, I can mistreat or kill them because they are the enemy. Examples would be when law enforcement see a person of color driving, walking, jogging, shopping, or sitting on their porch, and assumes they are doing something wrong, approaching this as a life and death situation. Whereas they might see a white person doing those same activities, but see it as normal human activity.

We do this with our faith as well. When our absolute truths do not allow us to see the other person or understand them, then I question how that faith is helping us. One person wrote, when one's faith makes them hate the other person then that faith is worthless and needs to be thrown out and to start over again. The other option would be to look deeper into your faith to find the love that is needed to see everyone as beloved of God. Jesus stood up to racism, bigotry and violence with peace and love. May we do the same.

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

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

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