

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

July 1, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God
Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (6/28), Frank preached about Moses reluctantly accepting God's call and, along with Aaron, gathering the Israelites together to lead them out of Egyptian bondage to a place of promise. The journey to the new place was difficult and people grumbled. Likewise, at times we resist leadership, desiring to go back to the way things were. Often it seems easier to stay put than to follow leaders.

This Sunday (7/5), we will take a break from our Story of the Bible series to listen to a message from Dan Miller, our Conference pastor, about how to do the work of love in the midst of a pandemic.

Next Sunday (7/12), we will take our first extended look at the commandments and legal guidelines of the Bible, beginning with passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy that focus on justice and purity.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom
Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar (*All events are Zoom meetings*)

Sunday, July 5

No 9:30 am adult education session
10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom
No Facing Hard Questions session

Sunday, July 12

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom
2 pm - Facing Hard Questions - How do we determine which aspects of the Mosaic Law still apply to us as Christians and which ones do not?

Sunday, July 19

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

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.

Fri, July 3 – Linda Showalter
Mon, July 6 – Linda Kandel
Mon, July 6 – Sydney Maust
Tue, July 7 – Laura & Noe Martinez, 2012
Wed, July 8 – Raphael Edou

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: Deuteronomy 12-14, Psalm 119:49-56
- Tuesday: Deuteronomy 15-18, Psalm 119:57-64
- Wednesday: Deuteronomy 19-22, Psalm 119:65-72
- Thursday: Deuteronomy 23-26, Psalm 119:73-80
- Friday: Leviticus 11-15, Psalm 119:81-88
- Saturday: Leviticus 18-22, Psalm 119:89-96

Resources about racism will be added to the website. Here is the initial list:

1. An article by Zenebe Abebe, “The Two Faces of Racism”
<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwittYv0qqLqAhVDA0KHZCICID4QQFjAAegQIBhAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fpuscho.larworks.fresno.edu%2Fhandle%2F11418%2F370&usq=AOvVaw2zoB3QdDBF9jAwKeDSqcl> Click on the little image you get at this link and the article will open up.
2. The 1619 project, a series of articles and podcasts from the New York Times, recommended by Wilma Bailey. “The 1619 Project is an ongoing initiative from The New York Times Magazine that began in August 2019, the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery. It aims to reframe the country’s history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of our national narrative.” You will need to create a free account in order to be able to read the articles. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>
3. A list of books compiled by Brad Yoder. Books marked with an asterisk are particularly recommended by Barbara and Zenebe Abebe and/or Brad Yoder and Jeanne Smucker. Brad says he has all of these books and is glad to lend them. (**See attached**)
4. These documentaries have been ordered for our church library:
“Eyes on the Prize: Americas Civil Rights Years 1954-1965” (14 parts)
“Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise” (4 parts)
“Race: The Power of an Illusion” (3 parts)
5. A two-hour long documentary about our own Crispus Attucks HS. Also, the school now houses a small museum to Indianapolis African American history. The documentary can also be watched on PBS for subscribers. <https://www.wfyi.org/programs/attucks>
6. “Race: The Power of an Illusion.” Available as an e-video or DVD from the Indianapolis Public Library.
7. “History of Redlining--Indianapolis IN” which Jeanne showed us on Zoom is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kX_W_XRNHJ4

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom
Chair: Brad Yoder

Temeika Green and Herman Sadler, a local couple whom several members of Shalom helped get into permanent housing last year, are facing some renewed challenges in light of COVID-19, specifically relating to food and air conditioning. If you would be willing to donate food, help provide transportation for them to pick up food, or donate a fan or window air conditioner, they would greatly appreciate it. You can contact Temeika directly at temeikag@gmail.com.

CROP Walk: As Shalom's team caption I just got word about the Crop Walk being held virtually this year! It's on Sunday October 4th! Will let you know how we will walk virtually at a later date. As it will be virtually anyone who wants to participate can do so and register now. Go to this website. <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/indianapolisin>. When you register find Shalom Mennonite Church as our team! And you can start to get donations right away!! I set our goal high as we are 4 months away from the walk! If you have any questions please email me at Juliekins7182@hotmail.com.

MCUSA (Mennonite Church USA) has taken several actions in the past few weeks in response to the national movement for racial justice. They have issued [this statement](#) on racial injustice, launched [this Justice Fund](#) to support Mennonites who are involved in dismantling racism and policing reform, and offered the first of a series of panel discussions by MCUSA leaders called Race, Church, and Change, which you can see [here](#). You can register for the second panel discussion in this series, which is scheduled for Thursday, July 23 at 6:30p, [here](#).

Attached is the most recent letter from Peter and Delicia.

ADMINISTRATION: Congregational support systems
Chair: Laura Harms

See [Shalom woods trail video](#)

The church could use a flat panel computer monitor. No larger than 24", 16x9 layout, HDMI input, and capable of 1920x1080 resolution. Jim Showalter

Announcements

- 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 [here](#)!
- **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.
- Mike Wigginton is now managing our Zoom calendar and uploading minutes on the church website. If you need to schedule a meeting using the church account or you have minutes for him to upload, you can email him at mlwigginton@sbcglobal.net.
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

Reflections on the Journey

Introduction to the Mosaic Law

If you have been keeping up with the recommended daily Scripture readings, then you undoubtedly noticed a major shift in the writing style this week. Up to this point, everything we

have read in Genesis and Exodus has taken the form of narrative. We read the *stories* of creation, the fall, the calling of the chosen people, and the enslavement and liberation from Egypt. But starting around Exodus 20, God and Moses begin launching into long speeches that list one commandment after another after another in seemingly random order. These speeches aren't normal speeches; they are a formal articulation of Jewish law. The literary genre of Exodus changes about halfway through the book, from a narrative history to a legal document, and we need to adapt the way we think about it accordingly.

For the vast majority of us, legal documents are not nearly as interesting as stories. I don't personally know anyone who has started reading through the Indiana Law Code from beginning to end just because they were bored. Nevertheless, I am certainly glad that the Indiana Code exists, and I myself have read *parts* of it at several different points in my life, when I have had questions about matters such as tenants' rights or traffic laws or our education system. Fortunately, the Indiana Code is organized in a structured way that makes it relatively easy for someone like me to pick through it and find out what it has to say on any particular topic. By contrast, the Jewish law is not laid out in a carefully structured way. It jumps from topic to topic somewhat abruptly and often circles back to commandments it has offered before and repeats them or revisits them. There's no simple way to look up everything the Jewish law has to say about the distribution of wealth or how to respond to adultery or which festivals one must follow.

For us, this makes for a confusing read, but for the ancient Israelites, it made sense because they were primarily an oral culture. Most cities and towns in ancient Israel didn't have a copy of the Scriptures on hand, and even if they did, it wasn't easy to look up any particular passage. People who wanted to know what the Jewish law said had to consult with someone who had memorized all of the Hebrew Scriptures, and it's easier to remember different rules and commandments when they are embedded in narrative material. And so, the Jewish law – the collection of sacred commandments found in these Scriptures that had real legal weight for the Jews in Jesus' day – was scattered and embedded in the narrative material in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Admittedly, the commandments are more densely packed in some places than others, but even the book of Genesis, though mostly narrative, contains some legally binding commandments (e.g. Genesis 17:12), and even the book of Leviticus, though mostly law, contains some narrative material (e.g. Leviticus 8-10). Consequently, the Jews came to refer to the entirety of the first five books as the "Torah," which is Hebrew for "Law".

For our purposes, I have decided to take the more densely packed "legal" sections of the Torah and group it together by topic so that we can get a clearer picture of what the Scriptures say on various subjects. This means that we will be jumping around a lot in the next two to three weeks between the second half of Exodus, the book of Leviticus, and the middle part of Deuteronomy. This week, the focus is on the instructions that God gave the Israelites for setting up a system of worship in the wilderness; next week, we will be focusing laws that regulate everyday behavior in order to promote justice and purity, and the following week, we will be looking at the commandments about sacrifices, festivals, and other religious rituals. (If you get behind in the reading, just make a note somewhere of what parts you missed. There are some catch-up reading weeks built in later in the series.)

There are other historical and theological reasons why the Jewish law is woven into the larger Biblical narrative. One of those reasons is to remind us that the laws can only be properly understood in the context of their story, or to use the Apostle Paul's language, the laws of God only have authority in light of the promises of God. These laws provide guidance, not universal rules, to the chosen people, and it is up to us to discern how God would have us honor this law today.

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