

# Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

April 2, 2020

## WORSHIP

Our relationship with God  
Chair: Linda Showalter

### How will we "gather?"

Shalom recently purchased an account with zoom that allows us to do everything from hold small group videoconferences to host congregation-wide gatherings, and any church member who would like to lead a church function is invited to use the Shalom zoom account. However, we can only hold one zoom meeting at a time, so if you would like to use the zoom account, please email [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) to request a time. If your request is accepted, you will receive a zoom link that you can forward to the people in your group and the name and time of your meeting will be added to the church calendar. (The calendar has been updated for April to only include virtual meetings.)

Gathering in Spirit - Although Shalom will not be streaming Sunday morning worship services during the quarantine, we will have an opportunity to connect as a whole congregation on Sunday afternoons from 2p to 3p during a zoom session called "Gathering in spirit". Brian will introduce this time each week with a brief devotional, and then will open it up to prayer & sharing. Please email [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) if you would like to attend these weekly meetings, you will receive a link for the zoom meeting with some follow up instructions on Saturday.

### Lenten Resources

During the 6 weeks of Lent, there will be a new, weekly Lenten meditation guide attached in each Journeying Together. These Lenten meditations will guide us to pray using scriptures and will focus on how Jesus brings light into the shadow places of our lives and our world. The meditations will challenge us to seek and to shine light, finding hope in desperate times. There will be many prayer options suggested and you will likely not use each one

listed. The meditation guides encourage us to be open to different ways of praying and where it can lead us. (see attached for Week Six, to start on Sunday, April 5th)

### Brian's role

During the quarantine, the pastoral role has had to change both to meet the different needs of the congregation and to adapt to Brian's situation at home. Starting next week, Brian will be filling in the role of church administrator, in addition to leading the new deacon council, participating in commission meetings, and leading the Gathering in Spirit time each week. To accommodate Brian's schedule, Journeying Together will not be going out on Wednesdays instead of Thursday's. So, if you would like to include an announcement in JT, please send it to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) by 3p on Wednesday of that week.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

Relationships at Shalom  
Chair: Linda Kandel

### Social phone tree

As a Shalom Mennonite Church participants we are friends in a community of believers. Our time on Sunday mornings are times of spiritual renewal as well as talking with each other about our weeks and days. With not being able to meet this function is no longer available to us. The rotating phone tree is attempting to help with the lack of social contact with our friends at Shalom. The phone tree itself is to give a little structure to our missed social life. On the phone list tree the names of those participating are divided up and placed opposite each other. Each week you are invited to call the person across from your name sometime that week. This call is just to chat and catch up like you do on Sunday. You can also expect a call from someone else as you can see on the list. We are not making this list secret or hidden so if the person who is to call you does not do not panic. You can either call that person or

understand that the person's life may have been full and there was not time to call. This phone tree is not an obligation or another demand on your time. It is meant to be a help to get some of the social contact we each need in our lives to feel whole and connected. The person you are to call will change each week because we want everyone to talk to everyone and not just a select few. On the call you are invited to laugh, cry, share what you want talking about random stuff or what you have found helpful as we all isolate. The goal is the contact and if you do talk about what is happening spiritually this is OK as well.

You are encouraged to call others in the church if you need more contact. Many of us are bored and do not know what to do with our time so taking with others helps us to share what works for us and what does not as are in isolation right now. If you do not want to be a part of this phone tree please let Linda Kendal, Rose Love or Herb Troyer know so that you can be taken off the next list or put back on the next list if you choose to join again.

There is really no blame or shame if you do not want to be a part of this phone tree. CLC and the Church leadership knows that this is a stressful time for everyone. For some of us we are isolated and bored and so this contact is needed to get us through the week. For others we are stressed, we may still be working and worried about bringing the virus home to the family and this phone contact may be just too much. This is fine do not feel ashamed if you do not want to be a part of this phone tree. We understand that adding one more thing to do and worry about is just too stressful. Our prayer is that you find ways to de-stress and find the calm center where God speaks to you so that this time can be renewing and fulfilling amidst all the stress of isolation.

Herb Troyer phone 317-407-6340  
email [troyers-hj@hotmail.com](mailto:troyers-hj@hotmail.com)

### **DISCIPLING**

Growing in our relationships  
Chair: Martha Yoder

#### 1 & 2 Kings Sunday school class

Wilma Bailey will resume teaching the Sunday school class that she has been leading on 1 & 2 Kings over zoom immediately before the

"Gathering in Spirit" session. If you would like participate in this session, email [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) and indicate whether you plan to attend this Sunday school class only or both this class and the Gathering in Spirit session that will follow.

#### Good Friday Bible Study Session

On Good Friday (April 10) at 6p, Brian is going to host a zoom session that will imagine what it would have been like to be a Christian in the first century. In that session, he will read through the book of Mark in one sitting, which is how it was originally intended to be read. If you would like to participate in this session, email him at [brian@shalommennonite.com](mailto:brian@shalommennonite.com).

### **COMMISSION COUNCIL**

Connecting the Commissions  
Chair: Jeanne Smucker

The Commission Council met on 3/31 to discuss a number of issues that impact the entire congregation. [Here](#) is the link to the new page on the website in which the Commission Council minutes are stored.

### **SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM (SGDT)**

Chair: Joyce Troyer

Posted to the Shalom web page under gifts discernment are [two new documents](#). The first is a list of the Shalom church members and their gifts. The second is a listing of persons by gift. In the future we will be updating the spreadsheet but in the meantime these documents are available for use. Any comments submit to Joyce Troyer, Cheryl Martin or Mike Wigginton

### **OUTREACH**

Relationships beyond Shalom  
Chair: Brad Yoder

#### First Mennonite Blood Drive

Because of the disruption to all of our lives, blood donations have been way down and are very badly needed. Versiti (formerly Indiana Blood Center) will be holding the drive at FMC in the fellowship hall on Saturday, April 4, from 10-2:00. Faith in Action will be working with them to make sure social distancing and

sanitary practices are in place. Donors are asked to sign up at this link:  
[https://donate.indiana.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/140996](https://donate.indiana.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/140996)

We have slots for 26 donors and there will be multiple stations within the fellowship hall to accommodate this. We will ask donors to enter through the main entrance and exit through exit where the mailbox is to maintain social distancing. Below is additional information about the blood drive.

Saturday, April 4

10am to 2pm

Appointments needed

[https://donate.indiana.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/140996](https://donate.indiana.versiti.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/140996)

Photo ID, eat and Hydrate

Donation and eligibility questions, email [scrawford@versiti.org](mailto:scrawford@versiti.org)

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Congregational support systems

Chair: Laura Harms

#### Tithes and Church Finances

Treasurer Bob Love and the Administration Commission are working on solutions to provide mail-in and on-line donation options. More to come on this topic.

#### First Quarter Financial Report

Treasurer Bob Love sent a Financial Report out this week. If you did not receive a copy, you can find it [here](#).

#### Seeking Administration Asst.

During this time of closures and cancellations, Brian will take up some of the administrative tasks. AC would still very much like to hire a new Administrative Assistant. Please spread the word so we'll be ready to relieve Brian of these administrative duties in the near future. If anyone is looking for some extra work-from-home income during this time, please reach out to Tim, Sam, or Laura. You could pick up some tasks like creating the newsletter, updating the website, and checking office email temporarily. Full job description available.

#### Minutes

The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team met on March 4. The minutes are attached to the newsletter email and can be found [here](#).

The world has changed since Discipling Commission met on March 12, and some of the things we planned may not happen at all, but [here is the record](#) of the meeting as it was that day.

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### **Gathering in Spirit**

At its core, Christianity is a physical religion. It cannot be reduced to a set of abstract principles. Its ultimate purpose is not to create an inner state of joy and tranquility. It is a religion about a God who took on flesh, who lived and breathed among us, and who offered his body and blood for the salvation of the world. Moreover, God invites us to participate in this religion physically. Jesus instructed us to regularly "eat his flesh and drink his blood" in the ritual of communion in memory of him. The book of Romans teaches us to "offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God," and Hebrews warns us not to "give up meeting together."

Unfortunately, due to the deadly and contagious nature of COVID-19, we are not able to meet together at the present time, which for us means that we cannot fully practice our religion. As grateful as I am for the technological resources that allow us to see and hear from each other, they are no substitute for Christian practices such as communion, footwashing, the laying on of hands, and the simple act of gathering in a common physical space to worship God – all of which require face-to-face contact. It is appropriate for us to lament the fact that we cannot physically gather, even as we lament the fact that hundreds of thousands of people are suffering from COVID-19 worldwide.

So, what can we do? Fortunately, the Apostle Paul offers us a model for how to respond to this kind of situation in the book of Colossians, when he was physically kept from being with his church communities due to imprisonment. In his epistle, Paul seeks to connect with the Colossians in a number of ways, but he never considers them to be an adequate substitute for Christian fellowship, nor does he minimize the pain of physical separation. "I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face." (Col. 2:1) However, he seeks to stay connected to them primarily through

prayer: "For this reason... we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's<sup>[d]</sup> will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God." (Col. 1:9-10) Paul then goes on to claim that, to the extent that we are all following Christ in our personal lives, we are mysteriously connected to each other through Christ's body. After all, "He is the head of the body, the church... and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. 1:18, 20) And because of this, Paul is able to say, "For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ."

Following Paul's example, let us lament the fact that we cannot gather in person, but let us seek to remain connected to each other through prayer and Christian discipleship. To help facilitate this, we are going to begin holding a "Gathering in Spirit" time on Sunday afternoons at 2p, which will center on prayer & sharing. Whether you are able to attend these or not, I would like to offer one more prayer of Paul's for you: "May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled<sup>[e]</sup> you<sup>[f]</sup> to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light." (Col 1:11-12)

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Pastor:

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[brian@shalommennonite.com](mailto:brian@shalommennonite.com);

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

Please submit information by Thursday, 12pm, to  
[office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com)