

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

October 14, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God
Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (10/11), we wrestled with the story of King Josiah, who despite being the most righteous of all of the kings of Judah, was not able to inspire God to relent or save Jerusalem from destruction.

This Sunday (10/18), we will read about and reflect on the most traumatic moment in all of the Older Testament: the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the destruction of the temple of Yahweh.

Next Sunday (10/25), we will spend time dwelling on the grief that the Jews experienced in response to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Specifically, we will look at three different ways that the Bible responds to this tragedy: lamenting, questioning God, and calling for vengeance.

See attached minutes from our October 8th meeting.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom
Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar (*All events are Zoom meetings*)

Saturday, Oct 17

6:50 pm (EDT) - Celebration 2020: MCC at 100, a livestreamed event commemorating a century of MCC's ministry

Sunday, Oct 18

9:30 am – 1) Brad Yoder and Kristen Metzler-Wilson will lead a study of the book *Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity* edited by Don Neufeld and Steve Thomas.

2) A breakout room will be available for extended fellowship time

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

Saturday, October 24

10 – 11 am - Baptism exploration class, using *God's Story, Our Story* by Michele Hershberger. Led by Frank Kandel and Carol Bither.

Sunday, October 25

9:30 am – 1) Brad Yoder and Kristen Metzler-Wilson will lead a study of the book *Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity* edited by Don Neufeld and Steve Thomas.

2) A breakout room will be available for extended fellowship time

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm - Facing Hard Questions: Many scholars believe that European anti-Semitism has its roots in Christian supersessionism - the belief that the Israelites failed in their mission as God's people and the Church had to replace them. Is there a way to understand the Biblical story without this interpretation?

Sunday, Nov 1

Daylight Saving Time Ends

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: How historically reliable are the narratives and stories of the last part of the Older Testament?

Saturday, November 7

10 – 11 am - Baptism exploration class, using *God's Story, Our Story* by Michele Hershberger. Led by Frank Kandel and Carol Bither.

Sunday, November 15

10 30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm - Facing Hard Questions: Did religions and ideologies other than Judaism influence the development of Christianity? If so, what are the implications of that?

Saturday, November 21

10 – 11 am - Baptism exploration class, using *God's Story, Our Story* by Michele Hershberger. Led by Frank Kandel and Carol Bither.

Saturday, December 5

10 – 11 am - Baptism exploration class, using *God's Story, Our Story* by Michele Hershberger. Led by Frank Kandel and Carol Bither.

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.

Thu, Oct 15 – Josh Martin

Sat, Oct 17 – Justin Hochstetler

Mon, Oct 19 – Mary Albrecht

The Community Life Commission is asking for volunteers to meet with persons who are not regularly meeting with Shalom in our Zoom Sunday services but who would like some socially distanced contact with the Shalom Mennonite Church members. The purpose of these meeting would be for fellowship and just getting to know each other. The persons who would be invited to these meeting would be individuals who have fellowshiped with us in the past but are not wanting to attend the zoom meetings or are newcomers to the church and just want a face to face meeting with someone from Shalom to get to know Shalom people better. We envision a small group setting that meets outside for fellowship either sitting or socially distance walking. The meeting would be limited to 10 or less.

Due to the COVID virus we recommend this happen outside but with the weather changing meeting in the church with proper social distancing and the wearing of masks would be ok. These meeting would be limited to 10 people.

Please contact Herb Troyer either by email or phone 317-407-6340 if you are interested in this volunteer position.

Conversation about current politics: If you would like to be a part of an informal conversation about current events related to politics, let Wilma Bailey know. Two other conversations have been scheduled for Oct. 23 and Nov. 5 at 7 p.m.

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: Proverbs 10:17, 27:5-6, 28:23, Jeremiah 18-21, 37, 2 Kings 25:1-2, Ezekiel 24

Tuesday: Jeremiah 32-34, 38-39; 50-51, Proverbs 24:1-2, 19-20

Wednesday: Jeremiah 52, Ezekiel 33, 19; Lamentations 1-2, Proverbs 15:13

Thursday: Obadiah, Ezekiel 25-28, Psalm 137, Proverbs 18:14

Friday: Ezekiel 29-32, Psalm 79, Proverbs 14:9-14

Saturday: 2 Kings 25:3-30; Habakkuk 1-3; Lamentations 3-5, Proverbs 30:1-3

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom
Chair: Brad Yoder

See minutes from the September 22 meeting [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who donated and walked for the virtual **Crop Walk** this year! We all had a good walk! See attached picture.

Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT)

Chair: Joyce Troyer

Tim Ludden has been serving Shalom as a member on the Administration Commission (AC) for the past 1 1/2 years. The Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT) recommends Tim to continue in this position for another two-year term. Please send your comments of affirmation and feedback to Joyce Troyer at troyers_hj@hotmail.com by October 21, 2020.

Vision and Accountability Team (VAT)

Chair: Jeanne Smucker

Announcements

- As an update to announcement Brian made last Sunday, Proposition 237 - which adds four community members to the board that oversees the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, giving civilians the majority - was passed by a 19-6 margin by the City County Council on Monday night. [This article](#) offers some more detail about what it means for our community.
- Debora Edou has recently joined the Immigrant Welcome Center as a "Natural helper" volunteer. For those who may not be familiar with this organization, the Immigrant Welcome Center "empowers immigrants by connecting them to the people, places, and resources that enable them to build successful lives and enrich our community." If you are looking for resources to help immigrants, feel free to reach out to Debora.
- 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.
- **Please note:**
 - Mike Wigginton manages our Zoom calendar, church calendar, and uploads 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 the office at office@shalommennonite.com or mlwigginton@sbcglobal.net.

- Sam Bixler manages our church directory, email address list, and telephone numbers. You can email changes or additions to the office at office@shalommennonite.com or bixlersc@gmail.com.
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

Reflections on the Journey

Calls for Vengeance in the Older Testament

In the second century AD, a young Christian named found himself struggling to reconcile the Scriptures of the Older Testament with the teachings of Jesus. During his Bible reading, he kept coming across prayers for vengeance, such as Psalm 79:6, “Pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call on your name,” as well as God’s violent answers to those prayers, such as Jeremiah 50:18, “Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I am going to punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria.” These calls for vengeance and promises to avenge didn’t fit with the picture he had of Jesus, who taught, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” (Luke 6:27-28) So he concluded that the God of the Older Testament must have been a fundamentally different God than the God in the New Testament, and he rejected the OT God altogether. This apparently resonated with a number of Christians, because it started a movement called Marcionism that lasted for several centuries. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear Christians express similar thoughts today – especially in light of some of the passages that we will be reading next week.

But when reading Scripture, it is important to understand the context in which it was given and how each passage “fits” in the Biblical story. Although it’s not always clear what the context is, some passages – such as Psalm 79 – actually give it to us. That psalm begins, “O God, the nations have come into your inheritance; they have defiled your holy temple; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food, the flesh of your faithful to the wild animals of the earth.” This is a reference to the most tragic experience of the Older Testament – the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (who are also called the *Chaldeans* throughout our readings, by the way). This was a moment when the Jewish people experienced loss at a level that most of us can’t even imagine: they lost their homes, their loved ones, their country, and in a certain sense, their religion all in one fell swoop. They were grieving, and that grief is expressed in many different ways – through laments, through questions, and sometimes, through calls for vengeance against their Babylonian oppressors.

Although these passages seem hateful and violent to those of us who are relatively safe and comfortable – including Marcion himself, who was a wealthy merchant in the Roman Empire – those who have actually experienced trauma similar to that which the exiled Jews experienced see it differently. The calls for vengeance express the feelings of anger that people naturally feel when they are oppressed, but they turn that anger over to God rather than taking matters into their own hands. Likewise, God’s promises to punish oppressors reassure the victims enough that they can let their vengeance go – although God’s actual “punishments” may be more passive or restorative than the victims themselves call for. But the point is, God assures that justice will be done.

The majority of these calls for vengeance were written in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and thus were intended for people who found themselves victims of severe oppression. So before we jump to Marcion’s conclusions, we should consider where the passages we are reading fit in the Bible’s story, as well as where we ourselves fit in it. ~ Brian

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

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