

# Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

July 29, 2020

**WORSHIP:** Our relationship with God  
Chair: Linda Showalter

**Last Sunday (7/26)**, Sabrina preached from the book of Numbers (or rather from the book, "In the Wilderness" - its Hebrew title), and she walked us through the ups and downs of the book, the successes and failures of the Israelites, and the alternating anger and mercy of God. Like the ancient Israelites, we may find ourselves overwhelmed in the wilderness and bewildered by the mysterious and seemingly contradictory God we are following, but we were encouraged to follow the example of Caleb and take each step by faith.

**This Sunday (8/2)**, we will complete our study of the Mosaic Law by considering Moses' final words in Deuteronomy and the association of blessings and curses with the adherence to the law.

**Next Sunday (8/9)**, Wilma Bailey will preach on the book of Joshua, when the people of God finally entered the Promised Land but did so by force and violence.

Minutes of the July 20 Worship Commission meeting are attached.

**COMMUNITY LIFE:** Relationships at Shalom  
Chair: Herb Troyer

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

## **Sunday, August 2**

9:30 am - Jason and Marcela Rosales Harms will share about the Next Generation Farmers Youth Program at Lawrence Community Gardens.

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: Does God punish people for sinning with plagues or through acts of violence by human aggressors? If not, how do we understand the passages that seem to indicate this?

## **Sunday, August 9**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm - Facing Hard Questions: Do Christians ever have a responsibility to disavow certain Biblical instructions - such as God's command to kill civilians in Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua?

## **Sunday, August 16**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

## **Sunday, August 23**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: Did the human authors of the Bible have political biases and agendas? If so, should that impact the way we read the text?

## **Sunday, August 30**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

## No Facing Hard Questions

### **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](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com).*

Sat, Aug 1 – Abri & Justin Hochstetler, 2009

Mon, Aug 3 – Dagne Assefa & Carol Weaver, 1985

**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: Psalm 114, Joshua 1-4

Tuesday: Psalm 125, Joshua 5-8

Wednesday: Psalm 76, Joshua 9-12

Thursday: Psalm 136, Joshua 13-16

Friday: Proverbs 3:33-35, Joshua 17-20

Saturday: Proverbs 4:1-6, Joshua 21-24

**OUTREACH:** Relationships beyond Shalom  
Chair: Brad Yoder

Some of you wanted my notes on our discussion Sunday, July 19. They are attached. ~ Brad Yoder

Several months ago, before COVID19, the Outreach Commission launched a second ABC Promise Partnership between Shalom and Green Tree Plastics, LLC in Evansville. Our first project was the grey and black bench under the big tree near the playground. This time we are going for one, or possibly two, Toddler Tables for our playground area to serve the toddlers and younger children in our church family.

Many of you have been collecting plastic caps and lids for this project over the past months. Thank you! Frank Kandel has agreed to pick up large bags of caps and lids from your home to transport to Shalom for storage until we can resume our youth-driven sorting and weighing activities. Please call him at 309-532-2859 to schedule a pick-up date and time.

If you have not been collecting the appropriate plastic caps and lids, you can start now!

Attached is a list of the needed types of caps and lids for this program. For more information on the ABC Promise Partnership program go to [www.greentreeplastics.com](http://www.greentreeplastics.com).

Let's get some picnic tables for our tots!

Marilynn Teel

**Trochez-Hernandez fund:** Support for August has been provided to Gemina and her family but there are currently not enough funds to provide full support for September and beyond. Please consider an additional donation, made out to Shalom Mennonite Church, with "Hernandez fund" on the memo line. The next evaluation of the monthly support and the family's needs will be conducted in October. Please contact Laura Harms, [harms.laura@gmail.com](mailto:harms.laura@gmail.com), with any questions or fundraising ideas.

## **Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT)**

Chair: Joyce Troyer

Laura Harms will leave the Administration Commission (AC) at the end of August.

Also, Wilma Bailey's term as Vision and Accountability Team (VAT) Congregational Representative (CR) ends August 30. All Shalom participants who consider Shalom to be their home congregation and attended in person prior to the COVID19 pandemic are invited to participate in the selection process to replace Wilma. Continuing on the VAT in the new church year are Jeanne Smucker, Chair; Cheryl Martin, Vice Chair; Rod Maust, CR; and Thad Wilson, CR. Shalom participants will receive an email in the next week with details regarding choosing a new CR. Please watch for it and respond promptly!

Submitted by Joyce Troyer for the SGDT

### **ADMINISTRATION:** Congregational support systems

Chair: Laura Harms

### **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](mailto:mlwigginton@sbcglobal.net).
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) by 5 pm on Wednesday.

### **Reflections on the Journey**

The members of the Worship Commission recently learned of some disturbing news regarding the author and composer of several beloved and frequently used songs in our songbooks. The composer David Haas is the subject of allegations of sexual misconduct by multiple, credible individuals. This behavior allegedly took place over a period of at least 30 years. Haas initially denied all these reports, but he has issued a statement of apology on his website on July 9. At the beginning of this statement, Haas states, "In recent days, through a lot of prayer and reflection, I have come to realize that I have caused great harm to a variety of people. I make no excuses for any harm that I may have caused. I take responsibility for my behavior and I am truly sorry." He goes on to say that he is receiving "professional intervention and treatment" and that he prays he can receive forgiveness from God and from any who have been hurt by his actions.

On June 23, the committee compiling the new Mennonite hymnal, *Voices Together*, announced its plans to remove songs by Haas from the book, including "I Will Come to You in the Silence," "My Soul is Filled with Joy," and "Peace Before Us." The editors of the new

hymnal stated that they made the decision to remove these songs “in order to not amplify his voice and increase the possibility of ongoing harm.”

At the Worship Commission meeting on July 20, we discussed this situation and the question of whether it is appropriate to continue singing songs by Haas in our worship services. The Worship Commission was deeply saddened and disturbed to hear this news about Haas, and we condemn sexual misconduct wherever and by whomever it occurs. As we considered whether we should continue to use his works, we focused on three main issues:

- 1) ***If we sing these songs are we empowering further abuse?*** We believe that the editors of *Voices Together* made the right choice in deciding to exclude songs by Haas since including them could have resulted in further recognition or financial gain for him. However, we do not think that using this music (from previously published songbooks) in our local worship services will provide any gain or empowerment to Haas personally.
- 2) ***If we sing these songs are we dismissing the pain of the victims?*** We realize that it is important to honor and recognize the pain of all who experience any form of violence or violation. We believe that we cannot and should not ignore these allegations of abuse or pretend that they do not matter. We want to make it clear that we condemn such abuse and stand in solidarity with those who have been hurt. However, we think that we can continue to sing these songs without improperly honoring Haas or denying the pain he has caused.
- 3) ***If we sing these songs are we promoting bad theology which may have contributed to Haas’s reported abuses?*** Based on our review of the Haas songs we frequently sing, we did not find evidence of problematic theology. In some of his songs, the lyrics are based on other sources that he did not originally write. For example, the lyrics in “My Soul is Filled with Joy” are based on the words of the Magnificat (Mary’s song in Luke 1) and the words of “Peace Before Us” are from a Navajo prayer.

After our discussion of these issues, we concluded that we will continue to use songs by Haas in our worship. We do not believe that using this music in our services will inappropriately honor Haas or his behaviors or empower further abuse against those who have experienced harm. We will continue to approach the planning of our services prayerfully and with an attitude of humility.

We encourage anyone with additional questions or comments to contact a member of the Worship Commission.

Linda Showalter, Grace Rhine, Emily Fox Ludden, John Amstutz, and Brian Bither

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

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

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

Please submit information by Wednesday, 5 pm, to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com)