

# Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church      May 27, 2020

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

**Last Sunday (5/24)**, Wilma Bailey used the story of Job as a backdrop to a discussion of how we are experiencing the coronavirus. Job suffers tremendous losses: family, health, income and friends along with a feeling that God has betrayed him. He does not know why. An invisible hand seems to be against him. The coronavirus has also created tremendous losses of life, productivity, security, jobs and economic instability. How can we spiritually cope? The scripture text will be Job 1:13-22.

**This Sunday (5/31)**, we begin Act II of our story of the Bible series, which is "The Calling of the Chosen People." This begins with God's call to Abram and Sarai in Genesis 12, and it sets the stage for the rest of the Older Testament. Although their travels in Genesis may seem random and aimless to many readers, a closer look at the characters involved demonstrate that God was already at work in Abram and Sarai to make them a witness to God and model nation to the world.

**Next Sunday (6/7)**, we will follow the stories of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau, and consider how their patterns of wandering and wrestling with God created a model for relating to God that we still follow today.

If anyone wants to see the concert at the Duomo in Milan, Italy by Andrea Bocelli that I mentioned last Sunday it can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huTUOek4LgU> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huTUOek4LgU> for Amazing Grace alone. - Wilma

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

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

## **Sunday, May 31**

9:30 am – 1 & 2 Kings SS class

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom – Brian will preach on "God's vision for a New People"

2 pm – Facing the Hard Questions – Was Abram's relationship with God unique? To what degree does God reveal truth to people outside of the Judeo-Christian tradition?

## **Sunday, June 7**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom – Brian will preach on "Wandering and Wrestling in Canaan"

*No Facing the Hard Questions*

2 - 3:30 pm - "Why do kids do that?" led by CoraLyn Turentine and Indiana Mental Health Matters.  
See details below in the Discipling section

## **Sunday, June 14**

9:30 am -- update from Peter and Delicia Wigginton in Ecuador

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom – Brian will preach on "The Scope of God's Sovereignty"  
(the story of Joseph)

2 pm - Facing the Hard Questions - Does the Bible have a response to the problem of evil?

### **Sunday, June 21**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom – Brian will preach “Enslaved in Egypt”  
*No Facing Hard Questions session*

### **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).*

Today, May 27 – Lexie Bither and Carlos Reyes

Tue, June 2 – Lorraine Harms

Tue, June 2 – Jim & Linda Showalter, 1973

### **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: Job 18, Proverbs 18:22, Genesis 24-25

Tuesday: Job 19, Proverbs 18:19, Genesis 26-28

Wednesday: Job 20, Proverbs 14:30, Genesis 29-30

Thursday: Job 21, Proverbs 24:15-16, Genesis 31-33

Friday: Job 22, Proverbs 20:22, Genesis 34-36

Saturday: Job 23, Proverbs 29:3, Genesis 37-38

### **Facing the Hard Questions sermon discussion**

As a corollary to our “Story of the Bible” sermon series, Brian will host a sermon discussion class at 2p on Sundays that will wrestle with the critical questions about the Bible in light of modern insights into science, history, and ethics. These sessions may be recorded and posted on the internet.

**June 7, 2:00-3:30 PM,** you are invited to attend a special training event, “Why Do Kids Do That? Mental Health and Behavior.”

Do you wonder why many children struggle with challenging behaviors? Perhaps you feel burned out and are unsure of how to respond effectively. Discover the root causes of many of the challenging behaviors facing today’s communities. This training will help you to understand why toxic stress and trauma affect youth development, academic learning, and behaviors, and is the first step in learning how to respond to children and youth experiencing social-emotional distress. Rediscover your empathy and expand your capacity for helping children and youth to grow, heal, and learn.

Training will take place via Zoom. An access link and password will be mailed to you shortly after registering.

PLEASE REGISTER EACH PARTICIPANT as we will need an accurate head count to properly pay the training agency, Indiana Mental Health Matters. [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/shalom-mennonite-training-why-do-kids-do-that-mental-health-and-behaviors-registration-106438915662?ref=enivtefor001&invite=MTk2MjMyNDAvdGhldHVyZW50aW5lc0BnbWFpC5jb20vMA%3D%3D%0A&utm\\_source=eb\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=inviteformalv2&utm\\_term=attend](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/shalom-mennonite-training-why-do-kids-do-that-mental-health-and-behaviors-registration-106438915662?ref=enivtefor001&invite=MTk2MjMyNDAvdGhldHVyZW50aW5lc0BnbWFpC5jb20vMA%3D%3D%0A&utm_source=eb_email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=inviteformalv2&utm_term=attend)

**Discipling Commission** met by Zoom to think together about how to help Shalom grow in love of God, each other, and others during this time of physical distancing. Here are some of our reflections:

--It does not seem that more screen time would be helpful to our children and youth, many of whom are already spending a lot of time online for school. We would welcome any ideas you might have about how to keep them connected during the summer.

--We would like to spend time during the adult Sunday school hour (currently 9:30-10:25) hearing from each other. Would you like to share about your work? Your family traditions? Your faith journey? Email or call Martha Yoder Maust with ideas.

--Since this is our year to focus on the Story of the Bible, we would also welcome offers to share a favorite Bible text and why it has been important to you. This could include songs inspired by Bible texts. Have you memorized a favorite book or chapter? We would love to hear you recite it.

--There may be some Sundays in which we will not have anyone scheduled to share, and if that is the case, we will all enjoy a little more Sabbath rest. We will keep you informed in the Journeying Together.

Thanks in advance for your input, Martha Yoder Maust

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

Chair: Brad Yoder

**Amigo Centre** wishes to thank everyone who has given so generously. We have felt your support whether through financial means or through prayer. We are hopeful about the future and continue to work towards helping people connect to God, nature and each other. Announcements about events and programs can be found on our Facebook page and on our website, [amigocentre.org](http://amigocentre.org)

**Annual Conference session:** Zenebe Assefa would like to share information about the annual conference sessions coming up June 19-20. This meeting is open to delegates and pastors. See the attached document for more information.

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

Chair: Laura Harms

An ad hoc "**Safely Gathering Committee**" including VAT, commission chairs, and a few others met on Monday night to talk about when we might start to meet in person again for worship, and how to do that safely. Shalom will continue to have virtual worship and adult ed classes through the end of June, then the committee will re-assess the situation later in June and make a decision about July. At some point we may poll the congregation to see how many are ready to attend in person. We talked about having a hybrid service, with some in the church building and some on Zoom, and we will explore the technology needed to make that possible. We will work on measures to keep in-person meetings safer, such as using hand sanitizer, wearing masks, keeping our distance from each other, and changing how we use music (since singing can send the virus as far as 16 feet).

These are complex issues and we ask for your patience as we try to sort them out.

Martha Yoder Maust, for the Safely Gathering Committee

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. – Jim Showalter

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 Pilgrimage

### On Biblical “Heroes”

Often times, we read the Bible for ethical guidance. If we are trying to make a hard decision, if we find ourselves in a moral gray area, or if we are asked to weigh in on a controversial issue, we look to the Bible for help – and appropriately so! But if we are going to Genesis or any other narrative book for this kind of guidance, we have to be careful. Our tendency is to identify “good guys” and “bad guys” in the stories and to infer that whatever the “good guys” do is morally acceptable and whatever the “bad guys” do is unacceptable, unless the text explicitly tells us otherwise. But this is not how the stories were intended to be read, and doing this can have devastating effects.

In American history, there have been people who have argued that murder is morally permissible because the “heroes” of the Bible killed people in self-defense, that slavery is morally permissible because the patriarchs had slaves, and that polygamy was morally permissible because the patriarchs had multiple wives, to name a few examples. But the stories themselves don’t actually endorse any of these behaviors – they simply describe them. As Christians, we believe that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,” so we cannot automatically assume that something a “Biblical hero” does is morally acceptable – even if they benefit from that action or behavior.

So if we can’t read the Biblical stories in this good guy versus bad guy way, how can they be useful to us? There are several different ways in which a book like Genesis can provide moral guidance. To name one, despite not describing a particular action as “good” or “bad,” the narrative often shows us some of the unintended consequences that those actions can take. For example, although God doesn’t explicitly criticize Abram for forcing his slave (Hagar) to bear his child, the text does highlight the fact that this action created jealousy and hostility in Abram’s home. Another way to use these stories is to hold them in light of the larger testimony of Scripture. Abram and Sarai’s treatment of Hagar fails to meet the requirements of hospitality and emancipation laid out in the Jewish law and the New Testament. And toward the end of the Bible, one of the requirements for a male church leaders is that he must be a “husband of but one wife” – indicating that polygamous marriages fall short of God’s intentions for humanity. Yet another way to read the text is to imagine ourselves in the role of different characters and use the stories to expand our moral perspective. The story of Hagar, for example, has been embraced by black church because many slaves in American history had very similar experiences, and there is a benefit in interpreting Hagar as a *survivor* whose faith in God played a key role in her escape from an abusive situation.

The Bible does not tell a story of heroes and saviors (with one exception), but of imperfect people trying to figure out how to follow God. By the grace of God, let us learn to imitate what they did well and to learn from their mistakes rather than repeat them.

- Brian

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

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