

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

July 22, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God
Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (7/19), we studied the sacrificial system that is established in the Mosaic law and sought to understand why the people of God felt such a strong responsibility to observe religious rituals and purge themselves of sin as they lived into their identity as a "set-apart" people.

This Sunday (7/26), Sabrina will preach on "This Is Us" The scripture reading will be Numbers 13:1-2, 25-33; 14:1-24

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

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom
Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar *(All events are Zoom meetings)*

This Sunday (7/26)

9:30 am - Wilma Bailey will lead a conversation on monuments

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

Sunday, August 2

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

No Facing Hard Questions

Sunday, August 16

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

Sunday, August 23

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.

Today – Gemina Trochez

Mon, July 27 – Harlan Nelson

Tue, July 28 – Emily Ludden

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 20:20-21, Numbers 32-36

Tuesday: Deuteronomy 1-4, Psalm 135

Wednesday: Psalm 1, Deuteronomy 5-7

Thursday: Psalm 112, Deuteronomy 8-11

Friday: Proverb 13:13-15, Deuteronomy 27-30

Saturday: Proverbs 10:6-11, Deuteronomy 31-34

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom
Chair: Brad Yoder

Join us (virtually) for a **Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Centennial Celebration on July 26**. This year marks the 100th anniversary of MCC! It is not the centennial year we anticipated. Still, we invite you to join us (virtually) on Sunday, July 26, at 6:30 p.m. (EDT), as we offer thanks to God and pray for the future of MCC’s ministry of relief, development and peace in the name of Christ. We’ll be broadcasting live from Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, site of an important first meeting in the formation of MCC when representatives of various Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren groups met in July 1920. We had hoped to worship together in person, but we’re grateful for the livestream option that will enable more MCC supporters and partners to join us. The livestream will feature a combination of live and pre-recorded speakers and music. Please invite your friends and family by sharing the link: mcc.org/gl-centennial-livestream.

Pastoral Team Search Committee update: Yes, exciting news!

The Pastoral search committee has held two virtual meetings with one applicant. We then invited the applicant to come to Indianapolis for in-person meetings. This past Saturday, throughout the day, the applicant met with the search committee, the VAT and the Commission Chairs Team in person, outside the church, with distancing and masks. The search committee met this Tuesday evening and decided to extend an invitation to the applicant to candidate with our congregation.

To review the process: After the committee decides on a primary applicant, they contact some of the references provided by the candidate. That was done before the recent visit. The applicant then meets with the church leadership, informally. This provides the applicant an opportunity to ask questions along with the questions asked by the leadership of the applicant. The search committee then extends an invitation to the applicant to be a candidate. If the applicant agrees to candidate, they also let any other churches with whom they have been in conversation know that they are moving forward with the church where they will candidate. This does not mean that they have been called. It is just the next step. This is the point where we find ourselves.

The applicant has indicated that he will let us know if he wants to candidate with us by July 26. The next step will be for him to preach a sermon and to have an opportunity for members of the congregation to ask him questions. Due to the pandemic, these encounters

will all be by Zoom. Prior to that day, the congregation will be provided with a summary of the candidate's biography and strengths that we have identified. Following the sermon and question-and-answer session, the congregation will have the opportunity to vote on whether to call the candidate to come join the pastoral team of our congregation. At least 85% of the congregation will need to affirm the calling for us to move forward.

Please hold the applicant and our congregation in prayer as we discern God's will for our church as we move forward into this exciting time. ~ Jeanne Smucker

Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT)

Chair: Joyce Troyer

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

The SGDT wants to say "Thank you!" to Laura Harms for her service with the AC as first a member and then as chair.

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

- [Link to Commission Chair meeting on June 16](#)
- Update on gathering safely:
Commission chairs met on July 21 and discussed the current state of the Covid-19 pandemic in central Indiana.
--Cases have been rising sharply in the past two weeks, so we have decided that at least through the month of August we will continue to meet by Zoom.
--Worship and Admin Commissions continue to work on the logistics of eventually having a hybrid service (on-site and remote).
--We considered the option of meeting on the church lawn, but it would be a lot of work for a few people to set up a sound system then take it all down again, so we are not planning to try that. Small groups, which would not need amplification, are welcome to use the church lawn for outdoor meetings, with masks and appropriate physical distancing.
--We are also considering separating age groups in the building, with young children meeting in a separate space than older adults.
We know that this pandemic is wearing on many of us. Thank you for your patience as we try to navigate our way through this season.~ Martha
- Pastor Brian will be on vacation with his family from Wednesday, July 22 to Tuesday, July 28 and will not be checking email during that time. If you have an urgent church matter, please email Jeanne Smucker, our congregational chair, at jmrsmucker@outlook.com.
- "**Give Hope to Live** is a program that was started with Nizeet Deiter's sister Fresia Kelley to help COVID-19 patients hospitalized in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Grace Pointe

Community Church of the Nazarene in Maryland is launching a fundraising campaign here in the United States, and you can donate by going to <https://pushpay.com/g/gracepointcommunitysevern?r=one> and using Fund, then typing "HONDURAS COVID-19 CARE" in the Memo line. For each patient, your donation may be the difference between life and death. If you have any questions about this program or process, contact Nizeet and Chris at deiteraguilar@gmail.com.

- 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 mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net.
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

Reflections on the Journey

Mapping the Book of Numbers

Numbers can be a challenging book for 21st century readers because it lists a myriad of names and locations that don't mean anything to most of us. However, these details must have been important to the early readers, because the book of Numbers is careful to track every step of the Israelites' journey from the Red Sea to the Promised Land. (And just in case we missed it, chapter 33 gives us a recap of the entire journey!)

Unfortunately, even with these detailed notes, it is all but impossible for historians and Biblical scholars to pinpoint most of these locations, because they are all in the desert and far from the major urban centers that historians use as reference points. Nevertheless, even without a precise map of each of these locations, it is beneficial to have a general grasp of their journey to get the most out of this story. This is why I decided to use the map that I attached to Journeying Together, which I encourage you to open as a reference point. It is not a particularly accurate depiction of the Israelite's travels, but it does a great job of conveying the general stages of the journey.

The Journey from Egypt to Israel begins in Exodus 15:22, which says that "Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the Wilderness of Shur." The first stage of their journey, represented by the light blue #1 line on the map, loosely corresponds with their journey from the Red Sea to Mt Sinai. Even though the Torah spends less than four chapters describing this stage, it seems they covered a lot of territory, as you can see. Then, Exodus 19:1 reports that the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, and they spend the rest of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and the first part of Numbers there. In Numbers 10:12, they finally leave Sinai and set out on their path to the Promised Land, represented by the the orange #2 line on the map, along the path that God had intended.

The orange path takes them to the second most important location in their journey narrative: Kadesh. Kadesh is just south of Israel, and it was from there that Moses sent the twelve spies to study the land of Canaan and give them a report of how they should respond. Unfortunately, the spies were terrified of the people there and suggested that the Israelites should turn around. It was also during this stage when Moses took a detour to Meribah in Numbers 20, represented by the yellow #2 line, and disobeyed God's command by hitting the rock to make it produce water. This resulted in the forty years of backtracking and wandering, represented by the #3 green line.

Toward the end of this time, God and the people began to reconcile, and the Israelites entered the fourth and final phase of the journey. Rather than taking them into the land of Canaan from the south, through Kadesh, God brings them up along the eastern border of Israel, and they finally cross the border (the Jordan River) at the beginning of Joshua. To go this route, they have to go through the lands of Edom and Moab, two of Israel's oldest historic enemies. By this point, the Israelites had learned their lesson, and they trusted God to bring them through these lands, setting them up for redemption.

As you can see, the map itself is a microcosm of the larger Biblical story, in which God has a plan for the Israelites (represented by lines 1 & 2), the Israelites "fall" and deviate from the plan (line 3), and God creates a new route by which to redeem them (line 4). Keep an eye out for some of these key locations as you read the text!

- Brian

Journeying Together is a weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church: 6100 E 32nd St, 46226; (317) 549-0577 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