

JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

September 8, 2021

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Brittany Bither

Last Sunday (9/5), Brian preached from the book of Ruth and consider how the Bible identifies and responds to the challenges of xenophobia

This Sunday (9/12), Brian will preach about the kind of humility that "considers others better than yourselves."

Next Sunday (9/19), is Peace Sunday, which we will celebrate by reviewing our commitment to nonviolence and Brian will preach considering the example of Abigail from 1 Samuel 25

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

CALENDAR

Sunday, September 12 around 12p (after Zoom church) - Virtual Vote on Antiracism Audit

From Sept. 19 to Nov. 21, at 9:30, Wilma Bailey will lead us in a study of the book of Numbers.

Sunday, September 26 at 10:30a (during Zoom church) - Pastor Craig Oury's installation

Sunday, October 3, World Communion Sunday

Small Groups at Shalom

Returning to Zoom meetings has been emotionally difficult, but the rise in Covid cases around us requires minimizing contacts. The hard part in all this is staying connected to friends, family members and church members. But there are some solutions.

At Shalom Mennonite Church we have a small groups that help to keep us in contact with each other. There are several that are still meeting, and you are invited to join one of them. The groups each meet at different times and places. Depending on what is happening, some are continuing by Zoom and others meet outside when weather permits or zoom meetings when needed. Being in a small group myself, I find it helps to have more contact with others during these times of Covid.

Another option is for a few people to start a new small group based around a common interest. The group can be time-limited and each group is asked to evaluate if the group is still working for them on a regular basis.

Let a Community Life Commission member know if you are interested in either joining an ongoing small group or in starting a new small group: Herb Troyer (troyers_hj@hotmail.com), Rose Love (rhlove@sbcglobal.net), or Linda Kandel (linidakandel@gmail.com).

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships

Chair: Martha Yoder

Dismantling Racism Audit Proposal Update

Shalom met after worship on September 5 (on Zoom) to discuss the dismantling racism audit proposal. In breakout groups and as a whole group, led by CoraLyn Turentine and Frank Kandel, we discussed pros and cons and raised questions. Here is a summary of the meeting. Scroll down to find a little more info on some of the questions, and instructions on how to vote.

Summary of Sept. 5 meeting

Things that we are excited about:

- Working with experienced people who can help us identify concrete things we can do.
- Gaining an outside perspective on our church culture
- Generally learning new things about Shalom (*This was probably the most popular sentiment. I think we are genuinely curious about ourselves, and want to understand ourselves better*), not just about the ways in which we may perpetuate racism, but also what are some gifts and tools that we have that could help us to be more faithful to being anti-racist.
- This could show us areas for positive change, for example, in how we worship, how we make decisions, etc...and help everyone to understand why we are making the changes we are making (generate buy-in).
- Excited to learn how to respond and help people who have experienced racism. This could include people who are already a part of our church, as well as the community around us.
- We might learn that we are doing some things right

Things that we are fearful about:

- This might be more beneficial for the leadership than for the broader congregation. It is going to focus more so on policies and procedures, and may not really address the individual need to be anti-racist.
- We may not handle inter-personal conflict well in the church. How will we recover if/when the conversations become challenging? What will we do to emotionally and socially navigate hurt feelings?
- Will we really get the most value from doing this virtually? What important items might be missed?
- Are we ready for change?
- Do we have time and energy for our part of the process?

Pros:

- The company has 30 years of experience.
- Opportunity to explore other "problem areas" that we might be perpetuating (sexism, classism, etc.)
- Paying an outside organization will save the congregation a lot of time and energy. Why reinvent the wheel, when there is already an organization that has an evidence-based process for completing these kinds of audits?
- Working with strangers might help some in our church to be more open and transparent. Less fear of being judged or labelled as "racist."
- Working with a consultant can help to keep us on track and make sure we complete the audit, and finish what we start.

Cons:

- The virtual audit may miss out on key areas that may manifest in-person.
- Some people may be more comfortable opening up to someone they know, instead of to strangers.
- The consultants may not be available to respond to questions/concerns/loose ends after the process is over. If we work with someone we know, we'll be able to reach out to them after the process is over.
- Our in-person environment/practices/set-up, etc. may not be part of the evaluation, leaving us vulnerable to old habits that might have been addressed otherwise.

Questions that we still have:

- What have other Indiana-Michigan congregations felt about working with this consultant?
- To what extent will the audit be something that is done "to us," vs. "with us."
- Is it going to focus primarily on racism experienced between black and white Americans? What about other ethnic groups? What about foreign members of the congregation?
- What are the personal and professional backgrounds of the 3 staff members who will be working with us?
- How soon would we be able to start?

- How will this really change things? Will it only make a difference to our congregation, or will it help us to understand how to be anti-racist outside of the church as well.
- Is there another organization that provides similar services who may be a better fit for Shalom?

Updates after the meeting:

- As of yet, there are no other Indiana-Michigan congregations that have gone through an audit with Widerstand Consulting, although several have been using the curriculum that we used in April and May.
- I asked Widerstand about other Mennonite congregations that could provide a reference. Tobin Miller Shearer answered that there are none that have completed an audit yet, although one is scheduled to start in a few weeks and others are scheduled for later. This indirectly answers the "how soon would we be able to start" question; it seems like at least several months would elapse before we could start.
- Two documents that were referred to at the meeting are attached below.

Voting Process

Commission chairs decided we would need a 60% majority to move ahead with this decision.

There are three ways to vote:

1. Come to the meeting this Sunday, Sept. 12 and enter your vote in the chat.
2. Come to the meeting and raise your hand when I ask for votes.
3. Email Martha Yoder Maust yodermaust@gmail.com **BEFORE 9:00 AM** on Sunday, Sept. 12 so that your vote can be included in the count at the meeting. You may vote yes, no, or you may tell me that you are abstaining.
4. One more note: In the Zoom chat or in your email, feel free to add comments. Your comments might inform next steps.

Natasha Diener

Natasha Diener shared with us on Zoom on August 29. Attached are her update letter and information on how to support her.

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Brad Yoder

Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence

On Thursday, September 16th at 7-8:00PM, is the Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence Forum and Annual Meeting, with Guest Speaker State Senator Fady Qaddoura. Pre-register at info@hcgv.org with "RSVP Annual Meeting".

The Arlington Woods Neighborhood Association Cleanup Day

The Arlington Woods Neighborhood cleanup day plan has changed slightly.

The **date (September 18, 2021, and the time 9AM - 1 PM.)** remain the same.

However, at this past Monday nights' meeting the association announced that volunteers would be asked to go **to 3315 North Drexel Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46218** to pick up trash, clean gutters, trim shrubs and other cleaning task around this home.

The use of a ladder will be required and therefor anyone willing and interested to volunteer would have to visit the following site...

<https://arlingtonwoods.voluntreehub.com/> and complete a waiver form before coming to work at the property. If you need more clarification about the waiver, please contact Ms. Talia Shivers at taliapar@aol.com.

Zenebe Abebe, for Outreach Commission.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM

CHAIR: Joyce Troyer

The SGDT requests your affirmation for Jeanne Smucker who has agreed to serve as a member on the Worship Commission. Please email Joyce Troyer with your comments at troyers_hj@hotmail.com or call/text Joyce at 317-446-4353 as soon as possible, at least by September 15. Jeanne will join Brittany Bither (chair) and Linda Showalter (member).

SGDT is also pleased to announce that Mark Stocksdales has accepted the nomination to be the Vision and Accountability Team Congregational Representative (CR) for a three-year term. The other members of the VAT are Cheryl Martin (chair), Frank Kandel (vice chair), Carol Bixler (CR), and CoraLyn Turentine (CR).

SGDT is grateful for all who serve Shalom! At this time, the official positions for the coming church year that begins September 1 are filled, but volunteers are always needed and appreciated. Although the pandemic limits what we can do in person, the work of the church continues. If you are interested in an area of service, please contact Joyce Troyer (troyers_hj@hotmail.com), Frank Kandel (kandel93@gmail.com), or Raphael Edou (raphaedou@gmail.com).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Renewing the Deacon Program. As we enter yet another round of quarantine and virtual church, the Pastoral Team and VAT have decided to temporarily renew the Deacon Program. The Deacon Program is a system of pastoral care that we adopted in April 2020 in which every regular attendee of the church was assigned to a deacon, who was responsible for keeping in touch with them and acting as a point of spiritual support from the church. Although we had talked about implementing something like this for years, we never formally discussed it as a church, and so we decided to experiment with it at the beginning of the pandemic when the need for pastoral care increased beyond what Brian could handle by himself. Now we have experimented with it for over a year, and we have gotten a wide range of responses, from people who really appreciated it to others who did not find it to be helpful or effective. When the church starts meeting in person, we plan to have a congregational evaluation of the deacon program to decide whether to continue it or not, but until then, the church leadership has decided to renew the program, while making two key changes:

(1) New deacons - All of our deacons did a wonderful job serving in their roles, but some need to end their service, which means that **we need new members of the congregation to volunteer as deacons**. If you have any interest in serving as a deacon, please contact Brian to learn more.

(2) Congregational Participation - The make-up of our congregation has changed in the last year, with some folks ceasing to attend Shalom and others joining the church. The Community Life Commission is going to re-evaluate the list of regular attendees, which will be re-distributed among the deacons. However, if you do not want to be contacted by a deacon, please email Brian that you would like **to opt out of the deacon program**, and you will not be assigned one. Of course, you will still be valued as a member of our community.

Faith Perspectives on Immigration

The Clay County jail, which is the only facility in the state of Indiana authorized to detain undocumented immigrants for more than 72 hours, is quietly making plans to expand their capacity and their contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which would adversely impact many people. Hannah Cartwright,

an attorney who advocated for detained immigrants and friend of Shalom, is leading a seminar called, "**Faith Perspectives on Immigration & Conversation about the Proposed Expansion of Immigration Detention in Indiana**" on Tuesday, September 14 at 7pm. If you want to learn the basics about immigration detention in Indiana and consider how we might engage this as people of faith, please join the seminar by following this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86817646573?pwd=b0hVMmFRMDZ5YXdpR1VxS2s2NEYwdz09>

Join Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for the third MCC U.S. Color of Compromise webinar featuring Sandra Maria Van Opstal on September 28th at 1:00 p.m. EDT. From the depth of her experience ministering to the Hispanic and Latino community, writer, speaker and co-founder of Chasing Justice movement, Sandra Maria Van Opstal will speak about the impact of the church's complicity in racism on the Hispanic and Latino community here in the U.S. Register for the free webinar here: mcc.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mn84mcwBTHu_ggUajNFQKw. For more information on past webinars in the series, visit mcc.org/color-of-compromise.

Crop Walk

It's that time of year again to think about participating with the Crop Hunger Walk!! Due to COVID the walk will be virtual again in October; the walk is 3 miles. As people sign up we will decide if we want to meet up to walk as a group or individually. You need to register online to walk with Shalom Mennonite church. Ask for your donations to help stop hunger as the donations go to people around the world to stop hunger. <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/event/indianapolisin>

Please email me at Juliekins7182@hotmail.com if you have any questions! – Julie Sanders

MCC bike ride



This year I am again planning to participate in the annual MCC Bike Michiana tour at Amigo Centre on October 8-10. This year's project is directed to Climate Change Mitigation in Zimbabwe, and I am soliciting your sponsorship as I have in prior years. With last year's cancellation, the worldwide needs are still critical in the face of the pandemic, I invite you to share with those who are less fortunate than us. With the limits of in-person worship, I am asking you to make your contributions by mail.

Checks should be made payable to AMIGO CENTRE and mailed to me, John Amstutz, 1185 N 10th St., Noblesville, IN 46060.

Thank you for your contributions and sponsorship. With your past support, you have helped me to raise close to \$30,000 for mission services of MCC, and I am hoping that this year is the year to exceed that goal. John Amstutz

Solar Panel System Payback Changes?

Recently, Jefferson Electric (Shalom's solar panel installer) was asked to provide expert testimony for the

INDIANA DISTRIBUTED ENERGY ALLIANCE, an advocacy group working to get fair financial compensation for residents and businesses in Indiana whose personal and organizational solar investments are producing an excess amount of energy which is contributing to the utility grid's supply. [More here.](#)

Note: The current compensation agreement for our excess power is by net metering which gives us full credit for our excess power during daylight times and then we use these credits whenever we use more power than we are currently generating – like during dark hours.

AES (formerly IPL) Proposal: Instead of net metering (equivalent crediting) for our excess power, they would pay us for it at about 1/3 of the current price. (don't know when this may occur)

Comment: This could double or triple the payback years for our system (which is currently about 15 years). Our excess power during the light hours would be paid to us at about 1/3 the rate that we pay for our power during the dark hours when we use more than we generate. The current net metering agreement is in effect until 2032 but each power company can leave net metering if their rooftop solar generation power reaches 1.5% of their peak power. This does have the attention of many consumer & environmental groups! - Jim S.

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 at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEn30AED17Q_ReoskuxUXA!

Video recordings (MP4) of our Zoom worship services are available online. A link to the worship service recordings is on the Member's page of our website.

PLEASE NOTE: You can only watch the first 60 minutes of a recording while online at this site. However you can watch the **entire recording if you download it** onto your computer/tablet and then watch it from the downloaded MP4 file. Be aware that these files are 300MB - 1200MB in size. First click on the recording and then the download (direct download) function is at the top right. When finished watching, delete that downloaded MP4 file from your computer/tablet so you gain back that space. -Jim

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.

Craig Oury is now compiling *Journeying Together* each week. You can continue to send information to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday. Craig is now managing 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 at craig@shalommennonite.com

REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

Balancing Act

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. Matthew 14:13-14

Jesus, about to go to a deserted place alone for a while. Then here comes the sea of faces. When you're super busy, when you think you are just about to get a break you are then again inundated with what it is that you were looking to take a break from. So much for this break I guess huh? Jesus saw the crowd, had compassion on them, and then taught them many things.

When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Although the biblical text doesn't say this, I can imagine the disciples were somewhat annoyed at the large crowd that gathered on the hillside, I at least would be. 'Why didn't they plan ahead? Why didn't they bring they bring their own food? Who do they think we are, people just here to take care of all their needs? Come on, take care of yourselves already! You made it all the way over here, what did you think was going to happen? There obviously isn't a Wendy's near by. There is no Kroger either to go buy a deli sandwich. You may be familiar with the non Biblical saying, God helps those who help themselves? I suppose this is the thought and attitude that Jesus here teaches us and the disciples against. There are not certain people that deserve to be shown hospitable actions by us or the disciples, it is all, even if they appear to lack common sense, like going out all day and not thinking about what they'll eat. The disciples possibly considered the crowd a nuisance to be dismissed before things got out of hand, at least that is the feeling I get from reading this text, but maybe I'm assuming something based on my own experiences, but in their act of hospitality, their attitudes changed. They began to see the people as Christ did, as honored guests.

The disciples did not expect to see a crowd when they got off the boat. They had planned for a retreat, just them, but they were greeted by masses of people who had great needs. So Jesus changed the schedule. He was flexible, using the whole day to care for their needs. They don't need to go away says Jesus, and Jesus wasn't just talking about that they could be fed. There was time to continue to host this multitude. Jesus' welcome made them feel that they were not an intrusion on his busy life but cherished guests. Jesus gave them words, which they longed to hear. Jesus gave them a healing touch, which they ached to feel.

Yet this is not a call to work ourselves to the point of burnout. It is important to take care of ourselves. It is important to be aware that we need time to regroup and to set aside that time for ourselves. The balance can be difficult to obtain and it takes a thoughtful effort to set aside that time because something else is always around the corner ready to ask for our time. That is why I am glad that Matthew also adds what happens after this event.

Verses 22-23,

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone

– Pastor Craig

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

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Vision & Accountability Team: Cheryl Martin, Carol Bixler, CoraLyn Turentine, Frank Kandel, Brian Bither, Craig Oury
