

# Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

January 6, 2021

## **WORSHIP: Our relationship with God**

Chair: Grace Rhine

**Last Sunday (1/3)**, J.E. Misz - a poet, licensed therapist, and converted Mennonite - will be speaking on the theme of blessings. (J.E. was Brian's roommate at Duke Divinity School and quite was influential in his own journey to the Mennonite Church.)

**This Sunday (1/10)**, CoraLyn Turentine will bring the message.



We will be participating in communion during our worship service. Please bring your own elements and have them ready at the beginning of the service.

**Next Sunday (1/17)**, we will resume our Story of the Bible series and look at the Gospel of Matthew, which depicts Jesus as the embodiment of Israel itself.

## **COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom**

Chair: Herb Troyer

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

### **Sunday, January 10**

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

Due to time taken off in quarantine, Brian has canceled Facing Hard Questions for this week (1/17). The discussion will be moved to 1/24

### **Sunday, January 17**

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

### **Thursday, January 21**

7 – 8:30 pm - Consuming Media Responsibly webinar (see announcement)

### **Sunday, January 24**

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: *The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today*, led by Emily and Tim Ludden

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: How historically reliable are the gospels?

### **Celebrations**

Sat, Jan 9 – Jim Showalter

Mon, Jan 11 – Phoenix Dunn

### **DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships**

Chair: Martha Yoder

Beginning on January 10, Tim and Emily Ludden will be leading a Sunday school class on the book The Bible Unwrapped by Meghan Larissa Good. If you are able to obtain a copy of the book before the first session, please read the Foreword and Introduction. Even if you aren't able to read ahead of time, please come prepared to discuss your personal understanding of and experiences with the Bible. A more detailed reading schedule is attached.

### **"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: Matthew 1, Proverbs 19:20-23, Hebrews 1-2

Tuesday: Matthew 2-3, Proverbs 12:5-8, Hebrews 3:1-6

Wednesday: Matthew 4, Hebrews 3:7-4:13, Proverbs 12:1, 15:10-11

Thursday: Hebrews 4:14-5:10, Matthew 5, Proverbs 15:18, 20:25, 25:21-22

Friday: Hebrews 5:11-6:20, Proverbs 19:24-25, Matthew 6, Psalm 119:161-168

Saturday: Hebrews 7-8, Matthew 7: Psalm 119:169-176

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

Chair: Brad Yoder

Among the ministries of the Quito [Ecuador] Mennonite Church has been helping refugees since 2002. These people come mostly from Columbia and Venezuela, where they may be fleeing violence or poverty, and are seeking a better life for themselves and their families. The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated this ministry this year. Mennonite Mission Network (MMN) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) have combined to provide the resources for this ministry, which is part of the work of Delicia Bravo and Peter Wigginton. The church provides food such as rice, beans, powdered milk, and sugar to about 80-100 families per month. During the pandemic this ministry was especially important, because at other times many of the refugee families would get some income from day labor on the streets, which is not possible during the public health crisis. While Shalom regularly provides support for Peter and Delicia, we decided at the end of the year to share some of our extra funds to support their holistic ministry to our brothers and sisters in Quito. Let's celebrate with them the sharing of God's abundance. ~ Brad Yoder

### **SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM (SGDT)**

Chair: Joyce Troyer

### **VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (VAT)**

Chair: Jeanne Smucker

Minutes from the latest VAT meeting are attached.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Chair: Mike Wigginton

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The latest issue of the Conference newsletter, the Gospel Evangel, has been published and is

attached to this week's Journeying Together.

- **Join MCC and Great Lakes BIC for a free webinar: Consuming Media Responsibly.** Framed with a time of biblical reflection, Bishop Lynn Thrush will facilitate a discussion with Pastor Tracie Hunter and Nekeisha Alexis, AMBS' intercultural competence and undoing racism coordinator, about how we should understand the ways the media influences us. The free webinar will take place on Thursday, January 21, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. EST. Participants will come away with a better understanding of the racial undertones of media consumption. Please register by January 20 at [mcc.org/gl-webinar-media](http://mcc.org/gl-webinar-media) to receive the webinar link.
- 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](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEn30AED17Q_ReoskuxUXA)!
- **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](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) or [mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlwiggin@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](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) or [bixlersc@gmail.com](mailto:bixlersc@gmail.com).
  - Send announcements for Journeying Together to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) by 5 pm on Wednesday.

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY**

### Introducing the New Testament Readings

At the end of Advent, those of us who have been following the Scripture reading assignments finished the Older Testament (except Psalms and Proverbs), and we will begin reading through the New Testament next week. If you got behind in your Old Testament readings or never started them, this is a great time for a fresh start! The New Testament assignments are easier for the average Christian than the OT readings, not to mention shorter. While we were in the OT, I assigned 4-7 chapters of reading per day, but in the NT, that will now be reduced to 2-5 chapters per day.

Those of you who are familiar with the New Testament know that it begins with four different accounts of Jesus' life ("the gospels"), which are followed by a book of the early church's history, the Acts of the Apostles, and the rest of the New Testament consists of letters written from various church leaders to the early Christian communities. The last of these letters, written by John from the island of Patmos, describes an apocalyptic vision that he had about his current day and the end of history, and it brings the Story of the Bible to a decisive conclusion. This structure raises some questions about how best to read through the New Testament. Since the four gospels cover largely the same material, should you read each gospel, one-at-a-time, or try to go through Jesus' life chronologically as you switch from one account to another? Should you read the epistles in the order in which they appear in the cannon, after the book of Acts, or try to insert them in the times when they were likely written? Then what do you do with the ones that don't fit clearly into the Acts timeframe?

I have decided to let the narrative books (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts) and the apocalypse (Revelation) be the main focus of our readings each week, so that we will remember that first and foremost the Bible tells a *story*, and that the prophecies, wisdom literature, and epistles all flow out of that story. We'll start by doing an overview of each of the four gospels in turn, since each one has a unique perspective that it applies to the life of Jesus, and then we will start weaving them together in loose chronological order as we work our way through Lent and Easter. Rather than trying to fit the epistles in the story chronologically, the epistles will be paired with the readings thematically to help us make the connections about how our values flow from the life of Jesus and the early church. For example, the gospel of Luke – which gives the most emphasis to justice – will be paired with the epistle of James, who also focuses on that theme, while the gospel of John – which emphasizes Jesus' identity as the Son of God – will be paired with Colossians, which also focuses on Jesus' divine nature and unique identity. Along the way, we'll continue reading psalms and proverbs, to remind us that while the Bible is divided into two Testaments, it is one unified story.

If you have never read through the New Testament before, I strongly encourage you to give this a try. Something powerful and transformative happens when make the Word of God a part of our daily diet, and it's quite meaningful to be able to do it together with other members of our church community.

~ 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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