

# Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

November 25, 2020

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

Chair: Linda Showalter

**Last Sunday (11/22)**, Wilma Baily delivered a sermon on "Thinking about gratitude when the world is troubled".

**This Sunday (11/29)** is the first Sunday of Advent, and we will spend this time reflecting on the longing for the Messiah that developed among the Jews during the exile. This week, we'll engage the books of Joel and Isaiah as they depict the Messiah as the one who brings vindication through judgment.

**Next Sunday (12/6)** is the second Sunday of Advent, and we will celebrate by joining another congregation - East Goshen Mennonite Church - in the first of two joint worship sessions. Brian will be preaching about the hopes that emerged not only for a Jewish Messiah, but for a Messiah who could save the whole world.



Due to the Covid19 virus, we have had to give up several of our traditions this year. With the Christmas season coming up, Worship Commission is polling the congregation to see how many people would be interested in participating in a round-the-circle time (outside) of caroling later in December. If we stay distanced and wear masks, the Safely Gathering group has deemed it safe enough. Since there will be no Christmas banquet this year, this would be one way we could spend some time together. Please let Linda Showalter know if you would commit to participating in a time of singing together. We would need a significant number of people to make this viable.

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

Chair: Herb Troyer

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

**Sunday, November 29**, First Sunday of Advent

No Sunday School

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: Were the prophets really writing about Jesus when they wrote what Christians have come to see as Messianic prophecies?



**Saturday, December 5**

10 – 11 am - Baptism exploration class, using *God's Story, Our Story* by Michele Hershberger. Led by Frank Kandel and Carol Bither.

**Sunday, December 6**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: we will have opportunities to talk about coping with the pandemic.

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

12 noon (right after worship) - Congregational Meeting for Budget discussion and approval

No Facing Hard Questions

**Sunday, December 13,** 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: we will have opportunities to talk about coping with the pandemic.

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

**Sunday, December 20,** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

9:30 am – Adult Sunday School: we will have opportunities to talk about coping with the pandemic.

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: Did the virgin birth really occur, and if so, what are the theological implications?

**Sunday, December 27,** Christmas Sunday

No Sunday School

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

No Facing Hard Questions

**Sunday, January 3**

No Sunday School

10:30 am – Worship Service

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).*

Sun, Nov 29 – John Amstutz

**DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships**

Chair: Martha Yoder

For the first three Sundays in December, we will be trying a children's Sunday school Zoom model that has been used in other congregations. Elementary school children (Kindergarten through 6th grade) are invited to log into a children's breakout room at 9:30 for a short session (likely not longer than 30 minutes). After the three sessions, we will check back with parents about whether this was a useful model for their children. Martha, for Discipling Commission

**“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 87, Isaiah 49-51

Tuesday: Isaiah 52-55, Proverbs 11:30-31, 25:13

Wednesday: Isaiah 56-59, Proverbs 20:23, 24:23-26

Thursday: Psalm 93, Isaiah 60-62

Friday: Isaiah 63-66, Proverbs 12:10-11, 19:9-10

Saturday: Micah 4-7, Proverbs 28:4-10

**OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom**

Chair: Brad Yoder

Attached is the latest news from Peter and Delicia in Ecuador. As you can see, they have been very busy. We are grateful for your support of their important work.

See the attached newsletter from Hoosiers Concerned About Gun Violence.

Go [here](#) to see minutes for the latest Outreach meeting.

**Honduras Relief Update:** Thank you to all who supported our relief efforts. The first shipment of six barrels and six boxes was loaded on Tuesday, Nov 24. We plan to send another shipment before year end and will let you know what items are most needed once we know a date. Laura and Erik

Shalom is in the wonderful position of having available some extra funds as we approach the end of 2020. During a recent meeting, the Budget Committee asked the Outreach Commission to develop a proposal for sharing some of these extra funds to extend the impact of Shalom ministries locally, state-wide, nationally, and around the Earth. Attached are the proposal, and a summary of information developed to help us to understand the thinking behind the proposal. On December 8, we will have a congregational meeting to discuss the proposed 2021 Shalom budget, and also to act on this proposal for using our extra funds from 2020. If you have questions, contact Brad Yoder, Chair of Outreach Commission, at [blyoder2@gmail.com](mailto:blyoder2@gmail.com) or 260-479-5128. Thank you for your participation in developing, and acting on, the proposal to support Shalom's ministries!

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

Chair: Joyce Troyer

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

Chair: Jeanne Smucker

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Chair: Mike Wigginton

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Please email the church office if you haven't received *Journeying Together* by Thursday morning.
- 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.
- **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**

## Grieving through Gratitude

Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, but for many of us, it will not be an especially joyful occasion. For the past several years, some of us have made it an annual tradition to gather and celebrate Thanksgiving together at the church, but this year's gathering had to be canceled due to the rise in COVID-19 cases. Others of us usually spend this time visiting with extended family, but many of these gatherings have also been canceled or seriously changed in order to curb the spread of the virus. We may be grieving these losses, while we read depressing news reports about the world suffering from economic devastation, hurricane damage, and civil wars. Of course, for our church family, the biggest loss we are feeling is the tragic death of Tim Bixler last week.

I've never really liked the idea that we ought to "praise God in the midst of suffering," when taken to mean that God expects us to put on a happy face even when we are going through tragic losses. But there is still a place for gratitude in the face of loss: as a tool to help us grieve. After all, to grieve is to express the pain we feel over the loss of something *good*. In order to fully grieve, it can help to articulate how good and meaningful and important that loss was, which naturally produces a kind of gratitude. So I would encourage us all, during this Thanksgiving, not to suppress any sadness that comes up in the hopes of salvaging the holiday, but to step into that sadness - at least for a few minutes - by acknowledging how valuable that which we have lost was to us. We can do this whether the loss is as silly as a missed Thanksgiving tradition or as serious as a family member. And perhaps in that process of honest grieving, we will find ourselves, strangely enough, in a place of sincere gratitude.

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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