

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

September 23, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God
Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (9/20), we had a joint service with First Mennonite to celebrate Peace Sunday, which immediately preceded the International Day of Peace (9/21). Shalom members continued our Story of the Bible series, as Brian preached about the breakdown of the United Kingdom and the Age of the Prophets - who called God's people to peace and justice in the midst of a politically tense time.

This Sunday (9/27), we take our first steps into a new historical reality that will define the Israelite experience for the rest of the Bible: the emergence of empires. The Assyrian Empire appears in the Biblical story as the most powerful enemy that the Israelites had ever encountered, and how they respond to this threat reveals the depth of their faith. This week, we focus on the Northern Kingdom of Israel responded to this threat.

Next Sunday (10/4), Sabrina will be preaching as we continue in the Biblical story and turn our attention to the kingdom of Judah, the only kingdom still standing out of the descendants of Israel.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom
Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar (*All events are Zoom meetings*)

Saturday September 26

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

Sunday, September 27

9:30 am – 1) Brad Yoder and Kristen Metzler-Wilson will lead a study of the book *Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity* edited by Don Neufeld and Steve Thomas. Please let Martha Yoder Maust or Brad Yoder know if you need help getting a copy of the book.
2) A breakout room will be available for extended fellowship time
10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom
2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: What do we do with the curses and calls for vengeance in our Bible? Is there an appropriate way for us to make use of these texts?

Saturday, October 10

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

Sunday, October 11

9:30 am – 1) Brad Yoder and Kristen Metzler-Wilson will lead a study of the book *Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity* edited by Don Neufeld and Steve Thomas.
2) A breakout room will be available for extended fellowship time
10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom
2 pm – Facing Hard Questions: Are any of the books in the Bible pseudigraphal - that is, falsely attributed to an author like a prophet or epistle? If so, does this change the way we understand them?

Saturday, October 24

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

Frank Kandel and Carol Bither.

Sunday, October 25

9:30 am – 1) Brad Yoder and Kristen Metzler-Wilson will lead a study of the book *Peaceful at Heart: Anabaptist Reflections on Healthy Masculinity* edited by Don Neufeld and Steve Thomas.

2) A breakout room will be available for extended fellowship time

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom

2 pm - Facing Hard Questions: Many scholars believe that European anti-Semitism has its roots in Christian supersessionism - the belief that the Israelites failed in their mission as God's people and the Church had to replace them. Is there a way to understand the Biblical story without this interpretation?

Saturday, November 7

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

Saturday, November 21

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

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.

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.

Thu, Sept 24 – Ernie Hodel & Tanya Goodloe

Thank You: I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you for your cards, letters and words of condolences at the passing of my father. I was able to be with my extended family for a time of grieving and remembrance of my father's life which was a healing time. While the girls missed being there they participated remotely at our house with Dagne which was a meaningful time for them as well.

We appreciate your prayers for Dagne and myself with his health changes as he begins participation in the ALS clinic at IU starting next month. Certain changes indicate the new diagnosis which has more limiting outcomes than foreseen earlier.

Carol Weaver

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships
Chair: Martha Yoder

Starting Sunday 9/27, we will have a short breakout room after worship (maybe 10 minutes?) to allow the younger children to visit with each other.

"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: 2 Chronicles 26, Proverbs 15:31-33, 16:18-19, Isaiah 1-5

Tuesday: Proverbs 21:21-22, 28:3, 15-16, 2 Chronicles 27-28, Isaiah 6-10

Wednesday: Micah 1-3, 2 Chronicles 29-31, Proverbs 25:1-7

Thursday: Proverbs 20:18, 21:30-31, 2 Kings 18-20

Friday: 2 Chronicles 32, Psalm 16, Proverbs 29:25, Isaiah 32-35

Saturday: Proverbs 11:9-11, Isaiah 36-39, Psalm 61

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom
Chair: Brad Yoder

- See the attachment for information on Arlington Woods Neighborhood Cleanup Day, on the Great Indy Cleanup day Saturday, October 3, from 9 am until 1 pm.
- Frank will be attending the Advisory Board meeting at Morning Star Church in Muncie on September 29th. If you would like to donate some non-perishable food for their Food Pantry please let him know.
- **CROP Walk:** If you can participate in the Virtual Crop Walk this year please register with this link: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/indianapolisin/>. To participate you only have to walk 3 miles on Sunday Oct. 4th anywhere and anytime! And of course, ask for donations! All donations go to help fight hunger around the world.
If you would like to donate, you can do a general donation to Shalom Mennonite Church with this link: <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/indianapolisin/Team/View/132565/Shalom-Mennonite-Church>. Any questions, email me at Juliekins7182@hotmail.com ~Julie Sanders

Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team (SGDT)
Chair: Joyce Troyer

Vision and Accountability Team (VAT)
Chair: Jeanne Smucker

Announcements

- Sadly, Mary Swartzentruber died yesterday (Tuesday, September 22). There will be a visitation at Conkle Funeral Home, 4925 W 16th Street (Speedway, IN) from 4:00-7:00 PM on Friday. This Saturday the outdoor service will begin at 11:30 AM in First Mennonite Church's parking lot and will be preceded by a private burial. Chairs for the service will be provided. Please wear masks. Please keep Mel and the family in your prayers. -Bob and Mag Smith
- **Celebrate with us!** Mennonite Central Committee invites you join **Celebration 2020: MCC at 100**, a livestreamed event commemorating a century of MCC's ministry on Saturday, Oct. 17, starting at 6:50 p.m. (EDT). The event will feature photos, videos and storytelling that highlight MCC's work over the years. Former MCC leader and pastor Leonard Dow of Philadelphia will inspire participants to walk boldly into the next century of MCC's ministry while talented musicians will lead in prayer and thanksgiving. You can find more information about MCC's centennial and log in for the livestreamed event at mcc.org/celebration-2020.
- 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 or mlwigginton@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 or bixlersc@gmail.com.
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

Reflections on the Journey

The Balance of Nahum and Jonah

In all likelihood, you're not very familiar with the book of Nahum. There's a reason for that: most pastors and church leaders don't want to touch it. In fact, it's one of only two books in the Old Testament – the other being Obadiah – to be completely left out of the Revised Common Lectionary, which assigns daily Scripture readings for Christians over a three-year period. So why do church leaders avoid this book? Read it for yourself, and you'll find out. It is graphically violent, bitterly vengeful, and uses disturbing metaphors to describe God's behavior. It's hard to find any "good news" anywhere in this book.

By contrast, you are probably familiar with the book of Jonah, which is one of the most beloved books of the Bible. More than any other book in the Older Testament, Jonah emphasizes God's love for each living creature (including animals!), God's bent toward mercy over judgment, and God's desire for us to love our enemies. Besides all of this, its imagery of death and resurrection is a powerful foreshadowing of Jesus' ministry – one which Jesus himself claims!

While I agree that we should be cautious about the use of Nahum and generous in our use of Jonah, I don't want Nahum removed from the Biblical canon. I believe that the books of Nahum and Jonah complement each other, and they should be read as a pair, not just as individual books. After all, they are thematically linked. Both books are focused on the city of Nineveh, which was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrian Empire was a vicious, expansionistic empire that not only defeated but utterly destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel. After conquering the Israelites, they sent the people as slaves into all directions of the empire, preventing them from retaining any part of their culture. At the same time, they systematically destroyed the worship centers, monuments, and historical landmarks of the Israelites in order to ensure that there was no "Israel" to which the exiles could hope to return.

We need to keep this in mind when reading the book of Jonah in order to fully appreciate Jonah's struggle. Jonah didn't hate Nineveh simply because he was biased against Gentiles. He hated Nineveh because it was the capital of the empire that tortured, humiliated, and ultimately destroyed his people. Without the book of Nahum to remind us that Nineveh was "the city of bloodshed," we could miss the full meaning of this story: it's not just about overcoming personal distaste toward "others" but about reconciling even with the most vicious of oppressors— *if* they are repentant. Nahum helps us remember how important that repentance is to reconciliation, reminding us that God will "by no means clear the guilty," but will insist on a full and thorough reckoning of sin before reconciliation is offered.

Likewise, Jonah's emphasis on mercy puts brackets around Nahum. Although Nahum's message seems to be one of sheer hatred toward the Assyrians, Jonah reminds us that God always holds out hope for redemption – even when expressing fury. After all, Jonah's prophetic message – though expressed in a single sentence – was essentially the same as Nahum's: "Nineveh shall be

overthrown!" If Nahum reminds us how enraged God was at the Ninevites crime, Jonah shows us how deeply God loves even the worst of sinners. Both of these insights need to be held in balance for true reconciliation to occur. Incidentally, Nahum and Jonah are "balanced" in the sense that they have almost the exact same number of verses: 47 verses in Nahum and 48 in Jonah. To me this suggests that God wants us to hold both justice and mercy in balance but tips the scales slightly in favor of mercy.

- Brian

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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