

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

January 13, 2021

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Grace Rhine

Last Sunday (1/3), CoraLyn Turentine brought the message about *Being about our Father's Business*. Communion was observed.

This Sunday (1/17), we will resume our Story of the Bible series and look at the Gospel of Matthew, which depicts Jesus as an individual who embodies the history and mission of the Chosen People

Next Sunday (1/24), we will study the Gospel of Mark, which describes Jesus as someone greater - and more mysterious - than anyone Israel had ever encountered before.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Relationships at Shalom

Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar (*All events are Zoom meetings*)

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

No birthdays or anniversaries this week.

DISCIPLING: Growing in our relationships

Chair: Martha Yoder

"The Bible Unwrapped" Class Survey

Last Sunday Emily mentioned the Christian Life Survey developed by one of her Taylor University professors. This survey can help you better understand how to engage with scripture based on your personal spiritual priorities and areas of focus. It's not required for the class, but those attending might find it useful as we continue to discuss how to relate to the Bible today: <https://www.taylor.edu/center-for-scripture-engagement/survey/index.shtml>

"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: Mark 1, Psalm 2, Galatians 1

Tuesday: Mark 2, Galatians 2, Proverbs 10:18-21, 25:11-12

Wednesday: Mark 3, Galatians 3, Proverbs 22:6, 30:32-33

Thursday: Mark 4, Galatians 4, Proverbs 17:1-2, 24-25

Friday: Mark 5, Galatians 5, Proverbs 12:12-14, 18:20-21

Saturday: Mark 6-7, Proverbs 18:3-7, 30:17, Galatians 6

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Brad Yoder

Needed are **non-perishable food items** for the food pantry at Morning Star Church in Muncie. They appreciate canned vegetables and fruits, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti and sauce, instant potatoes, cereal, peanut butter, etc. Items will be delivered to Muncie next Tuesday. If you have items to donate, you may leave them at church or call Robert Coleman at 317-902-0028 or Frank Kandel at 309-532-2859.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM (SGDT)

Chair: Joyce Troyer

VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (VAT)

Chair: Jeanne Smucker

ADMINISTRATION

Chair: Mike Wigginton

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **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 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_ReooskuxUXA!
- **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 mlwiggins@sbccglobal.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

"Why Four Gospels?"

We have been studying the Story of the Bible together for ten months and have covered many important subjects, but it is only now that we are finally reading about the most individual character in that story: Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, the first four books of the New Testament are all dedicated to telling the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. But do we really need four different books to tell us this story? After all, there is a lot of overlap between them. For the Christian who is trying to read through the whole Bible, it can feel pretty repetitive to read about the same event three or four times. Moreover, it can be confusing. The gospels sometimes assign use different names for the same individuals (for example, "the other Judas" from Luke is called "Thaddeus" in Matthew and Mark) and they sometimes arrange their stories in different orders. Since the second century, some Christians have thought it would be easier if there were a single, authoritative story of Jesus' life which compiled all of the information from the four gospels into one account and arranged it in a clear narrative. But I believe that the Holy Spirit was at work in ensuring that this didn't happen, as each separate gospel has something unique to offer.

Jesus is an extraordinary and complex individual whose story can't be fully captured by any individual writer. In fact, the gospel of John ends by acknowledging this, saying, "But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25) Because none of the gospel writers could capture every detail of Jesus' life, they had to select which events and which teachings to write about in their respective gospels. And while there were some events that *had to be* included in any story of Jesus' life – such as his crucifixion and resurrection – a lot of it was left to the discretion of the individual authors. For example, Matthew is the only gospel that mentions Peter's attempt to walk on water, Mark has a unique story about a man whose eyes Jesus has to touch twice to heal, Luke alone gives us the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the only gospel that mentions foot-washing at the Last Supper is John. Now, it's true that all of these stories could be compiled into one single account, but in highlighting these specific stories, each of gospels emphasizes a different aspect of Jesus' identity. For example, by including the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke demonstrates how much Jesus cared about justice and compassion, while Mark's strange story about the two-part healing also acts as an allegory to show us that we may know Jesus in part, but we probably don't fully "see" all that he is about.

The fact that we have four gospels suggests to me that Jesus is so meaningful and important that no single story can say everything there is to say about him. He cannot be *contained* by human words – even Biblical ones. Nevertheless, it can be somewhat tedious to read the same stories from Jesus' life multiple times. So, during the next four weeks, I am going to introduce each of the gospels one-at-a-time and talk about their unique insights into Jesus' mission and identity, starting with the Gospel of Matthew. Shortly after that, we will study Jesus' life chronologically, alternating between the gospels and sometimes reading the same stories in multiple accounts. If we have a better appreciation of the values that each gospel writer wanted to highlight, we can see and appreciate the nuanced differences in the way they tell their stories.

~ 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, Carol Bixler, Rod Maust, Thad Wilson, Brian Bither