

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

February 3, 2021

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

Chair: Grace Rhine

**Last Sunday (1/24)**, We studied the gospel of Luke, which highlighted the social and political aspects of Jesus' message - especially his concern for the poor.

**This Sunday (1/31)**, we will be studying the gospel of John, which puts the most emphasis on Jesus' divine identity as the Son of God and the one who can offer us eternal life.

**Next Sunday (2/1)**, Sabrina Falls will bring the sermon.



On Wednesday, February 17 at 7pm, we will be holding an "Entering Lent" service in observance of the Lenten season. Although there will not be an imposition of ashes, we invite you to join us for a time of confession, meditation, and silent prayer.

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

Chair: Herb Troyer

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

##### **Sunday, January 31**

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

##### **Sunday, February 7**

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: What do we make of Jesus' teachings on hell and damnation?

##### **Sunday, February 14**

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

##### **Wednesday, February 17**

12 noon EST – Virtual Luncheon with Peter and Delicia (Sign-in information:

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://MCUSA.zoom.us/j/94800199934>

7 pm - "Entering Lent" service

##### **Sunday, February 21**

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

##### **Sunday, February 28**

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

## **Celebrations**

Mon, Feb 8 – Barbara Longoria

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

Chair: Martha Yoder

#### **“Story of the Bible” Assigned Reading**

There are no assigned Scripture readings this week! I encourage you to use this as a time to catch up on past Scripture readings or reflect broadly on your experience of reading through the Bible thus far.

We will be taking a break from Facing Hard Questions during Lent, but will resume after Easter.

**Sunday School news:** Due a visit from a pastoral candidate on February 28, the reading schedule for our Sunday School class has changed slightly. The revised schedule is attached. Please feel free to reach out to Emily or Tim with any questions.

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

Chair: Brad Yoder

See the attached report on **Faith in Indiana**.

Mennonite Disaster Service will live stream its 2021 Annual Celebration meeting at 2pm this Saturday. You will find a streaming link [on their website here](#). It should be a one-hour program. Jim S

**Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence** January newsletter articles:

- [President’s Message](#),
- [Gun-Related Bills](#) Introduced in 2021 Indiana General Assembly

The items below link to articles in *The Trace*, a non-profit on-line newsroom “dedicated to shining a light on America’s gun violence crisis.” Find these stories and many more at [thetrace.org](http://thetrace.org)

- [‘This Isn’t Normal’: Governing With Guns in the State House](#)
- [Arkansas’s proposed “Stand Your Ground” law emerges from Senate committee](#)
- [Last-Gasp Trump Rule May Force Banks to Lend to Gun Companies](#)
- [On the Frontlines of Gun Violence Prevention, Lessons Learned From a Harrowing Year](#)
- [Be a member](#)

**Mennonite Central Committee**, along with over 500 partners in 51 countries, offers sincere thanks to our friends and supporters at Shalom Mennonite for your contribution of \$6,000 during our 2020 centennial year. The [coronavirus](#) created challenges and opportunities for our partners, but your generosity allowed them to respond to the threat with creativity and life-saving resources. Thanks to your support, MCC has been able to assist those impacted by [twin hurricanes](#) destroying food and property in Central America. Your support has allowed MCC to respond to the devastation of the [port explosion](#) in Beirut, Lebanon, with food, relief supplies, rebuilding and trauma healing activities for people, many who had previously fled the trauma of the Syrian war. Your support has allowed our partners to walk with [uprooted people](#) around the world, including DR Congo, where food and gardening tools are helping feed displaced families. Finally, we offer [prayers for peace](#) – both for our

own communities and for our neighbors around the world. Thank you for offering hope and solidarity to vulnerable people through MCC in the name of Christ. - Blessings! Les Gustafson-Zook, MCC Great Lakes – [mcc.org](http://mcc.org)

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

Chair: Joyce Troyer

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

Chair: Jeanne Smucker

### **ADMINISTRATION**

Chair: Mike Wigginton

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Pastor Brian will be on vacation from Monday, February 8 to Sunday, February 14. If you need to reach someone during that time, please email Jeanne Smucker, chair of the VAT, at [jmrsmucker@outlook.com](mailto:jmrsmucker@outlook.com)
- February is Black History Month. Celebrate and learn about Mennonite Church USA's African American Mennonite history through a timeline that highlights the people, events and work of the church from 1886 to today. If you read closely, you will find some familiar names in this historical timeline! <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/black-history-mennonite>
- Some folks have asked about using the church building to have safe space away from home where they can play or study (for example). The Safely Gathering committee has discussed this and developed these guidelines:
  1. Only one household at a time may use the space, and visits will need to be scheduled with Mike Wigginton. Households will be scheduled at least 7 days apart. All persons should be listed on the schedule and the record should be kept for at least 14 days after the visit, in case of any need for contact tracing.
  2. Because Brian uses the office and restroom and kitchen downstairs on a regular basis, the spaces available for others will be the upstairs office (for a quiet study space, for example), the nursery, and the youth room, as well as upstairs restrooms. Please mask while walking through the sanctuary to the youth room, as Brian usually is in the sanctuary every week. Use the front door, and Brian will continue to use the back door.
  3. Since most of the faucets have not been used for months, and unsafe materials can accumulate in unused pipes, we do not recommend drinking water from the restrooms or drinking fountains. It is safe to flush the toilets and wash your hands at the sinks.
  4. Shalom does not currently have a janitor. After your visit please wipe down toys (if you used the nursery), counters, door knobs, light switches, and faucets, and carry any out trash out when you leave.This does not apply to brief stops to pick up mail, for example, or hymnals. For brief stops, please just wear a mask and sanitize your hands.  
Safely Gathering Committee (Linda Kandel, Jeanne Smucker, and Martha Yoder Maust)
- The most recent Commission Chair meeting minutes are attached.
- **Pastoral Search:** The Pastoral Search Committee is pleased to announce that we have a candidate to introduce to Shalom. He has met several times with the search committee and also with Brian and the Vision and Accountability Team. Craig Oury will join us (virtually) on Sunday, February 28. We will have a chance to hear his faith story during the Sunday School hour and to ask him questions. He will then present the sermon during our worship service. That day, after a "lunch break" of 30 minutes, we will offer the opportunity to return to ask any further questions that you may have of him. (Sorry, no potluck this time.) Two weeks later (March 14), we will have a congregational meeting

immediately after worship for any further discussion about Craig's calling and follow that with a vote. A vote of 85% approval is required to go ahead and call Craig to be our copastor. A brief biographical sketch for Craig is attached to the newsletter. ~Jeanne Smucker

- 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:**

- o 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).
- o 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).
- o Send announcements for Journeying Together to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com) by 5 pm on Wednesday.

## **RELECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY**

### Reading Epistles Next to Gospels

One of the downsides to preaching through the Biblical Story in 13 months is that you do not have time to talk about everything. As much as I have tried to draw broadly from the Bible's story, there are some chapters, sections, and even entire books that I have passed over without comment. For example, in the past three and a half weeks, we've not only been reading the gospels but several epistles as well: namely, Galatians, Colossians, Philemon, James, 1 John, and the first part of Hebrews. Some of these are among my favorite books in the Bible, and while we don't have time to discuss each of them, I at least want to think about these books in connection to the gospel material that we are studying.

Often times, when we talk about the epistles, we speak about Paul's perspective or James's view or John's position, and there's nothing wrong with talking this way. After all, the epistles were written by human authors, and the personality and perspective of each author spills over into their writings. But what we may forget is that these ideas didn't just come out of thin air. These people developed their beliefs - directly or indirectly - from time spent with Jesus. James, for example, only mentions Jesus once in his epistle outside of the initial greeting, and it seems as though many of the ideas he espouses are his own. But when you read the epistle of James next to the gospels - and especially the gospel of Luke which shares a concern for social justice - you'll find that James drew many of his ideas directly from Jesus. And this shouldn't surprise us, since James was reportedly Jesus' \*half\* brother. Likewise, when Colossians makes big claims about Jesus being "the firstborn of all creation," this derives originally from God's words at Jesus' baptism, "You are my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased," and especially the reflections on Jesus' nature that we find in the gospel of John. Even when the writers of the epistles are not quoting Jesus directly, they are usually speaking out of the collective wisdom that came from the tightly knit apostolic community (See Acts 2:42ff), and this is why the early church so valued their wisdom: because they were people who were touched by Jesus.

May we always look for Jesus' footprint and listen for Jesus' voice when we are reading *any part* of the Bible.

~ 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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