

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

April 15, 2020

WORSHIP

Our relationship with God
Chair: Linda Showalter

The Worship Commission has decided to hold some kind of virtual gathering for Shalom every Sunday morning at 10:30a. Sometimes this may just be an opportunity for sharing and prayer, and other times it will be a full service. Thanks for your patience and understanding as we continue working this out.

Last Sunday, (4/12), we celebrated Easter through our first Zoom worship service, with some music, readings, preaching, and praying. Brian described Christ's appearance to the disciples as a "second wind" in the midst of a marathon – one we all need now.

This Sunday, (4/19), we will not have a full worship service but we will have a "Gathering in Spirit" session for prayer & sharing at 10:30a. You can get there through [this link](#), or through the additional information that will be sent out in Friday's email.

Next Sunday, (4/26), T.B.A.

New Hymnals. Money was budgeted to purchase new hymnals this spring, and the deadline for a 10% purchase is May 1. Before sending in our order, we would like to give people in the congregation an opportunity to place individual orders, also receiving the discount. A check for the cost of how many hymnals you order can be given to Bob Love with "hymnal" noted in the memo line. This is time sensitive, so please let me know by April 24 what edition and how many you would like. Editions that are available for purchase: pew \$23.99 (\$21.59); large- print \$43.99 (\$39.59); accompaniment \$89.99 (\$80.99). Additional information can be found at <http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/products/catalogue/>. - Linda Showalter

COMMUNITY LIFE

Relationships at Shalom
Chair: Herb Troyer

Calendar

Sunday, April 19 –
- 9:30a – 1 & 2 Kings SS class
- 10:30a – Gathering in Spirit

Small Groups

The Community Life Commission encourages all Shalom small groups to stay in contact with each other by meeting through phone calls or a Zoom conference. If you would like to use the church's Zoom account for this conference, please submit your request to office@shalommennonite.com and you will be given the date and the information you need to host the meeting – provided that it does not come in conflict with another Zoom meeting.

In addition to the small groups that already exist, we are forming a new small group specifically to weather this crisis. If you are interested in joining it, email Joyce Troyer at troyers_hj@hotmail.com

Sewing Machine Available. Jen and Nate Christophel Lichti, friends of the church, have a Kenmore sewing machine – along with a storage cabinet – that they would like to donate before they move. If you are interested, you can contact Jen at jen.christophel@gmail.com. Photos are attached to the newsletter email.

DISCIPLING

Growing in our relationships
Chair: Martha Yoder

Sunday school. Wilma Bailey's Zoom class on 1&2 Kings will resume this Sunday at 9:30a. Use [this link](#) to join the meeting. (It is the same as the Gathering in Spirit link)

ADMINISTRATION

Congregational support systems

Chair: Laura Harms

Minutes

Worship Commission, 4/7/2020. You can find the minutes for the last WC meeting [here](#).

Community Life Commission, 4/14/2020. You can find the minutes for their meeting [here](#).

CONGREGATIONAL NOTES

A space to share your news

A Thank You to my Shalom family who showered me with cards, emails, and phone calls for my birthday. Also for all the kinds that were expressed. A thank you to Caleb, Jacob, Liam, and Dirk too. – Joanne Buerge

Reflections On Pilgrimage

Easter in Fits and Starts

Jesus Christ is risen! We proclaimed this together – to the best of our technological ability – on Zoom last Sunday, and we will continue proclaiming it in the weeks to come. After all, Easter, like Christmas, is not just a single day on the Christian calendar: it is an entire season. It *begins* on Easter Sunday and continues until Pentecost Sunday, which falls on May 31 this year.

This time immediately following Easter Sunday represents a short but very important time in the history of Christianity: the time when Jesus had risen from the dead but had not yet ascended into heaven. It was during this time that Jesus appeared to his disciples – often in very personal ways – and revealed the good news to them. For example, he appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden, to Thomas who had missed Jesus the first time he appeared to the group, and to Peter on the seashore while he was fishing. These encounters changed their lives and they must have been exciting, but we also have to acknowledge that there was something strange about them: apparently, Jesus never stayed put in any one place but kept vanishing and reappearing all over Palestine.

In each of these stories, Jesus appears seemingly out of nowhere, engage in meaningful conversations with his disciples for

a while, and then disappear just as abruptly. It's not clear to me how or why Jesus did this. Maybe he had a lot of people he wanted to visit but not much time left on earth? Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 15 that he appeared to more than 500 disciples during this time, which is enough to keep anyone busy. But that's pure speculation. Whatever Jesus' motives were, this created a dynamic in which people had short and meaningful experiences with Jesus, surrounded by longer periods of absence. One gets the impression that even the twelve apostles would go for days or weeks without seeing Jesus, and then he would show up for a few hours, and then disappear again. It's no wonder that Matthew 28 reports that some of the disciples doubted Jesus' resurrection even after they saw him. No matter how real or powerful an experience with Christ is, it can always be doubted later, especially in subsequent periods of Christ's absence.

Although Jesus ascended into heaven forty days after his resurrection, he seems to have maintained this pattern of appearing in fits and starts ever since. Many of us have had a few meaningful encounters with God in the last few years in which we have sensed God's presence or seen Her hand at work, but we've also had long periods of loneliness, struggle, and doubt. If we find ourselves feeling this way, it is not abnormal. We just have to avoid letting the periods of absence convince us that the moments of presence weren't real. As we chart through difficult times, let us remember with confidence how God met us in the past and wait expectantly for God to show up again – if only for a few moments.

--by Brian Bither

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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Please submit information by Thursday, 12pm, to office@shalommennonite.com