

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

November 18, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (11/15), we continued to consider how the people of God should interact with the empires around them, this time turning to Queen Esther as a guide.

This Sunday (11/22), Wilma Baily will deliver the sermon. Sermon topic: Thinking about gratitude when the world is troubled.

Next 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.

Update on Voices Together, the new hymnal, from MennoMedia:

"We had expected to be shipping your Voices Together order this week. However, some of our printers and manufacturers have had to temporarily close due to COVID outbreaks. Like you, we are anxiously awaiting these final products. Please be patient as we get the remaining products produced and shipped."



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.

A couple ideas come to mind: Would it help if we sang along with recorded carols? (It might feel less like singing alone since we have to social distance.) Would it be better during the day instead of after dark? (Songbooks could be used; maybe not as cold.) Are there other suggestions that might help make this an enjoyable gathering? 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*)

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.

Sunday, November 22

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

No Facing Hard Questions



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, 2nd 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, 3rd 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, 4th 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.

Today – Charles Harms

Fri, Nov 20 – John & Lois Amstutz, 1965

Tue, Nov 24 – Jay Brubaker

Tue, Nov 24 – Angie Buller

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 110, Joel 1-3
Tuesday: Psalm 21, 149, Isaiah 11-13
Wednesday: Psalm 58, Isaiah 14-17
Thursday: Psalm 129, Isaiah 18-21
Friday: Psalm 94, Isaiah 22-24
Saturday: Psalm 147, Isaiah 25-27

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Brad Yoder

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 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

- Pastor Brian will be on vacation with his family from Monday November 16 to Monday, November 23 and will not be checking email during that time. If you have an urgent church matter, please email Jeanne Smucker, our congregational chair, at jmrsmucker@outlook.com
- 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 or 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 or bixlersc@gmail.com.
- Send announcements for Journeying Together to office@shalommennonite.com by 5 pm on Wednesday.

Reflections on the Journey

On Sunday, we finished the book of Esther, and in doing so, we came to the end of the Older Testament narrative. The OT takes us through the Persian period, and suddenly we find ourselves in the Roman empire when the New Testament begins. If you are wondering how that happened, I gave a historical overview of the major changes in that period in a milepost from a few weeks ago. However, from a Biblical perspective, the question still remains, how does the Bible want us to think about this intermittent time?

Based on the the way that the book of Malachi ends (with a reference to a coming messenger for the Messiah) and the book of Matthew begins, I believe that the Bible encourages us to think of the intertestamental period as a time of Messianic longing. The longer the exile lingered on, the more the Jews developed increasing interest in the prophetic texts that discussed a descendant of David who would rise up and make everything right. As it so happens, two Sundays from now (11/29) is the first day of Advent, and so we'll spend next week reading those influential passages that speak about this a Messianic figure. Now, I want to warn you that some of the text that we will be reading come from earlier periods that we've already covered, and so it may be hard to track the historical context. However, I decided to arrange this material thematically instead of historically because I want to show how the understanding of the Messiah evolved in three stages.

In the first stage, the longing for the Messiah came fresh out of an experience of oppression, and it calls on God to defeat and often to kill the enemies of the Jews. Although we may be uncomfortable with this, a revelation is given during this stage which stay swith us all the way through the book of Revelation: that the day of the Lord will be a day of judgment and vindication for the righteous.

In the second stage, however, something profound happens - the Jews begin imagining a Messiah who not only rescues them but who brings peace to all of the peoples of the world. This had actually been God's vision from the beginning (see Genesis 12), but in the years and years of defending the land of Israel, it had often been obscured. Some of the most profound descriptions of peace that we have in the Bible come from this Messianic stage.

But if the other nations of the world are not the enemies of the Jews, then where is all of this evil coming from? In the third stage of Messianic thinking, a new understanding of evil develops not as individuals but as hidden spiritual forces, sometimes described in terms of angels and demons, or to use terms that modern Christians are more comfortable using, powers and principalities.

May we too be able to grow in our hope in and understanding of the Messiah in the weeks that come.

~ 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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