

# Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church     June 10, 2020

**WORSHIP:** Our relationship with God  
Chair: Linda Showalter

**Last Sunday (6/7)**, we studied the covenant that God made with Israel, which set that community apart as the chosen people. Although it came with a calling and some expectations, the only requirement to retain the status as God's chosen people was to continue to wrestle with God.

**This Sunday (6/14)**, we will finish the book of Genesis and consider how the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was much bigger than any of them could imagine, and that God uses dreams, pagan kings, and even evil plans to bring forth good purposes.

**Next Sunday (6/21)**, we will finish the book of Job and spend some time dwelling on the beginning of Exodus – specifically on the period of time when the Israelites were enslaved by the Egyptians and consider how this painful part of Israel's history played a tremendous role in shaping both their identity and their ethics.

**COMMUNITY LIFE:** Relationships at Shalom  
Chair: Herb Troyer

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

## **Sunday, June 14**

9:30 am -- update from Peter and Delicia Wigginton in Ecuador

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom – Brian will preach on “The Scope of God's Sovereignty”  
(the story of Joseph)

2 pm - Facing the Hard Questions - Does the Bible have a response to the problem of evil?

## **Sunday, June 21**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom – Brian will preach “Enslaved in Egypt”

*No Facing Hard Questions session*

## **Sunday, June 28**

10:30 am – Worship Service on Zoom – Frank Kandel will preach on “The Exodus”

2 pm - Facing the Hard Questions - How should pacifist Christians respond to Biblical celebrations of the death of Israel's enemies?

## **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](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com).*

Thu, June 4 – Delicia Bravo & Peter Wigginton, 2011

Tue, June 9 – Carol & Mark Stocksdale 201989

Next Wed, Jun 10 – Erik Rosales

**DISCIPLING:** Growing in our relationships  
Chair: Martha Yoder

## **“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: Job 31, Psalm 26, 69-71  
Tuesday: Job 32-34, Psalm 92  
Wednesday: Job 35-37, Psalm 131  
Thursday: Proverbs 30:18-33, Job 38-42  
Friday: Proverbs 19:12, Exodus 1, Psalm 10, 143  
Saturday: Exodus 2-4, Psalm 138

**Thanks** to CoraLyn and her business partner Sarah Foster for leading an informative training session on trauma and children's behavior on Sunday afternoon. We are aware that some folks who would have liked to participate had schedule conflicts or had trouble logging in. Indiana Mental Health Matters provides this training from time to time. More information and registration is at <http://www.indianamhm.com/programs.html>

**OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom**  
Chair: Brad Yoder

The Annual Sessions of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference will be held on-line on June 19 and 20, with the theme of Built Together based on Ephesians 2. No registration needed to join in the worship times on Friday evening at 7pm (preacher Dan Miller) and Saturday morning at 9am (preacher Joanne Gallardo) at this link: <https://boxcast.tv/channel/n12gpk18euckrb3gcgs4> **Streaming will start 5-7 minutes after the publicized start time.** Each worship will also include congregational stories from the hosting Goshen area congregations. \$20 registers you for the entire event, including interactive Bible study with Safwat Marzouk of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, seminars on prison ministry, intercultural competence, and grieving, and conversations about the work of the conference. More information and registration is on the conference website: <https://im.mennonite.net/2020-annual-sessions/>  
Thank you,

**ADMINISTRATION: Congregational support systems**  
Chair: Laura Harms

An ad hoc "**Safely Gathering Committee**" including VAT, commission chairs, and a few others met on Monday night to talk about when we might start to meet in person again for worship, and how to do that safely. Shalom will continue to have virtual worship and adult ed classes through the end of June, then the committee will re-assess the situation later in June and make a decision about July. At some point we may poll the congregation to see how many are ready to attend in person. We talked about having a hybrid service, with some in the church building and some on Zoom, and we will explore the technology needed to make that possible. We will work on measures to keep in-person meetings safer, such as using hand sanitizer, wearing masks, keeping our distance from each other, and changing how we use music (since singing can send the virus as far as 16 feet).

These are complex issues and we ask for your patience as we try to sort them out. Martha Yoder Maust, for the Safely Gathering Committee  
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. – Jim Showalter

Mike Wigginton is now managing our Zoom calendar and uploading 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 him at [mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mlwiggin@sbcglobal.net).

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

### **Minutes**

VAT, 6/1/20. The minutes from the meeting can be found [here](#).

## **Reflections on the Journey**

By the time of King David, the people who lived in the region of Palestine had very strong tribal identities. In all likelihood, they saw themselves first and foremost as Reubenites or Benjaminites or Gadites, and only had a vague sense of how they might have been connected to the other tribes of the region. Part of the reason that Genesis was written was to foster a sense of unity between these tribes by clarifying the connections between these tribes. Genesis explains that all of these tribes were descended from the same holy family – the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and that God had given them the land by divine decree. Later, in the book of Numbers, God subdivides the land into twelve different sections. Each of the twelve tribes of Israel had a section of land allotted to them. Unfortunately, as the Biblical story moves forward, some of the tribes lose control of their region pretty quickly, the empires that conquered them sometimes gave them completely different names. But the Israelites never forgot to whom each portion of the land was originally allotted, and in order to fully appreciate the Biblical story, we need to pay attention to these original allotments.

Attached to Journeying Together are two maps to help us visualize these divisions. The first is a map of the allotments of twelve tribes of Israel as they are laid out in Numbers 34. The second is a map of the region of Palestine in the first century A.D., which can help us see each of these regions were eventually forced to embrace new foreign identities, even though they never forgot their original tribal association. I want to highlight a few things about these maps that will help us better understand the story. I encourage you to consult them as you read this reflection.

First, I want to address a point of confusion: the twelve tribes of Israel do not *exactly* align with the twelve sons of Jacob. One of the tribes of Israel, the Levites (descended from Levi) would eventually become a “priestly tribe,” which meant that they didn’t have any region of their own, since their job was to attend to the religious needs of all of the Israelites. With Levi out of the picture, the land of Canaan would have been divided among the *eleven* remaining sons of Jacob, but that was not acceptable because twelve is symbolic number that needed to be preserved (in both Testaments). So, to address the “loss” of Levi, Joseph’s territory is sub-divided between his two sons – Ephraim and Manasseh – which brings the number back to twelve. Incidentally, Ephraim would eventually become one of the most important regions in all of Israel.

Second, I want to point out that some of the tribes – Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh, are east of the Jordan River. Although they are part of the God’s original Israel in theory, the reality is that the Jordan River functioned as the eastern border of Israel for most of its history. This region just east of the Jordan region came to be known as Gilead, and these two and a half tribes eventually developed a separate identity as Gileadites, who were partners with Israelites, but not really considered to be a part of *real* Israel. As you can see from the New Testament map, these regions had become the Decapolis and Perea by Roman times, which barely feature in Jesus’ story at all. However, the Jewish people had not forgotten about them, and Matthew 4:25 makes a point to note that people came to Jesus from all over the original land of Israel – including “Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.” (As we will see, Matthew is particularly sensitive to these things. See also his comment about Jesus coming from “the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali” – i.e. Galilee – in Matt 4:12-16).

Finally, a spoiler: the Kingdom of Israel eventually splits into two kingdoms, with Judah and Benjamin

forming the Southern Kingdom and the other ten forming the Northern Kingdom. However, rather than calling them the “Northern Kingdom” and the “Southern Kingdom,” the Bible usually refers to them by the most powerful tribe of each kingdom: Ephraim (Joseph’s son) for the north and Judah for the south. Keeping track of these things will help you better understand the Biblical story, from Jacob’s blessing all the way to Jesus’ public ministry.

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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Please submit information by Wednesday, 5 pm, to [office@shalommennonite.com](mailto:office@shalommennonite.com)