

## **JOURNEYING TOGETHER**

Shalom Mennonite Church

July 28, 2021

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

Chair: Grace Rhine

**Last Sunday (7/25)**, Craig Oury joined us and preached his first sermon as a co-pastor at Shalom! Craig preached from 1 Peter about remaining focused on what we are called to do even when the world is coming to an end.

**This Sunday (8/1)**, Brian will draw from James 1:19-25 and 3:13-18 to consider how we as a church community can have fruitful conversations rather than frivolous ones.

**Next Sunday (8/8)**, Brian will focus on one particular conversation that is difficult and yet necessary for us to engage in the church: dismantling racism.

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

Chair: Herb Troyer

## **CALENDAR**

### **Sunday August 1**

10:30 am - Hybrid Worship service.

Sack Lunch outdoor fellowship meal after the Worship Service

### **Monday, August 9**

10 am to 3 pm - Brian's Roving Office at Coat Check Coffee (downtown; in the Athenaeum), 401 E Michigan St, Indianapolis, IN

### **Monday, August 16**

8:30am to 2pm - Brian's Roving Office at Northwest Panera Bread, 2902 W 86th Street, Indianapolis, IN

- **PLEASE NOTE THE TIME CHANGE**

### **Monday, August 23**

8:30am to 2pm - Brian's Roving Office at Fishers Panera Bread, 8510 E 96th St, Fishers, IN - **PLEASE NOTE THE TIME CHANGE**

### **Monday, August 30**

8:30am to 2pm - Brian's Roving Office at Greenwood Panera Bread, 789 US Highway 31 N, Greenwood, IN - **PLEASE NOTE THE TIME CHANGE**

### **Celebrations**

Fri, Jul 30 – Cheryl & Jim Martin, 1967

Sun, Aug 1 – Abri & Justin Hochstetler, 2009

Tue, Aug 3 – Dagne Assefa & Carol Weaver, 1985

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

Chair: Martha Yoder

**Children's Church:** Volunteers needed for August 15 and 22 and all of September for Children's Church. Email Laura if you are willing to help:

[harms.laura@gmail.com](mailto:harms.laura@gmail.com)

**Sunday School:** No word yet on when Sunday School might start but I'd like to know if you are interested in teaching when that becomes a possibility again. We may have up to 4 classes: 2's and 3's; PreK/K; Early Elementary; Youth. To show your interest for Children's Church or Sunday School email Laura at [harms.laura@gmail.com](mailto:harms.laura@gmail.com)

**Help needed with children's toy bags:** Something that helped my kids (Laura) get through worship when they were little were personalized toy bags that they could use at their seats in the pews during the service. Carol Stocksdale was one of the volunteers on the initial project years ago and has agreed to help again. Is there someone willing to work with Carol to dig through the existing stash of toys, make a few purchases, clean toys, and assemble bags? We'd like to have these bags ready for fall either when Sunday School starts up again or when weather stops us from going outside for Children's Church. Please reach out to Carol to coordinate a time - [csstocksdale@gmail.com](mailto:csstocksdale@gmail.com)

### Dismantling Racism Process

At the close of our Dismantling Racism class in the spring, the curriculum recommended doing an audit of our congregational structures and procedures to see what changes needed to be made. Outreach Commission, which initiated the Anti-Racism statement of our congregation the year before, has recommended we use Widerstand Consulting (the same organization that created our curriculum) to do the audit. The process would last 2 months and cost \$5000. This recommendation was approved by the VAT. Commission Chairs recommended that the question come to the congregation for discussion.

Brian is planning to preach the next 3 Sundays on how to have fruitful conversation, how to talk about race, and how to think about systemic and structural issues. On Sunday, August 22, we will have a 12:00 business meeting in which we will divide into small groups for conversation about this proposal. On August 29 we will again convene at noon to talk about any remaining issues and to make a decision about whether to proceed with an audit by Widerstand Consulting. Discipling Commission is leading this process.

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

Chair: Brad Yoder

### **Sharing Corner: School Kits for Mennonite Central Committee: Contents (NEW items only)**

- 4 spiral or perforated-pages notebooks (8.5 in x 10.5 in and 70 sheets)
- 8 new unsharpened pencils
- 1 ruler (flat, good quality; must indicate 30 cm; inch markings optional)
- 12 colored pencils (in packaging)
- 1 large eraser
- 2 new black or blue ballpoint pens
- 1 small **all metal** pencil sharpener, one or two holes. **All metal** sharpeners can be found online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) or [Bazic.com](https://www.bazic.com) or in the art supply section of retail stores like Staples. Plastic case pencil sharpeners are not accepted because these are poor quality and do not last as long. **If you cannot find all metal sharpeners** please pack the kits without them and we will add the sharpeners

### **SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM**

CHAIR: Joyce Troyer

SGDT is grateful for all who use their gifts to serve Shalom in so many ways!

Please read the attached VAT Selection Form attached at the bottom of the newsletter about this year's process of selecting 2 congregational representatives. The selection is for 2 representatives. One will have a 1 year term filling the vacated position of Thad Wilson. The other will have a regular 3 year term. Prayerfully consider the members listed and follow the guidelines to make your selections. You are encouraged to nominate 2 people. Please communicate your selections to Cheryl Martin before August 4. You can send them by email, snail mail, or the church mailbox. Please let Cheryl know if you are having trouble opening or finding the form.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Safely Gathering**

Safely Gathering Committee met by Zoom on 7/28/21 and reviewed data on rapidly increasing Covid cases. Over the past month cases in central Indiana have increased from 2 per 100,000 population per day to 12, or a six-fold increase. The new Delta variant (which currently represents 91% of cases in central Indiana) is far more contagious and can cause more severe illness than previous variants. CDC now recommends indoor masking even for vaccinated people in areas with rapid spread.

Because all of the children under 12 in our congregation (and a few of the adults) in our congregation are unvaccinated, we have decided not to proceed with indoor Sunday school in September as we had hoped to do. We will continue to monitor the data, and if numbers go down during the fall we will make changes as appropriate. If, on the other hand, cases rise to 15 cases/100,000/day, we will recommend resuming Zoom-only worship services.

At the sack lunch event on Sunday August 1, be sure to distance yourself from people not in your household. If you have trouble hearing from a distance of 6+ feet, please put your mask on before getting closer to others.

If you would like to see the data we are using, here are the references:

<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm>

<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>

And here is an article by a Christian epidemiologist that we have been using as a guideline: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/january-web-only/church-reopening-vaccine-coronavirus-covid-advice.html>

**Please** see the attached newsletter from Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence

**The** Indiana-Michigan Conference prayer memo is also attached.

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.

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).

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).

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

## REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

### Adapting to the Seasons

*“For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted... a time to break down and a time to build up... a time to keep and a time to throw away...” – Ecclesiastes 3:1-6*

As we approach the end of July, we are entering a “seasonal change” in American society. Children are returning to school, the travel and tourism industries are winding down, and community-based activities are starting back up. The church feels this change just as much as everyone else. Sunday morning attendance typically drops during the summer and picks up again in the fall, so we generally elect new leaders, create new ministries, and plan community gatherings in September and October – when the majority of us are here.

Ecclesiastes encourages us to pay attention to these shifts in the seasons and to be intentional about adapting to them. In fact, it offers us specific points to consider when we enter a new season, some of which I have highlighted above. For example, it tells us that there is “a time to keep and a time to throw away,” which encourages us to consider which possessions, ambitions, and commitments are taking up unnecessary space in our lives and to get rid of them. It also tells us that there is “a time to break down and a time to build up” which invites us to do some evaluation: Which practices and structures in our lives are working for us, and which ones need to be replaced by something new? It’s easy for us to keep doing things the way we have always been doing them, even when it no longer makes sense, but there comes a time when we should “pluck what has been planted” – acknowledge the benefits that our practices brought us in the past and then bring them to a close – so that we can “plant” new ones. This regular re-evaluation of what we need is necessary for cultivating a healthy spiritual life.

It’s easy – especially during a pandemic – to slide from one season into another without really thinking about it. But when we do that, life tends to get cluttered, unfocused, and draining. So let us take some time – both as individuals and collectively – to consider what God wants us to do with our time and resources during *this* season of our lives. ~ 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)

Pastors: Brian Bither, (317)-332-7320; Craig Oury, (301) 302-3181

Vision & Accountability Team: Jeanne Smucker, Cheryl Martin, Carol Bixler, Rod Maust, Thad Wilson, Brian Bither