

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

November 11, 2020

WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Linda Showalter

Last Sunday (11/8). Brian preached about the return of Jewish exiles back to Jerusalem. Although they were still under the imperial rule of a foreign power, which was not ideal, they were able to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and resume worship in a new context.

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

Next Sunday (11/22). Wilma Baily will deliver the sermon.



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 14

9:30 – Noon - Shalom work day (see announcement under “Administration”)

Sunday, November 15

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

2 pm - Facing Hard Questions: Did religions and ideologies other than Judaism influence the development of Christianity? If so, what are the implications of that?

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.

Fri, Nov 13 – Carl Rhine

Sun, Nov 15 – Roselle Martinez

Wed, Nov 18 – Charles Harms

Prayer request from Chuck Dunn: This morning my lawyer informed me we are set to have a emergency custody hearing next Tuesday morning 10 am. I have not been in contact with Phoenix since the last week in August. Please keep us in your prayers. The last two months have been unbelievably difficult. This pattern of moving and changing schools and not informing me has got to stop. I hope the court will finally put a end to this madness. Thanks for all the prayers and I will keep you informed as to the outcome.

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

There are no assigned Scripture readings for next week. I encourage you to use it as a time to catch up on any readings you may have missed! ~ Brian

OUTREACH: Relationships beyond Shalom

Chair: Brad Yoder

Shalom Friends,

Those of you who participated in worship on Sunday heard the announcement that Shalom has a surplus of funds this year, partly because we have not yet hired a second staff person, and because expenses are less since we have not been meeting face to face. When the Budget Committee met recently, we decided to let you know about this, and to seek your counsel on whether you know about needs that we should consider supporting with some of our surplus funds.

If you know of needs at the local, state, national, or global level that you think we should support, please let us know about organizations or agencies that you think Shalom should contribute to beyond our approved 2020 budget. (This could involve organizations that are not in our budget, or increased giving to those that are in our budget.)

One specific need that we have become aware of involves Morning Star Mennonite congregation in Muncie, which we support through our budget and through contributing food. A major ministry of Morning Star is the food pantry that they operate regularly for food-needy people of Muncie. Their cooling appliances have given out, and need to be replaced. This is an urgent need because a Thanksgiving food distribution program is an important part of Morning Star's ministry.

During worship last Sunday we decided to contribute \$1,000.00 beyond our budget to Morning Star. (An additional \$500.00 private contribution was added to that.) Frank Kandel has been Shalom's liaison with Morning Star. Yesterday Frank delivered the \$1,500.00 to them and asked them what their long-range needs are for cooling appliances. They need three new freezers and one new refrigerator, for a total cost of about \$3,200.00. The Outreach Commission recommends that Shalom contribute an additional \$1,700.00 to Morning Star, to meet their needs. Please email Brad Yoder, Chair of Outreach Commission, at blyoder2@gmail.com or call 260-479-5128 about: 1) whether or not you agree with making an additional \$1,700.00 contribution to Morning Star, and 2) information about other needs and organizations you think that Shalom should consider supporting with extra funds. Thank you for considering this.

Brad Yoder

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DISCERNMENT TEAM (SGDT)

Chair: Joyce Troyer

VISION AND ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (VAT)

Chair: Jeanne Smucker

ADMINISTRATION

Chair: Mike Wigginton

Saturday, November 14, we plan to have a work day at Shalom 9:30AM to 12. Forecast is for a 40% chance of rain so we'll hope for the best. We plan to observe social distancing guidelines and the building will be open to allow access to restrooms. There are a number of possible jobs to do which might include some of the following tasks. Mike Wigginton

- Rake leaves as needed
- Till/hoe excavated area, clear stones, add topsoil/mulch, seed
- We may have one invasive tree/shrub to remove from the Peace Path
- Pick up fallen branches
- Do necessary work in flower beds
- Apply herbicide as/if needed
- Re-set posts by driveway drain
- Prune trees/shrubs as needed
- Continue west clearing branches hanging over north side of back driveway
- Stakes/fence around 2 newly planted trees

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
- Our office email has randomly missed sending the Journeying Together to a few people (also random). If you haven't received a copy by Thursday, let me know and I'll forward one to you. Linda Showalter
- **Check out the new "On the Move – En Movimiento" podcast from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) that uses storytelling to challenge current narratives of migration.** In the first episode, Ron Byler, recently retired executive director for MCC U.S., reflects on his January 2020 pilgrimage along the southern U.S. border. Ron drove and walked along the border wall and visited with communities on both sides of the border. He shares about the communities, the people and what this pilgrimage has meant for him. For more information and to listen to the podcast, visit mcc.org/move-en-movimiento.
- The six-month evaluation of the monthly support provided to the Trochez/Hernandez family was conducted in October by the support group. The family has celebrated many successes in the past six months. Gemima is in the process of applying for a work permit after being granted approval at her August hearing. Melanie has started her university studies at IUPUI with a full scholarship. We recommend continuing to provide monthly support and welcome your continued pledges through our next 6-month period. Laura Harms On behalf of Trochez/Hernandez Support Group
- 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 mlwiggins@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

Reflection: From Abraham to Zerubbabel

As we come to the end of the Old Testament narrative, it's not entirely clear where relationship between God and Israel stands. On the one hand, it seems that special relationship between God and the nation of Israel ended with the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem. The temple was destroyed, the people were deported from the land, and the last King of Judah had to watch as all of his potential heirs were killed. On the other hand, it seems that the covenant with Israel either survived or was being revived. After all, the people were allowed back in the land and the temple was rebuilt. Likewise, it wasn't clear what the Jews were supposed to make of their new political situation. Fortunately, they had religious freedom and could worship Yahweh according to their law, but they were now under the patronage of a pagan emperor. Would this servitude be temporary or permanent? These questions are not fully resolved in the Old Testament, and I would argue that they are most fully embodied in the figure of Zerubbabel.

If you read Ezra and Nehemiah, then you're probably aware that Zerubbabel was the leader of the first waves of Jews to return to Jerusalem after Cyrus defeated the Babylonians. But Zerubbabel is important for another reason: he is the last prominent figure who descended from King David. Let's review the history here. Before Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was killed, Nebuchadnezzar kidnapped the previous king, Jeconiah, who was also a descendant of David, and put him under house arrest in Babylon. After Nebuchadnezzar died, his successor set Jeconiah free and allowed him and his family to live comfortably in Babylon. In 1 Chronicles 3, we learn the names of Jeconiah's descendants. Among them, he had a son named Shealtiel and a grandson named Zerubbabel. Then, in Ezra 3:2, a person named "Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel" emerges as a leader of the Jewish community and sets out to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. In all likelihood, this Zerubbabel was the descendant of the exiled King Jeconiah, who was in the royal line of David. As a member of the royal line, Zerubbabel could very plausibly claim to be the king and rightful heir of Judah. However, he didn't make that claim. Instead, he contented himself with being Persia's appointed governor over the region.

The prophets give mixed messages about Zerubbabel as well. Jeremiah famously issued a "curse" over the line of Jeconiah (or "Coniah") saying, "As I live, says the LORD, even if King Coniah son of Jehoiakim of Judah were the signet ring on my right hand, even from there I would tear you off and give you into the hands of those who seek your life, into the hands of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and into the hands of the Chaldeans. I will hurl you and the mother who bore you into another country, where you were not born, and there you shall die. But they shall not return to the land to which they long to return." Many people take this and the lines that follow as evidence that the Davidic dynasty was over. However, at the end of the book of Haggai, the prophet says, "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, 'I am about to shake the heavens and the earth, and to overthrow the throne of kingdoms... On that day, says the LORD of hosts, I will take you, O Zerubbabel my servant, son of Shealtiel, says the LORD, and make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you, says the LORD of hosts.'" By claiming Zerubbabel as a signet ring, God seems to be reversing the curse of Jeremiah.

The odd thing is that Zerubbabel never lived to see the Persian empire overthrown, and none of his descendants became kings in the traditional sense. In fact, the descendants of David seemed to fade out of history. This is largely because new Jewish leaders emerged such as Nehemiah, the Hasmoneans, and Herod the Great - none of whom were even descended from Judah. But it doesn't mean that the descendants of Zerubbabel had died off; it just means they disappeared from view. Theoretically, it was possible that one of Zerubbabel's descendants, living among them, would rise up and restore the David dynasty. And this is precisely what the Bible claims about Jesus of Nazareth. (See Matthew 1:12-13) Jesus was a descendant of Zerubbabel, which also means he was a descendant of David, of Judah, and of Abraham and Sarah, for that matter. Although he was not a ruler in the traditional sense, Christians believe that all of the promises given from Abraham to Zerubbabel about having a descendant who would rule would be met in him.

~ 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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