

Journeying Together

Shalom Mennonite Church

December 28, 2018

WORSHIP

Our relationship with God

Last Sunday, December 23:

Brian looked at a new scholarly interpretation of the Christmas story and reflected on how God tends to show up the most powerfully not in our moments of strength and purity but in our moments of struggle and imperfection.

This Sunday, December 30:

We will return to the theme of seeking guidance during Advent by looking at the story of Simeon and Anna. Just as many of us have been "surprised" when we discovered that a job, a ministry, or a relationship turned out to have aspects to it that we didn't expect, Mary and Joseph were surprised to hear how these two saints understood God's calling on their lives.

Next Sunday, January 6:

We'll celebrate Epiphany, the day when the Magi finally arrived at Jesus' home and presented their gifts to him in Matthew 2:1-15. But at the moment when their long process of discernment finally brings them to their destination, it immediately propels them in a new direction – which is, in fact, how discernment is designed to work.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Relationships at Shalom

Calendar

Sun. 9:30am Worship

11:00 am Sunday School

Jan 3 – Meal, 6:30pm; Bible Study 7-8

Jan 6 – Fellowship potluck after SS

Jan 9 – Morning Breakfast Group 7am

Jan 17 – Meal, 6:30pm; Bible Study 7-8

Jan 23 – Morning Breakfast Group 7am

Feb 3 – Pizzas for Peace lunch after SS

Save the Date:

The Penner family invites everyone to an open house on Saturday, December 29, to greet and congratulate Sara and her husband, Ignacio Ramos. They were legally married in November and plan a formal wedding in June in Guatemala.

DISCIPLING

Growing in our relationships

Sunday School Schedule:

- Dec 30--no SS

Jan-March, there will be 2 classes:

1. Brad Yoder and Jay Brubaker will lead a discussion of J. Denny Weaver's book *God Without Violence*. If you would like to participate and did not pick up a book on December 16, please contact Brad Yoder directly. Meets in classroom 1 downstairs.

2. Bible Study/sermon discussion led by Cheryl Martin. Brian and others will be preaching through the book of Luke, and each class session will focus on the text for that week. Meets in the back of the sanctuary.

Jan. 20, regular adult classes will be cancelled so that as many as possible can attend a training on sexual assault awareness.

OUTREACH

Relationships beyond Shalom

Giving Corner:

Thank you for donations to the relief kits.

In January and February we will be collecting blankets and comforters for Mennonite Central Committee and local shelters.

Milepost #632

The Threshold of a New Year

Like many church congregations this past week, we have just experienced a beautiful celebration of Christmas, rejoicing in the birth of Christ with glorious and soul-stirring music, colors, candlelight, teachings and beloved stories of the Divine in our midst! Now, as we move into the new year, let's remember that the life of Jesus continues to live in us when we, like Mary, say "yes" to what God desires to do in and through us.

Recently I happened upon this quote from the 14th century mystic priest, Meister Eckhart:

We are all meant to be mothers of God. What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the Divine Son takes place unceasingly, but does not take place within myself? And what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace, but I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to [the] Son if I do not also give birth to him in my time and culture? This, then, is the fullness of time: when the Son of God is begotten in us.

As a baby is born, the process that occurs between labor and delivery is called "transition" and it's the most intense stage of childbirth. Often I have reflected on our Shalom transition period in this way--like the pain and joy of bringing a child into the world. Here we are at the threshold of a new year and, in what sometimes feels like the slowest birthing ever, we still seem to be in transition!

Perhaps it's time for us to think of it in a new way--no longer as transition with all the travailing and contracting and stretching--but as delivery. Many expectant parents don't feel ready for the baby to arrive. The due date is fast approaching and they still haven't painted the nursery, built the crib, bought the car seats--so much to do!! Meanwhile, Baby doesn't wait for all the t's to be crossed and it's dotted! When it's time, it's time.

Regardless of where we are in our journey as a congregation, as we continue to adjust to our new structure and await the "advent" of a new pastoral team member, in the words of our Lord Jesus himself, "the time is coming, and now is" for the Christ child to be born in us

and for the world. May we have Mary's courage and grace to serve as "mother of God" and give birth to Christ within ourselves, embodying the Christ-life in our "time and culture."

- Sabrina Falls, Pastor

Do you have some thoughts to share about this month's spiritual discipline? The Pastoral Team invites you to share your thoughts as one of the weekly milepost entries. Please email Sabrina, Frank, or Brian to explore this further.

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