

## JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Shalom Mennonite Church

March 24, 2021

### WORSHIP: Our relationship with God

Chair: Grace Rhine

**Last Sunday (3/21)**, Wilma Bailey preached on the parables of Jesus by emphasizing how complex they were and inviting us to consider interpretations of parables that are less simplistic and more compassionate.

**This Sunday (3/28)**, is Palm Sunday, when we will celebrate one of the most important events in Jesus' life: his arrival in the temple, where he confronted the corrupt religious and economic forces of his day and laid claim to being the Jewish Messiah.

**Next Sunday (4/4)**, is Easter! Join us at our normal time on Zoom as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the new life that has been made available through him.

### Lenten 2021 Resources

For the season of Lent 2021, we are offering two Lenten resources for you to use at home:

1. A Lenten Guided Prayer resource, offered each week during the 6 weeks of Lent (see attachment)
2. A "Lent at Home" guide from MCUSA that includes ideas for at-home rituals during Lent and Holy Week, including ideas for activities to do as a family unit. The link here will take you to a website where you can download the guide:

<https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource-portal/resource/lent-at-home/>

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

#### Sunday, March 28

- 9:30 am – Adult Sunday school: The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today, Emily & Tim Ludden. READ: Chapters 34-36, Storytime (Job), Conclusion TOPIC: Convictions, disagreement, and uncertainty
- 10:30 am – Worship service via Zoom

#### Next Friday, April 2

- 7 pm – Good Friday service via Zoom

#### Next Sunday, April 4

- Next Sunday is Easter! Join us at 10:30 on Zoom as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and the new life that has been made available through him. Communion will be offered during this service, so we invite you to prepare by bringing some bread and juice from which you can partake at home.

#### Sunday, April 11

2 pm - FHQ: Does Jesus' great commission ask Christians to convince the peoples of the world to leave their own beliefs, practices, and cultural traditions?

#### Sunday, April 25

2 pm - FHQ: What do we make of the discrepancy between the New Testament description of healing miracles - which the apostles performed frequently - and relative absence of healing miracles today?

#### Sunday, May 2

2 pm - FHQ: How should we respond to Biblical passages that seem to tolerate - if not defend - the institution of slavery?

### **Sunday, May 16**

2 pm - FHQ: In light of all of the false prophecies regarding the end of the world, how are we supposed to read and interpret the book of Revelation?

### **Sunday, May 30**

2 pm - FHQ: Can we still believe in the imminent return of Christ and the final judgment when two thousand years have passed and it has not happened yet?

### **Celebrations**

Friday March 26, 2005 - Kim & Krystal Johnson

Saturday March 27 - Marilyn Teel

Sunday March 28 - Jerry Teel

Thursday April 1 - Becky Wigginton

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

Chair: Martha Yoder

### **"Story of the Bible" Assigned Reading**

"Story of the Bible" sermon series recommended daily readings at home. Next week's readings are:

**Monday:** Mark 14:1-52; Luke 22:1-53, Psalm 86

**Tuesday:** Psalm 102, Matthew 26:1-56; John 18:1-11

**Wednesday:** Psalm 62 Mark 14:53-15:20; Matthew 26:57-27:31

**Thursday:** Psalm 109, Luke 22:54-23:25; John 18:12-19:16a

**Friday:** Psalm 22, Mark 15:21-47, John 19:16b-42 – crucifixion, death, burial

**Saturday:** Psalm 31, Matthew 27:32-66; Luke 23:26-56 – crucifixion, death, burial

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

Chair: Brad Yoder

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Parents: Please provide something your child(ren) can wave during the children's story time on Sunday. It can be branches with leaves, long grasses, scarves, light blankets, etc. We will be talking about Palm Sunday and the meaning. I will want the children to march around and wave whatever they have. Thank you. - Cheryl Martin

There was a request from the congregation to share the actual numbers of votes for the pastoral candidate. There were 61 votes cast (approximately 85% of active participants). Of these, there were 53 "yes" votes (87%), 6 "no" votes (10%) and 2 "abstain" votes (3%). These numbers were shared with Craig when he called to officially accept our call for him to join our pastoral team. We are thankful for God's guidance in our discernment and look forward to moving forward in God's grace. - Jeanne Smucker, Pastoral Search Team

The [ArchIndy Creation Care Commission](#) (CCC) is partnering with [Keep Indianapolis Beautiful](#) (KIB) this spring to plant native trees (including native fruit trees) in and around faith communities. They can plant on church property as well as within a 0.2 mile radius of the property. In cooperation with Eastside Creation Care Network (ECCN), we have submitted an application on behalf of Shalom. More info to follow. - Mike Wigginton

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) April prayer newsletter is attached. It is also available on the IMMC website: <https://im.mennonite.net/support/support-for-conference/prayer/>

"Love Wins Over Hate", Thursday, March 25, 10:30PM, WFYI, PBS Channel 20-1. In interviews with six former white supremacists, this documentary explores why people choose hate, and how they change their views. The participants acknowledge the pain they have caused, and talk about how they are working for a more compassionate community.

Horrorific gun violence is intensely on our minds lately. How can we respond to make a difference? Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence has scheduled an expert panel discussion; "Broad-Based Coalitions and Campaigns for Gun Violence Prevention" on Tuesday, March 30, 7:00PM. See the attachment below for details about how to register in advance. Thanks for considering this opportunity to educate ourselves to act. - Brad Yoder, for Outreach Commission

Opportunity to volunteer Habitat for Humanity: Wednesday, April 28 Build and Raise Walls, 7 volunteers, 7:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Lunch provided. Downtown near Crown Hill (Exact address provided upon registration) First Mennonite Volunteer Registration: <http://vhub.at/FMChurch>. Please follow the link to register build date to reserve your spot. Upon successful sign up you should receive a confirmation email containing pertinent information regarding the build day. You will also receive a reminder email closer to the date. COVID precautions are listed on the site and in the confirmation emails, they can also be viewed here. If you have any questions please contact Randy Stoesz at [stoeszmd@gmail.com](mailto:stoeszmd@gmail.com)

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference (IMMC) is seeking a part-time pastor for the Conference Pastoral team. If you are energized by working with pastors and leaders, visioning a new future for the Conference, dismantling racism, supporting diversity, and listening for God's call for the church, we would love to hear from you. The job description is posted on the [MMC website](#). Applications will be accepted through March 26th. Please submit applications and/or questions to the search committee: [immsearchcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:immsearchcommittee@gmail.com)

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.

**Please note:**

- Mike Wigginton manages Zoom scheduling, church calendar, and uploads minutes to the church website. To schedule a meeting using the church account or if you have minutes to post, email [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 number list. Email changes or additions to [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 5PM Wednesday.

**RELECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY**

**Thoughts on a National Tragedy** - Eight days ago, a 21-year-old man went on a shooting spree in Atlanta, targeting the female employees of three Asian-owned spas. Although this is not the only – or even most recent – mass shooting that has been in the news recently, it is a tragedy that involved racism, sexism, religious extremism, and economic exploitation, and therefore, I believe that it's important for us to take some time to reflect on the ways in which these forces intersect with our own religious tradition.

Robert Aaron Long, the shooter, was a self-described sex addict who seemed to be fixated on lust and guilt. But what's more troubling is that he also seemed to be a dedicated, practicing Christian. The New York Times reports that he brought his Bible with him to high school every day and was the leader of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes group. He was active in his local church, and became a practicing member at a young age. And he seemed to be intent on eliminating a particular kind of sin from his life: lust. He apparently struggled with pornography use and visited the Asian spas with some

sexual motivation in mind. He told the police that he committed the murders to “eliminate temptation.” Clearly, his violent crimes were at least partially motivated by his religious views on sin and sex.

Because of this, the police and media have been hesitant to describe his actions as racially motivated or as a hate crime. The argument is that he targeted the spas not because of the race of the owners or employees but because of the services they offered. But this fails to consider the many ways in which racism and sexual exploitation are intertwined, especially for Asian women. For example, there have long been stereotypes about the sexual availability of Asian women that likely inspired him to seek out Asian-owned spas as a place for sexual gratification in the first place. And the fact that he cannot see the humanity of his victims but only views them as “temptation” to be eliminated is almost certainly influenced by racism as well. At a moment like this, it is important for us to acknowledge the discrimination and mistreatment that people of Asian descent face in this country in order to dismantle it. Doing so is a part of our commitment to anti-racism as a church.

Furthermore, this incident offers a tragic yet important lesson about how we should talk about and wrestle with “sin,” especially as we find ourselves in the season of Lent. I would agree with Long that at least some of his sexual pursuits seemed to be sinful, and that he needed to address them. However, as Jesus taught, all of the behaviors that are prohibited in the Scriptures are derived from the principles of “loving God” and “loving your neighbor as yourself.” If this is true, if sin is truly birthed out of a lack of love, then punishing ourselves or other people will never defeat it. Instead, the only solution is to learn to love our neighbors – and ourselves – more fully. In Long’s case, the appropriate response to his “lust” was not to seek a chastity that “eliminates” people as a source of temptation but to cultivate an appreciation for the humanity of the females over whom he lusted. Objectifying others sexually hurts both those who are objectified and, to a lesser extent, those who do the objectifying. It is love, not a pursuit of “purity” that must overcome it.

Let us pray for the families of the victims of the Atlanta shootings, as well as those in Boulder, Colorado, and for the Asian-American community more broadly as they feel the effects of these events. May the love of God prevail in all of us.

Journeying Together is a weekly email newsletter of Shalom Mennonite Church: 6100 E 32nd St, 46226; (317) 549-0577 <https://www.shalommennonite.com/>

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