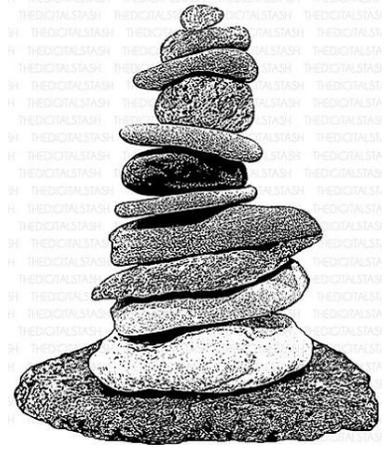


Fall Bible Study October 15 - November 19

JOSHUA BIBLE STUDY

This fall we have focused on Jesus as our Companion, walking together through stories of Jesus building relationship and trust. We have witnessed the dominant expression of Jesus' love as one sitting at the table with us, and we have looked to each other and seen Jesus in our common and shared life. In a very real sense, Jesus seeks to lead the people of faith into a new "promised land", one that is not bound by geography.



This summer the children learned many of the stories that precede Joshua during vacation bible school and ended their week waiting to enter the promised Land. At our MCUSA conference in Orlando this summer we passed a resolution on the Israeli occupation of Palestine, which continues to cause much tension in that region many centuries after Joshua. At the conference there was also an emphasis on the Doctrine of Discovery which addresses the occupation of foreign lands (especially in North America) and the massacre, and subsequent ongoing marginalization of Native Americans.

In our own microcosm, we here at Assembly Mennonite are in the midst of significant changes. We are in the middle of a building project. Walnut Hill is moving to a new location after residing with us for three decades. Tom Kaufmann is here as a Bridge pastor to help review the structure and pastoral staffing at Assembly. The congregation continues to grow, presenting the concomitant changes that growth brings.

The fall Bible study planning group made up of Paul Keim, Anna Yoder Schlabach, Jeremiah Chico, Tom Kauffman, Mary Lehman Yoder, Danny Aramouni believes that we can learn from the book of Joshua to help us address both the larger concerns of occupation and Assembly's future.

The fall bible study will be bookended by special services and potlucks. On October 8, we will join many in the wider Mennonite church to learn about and sing from the new Hymnal that is being created. Sarah Kathleen Johnson will be our preacher. At the end of the series on November 26, we will celebrate the ordination of Lora Nafziger, share in communion, and gather for a fellowship meal (no Sunday school).

Several themes from Joshua seem to fit well with our current journey as a congregation.

- There is God's abiding presence (1:6)
- There is assurance on the journey – *"You will know the way you should go even though you've never traveled this way before"* (3:4)
- Joshua meets the commander of YHWH's heavenly forces and asks, *"Are you on our side or that of our enemies?"* to which the reply is *"Neither!"* (5:13-14) *(The important question is whether or not we are on God's side.)*
- Unlikely people (like Rahab) are incorporated into the people of God (ch 2 & 6)
- Cities of refuge are appointed so that there are places of safety from revenge (20:1ff)
- There is a time to reflect on God's providence and deliverance and decide whom they/we will serve (23 & 24)
- The book of Joshua allows us to reflect on how we tell our stories about ourselves and our relationship to God

Joshua Fall Bible Study Schedule:

October 8: *Great Day of Singing....* Sarah Kathleen Johnson

October 15: *Long Ago and Far Away;* Joshua 24:1-15.... Paul Keim

October 22: *So what's going on with Rahab?;* Joshua 2...Mary Lehman Yoder

October 29: *Conquest: A Canaanite's Perspective;* Joshua 11: 16-23... Danny Aramouni

Nov 5: *Cunning Gibeonites: A Creative Response to Conquest;* Joshua 9... Anna Yoder Schlabach

Nov 12: *Cities of Refuge: Yet another way Joshua stretches the paradigm of acceptable violence;* Joshua 20...
Karl Shelly

Nov 19: *Covenant Renewal: What's with the "service" thing?;* Joshua 24:1, 14-15...Tom Kauffman

Nov 26: *Lora's Ordination;* Luke 24:13-35...Gayle Gerber Koontz

Here are some ways you can actively engage the biblical text during the upcoming weeks:

- Bring your Bibles to worship
- Read through (or listen to) the entire book of Joshua
- Participate in the second hour elective focused on Joshua
- Delve into the Believer's Church commentary on the book of Joshua recommended by Paul Keim. 3 copies are available in Assembly's library.
- Savor the worship visuals created by Eric Good Kaufmann
- For a brief [less than 9 minutes] video on the book of Joshua, watch this YouTube video: https://youtu.be/JqOqJIFF_eU

There are four elective options for adults during 2nd hour this Fall:

Further study of Joshua led by the Fall Bible Study planning group.

The trouble of race in America has been brutally visible recently. What would it take to become more seriously engaged in the anti-racism struggle? What would that look like for us at Assembly? We will explore these and related questions using Drew Hart's book, "*Trouble I've Seen: Changing the way the church views racism.*" Class participants are encouraged to read this provocative and important book.

Two contemplative electives one lead by Julie Keim and others which will use art as a venue to explore contemplative practice. The second lead by Jon Zirkle and others will focus on Reading, contemplatively and prayerfully, God's presence in the Book of Creation to explore and discover God's presence and Spirit in nature.

