

Manor Minutes
Volume 15 Issue 16
April 19, 2024

- Personnel Committee – April 24, 4pm
- Stewardship/Finance Ministry – April 24, 5:30pm
- Choir Practice – April 25, 6:30pm

Stay up to date at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar

Wild Things

**FMCC Night at
Washington Wild Things
Friday, June 7, 7pm
Fireworks Night**

Tickets - \$10/person Parking Pass - \$2/car

**Jody Mullis will be singing God Bless America
during the 7th inning stretch.**

**Sign up in the Narthex for tickets and parking
passes.**

**Please turn in cash or check
(payable to FMCC) to the office by **May 3rd****



PENTECOST

SUNDAY

May 19

- Baptisms
- Last day of Sunday School & CW&W
- Sunday School Teacher & CW&W
Volunteer Recognition
- Pentecost and Sunday School
Celebration Cookout after Worship
- Wear **RED**



The **Bethany Class** will be meeting at Eat'n Park for lunch on Tuesday, April 30th at Noon.

CAMP LAURELVIEW 2024 SCHEDULE

MAY 31ST- JUNE 2: FAMILY CAMP

JUNE 16- JUNE 22: CHI RHO CAMP

JUNE 23- JUNE 29: CONFERENCE CAMP

JULY 7- JULY 13: JUNIOR CAMP

JULY 14TH- JULY 17: MINI CAMP

Scholarships are available to cover part or all of the cost of camp. Ask Pastor Gena for more information. Camp is often a life-changing experience for young people. Please encourage the young people in your life to participate.



Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
351 Montgomery Ave.
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Gene Sheller, Bread
Consuello Sheller, Cup

April 21, 2024 – 10:15am

Prelude

Carson Throckmorton, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Gene Sheller

Leader: Sing a new song,

People: A song of love for all.

Leader: Sing of the Spirit of love,

People: The Spirit who loves us all.

Leader: Sing of God's abiding love,

People: That we might love one another and all of the world.

Leader: Sing a new song,

People: A song of love for all.

Opening Hymn

"Jesus Loves Me!"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong; they are weak, but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

O God, our Shepherd, in you we have everything we need. You guide us, showing us the way. You come searching for us when we go off on our own. Thank you for the independent spirit and spunk you have given each one of us, but thank you too for keeping us tied to you and to others who follow you. We are so grateful to have waiting and welcoming arms to come home to.

Thank you for times of quiet rest when you watch over us, when you stand guard. Thank you for those times when we feel so comfortable and at peace in your presence that it is like we are lying on a carpet of lush green grass. Thank you for those times when you revive us and bring life back into us with refreshment like that of a cool, clear pool of water.

Thank you for the ways your creation nourishes us in the food we eat, in the beauty we experience, in the co-creating work we do as we work in your world. What a gift this earth is to us. Thank you for the flowers that bloom in so many colors and scents; for the bees that buzz and pollinate, bringing forth a bounty of food; for water that runs and cascades and laps at our feet; for the sun, calling forth life and sustaining it, warming our skin and lifting our spirits. Right now, we give you thanks for all that you have made, imagining its beauty in our minds and recommitting ourselves to its care...

Shepherding God, especially when the way is difficult, when we feel completely alone and in despair, help us to know that you are right with us. Let us feel secure when everything is changing and the way is unfamiliar and unpredictable, knowing that you are the guide we can trust and count on.

Give us courage to share life with those we don't understand and those who don't understand us. Spread a table big enough for all of us, that we might learn to see you in each other as we feast on truth and light and love in your presence. Give us the courage to sit with our discomfort and vulnerability when you lead us into new pastures.

O God, our Shepherd, we so want others to know your comfort and grace, your welcome and your gentle course-correcting nudges. We pray that you might soften the hearts of those who hate and destroy. We pray that you might sustain those who work so that all have what they need. We pray for those who study your creation, care for it, and use it wisely for the good of all. We pray for caregivers and friends, for family and strangers who are walking with those who are suffering through their darkest valleys. We pray for those who are sick, those who are without hope, those who are missing loved ones, those who can't find what they need, those who feel trapped in harmful circumstances. Bring peace and wholeness, we pray.

And now we name those who are on our hearts and minds, knowing that you are with them just as surely as you are with us....

Lead us in right paths as we seek to love as you do. And may your love and beauty chase after us every day of our lives. We pray all of this in the name of our Good Shepherd, Jesus the Christ, who teaches us to pray, saying...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Prayer Response:

“Glory Be to the Father”

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

First Scripture Reading

Psalm 23

Linda Reese

Anthem

“I Sing the Mighty Power of God”

Choir

Children's Message

Rev. Stillwell

There are a lot of people in your life that you know, and I bet many that you like, but how many people do you trust? To trust is to have a strong belief in a person's reliability and ability. In other words to trust someone is to believe that they can do something as well as to believe that they will do it for you. We trust our friends with secrets, we trust our teachers that they will teach us what we need to know. We trust our parents will take care of us and help us. When we read the 23rd Psalm, it sounds as if someone may have just asked David the question, "Who do you trust?", and his answer is, "God", but he said it like this, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

David was himself a shepherd, and he knew that sheep can trust the shepherd in every situation. When the sheep are hungry, the shepherd takes them to green pastures where they have plenty to eat. When the sheep are thirsty, he leads them to a quiet stream where they can drink. When the sheep are in danger of being eaten by wild animals, the shepherd is their protector. The sheep can trust the shepherd in every situation.

That is how our relationship with God should be, which is why Jesus calls himself "The Good Shepherd". Jesus wanted his disciples to know that they and we are his sheep. Do you look like a sheep? Do you sound like one? No but, just like David, we can still say, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.", because we can trust God in every situation.

Each day we find ourselves facing difficult situations and we have difficult choices to make. We often ask ourselves, "Who can I trust?" The answer is, "Jesus." We trust he knows what is best for us, wants what is best for us, and we can trust that he will lead us to a wonderful place.

Second Scripture Reading

1 John 3:16-24

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

"The Fruit Abides"

Rev. Stillwell

Within the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John there are a lot of stories and a lot of sayings that are repeated so that when you read them through you may begin to have a "been there read that feeling." By the time you get to John the fourth and final of the gospels you get some new stories to read and that is good. No one needs to read about how Jesus calmed the storm for the fourth time; that starts to feel like thanksgiving dinners when your uncle tells the same story he always tell. After a while you want a new story.

So John, which is not only the last gospel in the Bible but the last written, draws from a different source of stories to give us the signs of Jesus such as, turning water into wine at the Wedding of Canaa and the I am stories like, I am the bread of Life, I am the light of the world, and I am the true vine.

Not only is this story unique in the gospels, but it uses a word that does not appear in any other gospel, but in this passage and it appears 12 times. Not only is this story unique in the gospels, but it is one of the teachings that is referred to in the letters of John as we have just heard. Again John's community is reminded of the Jesus' teaching at the Last Supper when the word that only appears in John's account of the Last Supper is used over 20 times in the two short letters of John. I think, therefore, that means that we should probably pay attention to the word and the word is, abide.

So let's abide with this word a while. There are many definitions of the word, therefore there must be many ways for us to abide, and they all seem pretty appropriate to what Jesus is telling his disciples at the Last Supper.

The first definition for the word, abide, is - to remain; continue; stay. This is a good definition for how Christ abides in us. He remains, he continues, he stays. People thought they had lost him when he was lifted up on the cross, the loss was immeasurable, but when he is lifted up again, to ascend into Heaven so that his followers know that his physical presence will no longer be with them, they are not sad or upset, because he says to them, "Remember, I am with you until the end of the age"

The disciples trust that Jesus will be with them in all places in all times, they will not have to hunt for him as they did when he went off to pray, and they will not have to fight to be near him for he can be near all of them all the time, because the Lord abides with them.

The second definition is helpful to understand how exactly we can abide in him. It reads - to continue in a particular condition, attitude, relationship. We, who have taken Jesus to be our lord and will surely call upon him in our last moments, need a little reminder to stay in relationship with him in between our baptism and our death. After the fire of conversion begins to die but before the end comes in sight we all need some help in keeping our faith going.

This is important because our lives are up and down and often so is our faith, we're either on the mountain or in the valley, and we don't take much time just to be or we do not put much value in being on the plateau. But those can be moments when we really get a chance to know what it is like to rest awhile in Him and abide our days rather just biding our time.

The fact is that we spend most of our time doing nothing real special and whether or not we feel Christ's presence in the ho-hum and humdrum days goes a long way to whether or not we bear good fruit. That's how Jesus describes abiding, being rooted.

Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide

Now this is truly a great metaphor for as the branch abides in the tree we should abide in the Lord. The branch bears the fruit, but only because of the nourishment it gets from its roots. My wife and I love to look at our forsythia bushes in the backyard in the spring. It is so beautiful and bright, so we often cut a few branches and put them in vase in our dining room to have some of that beauty inside. It worked for a while of course, but eventually the branches withered and died and had to be thrown out. The branches that continue to abide in the bush shine bright still.

There are still more meanings which eloquently describe what it means to abide with Him and He with us. The next is - **to put up with; tolerate; stand**: Clearly this describes Jesus abiding in us. He puts up with our complaining, he tolerates our shortcomings, he stands with us even when we fall.

Next is - to endure, sustain, or withstand without yielding or submitting and again this is the Lord abiding with us. The Lord abides a vigorous onslaught of sin and selfishness. He abides all that we throw at him, and yet he will not yield or submit because he wants us to yield and submit our will to him. There is no sin so great that Jesus can't wash it away with grace. No prodigal son can go so far away that he won't be welcomed back when he turns around, repents, and comes home.

The next definition works both ways. It is - **to wait for; await**. The example sentence the dictionary provides is to abide the coming of the Lord which we must do, or abide the coming of the Kingdom, but Jesus waits for us as well. Christ waits for us to open our hearts, waits for us to turn to him, the Lord abides our conversion.

Then we have to accept without opposition or question: **to abide the verdict of the judge**. This clearly is for us. Trust and obey as the old hymn sings for there is no other way than to abide in Jesus but to trust and obey. For us to abide in Christ as he calls us to do is to surrender our will to his trusting that it is infinitely better than our own.

The final definition fits Christ completely as it says - **to suffer for**. Of course he suffered on our behalf. God's love for us was so great that God came into our world in our form, and even without a crucifixion you could imagine the human form with all of its desires and drives, with all of its pains and limitations, was like suffering for God. Yet nothing was insufferable if it meant helping those who were lost to find their way back home. There was nothing that the Good Shepherd wouldn't abide for the sake of his sheep.

If you didn't before you can see now why it is that we begin our church year in advent singing in O Little Town of Bethlehem with its plea, "O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord, Immanuel", and then we conclude the Easter season with Christ assuring us that he abides with us.

It is such a good and perfect word. Jesus won't come and go as he pleases. He won't come once and never again. The Lord will abide, dwell, live, and reside in our hearts. That is what having the Spirit is like. We teach our children about Jesus living in our hearts because that is the simplest way we can think to explain it, but another way to say it is that the Lord abides with us.

And the Lord calls us to abide in him. When we are in the Spirit, when our hearts are attuned to God, we are not simply biding our time we are *abiding* our time, making the most of it, enjoying it, recognizing it as a gift, making an ordinary moment a transcendent moment because we are aware of all that is around us and from this will come the fruits that Jesus spoke of, kindness, mercy, gentleness, compassion, and love.

As we move from Easter to Pentecost we celebrate that Christ is with us always, and we should make it a point to be with him more. The Lord abides with us. I don't know about you, but I take comfort in that.

Call to Offering

Donna Stenski

Christ invites us to bring our gifts to his table, sharing what we have with any in need, proclaiming the good news of love in all we say and do. With generous hearts, let us bring our offerings to God.

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below! Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Dedication of Offering Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts and on all of us gathered here, that we may abide in your love and that your love may abide in these gifts. In your loving name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

In our lesson today we are reminded of a teaching Jesus told his disciples in order to show them the importance of staying connected to him. He used the example of a vine saying, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing." A vine, of course, is a plant with a lot of branches growing out from it, and often the vines have fruit on them, but if a branch breaks off from the vine it withers and dies.

Jesus wants us to produce a lot of fruit, but here he is not talking about grapes or watermelons, rather he is referring to what Paul would describe as fruits of the spirit, generosity, faithfulness, and peace, among others. Most of all, Christ wants us to love others as he has loved us.

This is no small task, and one that I do not believe that we can do on our own. I think we need to come back constantly to the example of one whose love was so great he ate with those who would betray him, forgave those who crucified him, and returned to those who abandoned him. That is why it is right and good that we come to this table as often as we do. Just as the branches must be connected to the vine before they can produce fruit, you and I must stay connected to Jesus to produce the good fruit that God expects of us, and this table is the source of our connection along with prayer.

Jesus makes good use of metaphors but there are ways that he is better than any vine. I am currently clearing out the dead branches from my grape vine and sometimes I accidentally break one off that still has life, and I am sad when that happens because I know that there is no way for that branch to be grafted back on to the vine, but when it comes to the true vine, Jesus Christ, I rejoice, for we know that even if we have not been abiding in him, it is not too late to come back and be reconnected.

Do you have a prayer request or need help? Please feel free to contact Rev. Chris (412-956-6590) or Pastor Gena (724) 263-0033 directly and confidentially. Or scroll down on the opening page of our website (www.fairhillmanorchurch.org) to "Requests for Prayer or Help." There you can send an email which will go directly to Rev. Chris. We are One Body in Christ!

Prayer List:

Homebound Members:

Mrs. Mary McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

Chuck and Mary Wiseman
880 S Main St, Apt 214
Washington PA 15301

Elinor Newman (Southmont)
835 S Main St, Rm 513
Washington PA 15301

Alice Cokeley
900 N Cass Lake Rd, Apt 324
Waterford MI 48328

Carol Brown
36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd, Rm 213
Washington PA 15301

Doris Sorice
880 S Main St, Apt 336
Washington PA 15301

Ed Alexey
Avery Allen
Jeannie Allison
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Jim Banish
Martin Berisford
Eleanor Boyles
Mabel Brooks
Leslie Byron
Sandra Carman
Clayton Chalfant
Leslie Chalfant
Denise Charles
Wanda Chicone
MaryAnn Coates
Zach Correll
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Sue Donaldson
Benjamin Dube
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Thomas Farabee
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Jay Freudenberg
Lois Gayman
Sue Golsky
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg
Theresa Hancher
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris

Rick Herrnberger
Aryn Hess
Janet Houston
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Kenger Family
Ivy Lacock
Ty Lacock, Jr.
Bob Lanning
David Leonard
John Lewis
Lee Martin
Dave McConnell
Pam McCord
Norm McDonough
Ruth Mikuta
Dick Moninger
Bob Morgan
Paul Myers
Joe Neckerman
Michaela Nixon
Sandy Nixon
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Deborah Patterson
JoAnn Piatt
Bo & Patty Pryor
Rick Rafferty
Cathy Rentgen
Jeannie Riffle
Lori Riffle
Betty Jo Riggie

Emily Cope Robinson
Dave Ross
John Samida
Debbie Sekorky
Sam Sheller
Valerie Shetler
Hannah Simpson
Doug and Tracy Smith
Darci Sprowls
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Bernard Teagarden
Beth Teagarden
Jane Teagarden
Thad Turner
Tammie Wallace
Gary Weaver
Tom Williams
Addison Wittenberg
Sarah Wittenberg

In the Military

Lance Dague	Andrew Gregg
Terrell McClain	Zachary Keene
Brandon Lipscomb	Sarah Lipscomb
Travis Ringer*	Emily Chase
Dylan Demain	

The brave men and women who serve our country make incredible sacrifices every day. We are forever grateful for their service and dedication. Please remember the military members that are deployed and away from their family that they may return to their homes safely.

*currently deployed