

Manor Minutes
Volume 15 Issue 14
April 5, 2024

- Elders Meeting – April 10, 5:30pm via Zoom
- Choir Practice – April 11, 6:30pm
- Elders Retreat – April 13, 10am-4pm

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**

The **Roof Fund** is running slightly behind. Please remember to fulfill your pledges to the Roof Fund. If you didn't previously pledge but would like to make a donation now, you are more than welcome to help cover the gap. You can use the pink envelopes in the pew back pockets or use Givelify on the church's website (www.fairhillmanorchurch.org, click on the *more* tab and then under the *give* tab you will find the roof fund). The final loan payment for the roof is due in September.

A Friendly Reminder



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

Thank you for your continued support of the "Trash to Treasure – Recycled Bottles Caps Turning into Park Benches" project for the Washington Park. Please remember to make sure the bottle caps are clean and dry before placing them in the donation container.





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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Carol Daniels, Bread
Sheila Harris, Cup

April 7, 2024 – 10:15am

Prelude

Carson Throckmorton, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Kevin Puskarich

Leader: We are born anew.

People: We have a living hope. We have an enduring inheritance.

Leader: It is God's love for us.

People: We trust God. We rejoice with hearts filled with praise.

Leader: Words cannot begin to express our joy.

People: How can we express what it means to be invited into God's presence?

All: *Let us worship God this day.*

Opening Hymn

"I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy"

Jody Mullis, pianist

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart (where?), down in my heart, down in my heart. I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart (where?), down in my heart to stay.

Vs. 2: I've got the peace that passes understanding

Vs. 3: I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

God of resurrection, we gather this morning as a community of believers. We come with joy to greet one another and to tell again and again the amazing news: Christ is risen! Love and life are victorious over evil and death! You have given us new life in the name of your Son!

God of resurrection, we want to walk in your light, but we often find ourselves in the darkness of unconfessed sin and a warped sense of who we really are. We make mistakes but don't own up to them. We falter but don't come clean. We make a mess and try to hide it. Give us courage to confess our sins to you and so walk into your light, back into fellowship with you and with each other. Help us to be truthful about who we are and what we've done. Praise be to you, O God, for in you we have the assurance that if we confess our sins, you who are faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all our sinfulness. Help us to trust in your mercy and in your standing invitation to come home.

God of resurrection, bless this congregation with a renewed sense of your Spirit moving among us. Open us up to honest conversations and give us courage to see our shortcomings as a congregation. Give us a new sense of commitment, so that the work of ministry might be shared among us all. Energize us through your Spirit to care for each other and to live in harmony. Give us a close sense of fellowship and empower us to show each other generosity. For, oh, how very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity.

God of resurrection, give your church the assurance that through squabbling and setbacks, through triumphs and growth, through conflicts within and pressures from without, you are indeed at work and will prevail. Give us confidence in the ultimate triumph of your will in the world. And help us to persevere in the power and presence of your Spirit. May the same Spirit who was at work in and through Jesus be unleashed in our world through your church.

God of resurrection, we pray for the Holy Spirit's boldness as we face whatever lies ahead. We pray for those who cannot bear to look in the mirror. Make us vehicles of your mercy and grace. We pray for those who are in pain, in despair, in shock or in grief. Make us bearers of your comfort. We pray for those who are rescuing and tending, rebuilding and repairing. Hear our prayers for strength and courage. We pray for those who are without food, clothing, shelter and medical care. Make us generous beyond measure. We pray for those on our prayer list, especially those who are in care facilities, and for those we have named aloud this morning. Hear our prayers for these loved ones we lift into your arms now.... Show us how to love, we pray.

Now may our singing, praying, listening, proclaiming, and serving be a testimony to the power of your love to make us a new creation as a community of faith. We pray in the name of the risen Christ, who taught 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

Acts 4:32-35

Anthem

“Peace Be Unto This Congregation,” by Jay Althouse

Choir

Children's Message

Rev. Stillwell

Have you ever tried to throw away a lawn mower? It's harder than you might think. It won't fit into any garbage can, and when I put it on the curb, the garbage men must have thought I had forgotten to put it away so they didn't take it.

So it sat there until someone came by and put it in their truck. Maybe they could fix it, or maybe they were going to sell it for scrap, but it is true that sometimes one person's trash is another person's treasure. You might say the same thing for Jesus. He was considered to be less than trash by many people in his time, and he was easily discarded, but after he was disposed of others found him and saw in him his true value.

It would have been easy for God to become manifest in the world in the form of a powerful, awe-inspiring person whom all people would have valued, but in allowing Jesus to be despised God taught us a valuable lesson about value itself. Value does not lie in beauty, form, or power. True value lies in what something can do for our bodies, our minds, our hearts, and especially our souls.

The problem is that those things cannot always be seen so easily and too often we fill our lives with things that look good while casting aside the things that really matter. Jesus teaches us to look again at the thing

and the people who have been tossed to the curb by the world. Like that perfect bargain at a garage sale, like Jesus Christ to the world, one person's trash may indeed be God's greatest treasure.

Second Scripture Reading

1 John 1:1-2:2

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Complete Joy”

Rev. Stillwell

It can be hard sometimes to watch an action movie where the hero's life is imperiled. Even though we know it will turn out right, it is still tense and nerve-wracking. Think of the James Bond scene in “Goldfinger” where he is strapped to the table and a laser is slowly cutting its way to slicing him in half. Even thinking about it can make me anxious even though I know he will survive.

The reason we watch these movies is that we know it will turn out right and we will have a sense of relief when they do. We believe this either because we have seen them before, or we simply trust that they will not kill off the main character. Sometimes they do of course, and those are either stories we do not like or that we are drawn further in by the bold departure from the norm, but there is a reason why 99% of the time the hero survives. Without them where is the story?

This is also the reason why we read the gospel. It has a brutal ending, if we see the crucifixion as the ending, and in that light the Last Supper is truly heartbreaking. An innocent man teaches his disciples to love one another even as he knows he will be condemned by one of them and abandoned by the others. There is a reason why Good Friday services are not as well attended as Easter services for they are all tension and no release.

Conversely, Easter is the happy ending. Jesus appears and in effect says, “See, I am alive! See, what I said was true! See, it's alright!” So the Last Supper and the crucifixion are read again and again because they are important steps of the story, but also because what Jesus taught, was not truly understood until after the resurrection.

That is why they are read every year, which is significant because the Bible is large and not all of it is preached. How often have you heard anyone preach from the letters of John? I have preached on them only one time.

These three short letters are of lesser renown. Tradition has it that they are written by the gospel writer at a later time, but since the 19th century this has been greatly contested citing the change in language style and vocabulary. In that argument it is possible that John changed his writing style in his old age, but most scholars conclude it is more likely that his followers wrote in his name the things that he taught them near his death in order to preserve them for future generations.

In this way the letters are written by the Johanine community and the purpose is to encourage followers of Christ in a difficult time, and to warn of those who oppose Christ, which in the letters of John is termed anti-Christ. Notice the plural. The anti-Christ is not some figure to come in the future, but as the letters state, anyone who opposes Christ. Anti-Christ literally means against Christ and is already in the world. Therefore if someone speaks of a person as the anti-Christ they are clearly getting their theology from Hollywood and not John.

Specifically, as the letters would go on to elucidate, the main anti-Christ were the Gnostics who believed and taught that Christ was not human. They claimed he only appeared to be human; therefore he only appeared to suffer, only appeared to be crucified, and only appeared to be resurrected. The letters of John are written to help gentile Christians see the humanity of Christ as well as his divinity.

What I want to focus on most in this first chapter is the way in which the first letter's instructions hearken back to the Last Supper. There so many teachings on that one night that it would take a lifetime to unpack them all and live by them. The letter begins by saying that God is light which remind us of the very beginning of the gospel of John which states "The life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

At the beginning of the second chapter is the term of endearment, "little children", which reminds us of Jesus saying. "Little children, I am with you only a little longer." (John 13:33) This leads into his giving the new commandment that they love one another as he loved them. All of this is set up by the verse that I think is the most important, "⁴We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete." This echoes the teaching of Christ on the night when he was betrayed, "I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11)

Christ spoke of joy at a time when joy seemingly was in short supply. The disciples might not have known it at the time as they celebrated the Passover Meal, but Jesus knew the shadows that were near. Likewise, he knew that dark times were coming for them, and yet he spoke of joy not in spite of this, but because of it. He did this because he knew that the darkness would be for only a bit, and even this too shall pass.

He could see past the darkness but knew the disciples would not be able to and so his teachings were intended to give them hope, but hope is like the sun. If you only believe in it when you can see it you will never make it through the night. There are few things in this world as beautiful as a sunset and I have spent many moments sitting and watching the sun set the sky ablaze in an array of colors as it says good night. Each time I have been moved and filled with peace and joy at the sun's setting, but I have to think that if I did not believe it would rise again just as beautiful I would find sunsets to be heartbreaking, and it would be hard to get through the night. Christ's disciples almost did not make it through the night, but they did, and now they have that memory anytime it gets dark, and a promise that the sun will rise again, and this gives them joy.

As I have said before there is a distinction between joy and happiness or pleasure with the latter being fleeting and joy being lasting. Psychologist, Michael Summa, says that the distinction between joy and happiness is that, "Joy accompanies the process through and through, whereas happiness seems to be more strictly tied to the moment of achievement of the process."

So happiness comes when a desired result is obtained, but joy happens throughout, because what we are doing brings us joy and because we believe, sometimes contrary to all the evidence, that it will end well. Joy comes from knowing everything will be all right.

That's how we can watch action movies where the hero is imperiled and all seems lost. That is how we can rejoice at the setting of the sun knowing that the sun will rise again and be just as beautiful. That's how we can stand to read the Last Supper knowing how bad it will get before it gets so much better.

This letter calls the early Christians back to the Last Supper to show everything was going to be all right, and the teachings Christ gave that night were not only for the disciples in that moment, but for followers of Christ in all times and places. These words should bring us joyous peace.

When Jesus showed his disciples the marks of crucifixion in his hands, they rejoiced. They could see that this self-emptying God would rather die than be in the sin-accounting business. Joy flows when God's lush grace washes over you in the proclamation that you are the beloved of God. The wounds of Jesus' crucified body, risen from the dead, testify to God's merciful presence amid sin and death, and bring

healing and hope, living faith and deep joy. It is the joy that Jesus promised to his disciples "so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete"

This was important for the early church and still is important for us. We all face darkness in our life whether we are worried about our health or our jobs. We face anxiety over retirement or the world our children and grandchildren will inherit. We dread another election where threats of violence are already being made. We worry about the future of our church, but we should know that Christ has made our joy complete, not by taking away the darkness, but by ensuring that it will be fleeting and the sun will rise again in the morning.

That is where our joy lies, not in possessions, or wealth, fame or pleasure, but knowing that the "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Did not, but also will not, because it cannot, nor can it take your joy if it is rooted in the one who has made it complete.

Call to Offering

Barb Bailey

You, O God, are our refuge. You provide for us and keep us from stumbling. You offer us life itself and the deep peace of your presence. We offer ourselves to you this day, trusting in your grace. We affirm that you are our God. May these gifts honor you, as they continue your work of offering the world a living hope.

Communion Hymn

"That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright" Carson Throckmorton, organist

That Easter day with joy was bright, the sun shone out with fairer light,
when, to their longing eyes restored, the glad apostles saw their Lord.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

I don't know if you heard but there is an eclipse coming. It is pretty exciting and I have heard of people making travel plans to be in the path of complete totality. The eclipse is exciting because it is rare, because it is drastic, and because it is temporary. I often wonder what it was like before we understood what was happening and knew that the sun would return. It must of looked to people like a horrible curse was upon the land, and they must have greeted its occurrence with dread and terror.

In Mark Twain's book "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" the Yankee bests Merlin and wins his freedom when he threatens to blot out the sun. He has no power to do this, but convinces them because he knew an eclipse was coming and uses the people ignorance and fear to his advantage. It is fiction but we know all too well how easy it is to use people's ignorance and fear to their benefit.

Because we have memory of the sun returning and because we have understanding of how and why the sun is being darkened, we no longer have fear of the darkness. As Christians we should have memory of how Christ overcame darkness trough his resurrection and we should have understanding of how he promises to do the same for us.

It does not mean that darkness will not come into our life. It will, by a thousand variations and shades, but it does mean that the darkness will not last. Dare we say it will be eclipsed by the light of the Son, but not the sun, that sets and rises every day. Rather our darkness will be eclipsed by the Son who set once, but is risen now forevermore.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Carol Daniels

Gracious Heavenly Father, thank you for the privilege of coming to this table. Thank you for Jesus, our resurrected Lord, for victory over death and forgiveness of sins. We come to remember Jesus and the ultimate sacrifice He made on the cross that we may be at one with You.

We ask Father that you bless this bread and cup that represents Jesus' battered body and shed blood. Please let these emblems nourish our spiritual bodies so that we are renewed, refreshed, revived and equipped to do your work until Jesus returns.

Words of Institution

Rev. Stillwell

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Sharing Holy Communion

All are invited to share in this meal. Please come forward down the center aisle, as you are able, then place your offering in the trays as you return to your seats by the outside aisles. If you are unable to come forward, the meal will be brought to you. Gluten-free wafers & individual servings are available in the Narthex.

Call to Discipleship

Rev. Stillwell

If you have come to know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior and you would like to profess that you intend to begin a life of faith, learning to walk in his way of Love, you are welcome to contact one of the Pastors to take this step. If you would like to join this part of the Body of Christ at Fairhill Manor Christian Church, to covenant to journey together in this life of faith, please reach out to one of the Pastors to learn more. We all take these moments to rededicate our lives to following Jesus.

Closing Hymn

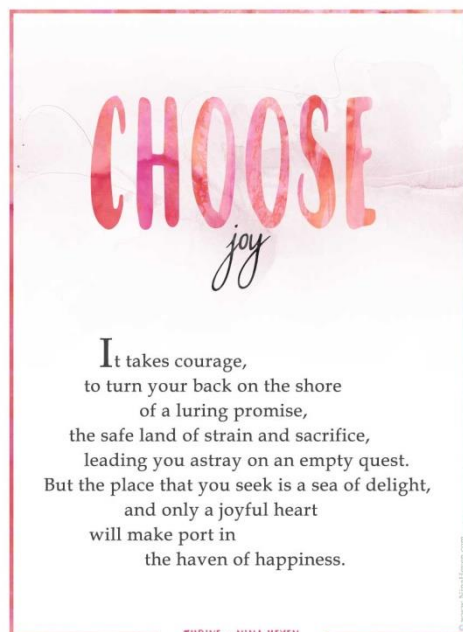
"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" Carson Throckmorton, organist

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love; hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive our fear and doubt away; giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

You have heard the story. You have seen new life in the risen Lord. Christ is among us, now and forever. Peace be with you. Peace be with you always.



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
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

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 Riggle

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