

**Manor Minutes**  
**Volume 15 Issue 7**  
**February 16, 2024**

- Lent Devotional Study – February 19, 7pm via Zoom
- No Dartball – February 20
- Elders Meeting – February 21, 5:30pm via Zoom
- Choir Practice – February 22, 6:30pm

Stay up to date at [www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar](http://www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar)



**Lent Devotional Study via Zoom** – We hope you will join us in a discussion of the readings of our Lenten devotional “Go To Jerusalem” which will be hosted by Rev. Chris and Pastor Gena starting this Monday, February 19 at 7pm via Zoom.

**Children Worship & Wonder Storyteller Training**  
 – February 23 & 24

**Week of Compassion Special Offering** – February 18 & 25 (Noisy Offering, bring your coins)

**Bethany Class Luncheon** – February 27, Noon at Eat’n Park

**Easter Flowers** – orders due to Office by March 10

**Tri-County Men’s Fellowship Dinner** – Thursday, March 21 at Perryopolis First Christian Church. Registration is at 5:30pm with the Dinner (creamed chicken over biscuits, mashed potatoes, green beans and dessert) at 6pm. Cost is \$15. Sign up in the Narthex or call the office by March 17 to RSVP.



**And the winners are.....**

**Gene Sheller and Isaac Mayen**



**2<sup>nd</sup> place: Chuck McConnell and Tom Wallace**

**General Budget Fund**

	Receipts	Expenses	Cumulative Balance
December 2023	<b>\$16,076.38</b>	<b>\$20,261.24</b>	<b>\$-11,005.37</b>
January 2024	<b>\$16,643.51</b>	<b>\$23,095.14</b>	<b>\$-17,457.00</b>



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  
Linda Reese, Cup

February 18, 2024 – 10:15am

**Welcome**

Pastor Gena

**Call to Worship**

Donna Stenski

Leader: Bring your lives,

**People: Full of sorrow and joy.**

Leader: Bring yourselves,

**People: Full of hope and despair.**

Leader: Come in your brokenness,

**People: Ready for fullness of life.**

Leader: Stay in your weakness,

**People: Ready to receive strength and the power of God.**

**Opening Hymn**

*“In the Garden”*

Jody Mullis, pianist

I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses; and the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And he walks with me, and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own, and the joy we share, as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

**Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer**

Pastor Gena

Brilliant Lord, your name echoes around the world. Your majesty is visible everywhere we look. Out of chaos, you create order and beauty. And even in the midst of your glory, infinite as the sky spread above us, you remember us and you visit us. You give us a role and a responsibility in your creation. We stand in awe of you, O Lord.

Forgive us for getting out of balance. You have given us dominion over your creation, but we have chosen to dominate it instead. You have asked us to rule over all the earth, but we have instead turned parts of it to ruin. Instead of using our power over creation in ways that serve your purposes, we have used it to serve our own selfish purposes and have caused suffering for your creatures. Forgive us and teach us how to fruitfully and faithfully steward all that you have made.

Humble us before you, we pray. Turn us from reliance on ourselves to dependence on your grace. Turn us from our self-righteousness and pride to thankfulness and praise for your mercy. Open our eyes to the systems we support and participate in that harm others and keep them oppressed. Keep us from regarding others with contempt and judgement without recognizing the sin that is in us too. May our worship and study and religious activities lead us not to separate ourselves from others but to draw us nearer with love to all of your children.

We pray today for those who always think they are right and for those who can never seem to get anything right. We pray for those who are sure of their faith and for those who aren't sure what faith is. We pray for those who are giving thanks for freedom from disease and addiction and for those who are still struggling through pain and chaos. We give you thanks for good food and fellowship and pray for those who are looking for love and belonging. We lift our hearts to you, asking for your care and presence with these loved ones....

May the day come quickly, O Lord, when everything is back in balance - when you are known throughout all of creation as the one true God who rules with love. Until then, lead us to see each other as your precious creations, each made in your image. We pray this in the name of Jesus, our brother and friend, 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 8**

Linda Reese

**Anthem**

“Is There Room For a Sinner Like Me?” by Pepper Choplin

Choir

**Children's Message**

Rev. Stillwell

Mops, brooms, sponges, a dust cloth... what do we use these things for? We use them when we clean, don't we? Do you ever help your parents with the cleaning around your house? I don't know about your parents, but there were many times when my parents thought our house needed cleaning when it looked just fine to me. Well, how do you know when it's time to clean house? Well here are some signs that will definitely let you to know that it is time to clean house.

It is time to clean house when your feet stick to the floor when you walk through the kitchen.

It is time to clean house when your mother can't find you when she comes into your room to wake you up in the morning.

It is time to clean house when the kids in the neighborhood use their fingers to write "wash me" in the dirt on your windows.

It is time to clean house when there are more dishes in the kitchen sink than there are in the cabinets.

It is time to clean house when you have so many dust bunnies under your bed you think its Easter!

Well, I think you get the idea. I know that your house never gets THAT dirty, but the truth of the matter is, we all need to do a little house cleaning at times.

If your mom or dad told you to clean your room, do you think it would help to point out that there are dirtier rooms than yours? No it wouldn't make your room any cleaner. Likewise, we can sometimes make a mess in our life when we do something we shouldn't. If you tell a lie, or break a rule, or act unkind to someone, it won't help to say that other kids are worse. Whenever we make a mess thing to do is clean it up. When the mess is in our room, we might use a broom, but when it is our life the best way to clean up a

mess is to admit what we did and say we are sorry. We call this confessing and repenting. They are as good for the soul as pledge and a dust cloth are to your room.

## **Second Scripture Reading**

**Luke 18:9-14**

Rev. Stillwell

## **Sermon**

### **“This is a Real Mess”**

Rev. Stillwell

Lately I have noticed a very common sitcom trope in which someone who struggles with seeing finally gets glasses and then it is like their world has changed. Everything seems great and everyone is happy until they realize that the better sighted person can now see everything. I mean everything. They notice all the flaws people have, the wrinkles in their face, the gaps in their teeth, and the dirt in their house.

Maybe that is why I don't get new ones because I have finally gotten to the point where I do not see every scratch, stain, or speck of dust in my house. That was an issue when I first bought it. I didn't have kids then so I had a lot of time to think. Now I probably don't notice scratches or marks on the wall because I am too distracted by all the toys my children have left around.

These are toys they don't even play with much anymore. Now they are much better, but when they were young it was a never ending battle trying to get them to clean up their mess. The best weapon we had in this battle is to tell them they must clean their room before they can play on the Kindle. This was very effective but the problem is that on those days when they have lost game privileges they have also lost the incentive to clean their room. It is frustrating because if they would just acknowledge the mess they could clean it up in no time.

I bet it is a lot like the way God thinks of us. We each have a mess in our lives. We all do, and if we would just acknowledge the mess it wouldn't be that hard to clean it up. In fact when it comes to caring for an illness often the hardest part is getting the diagnosis. Once you know what the problem is, often the solution is obvious.

The same is true for our sickness. Now you may be saying to yourself I feel just fine, but you and I all have been infected with the same germ, sin. It is true that we are each created in God's image, but we are each fallen, broken, messed up.

Let's begin at the beginning shall we? Perhaps you have seen the painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo called “The Creation of Adam”. It depicts God creating a man and imparting upon him the spark of life that is in God's own image. In the painting both God and Adam reach out to each other to touch fingers but there is a space between. They are near but not quite touching. There is a gap between humans and God.

What is represented in that gap? It is the “almost” of life. Michelangelo depicted the moment when God imparted life and spirit in Adam. Here the *imago dei*, the image of God, is completed as it was intended in the beginning. Now that image of God resides in each one of us, and we call that the soul. The feeling of worth that we possess is not about us, but about the fact that we have the Spirit of God within us. When people treat us with respect, affection, love or kindness we respond in kind because of the unconscious realization that God is with us.

Let me be clear. We are not God, but we were made by God but we have a problem. We often don't see the goodness of God that is right before our face and we often do not see it in others. We do not see the goodness because we do not see the Godness. Sometimes we can be cruel or hurtful or just dismissive of others because we do not recognize that they are made in the image of God, but just as often we look in the mirror and do not extend to ourselves the grace we might extend to others. Where others see a nice,

pretty person, we see with the glasses of doubt and self-loathing that enable us to see the flaws that others cannot see.

This is because people can be a real mess. By people I mean me, you, and everybody else. We lose sight of the beauty God has placed in our own lives or others. Consider for a moment how many people you know who are doing great in every way. I'll bet there are not many and I bet they aren't doing as well as you think.

I was relieved when I discovered this was not the case with others who I thought had it all together. I wasn't relieved out of some petty spite that wished to see others unhappy, but just to know that everyone has problems. Many of us have unresolved problems; issues in our past and habits we seem unable to give up, even though the negative impact is tangible.

Bill Murray once explained in an interview why he had a hard time with relationships saying, "I don't have trouble connecting with others. I have trouble connecting with myself." What causes this disconnect he said is that "we're not as wonderful as we think we are."

That is an important insight. Some of us think we have it all together therefore it is hard to examine our lives because either we don't think we need to or we try and start to see faults, scratches, clutter that we don't want to acknowledge so we stop and blame others for our mess.

There is another insight one that we must remember as well. We are also not as terrible as we think we are. Some people cannot connect with themselves because they are such a mess they do not realize that there is a treasure buried there, but there is.

What prevents us from reaching our full goodness is sin. Think, of sin as an illness that affects the condition of every human. It simply refers to the desire in every human to rebel against the way God created them. In fact the Hebrew language has many words that we translate as sin. One of the most descriptive is "Pasha", which literally means to rebel or to revolt. It is what Paul meant when he said:

<sup>19</sup>For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

If we do think of sin at all it is usually other people's sins, for it is often easier to see the sins in the lives of others than ourselves. Jesus pointed out this human tendency when he said, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" It is easier to diagnose another's sin, but we are all infected. We all have souls that are sick with sin to some degree or other. If you had an illness, focusing on someone else who was sicker would not make you any better. Saying, "yes I have the flu but she has cancer" would do nothing to make you or her well, and yet too often that is what we do with sin.

Yes, I lie a little but she steals. Yes, I drink a little too much but he is on drugs. Yes I hold grudges but that guy on the news is a murderer. Yes my life is messy, but they are real mess.

To those who were more interested in pointing out the mess of another person's life than cleaning up their own, Jesus told this parable:

<sup>10</sup> "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'"

The Pharisee justified himself by comparison to another and left the same way he arrived feeling an ever deeper sense of satisfaction and self-righteousness, because he was able to check off the box --prayed today. The tax collector, however, said ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

Pay attention to the tax collector, and you will see a reclamation project. If he truly believed that he was garbage I do not think he would have even attempted to pray to God. He knew he was not garbage he knew he was a mess, and he knew God could help him clean it up, and so Jesus said:

I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

The only way to clean up our mess is to focus on our mess and our mess alone and that is what the season of Lent is for. Lent marks the 40 days before Easter which recall the time in which Jesus prepared for his ministry by spending 40 days in the desert facing temptation. Traditionally it has been a time for preparation for new converts to examine themselves and repent of their sins, and it is a time for us to do the same of ourselves.

Recently the Sistine Chapel underwent a restoration because the ceiling and walls had become grimy due to dust and age and the smoke from the candles. They have before and after pictures and you can see an incredible difference, but most people were not even aware of the grime until it was removed. That is why it is important to clean from time to time, and why it is essential that we look from time to time. We examine our homes and clean them regularly and it is even more important that we do this with our lives as well.

As we begin this time of examination and preparation we should note that there are two things that are true about you and me. We are a mess, and under that mess in each of us is a divine work of art more beautiful than anything ever painted. We just need to clean off the grime, pick up the trash, remove the sin.

Focusing on what anyone else is doing prevents us from cleaning up our mess and revealing the treasure that God created which we have covered with sin. Let us begin this season of Lent getting real with the mess in each of our lives so that come Easter we can better reflect the Glory of God that is within us. Rest assured that God is already reaching out to lend a hand.

### **Call to Offering**

Charlotte Stillwell

God has given us bread and cup as symbols of divine love and hope. Therefore, as symbols of love and signs of hope, let us bring our gifts and 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

God of ancient days and futures not yet seen, bring your eternal wisdom to our time of offering. Bring your ancient faith and faithful love to the gifts we now bring. Transform the past with the promise of your future, that together our gifts may merge with your Spirit to bring transformation and hope to your world. Amen.

### **Invitation to Communion**

Rev. Stillwell

We have a door in our bathroom that doesn't shut right and it gets worse at this time of year when the spring comes and it swells a bit from the humidity. We need to fix the door because it is out of alignment

with the frame. This process is called justifying. The door needs to be justified so that it will fit the way it is intended.

It is the same word used on our computers when we want to line up the text. We click the “justify” tab so that the word will be aligned correctly.

This is also the word that Jesus used to describe the tax collector and the Pharisee. After saying their prayers Jesus said, “I tell you this person went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee.”

Justified is one of the words that is used to describe how Jesus’ grace works because we are out of alignment with God’s will and Jesus grace justifies us, corrects us, straightens us up.

We come to confess our sins and admit our failings not wallow in guilt or be overcome with grief, but to be justified. We are justified not by anything we have done, but what Christ has done and will do for each of us who come with a repentant heart. Let us come to the table, let us repent of our sins, and let us be justified.

### **Communion Hymn**

*“His Eye Is on the Sparrow”*

Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come, why should my heart be lonely and long for heaven and home, when Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is he: his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me; his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me. I sing because I’m happy, I sing because I’m free, for his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.

### **Prayer for the Bread & Cup**

Gene Sheller

Our Creator,

How majestic is your name. We thank you for making us. Help us to be humble like the tax collector. Help us to love each other. We thank you for loving us so much that you sent your son to educate us and then to be the sacrifice for our sins. We come to this table to remember that he caused us to be able to have eternal life with you. We ask you to bless the bread and cup representing Jesus body and blood. Please bless us as we take together. In the name of our blessed redeemer, we pray. Amen.

### **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**

*You will receive the bread and cup together. Please hold them; we will take each together as one body. Disciples of Christ believe in an Open Table. All who profess Christ and follow Him are welcome to share His meal. Gluten free wafers 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**

“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”

I am weak, but thou art strong; Jesus, keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.  
Just a closer walk with thee, grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
daily walking close to thee: let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

**Benediction**

Rev. Stillwell

Though the former things are past and the future is unknown, we go as God's beloved children. God's love and our place in God's realm is secure, both now and forevermore.

---



Please fill out this order form and return to the Church Office with **payment** by March 10. Indicate the number of flowers you would like. Make checks payable to “**Fairhill Manor**” and indicate “Easter Flowers” in the memo.

# \_\_\_\_\_ Tulips (6" pot) @ \$10/each

# \_\_\_\_\_ Hyacinths (3 bloom) @ \$10/each

# \_\_\_\_\_ Easter Lily @ \$10/each

# \_\_\_\_\_ Mum (assorted colors) @ \$10/each

**Orders with payment are due by March 10, 2024.**

Given by _____
In Memory/Honor of _____ (circle one)
In Memory/Honor of _____ (circle one)
In Memory/Honor of _____ (circle one)



**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](http://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 Alexy  
Avery Allen  
Jeannie Allison  
Terry Bailey  
Donna Bakaitis  
Jim Banish  
Jerry Berg  
Martin Berisford  
Eleanor Boyles  
Mabel Brooks  
Leslie Byron  
Family of Jen Caldwell  
Sandra Carman  
Clayton Chalfant  
Leslie Chalfant  
Denise Charles  
Wanda Chicone  
MaryAnn Coates  
Aimee & Jim Coture  
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  
Judy Hanning  
Erma Harper  
Sheila Harris  
Aryn Hess  
Janet Houston  
Ed Jackman  
Dallas Jacobovitz  
Kenger Family  
Ivy Lacock  
Ty Lacock, Jr.  
Bob Lanning  
David Leonard  
Darla Lewis  
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  
Sam Sheller  
Valerie Shetler  
Hannah Simpson  
Alexas Skariot  
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

# Cornhole Tournament 2024



From left to right: Owen Stillwell, Gene Sheller, Chuck McConnell, Rita Puskarich



