

Manor Minutes
Volume 15 Issue 4
January 26, 2024

- Dartball – January 30 @ 4th Presbyterian Church, 7pm
 - Choir Practice – February 1, 6:30pm
- Stay up to date at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar



American Cancer Society Daffodil Days - Order forms are available in the Narthex. Paid orders are due to the Church Office by February 10. Flowers will be delivered the week of March 18.

The SouperBowl Luncheon and Cornhole Tournament is February 11. Sign up in the Narthex to bring a soup for lunch and to enter your team in the tournament. Donations of canned soup or cash will be accepted and donated to the Community Circle Food Pantry. Since 1990 this event has been held on the same Sunday as the football Super Bowl to raise awareness about hunger in our community.

Children Worship & Wonder Storyteller Training – February 23 & 24

Night at the Wild Things Game – June 7

General Budget Fund

	Receipts	Expenses	2023 Balance (year to date)
December 2023	\$16,076.38	\$20,261.24	\$-11,005.37

The **Stewardship/Finance Ministry** will be providing monthly updates of the status of the general fund. The Balance Column is a cumulative balance from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023. This column will reconfigure next month to show a running balance for 2024. This information is also available in the parking lot entranceway in the glass framed cabinet. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Stewardship/Finance Ministry.

Emergency Contacts – Just in Case

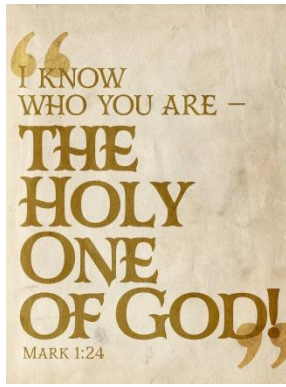
If an emergency happens to you while you are at the church we need to be able to give first responders information to ensure you the best care. Please make sure you have an emergency contact phone number or two on file at the church. It is also helpful if your emergency contact(s) have your updated essential medical information should that be needed.

You can send this information to the Church Office through email to fairhillmanor@yahoo.com or call the Karen at (724) 225-8610.

Each year on **February 2**, Punxsutawney PA holds a civic festival with music and food. During the ceremony, which begins well before the winter sunrise, Phil emerges from his temporary home on Gobbler's Knob, located in a rural area about 2 miles southeast of the town. According to the tradition, if Phil sees his shadow and returns to his hole, he has predicted six more weeks of winter-like weather. If Phil does not see his shadow, he has predicted an "early spring." The event formally began in 1887, although its roots go back even further.

What is your prediction? Early Spring? Or 6 more weeks of Winter?





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

January 28, 2024 – 10:15am

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Connie Sheller

Leader: Christ is our light, our way in the dark.

People: Come to the light of Christ.

Leader: Christ calls us here, to worship and to pray.

People: Come and answer Christ's call.

Leader: Christ leads us forth, to teach and to heal.

People: Come and worship our God!

Opening Hymn

"My Lord, What a Morning"

My Lord, what a morning; my Lord, what a morning; oh, my Lord, what a morning,
when the stars begin to fall. You'll hear the trumpet sound, to wake the nations
underground, looking to my God's right hand, when the stars begin to fall.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Almighty God, we worship you as the One who teaches with authority and acts with power. Praise be to you for creating life and newness out of seeming nothingness, for stretching forth your hand with healing and grace, for calming the rough waters and bringing peace, for breaking the chains of evil and death that hold us. We lift our voices and our lives in praise of your power and your love.

You have shown forth your power to heal and to save, O Lord, and yet we suffer with disease and pain, imprisoned in our bodies and minds. Come again with new healing and hope, we pray. Move us to care for one another. Inspire our doctors and nurses, researchers and donors with new strength and endurance to bring relief and new cures for what ails us. Help us to know that you are near us and are walking every journey with us. You know suffering first hand. Bring us peace, we pray.

We ask your mercy and grace on all who suffer this day – in mind, in body, and spirit. Please be with those who have conditions that leave others frightened and distant. Bring us near with your love, we pray. Please be with those who are looking for freedom from addiction. Lead them to those who can help, and bring them into a trusting relationship with you, the Great Healer. Give us courage to bring our messes to you, O God, for you accept us just as we are and just where we are. Help us to be real with you and with each other about what is going on in our lives. We are all struggling with something and need encouragement and hope. We ask for your presence to be with all of those who need your tender care – those we have named aloud, those on our prayer list, and those we name to you now....

Now speak with authority in our lives, O Christ. Speak to us, and speak to what is in us, so that we might be whole. Speak to us, with love, with hope, with strength, so that we might hear you and know, deep

inside, that we are your people and you are our God. We pray all of this in the name of the Great Rescuer, Jesus our Savior, 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:

“Emmanuel, Emmanuel”

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.

God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

First Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Von Lacock

Anthem

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

Have you ever had to clean up a mess? What kinds of things have you had to clean up? Did you have to clean it up all by yourself? Who helped you?

Sometimes we have big messes inside of us. I wonder what that might be like. What might be a mess inside ourselves? I feel messy inside when I’m angry. Do you? I feel messy inside when I’m really worried about something. Do you? When do you feel messy inside?

It turns out that we don’t have to clean up those inside messes all by ourselves either. I wonder who could help us when we are angry or worried or feel all messy inside? Our parents, our teachers, our pastors. And Jesus can definitely help us. Our Scripture today talks about a man who was all messy inside who came to the synagogue where Jesus was, and Jesus helped him. So when we feel messy inside, we can talk with someone we trust about it and ask for help. We can ask other people at church to help us with our messes. We can pray to Jesus and ask him to help us with our messes.

Dear God, thank you for giving us people who can help us when we feel messy inside. Help us to ask you for help then too. Thank you for loving us. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Mark 1:21-28

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“The Story of Silence”

Rev. Stillwell

I love to read and have all my life. I imagine the same is true for many of you. The fact of the matter is if you love to read you are never alone or bored, especially in this day and age when you can carry an endless library around with you. One can do this with an e-reader, and, when I got my first Kindle, I picked out a hand-made cover that imitated the cover of the book, “The NeverEnding Story.” I like that book, though truthfully I like the movie better, but it is certainly not my favorite. The reason I chose that cover is because that is what an e-reader is, a never ending story. I liked walking around with a metaphor in my hand.

If you are not familiar with that story, it is a fantastical tale where a boy named, Bastian, receives a book of that name and spends his time enraptured in reading of a far off land, Fantasia, that is endangered until he learns that the characters in the book are aware of him reading them, and of us reading about him, thus making it a never ending story. He realizes that he himself must become part of the story by calling out the princess’ name, Moon Child, and thus doing his part to save their world. The story itself is good, but

the idea of the reader becoming part of the story he is reading is what fascinated me as a child, and one I think of often, especially when I read the Bible.

I say this because the Bible is a story of many years ago that is still being told and lived out today. As a result, I thought of the NeverEnding Story as I was reading this passage in Mark; a passage, which I confess, has always confounded me. In the NeverEnding story, Bastian is deemed a hero by naming the princess and rewarded with the last grain of Fantasia and given the power to recreate it with his imagination. In Mark, however, a man with an unclean spirit is the first person to recognize and name Jesus saying, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." For this the man has his unclean spirit removed, which makes sense, but the part of the passage that amazes me is the command of Jesus for him to be silent. It's ironic in that the word, silent, almost me and, in fact Jesus said it rather sternly himself "Be silent, and come out of him!"

The word strikes me for two reasons. One is because Jesus is saying "silent" to an unclean spirit who has just identified Jesus as the Messiah. Now it may very well be that Jesus was simply telling the unclean Spirit to be silent in order to exert his authority over him, for authority is another word prominently featured in our text, but when placed in the greater context of Mark's gospel there is another reason for Jesus to say "silent."

It is a common example throughout the gospel that whenever people identify Jesus as the Messiah he tells them to keep silent. Scholars coined the term "Messianic Secret" to describe this motif in the Gospel of Mark, in which Jesus is portrayed as commanding his followers to maintain silence about his Messianic mission. It is argued that Mark wants Jesus' identity to be revealed at the crucifixion. It is also used to explain why so few of the Jewish people followed him.

Later Jesus would heal a leper and his command to the ex-leper was similar to the man with the unclean spirit. Mark writes:

After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, ⁴⁴saying to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'

So the word "silent" stands out to me because it seems misplaced, but also because it is so important to understanding the story. After all, we need to be silent to hear God's word. We know this on some level, and yet still we talk. We talk to God, which we should do, but how much time do we take to listen? One of the best sayings I have ever heard is from the Greek philosopher, Epictetus who said, "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak." What a different world it would be if we all took this advice. Being silent is a hard thing to do, especially when we think of being silent in our minds. Even when we are not speaking there is a conversation in our head, and that is the hardest voice to silence of all.

If you've ever tried to meditate, one of the things that could be very difficult about it is shutting off the voice inside your head. Meditation is not something just from Eastern religions. It is very much a part of the Christian tradition, especially in medieval times, in the times of the monastic tradition. It is a time to be quiet so that one may hear the still, small voice of God. It can take a lot of effort because to be silent, truly silent, is hard.

It is worth the effort, though. In God's presence, our hurried and wandering souls can finally find rest and renewal, but we must be able to turn off all vices including our own . . . especially our own. We must be able to stop for a minute our own arguments, our own planning, our own worrying, and our own thinking.

Once we find that peace we find that our lives must be lived from the inside out so that we first hear God's word, then live it as best we can, and then come back and speak to God in prayer.

I think Jesus silences those who call him Messiah in Mark's gospel, because they don't really know what that word means. They had many expectations that he would confound and this is why when Jesus is up on the cross, they lose faith that he is the messiah. The Messiah was to be a warrior. The Messiah was to be a king like David but better. The Messiah was not to die on a cross forgiving those who had put him there. Many followed him, because they thought he would do what they want to be done to others but not to them.

So many misunderstood who Jesus was because they had stopped listening to God and only hear themselves, and so they filled him with their own expectations, and we would be foolish to think that people are any better today. Jesus called all people to repent, not just those other people, so I think he tells people to be silent because at the moment, they're saying this because of the great things he can do; the exorcisms, the healings, the miracles. They don't have any idea what any of this really means until the end, and for many not even then.

We will see that their expectations will be confounded and overturned. We will see that most of those people will abandon him. We know this. I find it fascinating that when Jesus leaves this earth after he is resurrected, then and only then does he give the disciples the Holy Spirit, and this gift is symbolized with tongues. Now they may speak. Now they know what to say.

The disciples had to be silent in order to learn because our speaking often gets in the way of our learning, so they had to listen and they had to watch and they had to learn, and only then could they preach the good news. We know that they got things wrong all the time. They yelled at children who came to see Jesus. They yelled at the parents who brought the children to see Jesus. Peter yelled at Jesus. They said things wrong time and time again because so often they succumbed to the human temptation to speak before they thought. In those moments silence would have been truly golden.

As Christians I do not believe that we are called to always be silent. In fact when we encounter injustice, bigotry, evil, we must speak up and speak out, but if we have never known silence, known the voice of God that speaks to us in the silent moments of our hearts, then in the moments we need to speak we will either not have the courage to make our voice heard or I don't think we will understand what we should say. I don't think we will know how to say what needs to be heard, unless we have spent some time being silent, and letting God speak to our heart.

Although Mark is the second gospel in our Bible scholars believe it was written first, and Matthew was placed before it so that the NT would begin with the birth of Jesus, something Mark does not describe. If we see Mark as the first gospel, therefore, then the story of Jesus Christ begins with a call for silence. Silence is necessary so that the story may be heard, but ultimately silence leads to speech as we share the story because as we have seen for over two thousand years, this is a story that continues every time someone hears it and every time someone who thinks they know it listens to it again.

May the time we spend in silent mediation of God's living word lead us to pay attention to Jesus' whole life and listen even to his silence. Perhaps then we will stand with the outsider at the foot of the cross and confess, "Truly this is the Son of God." In doing so we may take part in this continuing, never ending story.

Call to Offering

Donna Stenski

God of abundance, you teach us the dangers of setting our hearts on earthly riches. May the offerings we give be symbols of our faith in your bounty, and of our commitment to follow your call in our lives wherever you may lead. Amen.

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

With these gifts, bring justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. With our ministry of love, proclaim unity in a divided world. Bless us and bless these gifts, that your light may shine in places shadowed by despair.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

Each week we seem to get the full range of winter. The week comes in like a lion with biting wind and freezing cold, and by the middle of the week it is mild as a lamb. These little glimpses of nice weather can seem cruel at times. Having this good fortune and then having it taken away from us makes the winter weather seem worse when it returns. But I believe that the trick is for us to savor those beautiful days and let the joy and blessing they bring carry us through the dark cold days.

I think the same is true of life. We can have isolated moments of pure joy and happiness, and sometimes they are few and far between. Each one lasts for only a short while and we go back to life as usual. I see these moments as glimpses of the kingdom, previews of the reign of God, that is to come and that we can share in, if only we will take the joy and blessing from those moments and use it to help us through all of our days, including the dark and cold ones.

Here at this table we are given an opportunity to thank God for each moments of joy and happiness we have received and we can ask for God's help in stretching that joy into a lifetime.

As Jesus fed a multitude with a little bread and fish, so too can Christ give an abundance of joy with just a little bread and wine. Take and eat and share with one another, and may the springtime of God's grace grow in your hearts throughout this winter.

Communion Hymn*"Here at Thy Table, Lord"*

Carson Throckmorton, organist

Here at thy table, Lord, this sacred hour, O let us feel thee near, in loving power;
calling our thoughts away from self and sin. As to thy banquet hall we enter in.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Carol Daniels

Most Merciful God, as we come to this table of remembrance let us pause and rid ourselves of the thoughts and worries that keep us from full communion with you. Let us focus on Jesus, the life He led, the Love and compassion He showed. As we partake of this bread and cup we ask for your blessing. May we go thru this next week, refreshed, renewed and rededicated to serve you. In Jesus name we pray.

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

“I Was There to Hear Your Boring Cry” Carson Throckmorton, organist

I was there to hear your boring cry, I’ll be there when you are old. I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold. I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well; in a blaze of light you wandered off to find where demons dwell.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Let us go forth as workers together with God proclaiming the Good News, performing deeds of mercy and kindness and giving evidence of Christ's love in all that we do. And may the grace of God be with us all. Amen.

Name: _____

American Cancer Society
Daffodil Sale

_____ Bunch of Daffodils \$12

_____ Bunch of Tulips \$15

_____ Mini Potted Daffodils \$15

_____ Gift of Hope \$25 (flowers donated to local cancer centers)

_____ Vase for Daffodils \$5

_____ Vase for Tulips \$10



To order, please return this coupon to Karen Thomas or place in the Church Office mailbox. Orders must be prepaid and are due by February 10, 2024. Make checks payable to “American Cancer Society”.

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 534
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
Martin Berisford
Eleanor Boyles
Mabel Brooks
Leslie Byron
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
Sheila Harris
Aryn Hess
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
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
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