

Manor Minutes
Volume 15 Issue 9
March 1, 2024

- Lent Devotional Study – March 4, 7pm via Zoom
- Dartball – March 5, 7pm at Home
- Board Reports due to office – March 6
- Choir Practice – March 7, 6:30pm

Stay up to date at 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. The study continues this Monday, March 4 at 7pm via Zoom. If you didn’t join last week, you can still join the discussion this week. The Zoom link will be sent out on Monday via email. If you didn’t receive the link, please contact the office.

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**.

Palm Sunday – March 24

Maundy Thursday – March 28 Service to be held at Fairhill Manor.

Good Friday Service – March 29 Service to be held at the First Christian Church.

Sunrise Service & Breakfast – Join us on the steps in front of the Church for Easter Sunrise Service, March 31 at 7am. Bring a chair and/or blanket and dress appropriately for the weather. A continental breakfast will be shared at 8am following this service.

thank you

We want to thank our Fairhill Manor community for your concerns for us during and following our recent surgeries. We are grateful for the love that was given through cards, phone calls, messages, emails, food delivered, and especially prayers. We are so thankful to be a part of this very caring fellowship of believers! **Gene and Connie Sheller**

The total collected during our “Noisy Offering” was \$345.03! \$275.03 was from coins, the rest in cash. This total was up from \$207.40 last year. Thank you so much for your generosity. This money will be sent to Week of Compassion.



SUBMIT YOUR
REPORTS

January – February reports due
March 6

Board Meeting
March 13, 7pm

Fellowship Event

Let's join together for **fun and fellowship** as we celebrate International Women's Day (March 8) on Saturday March 9, by traveling to the Highlands Marquee Cinemas to see the movie "Cabrini" at 11:55am. The film details the life of Catholic missionary Francesca Cabrini as she encounters resistance to her charity and business efforts in New York City. Discussion of the movie afterwards at a nearby restaurant is also planned. If you are interested in going contact the Church Office or Pastor Gena. The cost of the movie is \$9.50 and carpooling from the church can be arranged.



There will be an Easter Morning Breakfast at 8am following the Sunrise Service on March 31. Come and enjoy some **fellowship**

Sign up in the Narthex if you plan to come. If you would like to bring a breakfast item to share there is a sign-up sheet for that too!



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)

Garnet Withrow has moved to Gettysburg to live with her son. If you would like to send her a card her new address is:
123 Woodhaven Drive
Gettysburg PA 17325





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

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

March 3, 2024 – 10:15am

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Kevin Puskarich

Leader: In the wilderness of life, we are not alone.

People: God is with us, even in the midst of our loneliness.

Leader: On the treacherous paths, God's guidance is ours.

People: We will walk in God's ways of wisdom and truth.

Leader: Come to hear. Come to learn.

People: Come to the hiding place of God.

Leader: Here we find grace.

People: Here we find love.

All: Here we will worship and pray.

Opening Hymn

"Blessed Assurance"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long; this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

Draw us near, God of day and God of darkness. All our time belongs to you, yet we confess how often we fail to notice your nearness, feel your presence, trust your guidance. We desire only good times, happy moments, and miss your work in the shadows. We avoid conflict with others and fear looking deep within ourselves.

Sometimes it feels we have no place left to run, no place left to hide.

Hold us close, O God, during these Lenten days so we can look at ourselves, our relationships, and our openness to you. In brightness or darkness, let us always know your healing, freeing, guiding presence.

Call us forth, O God, to tend the places of beauty long forgotten, to plant gardens in the deserts of hurt, to pick flowers of hope when others see only despair. Take us deep this Lent and let us discover some boldness for action, some rest for weariness, some healing for wounds. Let forgiveness flow like a gentle river, and let our tables overflow with bounty and friendship.

Send us out, O God, strengthen us for the journey ahead. Guide us with your knowledge and your love. Send your Spirit to drive us and guide us where we need to go— ever-closer to you and to your ways.

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 24

Serena Dube

Anthem

“Joys Like a River,” by Douglas Wagner

Choir

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

I don’t know if you are aware but baseball season is coming soon. In fact they have already begun spring training. It’s so exciting to go out to the ballpark and sit in the sun, while eating a hotdog, or some popcorn, and watch your favorite team out on the field.

What is the most important thing in baseball? The baseball sure is important, because without it there could be no game. Bat and gloves are important too, or it would hurt to hit and catch. You know something else that’s absolutely essential to a baseball game? A team; two teams in fact!

Of the players on a team — the pitcher and catcher, the first and second baseman, the shortstop and third baseman, the outfielders. Which position is your favorite?

Lots of folks like the pitcher, but can you imagine if only the pitcher showed up for the game, without the rest of the team? That poor pitcher would be chasing balls all over the field by himself! The same thing would be true no matter which player tried to go it alone. Baseball is a team sport, which means it’s not for playing all by yourself.

You know something else that requires a team? Being a Christian. God gave us the church so that we wouldn’t have to try to go it alone. Other Christians are there to help us, support us, and make us stronger. Do you know who the coach of our team is? It is God of course and Jesus in the one out there helping us on the bases in order to get home, which we call Heaven.

I’m glad I’m on God’s team — and I’m glad God gave you and me a team to be on together.

Second Scripture Reading

John 3:2-17

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Stop Messing Around”

Rev. Stillwell

I am no carpenter, but I know enough to know that when you buy some wood you don’t just take the board that is on the top. Some boards are better than others, because some boards are more warped than others. They look fine at first glance but a careful examination will show that some boards bend away making them hard to fit into your project. One by one I look down the length of the boards before choosing the one I need. If they are straight I keep them. If not, I cast them aside.

Thankfully God does not treat us like a board. For, like those boards, we are warped. In some way or other, we are warped by fear and resentment, anger and worry, selfishness and hard heartedness. That is the bad news but here is the good news: God does not cast us aside for God delights in making us new. This is the point in the wood themed sermon that it is convenient for the preacher to mention that Jesus was a son of carpenter. Well he was raised in the house of a carpenter. The gospels give no indication that

Jesus could hammer a nail without hitting his thumb, but it makes for good sermon illustrations. Joseph would not have used a crooked board to make a door, but Jesus fixes crooked people by opening the door.

Part of the function of God's Holy Spirit is to open our eyes to how we have been warped, but also to guide us to a process of healing by guiding us to Jesus. Jesus is straight and true, but he enables us to see a new standard of existence. We see this when John baptized him, not because he needed it but because we do, and so Christ set the example for us to follow. Water tends to warp wood, but Living Water helps to align us, to justify us.

The key to this happening is that we quit messing around with the notion that we can straighten ourselves out. To truly change we have to realize that the board, created perfect and true but warped over time cannot justify and align itself.

I first became aware of this truth not through carpentry but through playing the guitar. Guitar stings go out of tune because of many things such as playing and temperature, but also because the wood of the guitar will bend and shift according to changes in temperature and humidity so that I had to take my guitar in to get it set, as they called it, every few months or so.

If we cannot justify ourselves, then we turn to Christ and try to emulate him as best we can and we do so in Lent by giving something up to face temptation as he did. When we give up something for Lent it is usually a physical thing but hopefully we try to also give up a poor character trait. Maybe it's anger, or a grudge, or impatience. We should realize that we would never say, "the thing that really made my life great was my lack of compassion and the way I lost my temper with my family." It is hard to imagine what our lives would be like without the mess that sin creates. Think of a woman looking at her phone. She sees the lives of her friends and they all look better than her's. As she views picture after picture she feels smaller and smaller.

Now think of what her day would be like if she would work with God to remove this sin of envy. It would change the mental state she carries every day. it would affect the words she speaks to her children and the way she experiences each event. She would be a better worker, leader, neighbor, spouse, mother, person.

One of the most important things I ever gave up was using the phrase, I will be happy when . . ." I always was thinking that I would be really happy when some event came or when some event ended, only for the moment to arrive and find that there was another such event I needed to happen, for me to be really happy.

I had to stop messing around and get serious about the fact that nothing would make me happy until I learned to find the happiness in each day. I can't say specifically how I did that. I can only say that it was essential that I diagnosed the problem, resolved to do something about it, and was reminded of how Jesus taught his disciples to consider the lilies. Some days the lilies are easier to consider than others, and the hardest time I have with this is now, at this time of the year.

This is when spring has sprung but has not fully arrived. This is when the daffodils begin to come up and get us excited that spring is coming, only to bloom and then be killed by a late frost. Spring so perfectly complements the Easter celebration because it brings with it the promise of resurrection, which is why it helps us to remember that someone who was going to die painfully on a cross still took the time to tell his followers, "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his lifespan? If you cannot do such a small thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

It all hangs on the cross of course, figuratively and literally. For all of its familiarity there will always be something mysterious about it. For the history of the church there have been countless theories of

atonement which can be thought of as “at one-ment”. It means the ways we are reconciled with God and justified. The church father, Pelagius, developed one called the ransom theory. This theory claimed that Adam and Eve sold humanity over to the Devil at the time of the Fall; hence, justice required that God pay the Devil a ransom to free us from the Devil's clutches. God, however, tricked the Devil into accepting Christ's death as a ransom, for the Devil did not realize that Christ could not be held in the bonds of death.

One of the most well-known is that of John Calvin whose Penal Substitution-theory of atonement argues that Christ, by his own sacrificial choice, was punished (penalized) in the place of sinners (substitution), thus satisfying the demands of justice so God can justly forgive the sins.

For me I choose Christus Victor theory which was the predominant view of the early church and for the first thousand years of church history and was supported by nearly every Church Father including Irenaeus, Origen of Alexandria, and Augustine of Hippo, which states that Christ defeated the forces of evil and death upon the cross. All of the other theories, I think, discount the radical nature of Christ and the scandal of the gospels by retaining the blood thirsty Old Testament God who demanded sacrifice. Reading the gospels I cannot but help to feel that God's plan was for people to welcome and worship Jesus as the savior who was sent to reach us and show us the way to God. I should say that was God's desire but God, knowing the mess of the world, understood it would not go like that.

Jesus said:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!
How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

Gathering God's children as a hen gathers her brood - that was God's plan, that was God's desire, but knowing the hold sin has on us imperfect, untrue humans, surely God knew that sending Christ to the city that kills prophets and stones those who are sent to it meant that the story would involve the cross.

How could it not? Challenging the prophets of religion, the oppression of empire, the selfishness of power how could it end up any other way? God didn't want crucifixion. We crooked, warped, distorted humans wanted it and still do. God allowed it however, because, in the end the crucifixion leads to resurrection, the resurrection leads to faith, and faith leads to grace, which leads to life in the here and now and to life eternal. It would have been great if everyone had welcomed Christ as king, but because of our warped nature it was necessary for Christ to get into our mess so that we might stop messing around ourselves.

As Disciples of Christ we proclaim that there is no right theory of atonement, or that agreement on how the cross works is not essential to enjoying the grace of the one who was hung on that cross. We don't need to know exactly how it is that Jesus saves, we simply need to believe that he does. What I think we can all agree on is that the cross stands as a reminder that we, as sinful people, are powerless to accomplish our at-one ment with God, and in fact, if we succumb to our base instincts we might just kill him again.

The band, Brand New, has one of the most painfully honest lyrics I have ever heard in their song, “Jesus Christ” which goes,

I know you're coming in the night like a thief, but I've had some time alone to hone my lying technique. I know you think that I'm someone you can trust, but I'm scared I'll get scared and I swear I'll try to nail you back up.

Ever wonder how a person can resist the grace of Christ then listen to that song. It is not because they do not want his grace. They desperately want it. It is not that they do not need it. They know they need it.

Rather, it is because they believe that they have become too warped to be useful. Until a person realizes that it is impossible to be so warped that God cast them aside, they will not call Jesus Lord.

The cross also proclaims the good news that God loves us so much that God will go to any length and bear any indignity to prove God's love to us and to say that we don't have to get right before God will act since, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

He died for us not because God required it, but because the mess we have made of our lives and our world required that God show a sacrificial love so profound and alien to our understanding that we would still be unpacking the lessons from it 2000 years later.

Let me leave you with this. I have a neighbor whose yard is a mess. I even cut his bushes and weeds so that they don't overtake mine. But there is one vine. It grows like an outstretched arm over my fence reaching out towards my tree. I was going to cut it, but now I admire it.

When I see the vine I feel God's Spirit asking me what am I growing toward, what am I straining for. God has provided all the light and heat I need and the water and nutrients as well to sustain me and help me grow. I also know that without God's power all my straining will get me nowhere. As Paul said speaking of righteousness:

¹³ Brothers and sisters, I myself don't think I've reached it, but I do this one thing: I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me. ¹⁴The goal I pursue is the prize of God's upward call in Christ Jesus.

There comes a time that we all get tired of the mess we are living in and start to grow towards God. It is a different time for each of us and we all grow at a different pace. What matters isn't where we are in our growth but where we are growing towards. Let's all stop messing around and keep growing towards the light.

Call to Offering

Gene Sheller

Although we do not live by bread alone, we do need food to sustain us. Although we do not yearn for injury and illness, they do come our way, and we do need healing. May the gifts we bring today be sustenance and healing for those in need. Let us, you and me, be sustenance and healing for our world.

Communion Hymn

"In This Very Room"

Carson Throckmorton, organist

In this very room there's quite enough love for one like me, and in this very room there's quite enough joy for one like me; and there's quite enough hope, and quite enough pow'r to chase away any gloom, for Jesus, Lord Jesus, is in this very room.

Invitation to Communion

Pastor Gena

A person named Steve Wyatt shared this meditation and called it "All of Us Have Rocks!" Some successful real estate developers gathered to discuss a possible joint venture. To their surprise, the group's leader began by describing his most embarrassing failure. He explained how his eagerness to make a lot of money caused him to overlook one important detail. He added, "I'm more careful now to get all the facts before moving out." The person beside him admitted he hadn't always been a genius, either. He once purchased land for development that, unbeknownst to him, was sitting on solid bedrock.

But the youngest member was reluctant to share his big flub. Instead, he fumbled around till finally mumbling, "Well, everyone knows I've had many successes." And that was all he intended to say. The leader replied, "Come on, Charlie. Put your rock on the table. Because if you haven't failed, you can't be in this group."

We could say that same thing about the church. If this were your first time here, you might look around and think, “This isn’t MY crowd. Look at these people! They’re perfect! Everybody has it together — except me!”

Wrong! Christians may look otherwise, but here’s the truth: The only qualification for membership in the church of Jesus is for you to admit that you’re NOT qualified. That you’ve made mistakes. That you’ve got a pocket filled with rocks and you’re not proud of any of them.

We’ve all got rocks. Some have a tote bag filled with rocks, others have a pickup filled with rocks, and still others have so many rocks they could open up their own quarry. But that’s OK, because rocks are why Jesus came. He didn’t come for perfect people. He didn’t build his church so nice people could sit around and talk about how we can be even more nice.

He came “to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). When he was crucified, God made Jesus “who had no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21). And when that happened, our Savior took all our rocks on his back. And then he used those rocks to build a forever pathway to real, abundant, never-ending life.

And so that we don’t forget what Jesus went through to remove these rocks from us, whenever we gather for worship, we break bread together and share from a common cup. We remember the pain his body went through and the blood it cost to forgive us. And we remember a truth that unites us all: Every single one of us has rocks, but we also have a Savior who takes them and makes them into something beautiful. So, come with your rocks to this Table and celebrate the gift of God’s grace.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Gary Ford

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to this sinful world. He took human form, to teach, to heal, to love and then to die for our sins. No longer are we bound to sin, for with His death those chains have been broken. Such a sacrifice shows how much you love each one of us. This gift of grace is freely given and open to everyone who will accept it and believe. We come to this table to take this bread and cup and humbly give thanks for what Jesus did for us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

Words of Institution

Pastor Gena

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

Pastor Gena

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 “God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens” Carson Throckmorton, organist
 God, who stretched the spangled heavens, infinite in time and place, flung the suns in
 burning radiance through the silent fields of space, we your children, in your likeness,
 share inventive powers with you. Great Creator, still creating, show us what we yet may do.

Benediction Rev. Stillwell
 Even as we go forth on this journey, God goes with us to guide our way. Therefore, let us go forth with grace
 and love!

Easter Word Search Puzzle

Circle the words that you find.



Alive
 Angels
 Cross
 Dead
 Disciples
 Easter
 Father
 Gardener

God
 Holy Ghost
 Jesus
 Joanna
 John
 Mary
 Peter
 Rabboni

Resurrection
 Sepulchre
 Tomb



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
Judy Hanning
Irma Harper

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 and Don Sekorky
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