

# Manor Minutes

Volume 12 Issue 2

January 15, 2021



This week begins our **annual stewardship** emphasis. The purpose of this is to celebrate what we have accomplished together, to inform the church members of what financial resources are needed to perform this ministry, and to ask each member to pledge their part in the upcoming year's efforts through the use of their time, talents, and treasure. Our theme this year is **"Together for Joy"** from Psalm 98, which reads "Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth." This past year was a hard year to be sure, but we got through it in part because we found joy in being together, and we look forward to being together in 2021. In the coming weeks you will receive letters from our Stewardship ministry and our pastors, we will discuss in the Sunday service the ministries in which our church is involved, and we will ask you to fill out a pledge card, either the one you will receive in the mail, or one on our webpage, by Sunday, January 31, when we offer up our pledges to God in worship. In the meantime if you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask Rev. Chris, Pastor Gena or the chairperson of our Stewardship/Finance Ministry, Jerry Puskarich.

## ZOOM - LIVE

**Zoom Worship this Week - Live from the Sanctuary at 10:15 am!**

"Join a Meeting" on Zoom at 9:45 am using the meeting ID and password.

**Meeting ID: 932 4557 4206 Password: 026316**

Fellowship with other "Zoomers" from **9:45 – 10:15 am.**

Text your prayer concerns to Pastor Gena (724) 263-0033. She will share these during worship. At 10:15 am, mute yourself on Zoom (Not sure how to do that? Login at 9:45 am and someone will help). Those on Zoom are visible to each other for the entire worship service. If you would like to see but not be seen, click Stop Video on your Zoom screen.

### Children Worship & Wonder

We invite children age 3 – Grade 5 to participate in Children Worship & Wonder. Join CW&W on Zoom around 10:30 am (contact Pastor Gena for the login information). To learn more and register your child(ren),

<https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/children-worship-wonder>

### Tween Team

Gather online via Zoom with 4th-7th Graders on Sunday evenings from 5-6 pm. We will resume our time together with our study based around "The Beatitudes," a curriculum designed specifically for online interaction and focused on Matthew 4:23-5:12. JC Leasure and Pastor Gena are co-leading this time.



Congregational meeting after Worship – January 17 via Zoom

February Newsletter Deadline – January 25

Installation of 2021 Officers – January 31 via Zoom

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



Fairhill Manor Christian Church

*(Disciples of Christ)*

351 Montgomery Ave.

724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor

Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor

January 17, 2021

**Prelude**

Audra Allen, organist

**Welcome**

Pastor Gena

**Call to Worship\***

Gene Sheller

In the shadows of the night, God calls us. Here I am, for you called me. In the daylight, God calls us. Here I am, for you called me. God calls to each of us by name. Here I am, for you called me.

**Opening Hymn**

*“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”*

Audra Allen, organist

O for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and king,  
the triumphs of God's grace!  
tongues to sing

Glory to God and praise and love  
be ever, ever given  
by saints below and saints above,  
the church in earth and heaven.

**Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer\***

Pastor Gena

Gracious God, you are the one who gives us life and sustains us in it. You lavish your gifts on us as individuals and as a community, giving us just what we need to carry out your work. You care for us, asking us to give our loads to you, asking us to fully depend on you. You show us the best way to live and how to love. We praise you, great and giving God!

This morning we give you thanks for breath and life, for the people we will see today, for family, neighbors, and friends, and for those whose ways are challenging to our own serenity. Help us to give thanks especially for the people who pull us to new understandings and show us sides of life that we have not known or have not welcomed. Give us openness. Give us wisdom and discernment, we pray. Teach us to love.

Knowing that you already hear the confessions of our hearts and are ready to forgive us, we confess our sins to you, merciful God. You see into each of us and know us fully as creatures in need of your constant care. We confess that we have listened to but not fully heard your word. We have not followed your will. We have failed others and ourselves. Lead us to honesty and faith so that we may begin again with renewed strength. We praise you that you know our hearts, you hear us seeking your forgiveness, and by your grace we are saved and made clean.

Hear our prayers now, Compassionate God.

We pray for the world: for leaders of nations, that wisdom and integrity will prevail for the good of all people, especially the poor; for regions torn by conflict, that peace may reign and living may be about building up rather than tearing down.

We pray for all people of faith: for the unity of the body of Christ, that our divisions might not turn people away from your Good News; for those of other faiths, that wherever prayers are lifted, you will hear them; for all people who nurture life in the name of a greater good, we pray.

We pray for our own nation, for our leaders and all who have the power to make policy, that consideration be given to what is most healthy and good for all people and creatures. Heal us as only you can. Show us the path forward that we cannot see. Show us how to lift each other up, how to serve one another, how to instill again a hope in a better tomorrow.

We pray for those in need: for all who are hungry, for those who have no home and no employment, for those who are sick, for those who are imprisoned, for parents and children who live in fear for any reason, for those who are trapped in cycles of violence and addiction, for all who are mourning.

For all other concerns of this gathering of your people which we have spoken aloud or now silently share with you, we pray...

And now, Great One, you for whom the floods clap and the hills sing. You, who know our situations better than anyone. Take our credits and debits, our ins and outs, our pluses and our minuses, our surpluses and that which we lack, and show us how to use them all as we join the great chorus of Creation. We pray all of this in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, who teaches us to pray, saying...

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

**Anthem**                      “Give Me Jesus,” by Craig Courtney, sung by Jim Cope

**Children’s Message\***

Pastor Gena

What makes you YOU? In what ways are you similar to other people? In what ways are you different, even from people who are your close friends or family? What do you love about yourself?

One of today’s scriptures is Psalm 139. This Psalm tells us we are wonderfully made by God who knows and loves us.

Sometimes we forget that God made us just the way we are. Sometimes we might wish we were more like a sibling or a friend or a movie star instead. It’s okay to see a trait in someone else you like and want to copy, especially if what you want to imitate is their kindness to other people. It’s great to grow and learn.

But even as we work toward becoming the best humans we can be, remember that no one else can be exactly like YOU! God made you exactly the way you are, with unique interests and abilities that help you love God and love your neighbors in ways that only you can.

Repeat after me: “I am a child of God, and God loves me for being me.”

Part of Psalm 139 says, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” I wonder how you can use some of the unique, wonderful traits God has given you to show God’s love to the world.

That's actually a piece of another thing we are celebrating today. This is the first Sunday of our Stewardship Campaign. For three weeks, we pause to think and pray about how we might give of ourselves and use God's gifts to serve God and others this year. People who earn money in some way are praying about what they can give this year to the church to help continue its ministries. All of us are thinking about our time and our energy and the gifts God has given us and how we can give of ourselves this year.

You know, I like Stewardship because it reminds us that each of us is unique – we have unique interests and abilities and gifts from God; we have a certain amount of money, debts and resources; we have a certain amount of time and energy and responsibilities; and God knows all of this about us! God knows everything about our circumstances.

I also like Stewardship because it reminds us that we are part of a community and we need each person to give as they can. We need each person's unique gifts, each person's unique amount of money they can give, each person's unique time and energy to do the ministries that God wants us to do here at Fairhill this year. Each of us is a little different but together we have just what we need.

Dear God, thank you for making us interesting, unique human beings. Thank you for knowing us through and through and for loving us just the way we are. Help us to celebrate all the different ways we love and serve you. Help us to see just how you would like us to give this year. Amen.

**Scripture Reading\***

**John 1:32-42**

Gene Sheller

**Sermon\***

**“Come and See”**

Rev. Stillwell

So much of television is made up of commercials. I usually like to watch two shows at once. One is my primary show and the other is the show I watch while the first is in commercials, but often times they both are in commercial. That is why I love the DVR. I can record shows and watch them later while fast forwarding over the commercials. I also love streaming services which provide shows that have no commercial interruptions.

I know that I am not alone and that most people get annoyed at commercials interrupting their favorite programs, but what do you do when your program is nothing but commercials? You know what I am talking about, I'm sure. You've seen one long commercial selling a product; a half hour or hour long show called an infomercial especially if you have had a bout of insomnia and you turned your TV on to see all the things you just couldn't live without or never knew you needed.

In the early days of Owen's youth I became familiar with any number of products deemed so valuable and necessary to my life that they were given thirty uninterrupted minutes of commercial time to convince me that my life wouldn't be complete without them. I remember the beard trimmer that vacuums the hair it cuts, the cup that holds a drink and a snack in one, and my personal favorite, the blanket. This is a blanket with sleeves and my children were obsessed with it for months. Infomercials are used for all types of products, but they all share some basic characteristics. They are long—at least a half an hour or more. They are hosted by actors who are always so amazed at how good the products are. Most of them involve Billy Mays yelling excitedly. They all take time to share endorsements by satisfied customers who have used the product but are more likely actors. All promise great things and have money back guarantees. All claim to be unbelievably good deals that you just cannot pass up.

The final universal truth that you can say about infomercials is that the least essential an item is the more the hype surrounding it. If this is true than the opposite should also be true—that the more essential something is the less it should need to be advertised or marketed. If that were the case then we would assume that Jesus and his followers needed very little advertising for what they offered, eternal life, and yet, the gospels, all four of them, come off as extended infomercials for Christ and the grace, truth, pardon, and hope that he offers.

Now Jesus is no marketer, but he still must convince people who he is. He begins with incredible endorsements, first from God at his baptism who said “This is my Son with whom I am well pleased”, and then from John the Baptist who told his disciples when Jesus walked by “Look, here is the lamb of God.” These endorsements lead directly to Andrew and Peter becoming Christ’s first disciples. Still, with the best endorsements a person can get, Jesus only gets two converts. This is in large part because Jesus, himself, doesn’t make a strong sales pitch. In fact he realizes that there is no way to explain who he is and why they should follow, and no reason to believe that they would believe even if he could, so he simply says to Andrew and Peter when they want to know where he is staying, “come and see”.

In other words it is a no risk opportunity. They can come and if they don’t see great things then they can leave, but Christ knows they will see great things so their satisfaction is guaranteed. It works so well that he tries it successfully with Phillip and then Phillip tries the same technique on a man named Nathaniel.

First, Phillip tries the hard sell when he tells Nathaniel, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” This is a significant claim, one that on the surface is too good to be true and Nathaniel cynically responds, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

This is similar to the attitude that most people have about things advertised in our day and age. Can anything be good if it is advertised at 2:00 in the morning? Can anything be good for the low, low price of \$20? Can anything be good if it can be obtained in three easy installments?

It is also the typical outlook of one who believes that something is not good if it is local. Every important and famous person comes from somewhere. Everything invented was invented somewhere, but so many people believe that good things happen elsewhere, in some other town, some other part of the world, where most of the residents, themselves, believe nothing good can happen. It is funny that the part of the sales pitch Nathaniel finds too hard to swallow isn’t that Jesus is the messiah or the one written of in the prophets, but that he is from Nazareth.

It is obvious that Nathaniel cannot be talked into following, so Phillip tries the no risk approach. He doesn’t argue or debate he simply does what Jesus did and says, “Come and See”

Come and see for yourself. Don’t take my word for it. Try Jesus for yourself, and if you are not completely satisfied you can return to your old life. So Nathaniel takes Philip up on his offer and meets Jesus who says, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!”<sup>48</sup> Nathanael asked him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.”<sup>49</sup> Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Now truth be told this is no great claim of Christ. It stands to reason that Nathaniel would have sat under a fig tree at some point in his life just as you and I are likely to have set under an oak, in fact scholars believe that this means Nathaniel was studying Torah. Again, it could reasonably be assumed that anyone who decided to see if someone was the Messiah was a student of the scriptures. It is a



common trick of psychics to make a general statement that is likely to be true and let the other person fill in the blank because they want to believe.

Jesus knew this and laughed that Nathaniel's cynicism was so easily broken saying, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."<sup>51</sup> And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Now we get to it. The claim that no one else can make. The promise that can only be experienced to be believed. If Nathaniel followed and all he ever saw Jesus do was fun parlor tricks guessing people's names and what they were doing, would he have stayed? Not likely. It is because what Jesus said was true and Nathaniel and all the disciples saw greater things, things that could not have been described or even imagined let alone believed.

It is amazing how we can be so impressed with simple things, but non-plussed by the truly great things. Magicians and marketers wow us with their illusions, and we too often don't notice the great things that are real. It is so often reflected in the things for which we ask God. We ask for simple things, money, football, signs, but too often don't ask God to open the heavens and let his Spirit pour down. God offers to change our lives forever, but too often we look for God to deliver small rewards or take care of small problems, and whether or not God can do this determines whether or not we will believe. We live in a world that promises much more than it can deliver. Wars promise peace, drugs promise happiness, money promises security, advertising promises fulfillment. Failed promises lead many to become cynical and they cannot be argued into believing that greater things are possible.

But we do not need to have all the answers and all the knowledge. We do not need to be Christ's pitchmen and women. We do not need to be living infomercials for Christ, and if we try to be, we will likely be met with scorn and well-earned cynicism from those who have bought too easily what others have been selling. If we claim Christ will solve all of a person's problems or make every day sunny, and take care of all of our bills, we will be promising more than we can deliver and people will inevitably be disappointed.

All we need to say is what Phillip said and what Christ said, "come and see". Come and see if following Christ won't cause you to see greater things in your life. Come and see if he cannot transform your heart and being.

All of this for the low, low price, of nothing. His disciples follow him and give nothing but their hearts, and that too makes the faith hard for some to believe. Certainly something as valuable as salvation should cost something and many preachers have tried to put a price on it. Some go so far as to suggest a certain gift and certain amount of money given to their church for ministry will make a person's prayers be answered. Those who do that are wrong.

God's generosity far outstrips our own. We cannot earn God's grace nor can we buy it. It is a gift freely given, but I do think it is true that in giving back we are blessed. We are blessed to take part in this great thing God has done to redeem the world. We are blessed to help create a place where we can worship and where ministry happens. Like the boy who gave just five loaves and two fish we are blessed to see how what we give can become much more than we imagined and reach far more people than we could have by ourselves.

So Christ calls us to come and see if our life is not immeasurably changed by following him and letting him lead us. And Fairhill Manor Church during this time of stewardship asks you to give and see. Give what you can and see if God doesn't multiply it in the form of ministry. Give as you are able and see if

God doesn't help you see how blessed you already are. Give to support the mission of your church and see if it meets your needs in ways that nothing you could buy ever could.

Come and see if Jesus Christ cannot fill the void in your life and fulfill the promise of your heart. You have nothing to lose and much greater things to gain.

**Call to Offering\***

Gene Sheller

We come from near and far to share our gifts in God's name. Knowing that we can do much more together than alone, we come together in joy to offer our gifts not for our benefit but for the benefit of your world. As we begin our stewardship campaign here is an example of how your gifts to our church create a place that helps many.

**Dedication of Offering Prayer\***

Rev. Stillwell

God, you are the source of all goodness and life. We bring our offering to you this day, knowing that all we have comes from you. We hear your call and we answer, bringing all that we have and all that we are. Use our gifts, our talents, and our bodies for your work of peace and justice. Amen.

**Invitation to Communion\***

Rev. Stillwell

If somebody we know and trust endorses something we are most likely to try it. When I want to buy a product I usually ask my friends for their suggestions. The more expensive the item the more recommendations I need. If I wanted to get something that was priceless I am not sure how many recommendations I would need, but when I come to this table where the gifts that await are priceless I have only one recommendation. That recommendation comes from Jesus Christ who tells me to take and eat; take and drink do this in remembrance of me. It is because he recommends it that I am here. Even Paul is careful to note that he passes on what was handed on to him. I can't think of anything so valuable that I would get with so few recommendations, but there are two differences. The first is the one doing the recommending, the son of God himself. I trust his recommendations more than the average person. The other difference is that this meal costs me nothing, even though it cost him everything. As we share in this meal let us give thanks for the one who recommended it to us and let us leave the table ready to recommend to others as well.

**Prayer for the Bread & Cup\***

Connie Sheller

Thank you, Father, for your presence with us, loving and caring for us as your children. We thank you for your gift of salvation given to us through your son, Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins, and rose from the dead promising us eternal life. As we take this bread and cup, help us remember your great sacrifice for each of us. Amen

**Words of Institution\***

Rev. Stillwell

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

**Closing Hymn**

*"Come Let Us Worship and Bow Down"*

Jody Mullis, pianist

Come let us worship and bow down  
Let us kneel before the Lord  
Our God, our maker (repeat)

For He is our God  
And we are the people of his pasture  
And the sheep of His hand  
Just the sheep of His hand (repeat)

**Benediction\***

Rev. Stillwell

God, who knows us better than we know ourselves, calls us to follow. Let us go in Jesus's name to share the good news of God's love.

---

\* You can listen to these pieces of worship at <https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/worship-audio-files>  
Previous Worship services can also be found through this website or on Youtube.



**Do you have a prayer request or need help?** Please feel free to contact Rev. Chris (412-956-6590) **and** 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 and Pastor Gena. We are One Body in Christ!

***Prayer List:***

Avery Allen  
Donna Bakaitis  
Bill Behrens  
Bristol Allan Berry  
Abby Blanchard  
Mark & Susan Britko  
Jordon Burk  
Wanda Chicone  
Joanne Coburn  
Emily Cope Robinson  
Rick & Dawn Couch  
Ruth Cox  
Irma Davis  
Jessica Duke  
Libby Eberhard  
Fred Engle  
Jay Freudenberg  
Joe Greene  
Bonnie Gregg

Sloan Amelia Hagy  
Judy Hanning  
Aryn Hess  
James Hritz  
Ed & Harriet Jackman  
Dallas Jacobovitz  
Bob Lanning  
Cheryl Leach  
Rick Lewis  
Lee & Betsy Martin  
Don Melvin  
Ruth Mikuta  
Dick Moninger  
Jody Mullis  
Georgette Murray  
Carmen Oliverio  
Peggy Oliverio  
Deborah Patterson  
Denny Paul

Sadie Reese  
Betty & Charles Riecks  
Betty Jo Riggle  
Chip Rogers and his parents  
Jim and Barb Roupe  
Theresa Shape  
Colby Simkovic  
Doug and Tracy Smith  
Troy, Tammy, Walker & Kolby Smith  
Cathy Stewart  
John Stewart  
Victoria Strawn  
Beth Teagarden  
Melissa Teagarden  
Frannie Venan  
Gary Weaver  
Nikki Wells  
Tom Williams  
Chuck & Mary Wiseman  
Preparing for Baptism – Nyka Rash



**Southmont-Presbyterian Medical Center**

Bill Behrens Rm 437  
835 S Main Street  
Washington PA 15301

**Homebound Members:**

Phyllis Cimino  
317 Wellness Way  
Strabane Trails #325  
Washington PA 15301

Mrs. Mary McDonough  
949 Bruce Street  
Washington PA 15301

**In the Military**  
Lance Dague  
Terrell McClain  
Brandon Lipscomb  
Daniel Robinson  
Shawn Dallatore  
Andrew Gregg  
Zachary Keene  
Sarah Lipscomb  
Travis Ringer  
Emily Chase  
Dylan Demain



Ruth Cox has been moved to a facility from where she lived near her daughter. Her new address is:

Ruth Cox  
3821 Wilson Blvd. Apt. 515  
Arlington, VA. 22203

Fairhill Manor has entered a new era: the age of anytime, anywhere giving. We are now signed up with **Givelify**, the mobile giving app for places of worship and charities.

Givelify gives you a beautiful, easy giving experience using your smartphone. There are no frustrating web forms to fill out, and recurring gifts are easy to set up and modify. Even better, it's free to download and use. It's safe and secure and gives you access to your complete giving record.

Want to see how it works? [Watch the demonstration video](#) that shows you all about how to make and track donations.

Ready to get started? [Download](#) the Givelify app for Android or iPhone.



You can help Fairhill Manor Christian Church all year through this program, not just at Christmas.

Choose Fairhill Manor as your charity on **Amazon Smile**. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Sign in to smile.amazon.com. Go to "Your Account," then select the option to "Change your Amazon Smile Charity." Type "Fairhill Manor Christian Church" into the Search box. Choose FMCC as your charity!





**Church Office hours:**

Karen is working from home on Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 9 am – 2 pm. She will be in the Church Office on Wednesday & Thursday, 9 a – 2 pm. The Church phone is forwarded to Karen’s cell phone.

Pastor Gena is off on Friday.

Rev. Chris is off on Friday.

If you need anything at any time, please call the Church Office phone at 724-225-8610.

# Puzzle!

Use the code to complete the blanks — and find out how God wants us to treat people.

CODE:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14												

		1,2	3		6	5	7,8	2,3		1	7,8	2,3													
	2	8	7	8,9	1	10	10	5	8	7,8	1	10,11	3												
10,11	8		8	7,8	3		1	7,8	8	10,11	4,5	3	9,10	'											
3,4	8	9,10	4		5	11,12	5	7,8	4		3	1	2	4,5											
	8	10,11	4,5	3	9,10	'		5,6	11	10	10,11		1	10											
	5	7,8		2	4,5	9,10	5	10	10,11		4	8	2,3												
	3,4	8	9,10	4		1	11,12	3		13	8	11	'												

EPHESIANS 4:32, NIV

Answer: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32, NIV