

Manor Minutes
Volume 12 Issue 47
November 26, 2021

Board Meeting following worship – November 28

Poinsettia Order Deadline – November 30

Dartball – November 30, 7pm @ Home

Choir Practice – December 2, 6:30pm Choir Room

Large Fellowship Hall reserved – December 4

Stay up to date, check www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar



Salvation Army Christmas **Angel Tree** tags will be available soon. Look for more information next week in the Manor Minutes.



Fairhill Manor will be ringing the bells for the **Salvation Army Red Kettle** fund drive December 6 through December 10 from 9am-5pm. Sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

Advent Devotionals are available on the Welcome Table in the Narthex. Please take 1 per family.

Thank you to everyone that came out to help decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas. It looks very festive.



Continued thanks to **Linda Reese** for cleaning up the Memorial Garden. Your attention to this is appreciated.

Red and White Poinsettias can be ordered for our Christmas Eve display.

Order forms can be found in the bulletin and also in the Narthex.

Deadline to order – November 30



Thomas Campbell Apartments is asking affiliated churches if they would be willing to donate **items for gift bags** for its residents. This is not a request for "BIG" gifts but small things like candy, small puzzles and things that would fit into a gift bag. There will be a box for donations in the coffee center. Deadline for donations is December 12.

In The Coffee Center



Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(*Disciples of Christ*)

351 Montgomery Ave.
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
November 28, 2021

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Gene Sheller

You alone, O Lord, are God. Come down, O God!
You have done wonderful things in the past. Come down, O God!
We need you here with us now. Come down, O God!
We wait for you. We wait with hope.

Opening Hymn

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (verse 1)

Audra Allen, organist

O Come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Lighting of the First Advent Candle of Hope

Reader 1: The darkness has long been upon us. We long for the light that is the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation.

Reader 2: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!

Reader 1: The light has not yet come.

Reader 2: We wait and watch for the dawning of God's glory.

Reader 1: We light this one candle so that it will cast its light into the darkness.

Reader 2: It reminds us to stay awake and be watchful, for the promised One will come to us at an unexpected hour!

Unison Prayer: How we long for the Light of your presence, Holy God! Guide us from the night of our hopelessness and lead us with joy toward the dawning of your New Day. Amen.

Anthem

“In the Bleak Midwinter,” arranged by Craig Courtney

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Righteous God, we are here, praying to you, as we do each Sunday. We have come and taken our places, putting ourselves in the path of hope. It's routine, it sometimes feels uninspired, but we have found joy and peace in your presence before. And so we situate ourselves here to worship and serve you, waiting for a word of hope.

God who rules over all, we are looking for right and just leaders. We want to live in safety, free from distress and worry. We have tried to save ourselves, to protect and secure ourselves in our own ways. We have elected and worshipped leaders of all sorts who have promised solutions to all of our problems, but they turn out to be human too, despite what we had hoped. We need to be saved. From our theories,

from our biases, from our trust in things which are not lasting or true. Call us to serve your Lordship alone.

Coming Lord, come and fulfill your good promises among us. You bring forth life from that which looks dead, old, past its time, and useless. We have heard, we have seen that you are able to do more than we can imagine in ways we would never dream about. You are always working resurrection and reconciliation, bringing forth truth and justice. Come, Lord Jesus, come soon and fulfill your good promises among us.

We thank you for those who with dedication and care put and keep things in order for us, doing the mundane work of routine and maintenance. Thank you for those who notice your movement among us and point to it. Thank you for those who have recorded your story and those who explain it. Thank you for those who serve with steadfast patience, always on duty before you, constant in prayer. Thank you for using us to do your work. And thank you for hearing our questions, our disbelief, our surprise when you choose us to bring the good news of hope to our world.

During this season of preparation, give us time and space to really see and be with each other. Take away our judgement of others that leaves them living in disgrace. For those of us spending time with children, help us to take joy and delight in them. When you speak to us or call us to service, open our ears to hear clearly your message, "Do not be afraid." And give us patience as we await the appointed time for your answers to our prayers.

Call us back to you, our Lord and our God. Turn our disobedient hearts toward the wisdom of the righteous. Make us a people ready, prepared for the coming of the Lord, Our Righteous Savior. It is in his name that we pray in hope, praying the words he has taught us...

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:

*"Lord, Listen to your Children Praying"
Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.*

First Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Von Lacock

Anthem

"All Praise and Honor," by G. Hallquist and B. Harlan

Children's Message

Cara Hritz

How many people here are over 70 years old? Studies show that by the time you are 70 years old you have spent 3 years of your life waiting. Waiting in line at the store, waiting for dinner to be ready, waiting for your turn...we do a lot of waiting!

We're going to read a little bit of this book that talks about a waiting place.

Do you like to wait? I don't really like waiting, but we have a lot of things in our life that we have to wait on. Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means "to come." Do you know what's coming? Of course, Christmas is coming! This is an exciting time, but it may also be a difficult time of waiting -- especially for children. Waiting for the day when you can open the gifts that you've wanted. What can we

do to make this time of waiting for Christmas more than just a useless time in the waiting place? Well, we can think about the true meaning of Christmas. We can think about Jesus and his love. We can think about giving instead of receiving. We can enjoy all of beautiful music and the decorations of the season. When we do those things, we will find joy in the waiting place. Let's pray.

God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. Help us to find joy in the waiting. Be with us this advent season as we wait for Jesus to arrive. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Luke 1:1-25

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Christmas Preparations”

Rev. Stillwell

Before you begin anything you must prepare. Before I begin preaching my sermon I begin writing it, but before that I read the scripture, read the commentaries, look up information and pray. I often use stories and illustrations from things that I have read, maybe last week, maybe last year, maybe ten years ago, and I often find that the things to which I have been listening and conversations I have been having find their way into my sermons. The point is that there is a lot of preparation that goes into a 15 minute sermon. The same is true of anything you might do. If you want to paint you don't just throw paint on a wall. You look at samples and choose a color. You gather your supplies, move the furniture, cover the floor, and then you paint. When my daughter wants to help me make pancakes, I found out quickly that this did not include gathering the ingredients. She let me do all that and call her in when it came time to really put the batter in the pan. In all things it is true as they say that failure to prepare is preparing to fail.

Well now we are in the season of advent, which is a season of preparation, and we have been getting prepared by decorating our church and getting ready for the Christmas celebration. I do this as a minister, but I do it in my own life as well. Today I will put out my Christmas decorations, after getting them down out of the attic last week, sorting them into the rooms that they will go, putting away the fall decorations, and cleaning the house, not to mention the lights I put outside when we had nice weather days in November. A lot of preparation goes into being prepared for the season of preparation.

I know I am not alone in this. You have preparation to do as well. For instance, I bet you all have some baking to do for Christmas. Of course you must get your recipes and your ingredients, and you must prepare your baking space and pre-heat the oven before you can even begin. Likewise, we all know that no one just gives presents. There is making a list, checking it twice, scouting the stores and finding the best price, wrapping and tagging, and then, only when all has been prepared are you finally ready to give the gift.

If it is true that preparation comes before anything and indeed everything, then how much preparation comes before God is ready to give the world the greatest gift, the long awaited Messiah?

Quite a bit you would think, which is why our story from the gospel of Luke, the first story in the gospel of Luke, is one of preparation. Luke begins the gospel, a story about Jesus, with the birth of not Jesus but of John, because the world has to be prepared for the great thing God is about to do, and that will be John's role as a child and later as an adult.

Luke tells us of a priest named Zachariah and his wife named Elizabeth, and the momentous day in which God answered their prayer of a child and answered their nation's prayer of a messiah, but, first, Zachariah had to prepare himself and the room for God.

The priests of that time had been divided into 24 divisions each responsible for the conduct of temple worship for one week twice a year and then one was chosen by lot to burn the incense which means that a

priest might never have this honor. This time Zachariah was chosen and he prepared himself by doing his duties, saying his prayers, and gathering the assembly to pray outside of the holy of holies. Then clothed in his priestly garments and equipped with the incense that would prepare the room for God's presence he entered the room and encountered something for which he was not prepared.

He encountered God, or the presence of God, in the form of a messenger from God, an angel who said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth." No one can be prepared for this. Some mark his fear as a sign that he had little faith, but that is not fair. Every time an angel appears in the Bible they start by saying, "Fear not" and do you know why? Because they are scary. They are shocking; no one is prepared to see them. Even Mary will soon be told to fear not because no one can be prepared for an angel to show up and make an announcement.

But that is what happens and the angel came to prepare Zachariah for the birth of a child that he had likely no longer expected. Not only that, but the angel goes on to say:

"He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

So he hears this and his wife, Elizabeth, conceives, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, ²⁵'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.' When Elizabeth gives birth she reaffirms the angel's message saying:

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
⁷⁸ By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

This, then, is the story of preparing the world for Jesus' birth, and, as an adult, John will be used to prepare the world for Jesus' ministry. To look at it quickly it appears that not much preparation is needed at all just a few verses in fact that cover all of nine months. But if we look again we see that, although the angel's message was about what would happen in the near term future, much of the story reminds us of the long ago past.

Zachariah and Elizabeth's circumstance should remind us of Abraham and Sarah. They were both a childless couple who believed they were long past the childbearing years. Luke describes them as "⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years." Change the names and this is a description that could have come for the book of Genesis to refer to Abraham and Sarah,

Abraham and Sarah prepared the way for Jesus by coming to Israel, the land that God showed them, and by giving birth to the nation of Israel. That is not the only echo of the past that we see in our story for John was to be like Samson and Samuel who were Nazirites. The angel said of John, "¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be

filled with the Holy Spirit” Samson was a judge and Samuel was a prophet and it was Samuel who played a part in preparing the world for Christ by choosing David as the second king of Israel, according to Gods instructions.

John’s role will be like Samuel’s in that he will be a prophet, but he will not help choose or advice kings. Rather, John will resemble Elijah as written in the book of Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament which speaks of the day that:

“I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.”

The resemblance is so strong that many people believe John to be Elijah returned fulfilling what the angel said previously to Zechariah, “¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Luke gives us just a few verses to prepare us for the coming of Christ, but what we see in them is that all of the history of Israel was a preparation for what God was going to do. There is not that much in the Hebrew Scriptures about a messiah. The word is Hebrew for “anointed one” and refers to many things and people including, Cyrus of Persia, the only non-Jew named messiah by the prophet, Isaiah.

Traditionally a messiah was someone anointed to do something for a period of time, but starting in Isaiah the term begins to be associated with a descendant of David who will be not a messiah, but the messiah, and from that point on the people had been preparing for him to come. Luke shows us that all of Israel’s history was one of preparation. God gave the people the law to show them their sinfulness, and Paul argues that Jesus fulfilled the law, and Hebrews explains that Jesus fulfilled the sacrificial system.

In just a few verses Luke has set the table, he has gathered all the ingredients, he has checked his list of things to include, he has prepared us for what will be an incredible story. Let us take the time of Advent to prepare ourselves to hear it, and respond to it.

Call to Offering

Gene Sheller

Thank you for nominating and electing me to be your 2022 moderator. I want to thank the Fairhill Manor Christian Church officers of 2021 for offering their time and talents. We, the congregation, have survived the pandemic so far, and with our pastors, officers, and you, the other members; I look forward to having another successful year with God’s help.

Our offering includes our **time**, our **talent**, and our **money**, so thank you, 2021 officers for giving your time and talent to our congregation so that we can continue our ministries.

We have recently had the opportunity to pledge our financial giving for 2022. Last year we received 37 pledges for \$103,514. So far, for 2022, we have received 23 pledges for \$92,963. Of those 2022 pledges, 14 are from giving units that pledged last year. There are 9 new pledges from giving units this time. I thank those people for doing that. There are still 23 giving units that pledged last year who have yet to pledge this year.

This Call to Offering is printed in this week’s Manor Minutes along with the complete worship service so you can digest the numbers I just gave you. After some thought and prayer, please consider pledging soon so that the Stewardship/Financial Ministry will be better able to financially plan for the year.

Even though we receive some income from rents, royalties from mineral rights coming from property gifts from former members, and other gifts, the **preponderance** of our budget comes from members' contributions. Together we will survive and prosper.

Please also consider whether you would be willing to give your time and talent to become an elder or trustee. We still need two elders and a trustee to fill our 2022 slate of officers.

As we are in our Advent season preparing for celebrating the birth of Jesus, the one who saved us and created our religion, may we all help each other in whatever way we can to remain a vibrant force in our community.

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

Ever-present God, be present in these gifts, that others may know your loving presence. Make them be for the world signs of your presence and signs of your love. In gratitude and hope, we pray.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

As we make preparations for our Christmas celebration perhaps the one that takes up most of people's time is Christmas shopping. I have come to enjoy purchasing presents for others almost as much as I enjoy receiving them because, knowing that I have the perfect gift that will make someone happy is a wonderful feeling. Giving the gift of a present feels so right that I have no doubt that it is in the spirit of the Christmas story, but it is not actually in the letter of the Christ story.

Jesus received a few presents from the wise men after his birth, but that's about it. During his life Jesus receives only few gifts that we are told of, and Jesus, himself, gives very little in the way of material things to the people that he meets. Apart from loaves and fish we can say that Jesus gave hardly any gifts at all.

Instead, he gave the gift of his personal presence, and gifts that were treasures of the heart: self-belief, inner peace, dignity, healing, compassion, and forgiveness. All of these gifts are represented here in the communion meal. At this table we are given a very little material gift, but the personal gifts we receive are numerous, for here we receive grace, mercy, forgiveness, encouragement, and renewal. Above all we find ourselves in communion with each other and with our Lord as we experience the very real presence of Jesus Christ in our midst.

This Advent as we spend time and money looking for the perfect physical gift, let us not forget to give the gift of presence as Christ did. For so many, gifts of kindness, compassion, warmth, and forgiveness, are the greatest gifts of all. These are the gifts we receive when we share this meal. Let us also share them with others that may receive Christ's presence as well.

Communion Hymn

"Come, O Long Expected Jesus"

Audra Allen, organist

Come, O long expected Jesus, born to set your people free. From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be. You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart; dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart.	Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king, born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring. By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by your all sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.
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Prayer for the Bread & Cup

J.C. Leasure

Patient God,

Since Adam, we have followed our own path. Your creation, the bearers of your image, turn away from you. Even while we are still sinners, you sent your son to die for us. You graciously give us life not because you could or because you should, you give new life because you promised you would. As we prepare for the coming of the baby king, let your feast here remind us of the promise you keep. While we eat of the bread and drink of your cup we shall keep our promise to live for you. Reform us to your image, and send your Spirit to teach us how to live in your kingdom.

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

Call to Discipleship

Rev. Stillwell

Closing Hymn

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.

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

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Stay awake, for God is coming. Prepare your heart, for God is near. In the darkness, a candle of hope burns brightly. In the quiet, God speaks to us. Go with joy, and remain hopeful.

Recorded worship services can be found on the Church website or on YouTube,
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmlH3qzih_fzHCC2X0Jhc_sfniJ7C1O3X

PRAYER
REQUEST

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) 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!

Homebound Members:

Phyllis Cimino
317 Wellness Way
Strabane Trails #325

Alice Cokeley
149 Meadows View Rd
Washington PA 15301

Mrs. Mary McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

Ed Alexy
Avery Allen
Lisa Amistade
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Jim Banish
Tom Barnhart
Abby Blanchard
Susan Britko
Mabel Brooks
Denise Charles
Wanda Chicone
John Collar
Emily Cope Robinson
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Fred Engle
Jay Freudenberg
Jett Fuller
Derek Gardiner
Lois Gayman
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg

Kyle Hallam
Connie Hanning
Aryn Hess
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Family of Pam Kloss
Ty, Kerri, Allie, Ivy &
Ty James Lacock
Bob Lanning
Marylee Lawrence
Libby LeDuff
Frank Lippert
Lee & Betsy Martin
Dave McConnell
Don Melvin
Michaela Nixon
Ruth Mikuta
Georgette Murray
Deborah Patterson
Bo & Patty Pryor
Kayda Richards
Cathy Rentgen

Betty Jo Riggle
Dave Ross
Jim and Barb Roupe
John Shadeck
Theresa Shape
Hannah Simpson
Doug and Tracy Smith
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Beth Teagarden
Nadine Teagarden
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
Sarah Wittenberg
Marcie Yocum

In the Military

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

Zoom Worship will continue to be live at
10:15 am each Sunday.

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

Meeting ID: **932 4557 4206** Password: **026316**
Fellowship with other "Zoomers" from
9:45 – 10:15am.

Text your prayer concerns to be shared during
worship to Rev. Chris at
(412) 956-6590.

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 am – 2 pm. The Church phone is forwarded to Karen's
cell phone and can be reached anytime.

Pastor Gena is off on Friday. Pastor Gena is working from home and
comes in to the church as needed. Feel free to text, call, email or set
up a time to meet with Pastor Gena.

Rev. Chris is off on Tuesday during the school year.

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



The beautiful poinsettia tree that adorns our sanctuary each Christmas Eve is a tradition that we all look forward to every year. Please fill out this form and return it to the church office by **November 30th with payment**. Indicate the color and number of poinsettias you would like to order. Cost per plant is \$10. Please **make checks payable to "Fairhill Manor" and indicate "Poinsettias" in the memo line**. Plants may be picked up following the Christmas Eve service.

_____ RED Poinsettias

_____ WHITE Poinsettias

ORDERS are due by November 30th

Given by

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

Additional Comments: