

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 14
April 4, 2025

- Bible Study – April 7, 5:30-6:30pm via Zoom
- Elders Meeting – April 9, 5pm Large Fellowship Hall
- Choir Practice – April 10, 6:30pm

Stay up to date at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar



April 7 – **Lenten Bible Study**, 5:30-6:30pm via Zoom. The fifth session of the Lenten Bible Study will be centered on **Mark 13 and Chapter 5** in Amy-Jill Levine's book, "The Gospel of Mark: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News." Feel free to join the study this week even if you were unable to join last week. The Zoom information will be sent on Monday via the Manor Minutes email list. If you do not receive the Manor Minutes via email, contact the Office to receive the link.

April 11, 12, 13 – **"He's Alive!"** presented by Heaven Bound Ministries, Inc. at the Capitol Theatre, Wheeling. Admission is free. The BYKOTA Sunday School class is going to the "He's Alive" passion play on April 11 at 7:30pm. We are inviting anyone who would like to accompany us that evening. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Or you can talk to Connie Sheller. Let's have many attend!

April 13 – **Palm Sunday**

April 17 – **Maundy Thursday** "Living Last Supper," 7pm at First Christian Church, 615 East Beau Street, Washington

April 18 – **Good Friday Worship Service** at FMCC, Noon

April 20 – **Sunrise Worship Service**, 7am
Breakfast following Sunrise Service
(No Sunday School)
Easter Worship Service – 10:15am

Bethany Class Luncheon
April 22
Eat'n Park
Noon
Everyone is welcome!

let's do
lunch



Save your items for the Rummage Sale that will be held on **May 8-10**. All items donated will be put out for sale with the proceeds going to the FMCC General Fund.

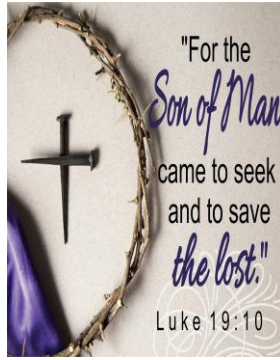
A Note from Karen.....

One thing I have learned about FMCC is that when a request goes out, responses come back tenfold.

There were so many donations for the **Community Circle Food Pantry** this week Rev. Chris and I had to take 2 cars to deliver them all to the pantry!

The list of items needed for the Easter boxes is on the bulletin board in the hallway, and I think FMCC's "peanut butter, jelly, toilet paper" distinction is a hit with the workers and clients at the food pantry. Keep them coming!

THANK
YOU
FOR ALL OF YOUR
donations



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Chuck Riggle, Bread
Linda Reese, Cup

April 6, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Kevin Puskarich

Leader: When we have been hurt and lost,

People: God brings us laughter and joy.

Leader: When our lives reach a dead end,

People: God opens a way forward.

Leader: When the rivers of our lives dry up,

People: God sends living water to quench our thirst.

Leader: God has done great things for us!

People: Let us rejoice!

Opening Hymn

"Shout to the Lord"

Jody Mullis, pianist

My Jesus, my Savior, Lord there is none like you. All of my days, I want to praise, the wonders of your mighty love. My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength. Let every breath, all that I am, never cease to worship you. Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing. Power and majesty, praise to the King; mountains bow down and the seas will roar, at the sound of your name.

Blessing of a Mission Project: Shorts for Sierra Leone

Connie Sheller and Rev. Stillwell

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

O God, our great redeemer. What you have done in the past assures us that even in times of fear and great sadness, you are with us. You are our Savior, the one who clears a level path through overwhelming situations. You are our Lord, the one who brings us back, who calls us home from every direction. You are always bringing a new day of deliverance and peace.

Call us back into our bodies that we might be truly present in each moment. Even now, we feel our breath as it passes in and out; we feel our hearts beating. We are here, sitting in this place, with all our thoughts and feelings, with all of who we are. We are here, thanking you for your presence. You nourish us; we breathe in your goodness and your love.

Help us to listen carefully to what you are saying, even it is hard news. We are grateful that you walk the difficult roads with us but, really, we would rather not have to walk the difficult road to begin with. It's hard even to imagine your final journey to Jerusalem, knowing that betrayal and ridicule, unfair treatment and murder lie ahead. It's just plain hard, and we don't like it. We don't want to go there if we don't have to. Why can't you just take it all away?

Thank you for hearing our cries for mercy, our cries for help, even when others are tired of us, tired of our problems, tired of our asking for help. You stop and call us near so that you can hear our pleas, up close and personal. In this moment, we imagine you asking us, “What do you want me to do for you?” And this, Lord Jesus, this is what we would say...

Thank you for seeing us and hearing our hearts, even before we say a word. Thank you for noticing when we need a change in our lives and are looking for healing and wholeness, for something more satisfying. Thank you for calling us down from our places of pride, self-importance, self-sufficiency, and self-reliance and for inviting yourself into the middle of our lives. There are burdens we’ve been carrying, ways we’ve felt trapped in who we are and what we do. We would like to tell you about it right now before you even ask. This, Lord Jesus, this is what we would say...

Compassionate God, many need your care and strength. Would you please be with them and bring healing to their bodies, their spirits, their relationships, their homes? We pray for those we have named aloud this morning, those on our prayer list, and those who are in our hearts and on our minds...

As we near Jerusalem this Lenten season, may we follow you more closely for we know that both pain and joy, sorrow and new life lie ahead. All of this we pray together as Jesus taught us, saying...

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

Prayer Response:

“Glory Be to the Father”

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

First Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 43:16-21

Connie Sheller

Anthem

“I Will Lift My Eyes,” by Dave Perry

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

This morning we will read another part (pp. 22-25) of *Make Room: A Child’s Guide to Lent and Easter*, written by Laura Alary and illustrated by Ann Boyajian, © 2016, published by Paraclete Press.

Lent lasts for forty days and forty nights, plus six Sundays. It takes time to get ready for Easter. Purple is the color for getting ready. We light six purple candles for the six Sundays in Lent. Each week we snuff out another purple candle. This is the fifth Sunday in Lent, so we snuff out five purple candles.

During Lent, we wonder about the Kingdom of God that Jesus talked about – the world the way God imagined it in the very beginning, the way God wants it to be. And we realize that the Kingdom of God grows inside us. It needs time and space to grow.

We have heard about ways to make time to be with God and about ways to make space within and around us for the Kingdom of God to grow. Last week we wondered about how the Kingdom of God grows – sometimes from little things we do and sometimes very slowly.

This week we hear about making room. Wherever Jesus went, people wanted to be near him. So many people needed so many things. Sometimes Jesus got tired, and his friends tried to help him rest by

sending people away, but Jesus said, “Let them come! Everyone is welcome.” Jesus even welcomed people that other people didn’t like.

During Lent we make room. We invite a neighbor to our house to share soup. We make cards and send them to people who are sick or alone. We try hard to see people the way Jesus saw them. Sometimes people stand all alone by the wall while lots of friends stand together in tight little circles. I wonder how we can make room for them. Sometimes people are loud and annoying and misbehave because deep down inside they are hurting and want someone to be their friend. I wonder how we can make room for them.

Dear God, help us to make time to be with you. Help us to make space for your Kingdom to grow. Help us to make room for everyone. Help us as we get ready. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Luke 18:31-19:10

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Coming Up Short”

Rev. Stillwell

I am not a tall man. At 5-10 my height is pretty average. While I am not tall, I also am not short, but I have come up short a time or two in my life. When I was in third grade I won the Warwood Grade School Chess Tournament. It was one of the proudest moments of my life, but the next year I lost in the second round to a very talented newcomer named David. I lost the next year as well. In sixth grade (the last year I could compete) someone stunned David, who at that point was the two-time defending champion, clearing my way to another championship. The problem is that I was upset by someone I had never played before. I got third place and a trophy, but I couldn’t help feeling disappointed. I couldn’t help feeling that I had come up short.

I have also succeeded at a few things in my life, but often it was the times that I came up short that taught me the most. Losing when I expected to win, not getting into the school I wanted to get in to, not making the team or being picked last, were all humbling moments, but they were also motivating.

Coming up short is disappointing, but if you learn from it then you can never fail. There was one time, however, when I came up short literally. I was on the track team in 9th grade, the first and only time I was on the track team. I say I was on the “track” team, but the full name of the sport is track and field, and believe me, I spent all of my time in the field. That is because I was on the team to throw the disc and put the shot. I was good at these events because I was big and because they required no running or jumping.

So, you can understand my confusion when the track coach asked me to run the high hurdles. Did he see something in me that I didn’t see? Did he believe I had hidden athletic talent previously unseen by others? Did he need a body to make sure we didn’t forfeit?

Probably the latter, or maybe he just wanted a laugh. I did my best, and I ran my race, but the high hurdles are called that for a reason. Not only am I slow, but I am not a good jumper, but the goal is to clear the hurdles any way you can. The fastest way to do that, of course, is to jump over them, but if you can’t do that do what I did. I kicked every one down on my way to an impressive last place finish.

Well, nobody likes coming up short, so imagine how Zacchaeus must have felt when he heard that Jesus was coming to town. Zacchaeus came up short in two distinct ways. First, he came up short morally. He was a tax collector, which was not immoral in itself but some thought so. This is because he was collecting taxes from his fellow Jews in support of Rome. In addition, what was clearly immoral is that he used his position to get rich. He did his by cheating people. Quite simply he told people they owed more than they did and kept the extra for himself.

In spite of this, or perhaps because of this, Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. On his way to Jerusalem Jesus passed through Zacchaeus' town of Jericho. When he did a large crowd gathered, and Zacchaeus came up short in a different way. This time he was too short to see Jesus, but he did not let his being short allow him to come up short. Rather, he climbed a tree to see the man.

Luke writes that "When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' What a tremendous blessing for Zacchaeus. He overcame his literal shortcomings and received the messiah, but this caused others to grumble about his shortcomings, and here they were not talking about his height.

They complained, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." They were all sinners of course. We are all sinners, but you get their resentment don't you? You can imagine how it might be in your neighborhood. What if Jesus came and stayed at the house of the guy down the street, who you knew was cheating on his wife, or a person selling drugs, or a businessman who cheated on his taxes? I am sure we would grumble too.

In this story Zacchaeus has two very big shortcomings, but I would argue that they are the reason why he does not come up short. First, is that he was small. I do not mean to imply that Jesus came through Jericho with the express desire to stay at the shortest man's house that he could find, but I have to think he was impressed by Zacchaeus' desire to see him that he climbed a tree for him.

If nothing else, this caused Jesus to see him, but I bet he knew him already, and I bet Jesus knew of his other shortcomings, the ones that were much worse so he not only acknowledges Zacchaeus but honors him in a tremendous way. He does this in order to use him as an example.

Simply based on this blessing, Zacchaeus makes a propound announcement when he says:

Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' ⁹Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

What a great story. We never hear about him again, but I feel confident in believing that, although he was saved, and his life changed, he still came up short a few more times in his life.

We all do. Zacchaeus was baptized in a sense, but that doesn't mean he won't come up short again. We are always sinners, but once saved sinners are soaking in forgiveness. This isn't to make anyone think they can just do what they want but to help them know that when they come up short, they can try again.

Have you had someone say that they changed but you thought, "I'll believe it when I see it?" that's all right, because if a person has truly changed you will see it. One of the ways that you will see it is that they will make efforts to show their repentance is true.

We go back and forth about whether salvation comes through faith or works, and the answer is both. We are saved by faith but our faith should inspire good works. They are the fruit of the spirit and by our fruit will we be known. We all want to be saved and forgiven, but often we do not want to have to do any work, but Zacchaeus once climbed a tree and it resulted in his repentance and his salvation.

Zacchaeus wanted to know and see Jesus so badly that he climbed a tree, and while that may have made him stand out catching Jesus' eye I think it was the act of climbing the tree that caught Jesus' eye. He

could have gone to anyone's house, but no one wanted it as badly as Zacchaeus. His desire for Jesus was so great he climbed a tree, and this story should make us ask ourselves a hard question.

What would you climb a tree for? What would you do for something you really value or something you supposedly value above all else? Would you climb a tree to see a rock star, to see a parade, to be closer to Jesus? Of course, it is a metaphor and a rhetorical question, but we all must ask how much work are we willing to put in to our faith and to sharing our faith.

Johnny Cash phrased it in a song once by asking:

Would you walk that second smile? Turn a frown with a smile?
Would you give a little more than you could take? Did you shine your little light
Upon the children of the night? What on earth would you do for Heaven's sake?

Kids climb trees for fun, but not so adults. Therefore, it was impressive the lengths to which Zacchaeus would go to see and to be seen by Jesus. What lengths will we go? Will we go until we get uncomfortable then stop? Will we go until we have to sacrifice our time and then move on? Will we follow until it becomes a burden or until it is no longer fun? Will we be like the disciples and follow all the way to the Last Supper but come up short at the cross, or will we be like the women who remained at the cross and came first to the tomb? As we sit near the end of Lent let us ponder this question in our heart, and let us give thanks that there was no length to which our Lord would not go for us.

It is great to come to church, but we do so in order to get fueled up, energized, and ready to go out and climb a tree or two for others so that they may see the ways in which Jesus has changed our lives. We are not saved by our works, but our works demonstrate our faith, and I believe get us closer to the one who inspired them, Jesus the Christ.

As we leave this place let us emulate Zacchaeus' faith in that we will do whatever it takes to be closer to Christ, to know him better, and to share him with others. Emulate Zaccheaeus' faith, and you will not come up short in the eyes of God.

Communion Hymn

"In the Bulb There Is a Flower"

Sam Johnson, organist

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise;
butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that
waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

When I was in Texas spring began around the beginning of February. The weather began to warm up to around 60 degrees, and the sun was out very often. Even when it rained it didn't ever seem to last as long as it does around here in March or April. You might think that this sounds wonderful, like a kind of paradise, but, although it was good in February, I have to say that it was easy to take for granted.

You had good weather more often than not and the winter there consisted of about two months of cold and a small amount of snow. After a while I found that you stopped noticing the sun, or you might notice how hot it has become by April and it made me angry.

Even though the spring weather here isn't as consistently good as it is further south there is something particularly special about it here. The grass seems greener. The air fresher. The sunshine and the warmth all the more invigorating. All of this because springtime here comes with a price.

All the beautiful blossoms and flowers could have come though months of rest and hibernation, through weeks of rain and mud. So now the spring is here, and all that we wished for when the dreary days of February dragged on has arrived.

As we prepare to partake in the Lord's Supper we should be reminded of the eternal springtime that Christ offers all who would follow, and as we remember that night in the upper room just before he was betrayed we know that this eternal spring could not have been won without a terrible winter.

As we share in the emblems of Christ's sacrifice let us give thanks that there is a place where spring blossoms eternal, a place where it can never be taken for granted, a place where our souls will be in full bloom, a place that we are all invited to come.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Chuck Riggle

Most Gracious Heavenly Father, we come to you this morning with a deep sense of reverence and humility. We thank you for the privilege of being in this sacred house of worship and especially for the opportunity, once again, to participate in this holy act of communion. As we partake of the bread and cup, which represents your son's broken body and shed blood, let us be reminded that his death on the cross so many years ago, was not in vain. Because he made this supreme sacrifice for us, we ask for your guidance and assistance in living each day of our lives in Christ like fashion. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Words of Institution

Rev. Stillwell

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Sharing Holy Communion

All are invited to share in this meal. Please come forward down the center aisle, as you are able, take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and partake. 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

Rev. Stillwell

This is the promise of the gospel: God already knows you. God already loves you. God has already gifted you. God has already called you. You are invited— to deepen this knowledge, to feast in this love, to cultivate these gifts, and to follow this calling. There is a place for you among the people of God in this community of faith.

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

"Open My Eyes, That I May See"

Sam Johnson, organist

Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me; place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see. Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Go forth in the abundant mercy of our God, seek Jesus with your whole heart, and bear the fruit of his kingdom. For the one who gave himself over to death has given this world new life.



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!

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Paul Harton
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Aryn Hess
Danni Iams
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Dick Moninger
Joe Neckerman
Carmen Oliverio
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Lori Riffle
Nelly Rodriguez

John Samida
Elvia Mery San
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Pat Sorice
Darci Sprowls
Cathy Stewart
Jane Teagarden
Beth Teagarden

In the Military

Lance Dague	Andrew Gregg
Terrell McClain	Zachary Keene
Brandon Lipscomb	Sarah Lipscomb
Travis Ringer	Emily Chase
Dylan Demain	Noah Rudolph

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.