

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 13
March 28, 2025

- Bible Study – March 31, 6-7pm via Zoom
- Choir Practice – April 3, 6:30pm

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



March 31 – **Lenten Bible Study**, 6-7pm via Zoom. The fourth session of the Lenten Bible Study will be centered on **Mark 11-12 and Chapter 4** 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, Beau Street Washington

April 18 – **Good Friday** service at FMCC, Noon

April 20 – **Sunrise Service**, 7am

Breakfast following Sunrise Service
(No Sunday School)

Easter Worship Service – 10:15am

On Sunday, March 30, we will collect a 5th Sunday of the month offering for the **Funeral Dinner Fund**. Envelopes will be included in the bulletin. Please give as you can.



Easter Flower orders are due by **March 30**. Order forms for Easter Flowers can be found in the Narthex, bulletin and Manor Minutes. You can order tulips, hyacinths, mums, or Easter lilies in memory of or in honor of someone. All flowers are \$10/each.

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.



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Connie Sheller, Bread
Gene Sheller, Cup

March 30, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Kevin Puskarich

Leader: The table is set.

People: The banquet is laid.

Leader: Our souls hunger and thirst for God.

People: Our gracious host welcomes us here.

Leader: God's steadfast love is better than life.

People: Sing for joy in the shadow of God's wings.

All: We have come to praise the living God.

Opening Hymn

"Great is the Lord"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Great is the Lord, he is holy and just, by his power we trust in his love. Great is the Lord, he is faithful and true, by his mercy he proves, he is love. Great is the Lord and worthy of glory. Great is the Lord and worthy of praise. Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice, now lift up your voice: great is the Lord, great is the Lord.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

Sustainer God, you nourish us in every way. Forgive us when we reject your love and care. Open our eyes when we neglect your gifts and ignore your presence. Draw close to us, that we may recognize your abiding presence and guiding love. Reclaim us as your own, that we might live for Christ and answer his call of discipleship.

Hear our prayer, O Lord, for those who are ill. Some are suffering ailments that others may call minor. Some are in pain, and some are dealing with matters of life and death. Whatever the severity of their illness, they need your healing power and they need a sense of your comforting presence.

We give thanks for the way you have created us, and for the marvelous and mysterious mechanisms that bring healing when the body is attacked by disease or injury. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, and we praise you for your creative power. But sometimes these natural healing processes are not enough, and we ask for miraculous intervention.

We plead that you will step in and personally intervene on our behalf, bringing wholeness and healing even in the face of pessimistic prognosis. We pray also for caregivers—for those doctors, nurses, and assistants who have studied the intricacies of the human body and who are qualified to diagnose our

ailments and prescribe cures. We thank you not only for their vast knowledge and special skills, but also for their caring and sympathetic spirit as they deal with those who are hurting.

Mighty God, we thank you for your wondrous gifts and your constant love. Guide us on the journey of faith, and feed us with your sustaining grace. Live in us this day, that we might live in you and answer your call. Welcome us home when we wander afar. Restore us with your compassion and love. Transform us with your miraculous grace, that we might become the new creations you envision us to be. Strengthen us with the power of your Holy Spirit, that we might offer others the same welcome, grace, and love that you have offered us. In your beloved name, we pray. Amen

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

Joshua 5:9-12

Connie Sheller

Anthem

“Let Your Light Shine,” by Craig Courtney

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

This morning we will read another part (pp. 10-13, 16, 18-19) 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. 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 fourth Sunday of Lent, so we snuff out four 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. We realize that the Kingdom of God grows inside us. But it needs time and space to grow.

Two weeks ago we heard about ways to make time to be with God. Last week we heard about some ways to make space within and around us for the Kingdom of God to grow. This week we wonder about how the Kingdom of God grows: maybe like a tiny mustard seed growing into a huge plant with space for lots of birds to build nests, maybe like a pinch of yeast making a big batch of dough rise.

We pray for the Kingdom of God to come. We plant seeds and wait for them to sprout into plants. We roll dough and twist it to make pretzels – like little arms crossed in prayer. We pray for the Kingdom of God to come – maybe from something very small, maybe so slowly we hardly notice. Maybe the Kingdom of God happens right around us. Maybe it is happening now.

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

Second Scripture Reading

Luke 16:19-31

Rev. Stillwell

There are a lot of sicknesses going around. Flu and colds and pneumonia have wreaked havoc on our community, and I count myself fortunate that I have not been sick much. In addition to all of the usual sicknesses to be concerned about now, measles is making a comeback which is a sentence I never thought I would have to say, but here we are. We get our shots, and wash our hands, and take our supplements to boost our health so that we do not catch a sickness, but one sickness we don't spend too much time worrying about is affluenza. No not influenza, affluenza. This is a sickness that is not so much physical as spiritual.

I once had a conversation with a man who spoke of trouble he was having with his car. I commiserated because I have had a lot of work done on mine. Then he complained about brakes needed for his second car, and again, I got it. Between my two cars I am at a repairman, dealership, or oil change place a lot. The conversation took a turn however, when he went on about things he needed for his third, fourth, and fifth car. I must admit he lost me then.

It turned out he collects cars and takes them to car shows. He even has a working Ford Model A, the prize of his collection, and I did not know what to say, but just listened to him. The conversation, from my point of view, had become funny, jarring, and unbelievable all at the same time.

That is what today's parable is for me as well--funny, jarring, and unbelievable. This parable is a caricature of both the rich and the poor. The rich man in the story isn't just rich--he is over the top--this guy dresses only in regal clothes--in royal purple hues and fine linens--he only does fine dining and banquet feasts. And the poor man isn't just poor; he's dirt poor. He is crippled and starving and lying at the rich man's gate. He is covered in sores and is being licked by savage dogs. He is unclean, a total outcast, desperate even for the scraps from the rich man's table. The rich man goes past the gate each day, but somehow he never notices this poor, desperate soul.

Both of these men die--the rich man is buried and ends up being tortured in hell, and the poor man is carried away by angels and welcomed to the heavenly banquet table. Death to the poor man is a blessing; death to the rich man is a curse. Their worlds were incredibly close yet utterly separate.

What we know about the gospel writer Luke is that he is all about reversals. The poor man in heaven. The rich man in hell. The rich man in poverty. The poor man in abundance. The one who had daily feasts is now begging the poor man for a sip of water. The poor man is named and known Lazarus. The rich man remains unnamed. We hear echoes of Mary's song from earlier in Luke, "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty."

This is a woe to those who are rich parable, the type to make us squirm in our seats uncomfortably, and there are five biblical words which are most likely to make people stop listening. Those five words are the ones which start this parable today, "There was a rich man...." I say that because, first, most people aren't rich, and even many who are do not think themselves so, so they will believe this parable is for someone else. Second, those who are often convinced that their wealth is a result of their goodness, so they are unlikely to listen to a story in which a rich person is the bad guy. This is unfortunate, because there is a message in this parable for people who don't think they are rich, and also rich people need Jesus too. This is the point of the parable after all. The rich man needed Jesus.

There are three aspects of Luke's understanding of Jesus which must be held in tension. First, Luke believes and scripture confirms that God has a special concern for the poor. In the Old Testament, New Testament, up and down it would be hard for you to argue this point. The second thing, Luke drives home

for his readers is that there are spiritual and moral dangers that come with wealth and social standing. And the third, and here comes the good news: there is great potential for blessings to be given and received with the right and generous use of wealth.

If you are poor, if you identify with Lazarus, this is good news; there will be a place for you and God loves you. If you are not poor and you do not identify with Lazarus, it does not mean God doesn't love you. Because God loves you, you are getting this parable as a warning. This lesson warns that if you are rich, then your life circumstance comes with its own unique set of temptations and perils.

As preacher Fred Craddock said, "The main obstacle to faith is not lack of proof; it is an excess of other interests and investments--of time, money, dreams, and so on." Because of God's love for us, we have received this parable as a warning.

Unfortunately, most warnings we get these days we totally ignore or gloss over. When you buy something new and open the box, generally you are met with excessive amounts of printed materials. All this paper usually fits into two categories- instructions for how to assemble, use, and maintain, and warnings not to let kids put pieces in their mouths, or not to use while in the bathtub, or to use without protective eyewear. Maybe they should come with one additional warning label saying, "Owning this product could be dangerous to your spiritual health."

Objects can be dangerous to your spiritual health because they might cause you to contract affluenza- a sickness caused from having too much. This parable is warning Christians against catching that disease. The rich man in the parable caught affluenza, which caused him blindness, lack of sensitivity, and numbness in his heart. His status and circumstance caused him to be unable to even see this poor man lying at his gate. The message for us is that there are stumbling blocks for those with access to money and access to power. These stumbling blocks are abundant, they are subtle, and they are often masked as good and well-deserved things. Yet the warning here is that nothing is to blind us to those in need and nothing is to confuse us about our need for God.

Luke has painted this scene for us with these two caricatures of the rich and the poor, and I would venture to guess that most of us would not feel comfortable identifying with either one of these men. So I would propose you place yourself in the scene as one of the rich man's brothers. You are one of the brothers the rich man and Luke wanted to warn and to save. We are the ones for whom it is not too late. We can still be cured, we can still be protected, we can still become the kind of people Jesus asks us to be. The rich man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers. But Abraham says, "Your brothers have Moses and the prophets. They should listen to them." "No, father Abraham," begs the rich man, "but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent."

The rich man knew all about humanity's selfishness, our hardness of heart, and our ability to ignore messenger after messenger and warning after warning. Because the rich man knew about the faults of their humanity, he knew it was going to take something radical to get through to his brothers.

A dead man would have to come to warn the rich man's brothers. A dead man would have to come to preach a message of salvation. A dead man would have to come to offer a bridge from the land of Hades to the banquet halls of paradise. If a dead man was needed, then God would send no other than his own beloved Son, for the sake of the sinner. As bizarre and other worldly as resurrection is for us, as it turns out, this is exactly what we needed. The good news is that the chasm between the rich man and Lazarus, between the sinner and God, this impasse has been repaired. The chasm of sin and death has been bridged in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God sent a message for the brothers of the rich man--the message came with instructions and warnings, the message came with grace and truth, the message came with big responsibilities and great promises. But the message was very good news--the barrier to God has been removed, and so we are compelled to respond to that gift.

As brothers and sisters of the sinner, let us learn what the lessons Jesus is trying to teach his disciples in this story:

- 1) That nothing we own should keep us from depending on God's faithfulness alone.
- 2) That our positions in life should never blind us to the strangers at our gates.
- 3) That we are to respond to the gifts in our life with faith, with generosity, and with service to the poor.

This parable might be hard to hear, but it is not hard to understand. We have received Moses and the prophets, we have received the gift of Jesus Christ--therefore no one is going to say we haven't been warned. As Jesus said, "Whoever has ears, let them hear."

Call to Offering

Rita Puskarich

As we continue in our Lenten journey, we are called to set our minds not on human things but on divine things. As we offer our gifts today, let us marvel at the transformation: when we let go of these earthly offerings, they are transformed to do the work of the divine.

The 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

Pastor Gena

O God, we come to you, humbled by the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Protect us from the allure of earthly possessions. Attract us instead to the satisfaction of acting with compassion. Open our eyes to the needs of those around us. May our choices and interactions reflect your love and generosity. Bless the gifts we bring, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Pastor Gena

It's that time of year when basketball is especially on our minds. I once heard about a famous NCAA basketball coach whose teams won 10 championships in his 27 years of coaching. As a player, he had been quite a star basketball player as well. In fact, John Wooden is the only person ever to be inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame both as a player and a coach.

But Coach Wooden's success on the court first as a player and then as a coach is not what caught my attention. Instead, it was the small cross he carried in his pocket every day since a pastor gave it to him as a young man. "Every time I reach in my pocket," Wooden said, "my fingers touch the cross he gave me. It's been worn down quite a bit now from my clenching it in my left hand during games."

I immediately thought this coach was one of those people who pray for God to help his team win the game and that's why he was clenching the cross. But that wasn't it. A reporter asked Wooden about it, and he said that holding the cross reminded him of his priorities – that there were things more important than the game of basketball.

The cross is always a good reminder about what matters most—whether it's a well-worn cross carried in a legendary basketball coach's pocket, or the larger cross that we see every Sunday when gathering around

a Communion table. Sharing communion with you under this cross helps me put things in perspective too.

As we gather this morning to share this meal, may we cling tightly to the cross, letting it remind us of what matters most. And may that reminder lead us to go forth, recognizing the presence of Christ in every person we meet, taking an extra minute to listen to their story, and reaching out a hand to show compassion in Jesus' name.

Communion Hymn

"Come and Find the Quiet Center"

Sam Johnson, organist

Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead, find the room for help to enter, find the frame where we are freed: clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Connie Sheller

Almighty Father, thank you for sacrificing your only Son for our sins. In this season, we recall Jesus on that cross, dying, and but rising from the dead so that we may have eternal life with you. Thank you for this bread and cup that we take now in remembrance of you. 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

You will receive the bread and cup together. Please hold them; we will take each together as one body. Disciples of Christ believe in an Open Table. All who profess Christ and follow Him are welcome to share His meal. Gluten free wafers are available in the Narthex.

Call to Discipleship

Pastor Gena

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

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

Sam Johnson, organist

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Go forth in gratitude for what the Lord has done, for what the Lord is doing, and for what the Lord is yet to do in the days ahead.

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER REQUESTS

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!

Homebound Members:

Mrs. Mary McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

Alice Cokeley
900 N Cass Lake Rd, Apt 324
Waterford MI 48328

Nolmy Aguille & Family
Terry Bailey
Bob Bakaitis
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezney
Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Wanda Chicone
Ruth Cox
Sue Donaldson
Benjamin Dube
Connie Faust
Kim Fleissner
Gary Ford
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Barb Graff
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Sheila Harris
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Carmen Oliverio
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Michelle Oneal
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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.



Please fill out this order form and return to the Church Office with **payment** by March 30. 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 30, 2025.

Given by _____

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)
