Manor Minutes Volume 12 Issue 16 April 23, 2021





Zoom Worship this Week - Live from the Sanctuary at <mark>10:15am</mark>!

"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 – 10:15am.

Text your prayer concerns to Rev. Chris (412) 956-6590. He 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), <u>https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/children-worship-wonder</u>

Tween Team

Gather online via Zoom with 4th-7th Graders on Sunday evenings from 5-6 pm. Our time continues to center around, "Faithful Families: Lent and Easter Devotions." JC Leasure and Pastor Gena are the co-leaders. This Sunday, April 25, we will have another fun "Friends and Family" night.



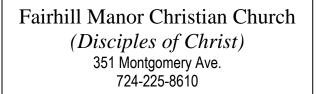
Stewardship/Finance Ministry – April 27, 6pm via Zoom Board Reports due – May 5 Elders Meeting – May 12, 6pm via Zoom Board Meeting – May 12, 7pm via Zoom

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

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!





Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor April 25, 2021

Audra Allen, organist

Pastor Gena

Linda Reese

Love one another, even when love involves risk. We love as God loves us. Love and care for others, even when caring is hard. We love and care as God loves and cares for us. Love in truth and action. By this we are known as children of God. Come let us worship in love and truth.

Opening Hymn

"Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service"

Lord, whose love through humble service bore the weight of human need, who upon the cross, forsaken, offered mercy's perfect deed: we, your servants, bring the worship not of voice alone, but heart, consecrating to your purpose every gift that you impart.

Still your children wander homeless; still the hungry cry for bread; Still the captives long for freedom; still in grief we mourn our dead. As, O Lord, your deep compassion healed the sick and freed the soul, use the love your Spirit kindles still to save and make us whole.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*

O God, our Shepherd, in you we have everything we need. You guide us, showing us the way. You come searching for us when we go off on our own. Thank you for the independent spirit and spunk you have given each one of us, but thank you too for keeping us tied to you and others who follow you. We are so grateful to have waiting and welcoming arms to come home to.

Thank you for times of quiet rest when you watch over us, when you stand guard. There are times we feel so comfortable and at peace in your presence that it is like we are lying on a carpet of lush green grass. There are times when you revive us and bring life back into us with the refreshment of a cool, clear pool of water.

Thank you for the ways your creation nourishes us in the food we eat, in the beauty we experience, in the co-creating work we do as we work in your world. What a gift this earth is to us. Thank you for the flowers that bloom in so many colors and scents; for the bees that buzz and pollinate, bringing forth a bounty of food; for water that runs and cascades and laps at our feet; for the sun, calling forth life and sustaining it, warming our skin and lifting our spirits. Right now, we give you thanks for all that you have made, imagining its beauty in our minds and recommitting ourselves to its care...



Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship*

Audra Allen, organist

Pastor Gena

Shepherding God, especially when the way is difficult, when we feel completely alone and in despair, help us to know that you are right with us. Let us feel secure when everything is changing and the way is unfamiliar and unpredictable, knowing that you are the guide we can trust and count on.

Give us courage to share life with those we don't understand and those who don't understand us. Spread a table big enough for all of us, that we might learn to see you in each other as we feast on truth and light and love in your presence. Give us the courage to sit with our discomfort and vulnerability when you lead us into new pastures.

O God, our Shepherd, we so want others to know your comfort and grace, your welcome and your gentle course-correcting nudges. And so we pray that you might show us how to care for these we name now. Show us what is ours to do and what we may leave to your other plans.

We pray for the hearts of those who hate and destroy to be softened. We pray for sustenance for those who work so that all have what they need. We pray for those who study your creation, care for it, and use it wisely for the good of all. We pray for caregivers and friends, for family and strangers who are walking with those who are suffering through their darkest valleys. We pray for those who are sick, those who are without hope, those who can't find what they need, those who feel trapped in harmful circumstances. Bring peace and wholeness, we pray.

And now we name those who are on our hearts and minds, knowing that you are with them just as surely as you are with us....

Lead us in right paths as we seek to love as you do. And may your love and beauty chase after us every day of our lives. We pray all of this in the name of our Good Shepherd, 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.

Prayer Response:"Lord, Listen to your Children Praying"Audra Allen, organistLord, 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*

Special Music "My Shepherd, You Supply My Need," by Isaac Watts, Southern Harmony Jim Cope

Children's Message*

Recently I took two weeks of vacation. I was weary and needed some rest. It wasn't so much my physical body that was tired; my mind and my heart were tired. I had been thinking and caring so hard for so long that I was just wiped out. So I wondered, when I decided to take 2 weeks away from work, how would I really rest?

When have you felt especially tired or weary? I wonder what happens if we are weary and don't get any or enough rest. I can tell you that I get cranky when I am weary. I can't think very well or listen to others very well. It's hard to give when I am really tired. How do you feel when you get the rest you need?

Pastor Gena

Psalm 23

Kathy Ford

Today's first scripture is Psalm 23. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" I don't need a thing. A shepherd takes care of sheep. One of the shepherd's jobs is to make sure the sheep have a good, safe place to rest. A shepherd watches over the sheep and keeps predators or other dangers away so the sheep can sleep peacefully. The sheep trust the shepherd to keep them safe, especially when they are sleeping and cannot protect themselves.

This poem compares God (who takes care of us) to a shepherd (who takes care of sheep). It reminds us God loves, protects, and provides for us, even when we are asleep. Knowing God cares for us allows us to rest instead of worrying about how we will get what we need to live. When we rest, our bodies, minds, and souls are refreshed and renewed for the next day's work and play. Even when we aren't sleeping, God can care for us while we rest. We can trust God to hold the things and people we care about while we are resting so that we can truly be refreshed and renewed.

I wonder what might be some ways we can rest in God's love and care. Some ways to rest might include lying down to take a nap or have quiet time for reading or stargazing outside on a clear night. What else can you think of? When I was on vacation I did just what I felt like doing when I felt like doing it. One day I felt like working on my flower gardens, and so I did. One day I felt like walking and walking and walking, and so I did. I walked on a town sidewalk, I walked along a country road, and I hiked on some beautiful park paths. One day I felt like I just needed a nap, and so I napped. And one day I felt like I needed to see water, lots of water, so I drove to a place where I could sit in the sun next to a big lake, and I took a nap right there.

Even when we have just little bits of time, we can rest. Let's try that. Let's close our eyes and breathe out through our noses for four slow beats, imagining all our worries leaving our bodies with that breath. Then let's breathe in through our noses for four slow beats, imagining we are breathing in God's comfort and care. This breath prayer is a way to rest and trust God whenever we feel tired, weary, or worried.

Dear God, thank you for loving and protecting us like a shepherd loves and protects the sheep. Remind us to rest in your care so our bodies, minds, and souls can be refreshed. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading*	John 21:15-19	Rev. Stillwell
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Sermon*

"Stories We Tell"

Rev. Stillwell

Last week we talked about a reunion of some of the disciples with Jesus Christ. Several times Jesus appears to his disciples after his death and often times these appearances involve sharing a meal. So many of the stories about Jesus and his disciples involve sharing a meal. There is the feeding of the five thousand. There is the last supper. There is the parable of the prodigal son in which the father throws a feast when his family is reunited.

This is important because whenever families get together to share a meal, two things happen. Food is eaten and stories are told. Maybe this is not the case every night at dinner, but whenever I get together with my parents and cousins even if we have not seen one another in a while, even if there are many things that have occurred in our life that we could talk about, eventually we go back to telling the old, old stories.

One Easter we gathered at my aunt and uncle's house and we talked about the time that we did not wait for my brother to finish hunting to start Thanksgiving dinner. We talked about the time when my cousin rode his big wheel into the pool and my dad jumped the fence and saved him while my brother and other cousin dove to the bottom of the pool to collect the change that fell out of my dad's pocket. We talked about one of the earliest memories I have which is the time that lighting struck that pool one summer night and I got left out on the porch after everyone ran inside afraid to touch the door. Talk about telling the old, old story.

So often at meals we tell stories that we never tire of telling, but what if the stories we have to tell are stories about eating a meal itself? The last story of the gospel of John, therefore, the last story of Jesus that we will get in the Bible, is a story of not the most famous meal with Christ, but in my opinion the most important meal anyone shared with Christ.

Jesus has appeared three times to three different groups of disciples after his first appearance to Mary Magdalene, and yet he keeps leaving. What are the disciples to make of these bewildering events? What would you do? When uncertain how to step forward often humans step backward to a place or a position where they are comfortable until they figure out what to do next.

Peter does just this when he returns to the skills of his past, and announces that he is going fishing. So there they were, disillusioned and tired and about to give up any hope of following in Jesus' footsteps when who should appear by the side of the sea, but Jesus, himself.

This is his fourth post resurrection appearance and the third to his disciples and just like that, the joy and excitement that their Hero inspired in them returns. Once again Jesus proves his awesome talents by finding 153 fish in one moment when they had found none all night, and when this happened the disciples, who had not yet recognized him, they know it must be the Lord. Immediately, Peter, ever the emotional one who just a minute ago was all set to return to his old life now runs to greet Jesus and brings the fish so they can eat.

Just like Cleopas and the unnamed Disciples in Luke's gospel it is sharing food that opens their eyes to Jesus who had been in their midst. Peter had always wanted to be the biggest hero of all, just like Jesus. He was the one who tried to make tents to house Jesus, Moses, and Elijah at the transfiguration. It was Peter who tried to walk on water just like his hero. It was Peter who rebuked Jesus twice to show his loyalty and Peter who drew the sword to defend Jesus. Now, once again, Peter sees an opportunity to show and prove his faith more than these other disciples, and he literally jumps at the opportunity.

But, in the process, Peter comes face to face with his shortcomings. Knowing full well that Peter three times denied knowing him, Jesus turns to Peter and asks, "Do you love me more than these?" What does Jesus mean by "more than these?" He might mean more than these fish and this life that Peter gave up, but I think he means more than these other disciples from whom Peter had always been trying to separate himself.

And Peter responds, "You know that I love you." Three times Jesus asks him if Peter loves him and each time he responds that he does. We can summarize that Jesus asks him three times to coincide with his three denials. In doing so Peter is reconciled to Christ whom he abandoned, and thereby reconciled to God, and Peter is also reconciled to himself. Jesus' commands to him to feed his sheep are the forgiving words that Peter needs to hear so that he may begin to forgive himself.

But look closely and you will see one more reconciliation in this story. When Jesus asks if Peter loved him more than the other disciples did, Peter only responds, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He affirms his love for his hero, but he does not claim to love him more than the others do.

This is important. Peter no longer tries to put himself above the other disciples. Perhaps the events of the past few days have taught him some humility. Perhaps Peter finally realizes that he doesn't have to be the greatest follower of all. He just needs to be a faithful one. For this realization and dose of humility Jesus tells Peter to "feed my sheep".

I think of this scene as a meal where they go over the stories that have occurred between them even if they don't actually speak the words. Jesus asks Peter "do you Love me?" and you know that a montage of memories runs through Peter's head of walking on water but falling down, of seeing Jesus on the shore of the Galilee, of the healing and the miracles. Then Jesus says, "Feed my sheep" and perhaps Peter remembers the five thousand and those whom Jesus helped. And Jesus asks the questions, "Do You love me?" three times like a person telling the same story again and again and by the third time Peter remembers that he denied him three times.

In the gospel of John we often get details that other gospels do not provide. Sometimes we do not know what to make of them but other times their meaning is clear. When Peter meets Jesus on the shore we are told that he finds Jesus tending to a charcoal fire, and that word "anthrakia" appears only one other time in the entire Bible. It appears earlier in John when Peter is standing in the courtyard outside of Jesus' trial before Pilate.

The woman said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

You know charcoal puts off an unforgettable scent and a smell that is perhaps the most powerful of sense memories, so when Peter gets to the shore and smells that fire he remembers what he had done, and when Jesus asks him the third time if he loves him he knows that Jesus knows too until with exasperation he says, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Why does Jesus ask this question three times? To make sure Peter gets it. To make sure that he will not respond enthusiastically and then fall away as he had done so many times before. Only after the third answer does Jesus finally say, "¹⁸Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go."

When I hear Jesus asking Peter the same question three times I think of my mother telling the same stories I have heard a thousand times and I know that we tell the same old stories because they make us laugh and they make us cry and most importantly they unite us. We tell the old, old stories because the stories tell us who we are.

As Christians we have two jobs: The first job of any Christian is to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love, and we cannot tell a story we do not know, so we must read and study the Bible again and again and this is why we repeat so often the same stories each week in church. Our second job is to share his love, which we do by following the great commandment that Jesus gave to his disciples to love one another as he has loved us.

The gospel, of John was written so that the story could be told. "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name"

It ends by saying "This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

Perhaps we will get to hear all of the other stories one day, but for now, we are given just these few stories to tell again and again until we learn them, understand them, and live them. Of all the stories we love to tell may we never grow tired of the old, old story of Jesus and his love which forgave and inspired his disciples to tell their stories.

Call to Offering*

God of love, help us remember that Christ has no body now on earth but ours, no hands but ours, no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes to see the needs of the world. Ours are the hands to bless the people we meet. Ours are the feet to do good in Christ's name. Bless, O God, the work of our hands and these offerings, that they may be Christ's work in the world. Amen.

(Adapted from Christ Has No Body, Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582)

Doxology

Dedication of Offering Prayer*

Shepherd of love, bless these gifts with the power and presence of your love. May your love bring healing to a world in need of your touch. May your grace bring hope to a world in need of your promise. And may our love be a sign, for all to see, that you, who are love, are present in the world today. Amen.

Invitation to Communion*

I once heard a comedian tell a joke about GPS. He said that there should be a Pittsburgh option, which would give the driver directions according to the businesses and the buildings that used to be around but no longer are. It would say something like, make a left at the old COGO's and drive past the bakery that used to be a hardware store, and if you reach the Mexican restaurant that used to be a Pizza Hut, you have gone too far.

I find it funny because I find it is true. We often live by things that used to be, and there is some comfort in that, but if we live in the past we never move forward and we cannot bring it back. All we can do is bring the past with us to the present. That is what we do when we tell stories, and that is what happens at this table. Here we tell the old, old story of Jesus and his disciples at their last supper before his death, and when we retell it, we make it new. We make it to fit our current life and situation.

When we share in this meal we take the past and bring it into the present, because what he did and taught then is relevant for us today. We cannot go back to the past, but we can take the best parts of it and keep them with us now and into the future.

Communion Hymn

"The Voice of Jesus Calls His People"

Audra Allen, organist

The voice of Jesus calls his people, "Come to my table and be fed!" For those who come to him believing, he is the Wine, he is the Bread. All who are lost, or bear great burdens, all who need comfort or release, come where the presence of Christ Jesus will nourish us with rest and peace.

Children and elders, men and women, what-ever color, race or tongue, in Jesus find themselves united, in him a home where they belong. We hear your loving voice, O Jesus, we long, we hunger to be fed; in joy we gather at the table where you are Wine, and you are Bread.

Rev. Stillwell

Rev. Stillwell

Linda Reese

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Holy God. Lord of heaven and earth, graciously hear our prayer.

We are so grateful to be able to gather together and worship You. We are still feeling Easter's radiant glow. At this sacred table we celebrate the life, suffering, death, resurrection and reign of Jesus, Your Son and our Savior. In this quiet hour, Your Sprit convicts us of what we have done and what we have failed to do. Please forgive us Lord. By sharing this bread and cup we are encouraged that we can start over, right here and now.

Father, send your Spirit to each of us to give us strength and courage, remind us of our hope in You as we partake together. We ask in Jesus name. Amen

Words of Institution*

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)

"Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"

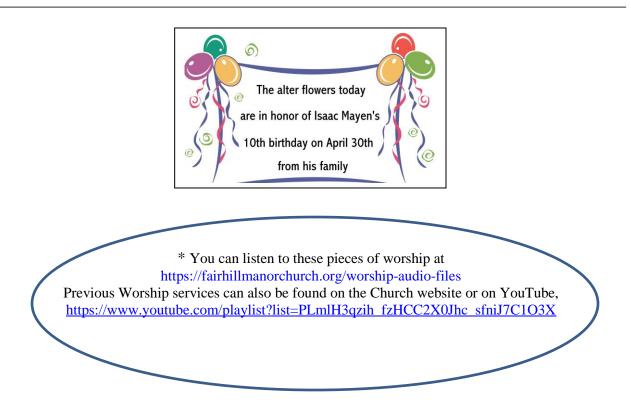
Sharing in Communion

Closing Hymn

Lord, I want to be a Christian in-a my heart, in my heart; Lord, I want to be a Christian in-a my heart. In-a my heart, (in-a my heart,) in my heart, (in-a my heart,) Lord, I want to be a Christian in-a my heart, (in-a my heart). Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, in my heart; Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart. In my heart, (in my heart), in my heart, (in my heart), Lord, I want to be more loving in my heart, (in my heart).

Benediction*

May Christ's love fill you this day with the living and enduring word of God. May Christ's love lift you up and guide you, that you may go forth to transform the world. Shalom and Amen.



Jackie Nelson

Rev. Stillwell

Jody Mullis, pianist

Rev. Stillwell



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!

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

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Becca Caldwell is Graduating from Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School. We are celebrating by holding a Socially Distanced Tailgate Party. We will have delicious individually boxed lunches provided by PW Catering LLC. Grab your lawn chairs and join us (rain or shine) in celebrating this milestone in Becca's life.

May 29th, 2021 from 11am - 1pm

Fairhill Manor Christian Church 351 Montgomery Avenue Washington, PA 15301

Please RSVP by May 15th Amy 724-207-3945 call or text or acaldwell8898@gmail.com.

Let us know how many will attend and your sandwich preferences. Turkey, Roast Beef, Ham Pretzel bun, Italian or Club

We hope to see you there!

Carol Davis must have the special touch to keep her poinsettia looking so great. Rev. Chris and Karen had a contest going to see who could keep their poinsettia alive the longest. Rev. Chris gave up in February, and Karen gave up soon after. Does anyone else have a poinsettia that is still alive? Thank you Carol for sharing this photo.



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.

Rev. Chris is off on Friday.

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