

Manor Minutes
Volume 13 Issue 20
April 29, 2022

The Story Chapter 29 Paul's Ministry and Mission – May 1
Bethany Class Luncheon at Tower Restaurant – May 1, 1pm
Board Reports due to office – May 4
Bethany Class Wednesday Zoom – May 4, 1pm via Zoom
Personnel Committee – May 5, 3:30pm Library
Choir Practice – May 5, 6:30pm Choir Room
Stay up to date, check www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar



Board Meeting – May 11

Please turn in your Board Reports to the office by May 4.

Blanket Sunday

Blanket Sunday will be held on Mother's Day, May 8, 2022. This is an event our Disciples Women's Ministries sponsors for Church World Service. These blankets are used around the world for refugees, displaced families, places of natural disasters, war, etc. \$10 will purchase a blanket. CWS is assessing the need in Ukraine right now and will be using lots of blankets for that particular situation. A single blanket can provide a person with warmth, a pillow, a place to store their belongings, shade from the sun, a way to carry wood or food, comfort to a wounded person, etc. Please give as you can. Cash will be accepted and checks may be written to: Disciples Women's Ministries or DWM. Envelopes will be provided. Questions please ask Connie Sheller.

Bethany Class

The Bethany Class Zoom will open at 8:30am on Sunday.
The class will begin at **9am** on Sunday.
Meeting ID: 883 3055 7258 Passcode: 344061

Unit 3: Liberating Letters

May 1	Freedom from Sin	Romans 6:1-14
May 8	Freedom for the Future	Romans 8:18-30
May 15	Freedom from the Law	Galatians 3:18-29
May 22	Freedom, Love, and Faith & The Fruit of Freedom	Galatians 5:1-26

This Zoom class will also be available Wednesdays at 1pm.
You will use the same Meeting ID and Passcode as Sunday link.

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

"Join a Meeting" on Zoom at 9:45am using the following 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.



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Gene Sheller, Bread
Connie Sheller, Cup
May 1, 2022 - 10:15am

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Rev. Stillwell

Call to Worship

Owen Stillwell

Leader: Sing praises to God you people of faith.

People: We give thanks to God, who heals and restores.

Leader: Praise God who transforms us, who heals and loves us.

People: Praise God, who clothes us with joy.

Leader: Do not be silent. Praise the Lord!

People: We give thanks our God, today and always.

Opening Hymn

“Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun”

Audra Allen, organist

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does its successive journeys run;
his love shall spread from shore to shore till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

As we gather to worship and as we come together in prayer we thank you, gracious God. We thank you for the gifts of this world, the sun and the moon, the flowers and the trees. We thank you for the beauty of the world and the joys of life. We thank you for family and friends, and a place to call home.

We also stop to thank you for those things that we often take for granted. We acknowledge with gratitude the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and the clothing we wear. We thank you for the heart that keeps on beating, for the body defenses that fight diseases, and for the bodily functions that continue without planning or thought. We thank you even for pain that warns of danger, for criticisms that enhance our character, for pangs of conscience that keep us from evil, and for the expectations of others that keep our aspirations high.

We thank you even as we confess that in our searching and groping to find you, that we have too often settled for idols made of gold, stone, and plastic.

We have put our faith in our money, placed our hope in institutions of brick and mortar, and trusted our weapons of war to keep us safe.

We have sought after our own comfort and ease, rejected calls for personal and national sacrifice, and belittled calls challenging us to aim higher.

Forgive us, O Lord, we pray.

Now help us we plead.

Help us to give an accounting of the hope that is in us—the hope nurtured by our life in Christ, the hope found in your commandment of love, the hope that comes from being your offspring and abiding in your Spirit.

Mighty creator as we search for you in the dark, come to us and illumine our path. Surround us with your love, and strengthen us with your grace, that our hearts and minds may be open to listen for your word and to live your love.

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

Acts 9:1-18

Gene Sheller

Anthem

“Is There Room for a Sinner?” by Pepper Choplin

Choir

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

Well now that May is here you know what that means right? They say April showers bring May flowers, and I am here to tell you it is true, because I found the most beautiful flower, and I wanted to share it with you. You cannot believe how big this flower is, and I found it growing along the side of the road. I want to show it to you but I think it would be best if you closed your eyes.

(Rev. Chris goes to the pulpit to get the “flower” which is really an orange traffic cone and shows it to the kids. After they explain to him that this isn’t a flower but a construction cone, he continues.)

That’s ok because, in addition, to being spring and time for flowers it is also construction season since the weather is nice enough for workers to get out there and fix the roads that need to be repaired. You have probably seen these as well and seen roads under construction, but let me ask you, have you ever considered that you were under construction too? I don’t mean that someone has surrounded you with orange cones and they are using equipment to repair you, but I do mean that you are not yet complete. It’s true. Think about it. Are you as tall as you will ever be? Is your voice as deep as it will get? Are you done growing and changing? No you are not. This might be obvious to you, but do you know that even when you are fully grown your sprit is still under construction?

No matter how old you get or how big you get there is always something about God you don’t know, and every day gives us a lesson to learn. The saddest people are the ones who think they are done growing and have nothing left to learn or improve. We come to church not because we are perfect but because we are not, and we need God to help us. Our faith, like the Western PA highway system is always under construction.

So you are right. This isn’t a flower, and the next time you are stopped at a construction site, you might not want to smell one of these, but I hope that you will see it as sign of God’s love and care and a reminder that as long as we live we are under construction.

Sermon

“Leopards and Scorpions”

Rev. Stillwell

I don't know why it is common to use animals to describe human nature but we do it very often. Phrases like “hungry as a horse”, “stubborn as a mule”, and “fierce as a lion” permeate our language and conversation. One of the most common comes from the Bible in the book of Jeremiah where the prophet Jeremiah asks referring to those in Israel who had done evil and refused to follow the law, “Can a leopard change its spots?” He asked this to show that some people can never change and now this saying has become so popular that many Christians say it not knowing that it comes from the Bible, and many non-Christians who have never read the Bible know this saying.

Comparing human nature to the animal kingdom is useful, but it always runs the risk that some scientist will come along and disprove a saying. This has happened recently in Borneo where scientists studying the clouded leopard have learned that sometimes, leopards do indeed change their spots. Clouded leopards were first documented in 1821, and it was believed that there was only one species of leopards in that area, but now DNA tests have proved that a second species of leopards with a different marking of spots has developed and the World Wildlife Federation has dubbed this the Borneo clouded leopard. So now that we know that sometimes leopards do change their spots and become a different species, maybe we should turn to a different animal to talk about the ability or inability for a person to change who or what he really is.

Have you heard the old fable of the scorpion and the frog? It goes like this:

The river was wide and swift, and the scorpion stopped to reconsider the situation. He couldn't see any way across. So he ran upriver and then checked downriver, all the while thinking that he might have to turn back. Suddenly, he saw a frog sitting in the rushes by the bank of the stream on the other side of the river. He decided to ask the frog for help getting across the stream.

"Hellooo Mr. Frog!" called the scorpion across the water, "Would you be so kind as to give me a ride on your back across the river?"

"Well now, Mr. Scorpion! How do I know that if I try to help you, you won't try to kill me?" asked the frog hesitantly.

"Because," the scorpion replied, "If I try to kill you, then I would die too, for you see I cannot swim!"

Now this seemed to make sense to the frog. But he asked. "What about when I get close to the bank? You could still try to kill me and get back to the shore!"

"This is true," agreed the scorpion, "But then I wouldn't be able to get to the other side of the river!"

"Alright then...how do I know you won't just wait till we get to the other side and THEN kill me?" said the frog.

"Ahh...," crooned the scorpion, "Because you see, once you've taken me to the other side of this river, I will be so grateful for your help, that it would hardly be fair to reward you with death, now would it?!"

So the frog agreed to take the scorpion across the river. Halfway across the river, the frog suddenly felt a sharp sting in his back and, out of the corner of his eye, saw the scorpion remove his stinger from the frog's back. A deadening numbness began to creep into his limbs.

"You fool!" croaked the frog, "Now we shall both die! Why on earth did you do that?" The scorpion shrugged, and said, "What did you expect? I am a scorpion. That is what scorpions do." Then they both sank in to the muddy waters of the swiftly flowing river.

That is an old story, but our passage today from the book of Acts is an even older story about the conversion of Saul. When this occurs and the hateful persecutor of the early church became the church's greatest advocate I expect that many Christians must have wondered if he is a leopard or a scorpion. Saul first comes to the reader's attention when he appeared at the stoning of Stephen. He was a Pharisee from Tarsus who was zealous in his pursuit of the law. He was faithful to Judaism and believed that anyone who blasphemed it would bring the wrath of God upon the nation of Israel, so he did what he saw as his patriotic and religious duty and persecuted the followers of Christ and the movement he referred to as the Way.

When he had seen Stephen's stoning he went out and led a persecution of Christians everywhere which brought him to the road to Damascus where he hoped to find more and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment. He found a Christian all right. In fact he found Christ, himself, who appeared to him in a flash of light and cried out, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Paul was blinded but, with the help of his friends, followed Jesus' command to go to Damascus and wait for instructions. There a Christian named Ananias was sent to him. Saul's sight was eventually returned, and then he was baptized.

Afterwards Saul then goes on to preach the word of Christ throughout the lands where he used to persecute it. Saul is a Hebrew name, but as his ministry is predominantly among the gentiles he later goes about referring to himself as Paul, the Roman form of his name, and that is how we have come to know him as the apostle Paul, the writer of much of the New Testament.

So Paul becomes Christian, and not just any Christian, but perhaps the most famous of all. Jesus tells Ananias that Paul "is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel." We know looking back that he did these things, but for Paul's contemporaries it must have been hard to forgive what he did.

This story, then, is among many other things, a story of forgiveness. First, Christ forgave Paul, and then others would have had to as well. When called directly by Christ to help Paul, Ananias understandably was concerned saying to Jesus, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." Like the frog, Ananias was afraid that Paul was a scorpion, and it took great faith for him to go to see him and lay hands upon him.

Ananias did as Christ commanded because he had faith in him and knew that Christ called his followers to forgive those who had hurt them. We know that Christ calls us to do the same. We pray it every Sunday in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." One does not come without the other. We know that Christ forgave even those who executed him even as Stephen did, and we know that he forgave even a vile and wicked person like Saul.

That is a pretty high bar for forgiveness, and although we cannot be expected to always reach that mark still we must strive to show love in forgiveness, but we know that we must also be careful for we live in a treacherous world, and there are always people ready to take advantage of our good nature. We all know such people. People who hurt us time and again. People who promise to quit drinking, using drugs, or lying, but they don't. People who make promises and never follow through and when they tell us they mean it this time we want to trust them, to forgive them for what they have done in the past, but we are wary.

So when it comes to conversion, seeing is truly believing. Even after Saul's sight was restored, he was baptized and his sight regained, you can bet that many others were unsure if this leopard had really changed its spots, or, like the scorpion, was simply biding his time to sting. Acts continues, "immediately

he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?"

Before Paul could become the apostle to the Gentiles he had to convince many people he was no longer the Saul they knew and feared. I think that Ananias' reaction is instructive for us today. He was chosen to do one of the most significant acts in the history of Christianity and he was chosen by Jesus himself, and still he was skeptical that Paul was a scorpion rather than a leopard who had changed its spots.

Therefore, I think it is perfectly all right for you to be skeptical of scorpions lest you get stung. But as Christians we must also believe that people can be like a leopard and change their spots. If this isn't the case then there isn't much hope for the world or the faith. We must believe that others can change because we know that we ourselves have.

We may never have repented of the types of sins that Paul had to, but that is the point. If Christ's grace is sufficient for even someone like Paul then it is sufficient for each one of us. That doesn't mean that everyone who claims to have changed really has or that we don't sometimes get stung by some of these people, but it does mean that the day that we begin to believe that a person cannot become new, that a leopard cannot change its spots, is the day that we stop believing in the gospel.

We don't have to believe it right away. It took scientists in Borneo a hundred years of studying to determine that the clouded leopard had changed its spots, and when Paul got to Damascus and preached about Jesus there many people didn't know what to make of it, but if someone really has changed over time, their actions will bear it out, and then it will be incumbent upon us to remember to forgive them for their sins just as we would want Christ to forgive ours.

Knowing that he was to follow Christ no matter the consequences, Ananias of Damascus, found Saul of Tarsus in the house as Christ had told him and laid his hands upon him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Upon seeing this feared and hated man for the first time, Ananias called him, "Brother Saul" and those are two of the sweetest words ever recorded in the New Testament.

Not only do those two words remind us of God's tendency to use unlikely people to be instruments of grace, but those sweet words, or any variation of them that you and I are courageous enough to speak in our circles of life, those two sweet words make clear that love is the last thing our enemies might expect to hear from us, but the first thing they need to hear. It was grace, amazing grace, that saved a wretch like Paul and grace that Paul taught in the first chapter of his most famous letter, his letter to the Romans:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'The one who is righteous will live by faith.'"

It was faith that led to grace which leads to salvation and Paul's doctrine of salvation by faith is the hallmark of our faith so that the promises of God to the Israelites were not contained in Israel or to the Jewish people but have extended to all people across the world.

Paul, of course, is the central figure in the story of Paul's conversion, but I think the person we most need to be like is Ananias. Like him we need to have faith in ourselves and in others. We need to have faith that scorpions can become leopards, that sinners can become saints. If we want the world to change then we need to believe that people can change and believe that if we treat someone like a brother then they may just act like one to us in return.

Call to Offering

Diana Crowe

O God, you have power and wisdom and might. You deserve honor and glory. We come to you, Holy One, blessed by your abundant life, to offer ourselves as your faithful workers. We bring our gifts this day, trusting that they will serve your people. Amen.

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

Lord, accept these our offerings. We give them with joy as a token of our praise and thanksgiving, as we commit ourselves again as members of the living body of Christ. Use our gifts and our very selves in service to Christ. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Pastor Gena

Hear this invitation to the Table as it comes to us from the Iona Community in Scotland...

Jesus was always the guest.

In the homes of Peter and Jairus, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna, he was always the guest.

At the meal tables of the wealthy where he pled the case of the poor, he was always the guest.

Upsetting polite company, befriending isolated people, welcoming the stranger, he was always the guest.

But here, at this table, Jesus is the host.

Those who wish to serve him must first be served by him, those who want to follow him must first be fed by him, those who would wash his feet must first let him make them clean.

For this is the table where God intends us to be nourished; this is the time when Christ can make us new.

So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, for a fuller life, for a better world.

Jesus Christ, who has sat at our table now invites us to be guests at his.

Invitation to Communion from Wild Goose Worship Group, Iona Community (Scotland), *A Wee Worship Book: Fourth Incarnation*, 1999.
Sourced from <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/menno-snapshots/voices-together-the-invitation-to-communion/>

Communion Hymn*“Loving Lord, as Now We Gather”*

Audra Allen, organist

Loving Lord, as now we gather, of that love unworthy still,
give us courage to surrender rebel heart and stubborn will,
and in us, in faith maturing, all your promises fulfill.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Gene Sheller

Dear God,

We come once again to praise you and honor you for wanting a relationship with us. You wanted that so much that you saved us from our sins by sending your Son, Jesus to be the sacrifice for those sins. We thank you for doing that. Please bless us as we take these emblems, the bread that represents Jesus' body and the cup that represents his blood to remember his sacrifice. We thank you God. In Jesus' name we pray. 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.

Call to Discipleship

Pastor Gena

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

"Amazing Grace"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Without fear or hesitation, entrust your life to God, because the Lord is the source of life, of hope, and of peace.

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



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
Washington PA 15301

Mrs. Mary McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

Alice Cokeley
900 N. Cass Lake Road, Apartment 324
Waterford, MI 48328

Bernard and Jane Teagarden
441 Valley Brook Road
McMurray, PA 15317

Nadine Teagarden
826 Old National Pike
Claysville PA 15323

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

Linda Hainer
Kyle Hallam
Judy Hanning
Aryn Hess
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Kenger Family
Family of Pam Kloss
Ty, Kerri, Allie, Ivy &
Ty James Lacock
Von Lacock
Bob Lanning
Libby LeDuff
Lee & Betsy Martin
Dave McConnell
Don Melvin
Michaela Nixon
Carmen Oliverio
Ruth Mikuta
Deborah Patterson
Bo & Patty Pryor
Kayda Richards
Cathy Rentgen
Betty Jo Riggle
Dave Ross
Jim and Barb Roupe

John Shadeck
Hannah Simpson
Doug and Tracy Smith
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Bernard and Jane Teagarden
Beth Teagarden
Nadine Teagarden
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
Sarah Wittenberg

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	

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.

Puzzle!

Discover the identity of a biblical person. First, assign a number value to each letter, starting with M=1, N=2, O=3, ... A=15, etc. Then use the code to complete the clues.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
15 _____ 1 2 3 _____

FIRST CLUE: 15 7 15 13 3 9 2 21 1 15 2

22 19 25 23 26 26 19 18 7 3 1 19 3 2 19.

SECOND CLUE: 22 19 11 15 7 8 19 2 18 23 2 21

7 22 19 19 4 23 2 8 22 19 18 19 7 19 6 8

11 22 19 2 21 3 18 17 15 26 26 19 18 22 23 1.

THIRD CLUE: 15 7 15 16 15 16 13 22 19 11 15 7

20 3 9 2 18 20 26 3 15 8 23 2 21 23 2 15

16 15 7 25 19 8 23 2 8 22 19 2 23 26 19 6 23 10 19 6.

Who is this person? _____

Answer: Moses