

Manor Minutes
Volume 15 Issue 8
February 23, 2024

- Lent Devotional Study – February 26, 7pm via Zoom
- Bethany Class Luncheon – February 27, noon at Eat'n Park
- Dartball – February 27, 7pm at Washington Alliance
- Stewardship/Finance Ministry – February 28, 5:30pm
- Choir Practice – February 29, 6:30pm

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

DON'T

FORGET

Week of Compassion Special Offering – February 25
(Noisy Offering, bring your coins)

Lent Devotional Study via Zoom – We hope you will join us in a discussion of the readings of our Lenten devotional “Go To Jerusalem” which will be hosted by Rev. Chris and Pastor Gena continuing this Monday, February 26 at 7pm via Zoom. If you didn't join last week, you can still join the discussion this week.

Bethany Class Luncheon – February 27, Noon at Eat'n Park

Easter Flowers – orders due to Office by March 10

Tri-County Men's Fellowship Dinner – Thursday, March 21 at Perryopolis First Christian Church. Registration is at 5:30pm with the Dinner (creamed chicken over biscuits, mashed potatoes, green beans and dessert) at 6pm. Cost is \$15. Sign up in the Narthex or call the office by March 17 to RSVP.

Palm Sunday – March 24

Maundy Thursday – March 28 Service to be held at Fairhill Manor.

Good Friday Service – March 29 Service to be held at the First Christian Church.

Sunrise Service & Breakfast – March 31 at 7am

Night at the Wild Things Game – June 7



SUBMIT YOUR REPORTS

January – February reports due
March 6

Board Meeting
March 13, 7pm



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Rita Puskarich, Bread
Gary Ford, Cup

February 25, 2024 – 10:15am

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Children's Bell Choir

"It's a Small World"

Call to Worship

Gary Ford

Leader: In promise and covenant, God calls

People: In hope and trust, we respond.

Leader: In love and faithfulness, God saves.

People: In gratitude and joy, we come.

Leader: Let us worship and praise God's holy name.

Opening Hymn

"Shine Jesus Shine"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory. Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire. Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy. Send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Holy One, we come before you today: full of hope, full of desire, full of promise. Thank you for the gifts that you have given us – the gifts you have given each of us as individuals, the gifts you have given us as a community of faith – that enable us to work together for the good of your church, the good of our community, the good of our world. Give us the grace and courage to continue to work together, showing forth the fruit of your love growing inside us.

Gracious Lord, you have blessed us with freedom— freedom to follow or to turn away; freedom to love or to hate; freedom to heal or to hurt. You ask that we follow your ways, loving our neighbors as ourselves. Forgive us for making choices that lead to hurt and fear. Help us to see ourselves and others more clearly, as treasured members of your one family.

We thank you especially this morning for Week of Compassion and for all who give through this offering that others might live on. Please encourage and enliven those who staff the work of Week of Compassion with diligence and care; the many partners throughout the world who are your hands and feet in the midst of poverty, war, disease, disaster, and displacement; and those who receive the gifts of compassion and so live another day with a little more hope. Take what we offer and multiply it abundantly around the world, all around the year through Week of Compassion, we pray.

Compassionate God, we name before you now the concerns of our hearts. We pray for the church throughout the world, that it might continue finding creative ways to care for each other, to speak for truth and justice, and to share the good news of your love for all. We pray for governments and leaders everywhere that they might make courageous decisions for the common good. Be with those who feel their lives and bodies have no value; those who are longing for healthy, loving relationships; those who are weighed down with emotional baggage; those who struggle with intense anger; and those living with

addiction. We pray for these dear ones known to us who are in need of healing – in body, mind or spirit... Come and ease their pain, come and ease their loneliness, come and hold them in your loving arms.

Show us your way, your truth, and your life that we may abide with you, worshipping you all our days. We pray these things together in the name of Jesus, who gives us true freedom, the prayer he taught us....

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

Prayer Response:

“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 Reading

Psalm 15

Barb Bailey

Anthem

“Deep Waters,” by Pepper Choplin

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

What do you need to live on? Let’s think of things we can touch and see first that we need (a house, food, clothing). These are some physical things we need in order to live.

What about things we can’t see or feel? We need things like kindness and love. What else can you think of that we need to live on (friendship, prayer, play, sharing).

I wonder how you would feel if you suddenly lost some of these things you need to live? You might feel sad, or scared or angry. And you might feel all alone. Can you imagine if you lost your home, all your toys and clothes? That would be pretty awful.

Now imagine if lots of people came together to provide you with a new home, new clothing, new things you need to live? That would be pretty amazing, right?

One of the ways that our church helps do this is through a ministry called Week of Compassion. When people lose their homes after bad storms or fires, or when they leave their homes to move somewhere safe, they get help to get the things they need to live on. Lots of churches send money or even help work with Week of Compassion to build new homes, provide meals and find jobs. When we all add our gifts together there can be enough for everyone’s needs.

This week we are giving money to Week of Compassion. We are going to work together to collect all of the coins that people here in our congregation have brought to give to Week of Compassion. Let’s do that now.

Dear God, We thank you for providing us with many things to live on: not just our beds and homes, but also the stories we read at bedtime, and the laughter we share with our families. We pray for people near us and far away who don’t have the things they need to live on. Thank you for these coins. Help them to bring love and hope to each person they reach in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Adapted from Week of Compassion 2024 Children’s Sermon at www.weekofcompassion.org

Sermon**“Who Left This Mess?”**

Rev. Stillwell

I love dogs and when I imagined myself grown up I assumed I would have a dog, but here I am all grown and up, and I neither own a dog, nor do I think I ever will. I still love dogs, but I no longer want to own one.

This is because they make some serious messes especially when they are young. When I was 6 we had a dog we named Chewie and we left him home a little too long one day so that upon returning we discovered that he had earned his name by chewing up the cushions of the couch.

It was quite a scene, and it looked like he had had a lot of fun, but when he saw us seeing him, the tail stopped wagging, the ears drooped, the eyes looked like puppy dog eyes because they were, in fact, sad puppy dog eyes. He might have been a dog, but he was not ignorant of the mess he had made or of the mess he was in. He was young and impetuous and unable to control his impulses. He had made a mess because he was a mess.

Now I've seen that look on a lot of human faces over the years including my own. Often times the messes that we make in and of our lives we make because they are fun to do. It was satisfying while it lasted, but after you pause and survey the damage you are left to wonder, “Who left this mess?” When we find ourselves in a mess we often wonder how it got there even though we were there when it happened.

One of the most common reasons for the mess in our lives has to do with our posture toward God. We are leaning away from God at the exact moment we should be leaning in. In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul talks about two different ways of living. The first is the way of the self. He writes:

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The second is a list of how we should live according to the Spirit.

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

This is the goal of Lent, less of the former and more of the latter; less of our self and more of the spirit. Our unwillingness to die to self- this tendency to lean away from God- is what the Bible calls idolatry.

Now we usually think of idolatry as worshiping an idol like Aaron and the golden calf or Nebechednezzar and the golden statue. Stories like these sound extreme but idolatry is alive and well today. The fact that it is more subtle makes it all the harder to recognize. Many things can become idols: work, success, fame, hobbies, sports, wealth, possessions, pride, ego. In fact, Martin Luther said, “Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your God.”

There is also idolatry in putting your hopes in something. There is nothing wrong with buying a new house, but, the bigger house you had hoped would save your marriage just becomes a bigger space to clean. The fast car you bought to help you feel satisfied in your mid-life becomes another bill to keep on top of.

Having things and wanting things does not make a mess of your life in and of themselves but giving them too much priority and God too little priority can. Most of us have the idolatry of nonchalance towards God. Tom Berlin whose book, *Restored*, inspired much of this sermon series, calls this “high functioning idolatry”. Like a high functioning alcoholic we are able to look and sound like devoted followers of Christ but we have messes in our lives that indicate our commitment is not as deep as we thought.

Author Henry Nouwen writes about the dilemma of setting aside idols in order to embrace God fully. “God does not want to be excluded from any area of our heart. But we hesitate because such a lover might radically change us and lead us where we would rather not go.”

God works on us constantly, often in ways we do not recognize until much later. This caused John Wesley to coin the term *prevenient grace* which describes God working to reach us long before we think about reaching out to God so that, when we do turn to God, all is ready for us. The table has been set so to speak.

You can see *prevenient grace* in the story of Zacchaeus. When he was child did Zacchaeus say, “When I grow up I want to extort my neighbors out of their hard earned money on behalf of the occupying Gentile Empire?” Something has obviously gone wrong for Zacchaeus. He had made a mess and every day he did something to make it worse. Zacchaeus did not know Jesus, but Jesus surely knew him.

Something must have been going in his life that made him search for something or he would not have climbed up in that tree. Jesus has timing and that timing has a name; *prevenient grace*. God is always searching for you, trying to get your attention, reminding you that no matter how much of a mess you are in, God is there ready to help. God’s grace is always on time, because it is always there ready to go, so that when Zacchaeus was ready to repent Jesus was there to say salvation has come to this house.

I think it is best to think of God’s grace as forgiveness given for a specific moment followed by a healing process that lasts a life time. Grace is surgery followed by therapy for the soul. When Jesus said that salvation had come to Zacchaeus he wasn’t talking about something that would happen when he died, but something that occurred right then and there. For Jesus, salvation is not about getting our ticket punched, it is an earthly life that leads to eternal life.

One final note about *prevenient grace*: it is not all about us. Yes God wants us to experience new life but God wants it for all the people around us as well. In a day and age of social media this should resonate with us. If God helps one person to clean up his mess, it will definitely improve the lives of all he knows and might inspire them to clean up theirs as well.

Jesus spent an inordinate amount of time with Zacchaeus, which caused people to grumble because he knew that if a tax collector gave his life to God and turned away from corruption, everybody’s life would get better, and maybe they would give their life to God as well.

This is the nature of God’s love and grace. It is always searching and waiting. It is ever ready to show up at a moment’s notice to move us from a mess to a place of light and hope.

In the future when we left our dog, we knew there was a good chance he would make a mess. So we put down towels or pads for one kind of mess, and we hid our shoes and covered the cushions to prevent another type of mess. We knew that he was a puppy and puppies make messes, but we also knew that we would clean up the mess he made and we would love him still.

When we look at the mess in our own lives let us remember the grace of Christ that has come before we even knew we needed it, so that we can say that we left this mess, but Jesus has come to help us leave the mess behind.

Call to Offering

Von Lacock

Nothing we currently have begun with us or should end with us. Currency is like currents of water. The rain comes and waters the earth, helping flowers bear fruit; then it returns to the heavens, a circle of giving and receiving made by God's wisdom. Let us give back to God as God has given to us.

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below! Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Dedication of Offering Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

God of ancient days and futures not yet seen, bring your eternal wisdom to our time of offering. Bring your ancient faith and faithful love to the gifts we now bring. Transform the past with the promise of your future, that together our gifts may merge with your Spirit to bring transformation and hope to your world. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

After two decades of ministry I can definitively state that people will not deal with their sin until they believe in God's unconditional love. No one wants to do all that work only to find that it isn't enough.

When it comes to being reconciled with God I tend to think of it like shoveling snow. You shovel and shovel and then the plow comes through and pushes it all back in your driveway, so you shovel some more, and it starts snowing again, so you head back out to shovel once more. Eventually I get to a point in the winter where I see the snow and think, I'm not shoveling any more. I am not brushing that off my car. It will all be for nothing, and the reason so many of us acknowledge the mess we are in, admit that we are the ones who made it, but don't try to clean it up, isn't because we are lazy, but because we question if the work in the end will be worth it.

Asking God to clean our hearts could be like trying to clean a vacuum. Why would you bother? It will never be completely clean and even if it could be it won't stay clean for long. This makes sense if all we are thinking of is the work we are doing, but, when it comes to restoring ourselves we aren't the only ones doing the work, and the first step in getting a clean heart is to realize that it is only God who can create in us a clean heart.

That is why we come to this table. Not because of what we have done, but because of what God can do. This is the table of the Lord. The Lord has invited everyone. There is no one so strong and good that they don't need the bread of Christ. There is no one so weak and broken that they don't deserve the blood of Christ. You may think of yourself as disqualified or overqualified. But Jesus thinks you are perfectly qualified. Come, there is seat at this table for you and the help only God can provide.

Communion Hymn

"Pass It On"

Carson Throckmorton, organist

It only takes a spark to get a fire going, and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing; that's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it: you spread God's love to everyone, you want to pass it on.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Rita Puskarich

Holy God, we gather as a community of love to bring ourselves and others closer to you. This table reminds us of our human sin and mortality yet because of your son Jesus, our Lord and Savior, we have

hope for our eternal life. We express our gratitude and ask your blessing on this bread and cup, Jesus' life and blood shed for us. May it keep us mindful of your love and mercy that we may be faithful throughout all of our days. 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

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

Rev. Stillwell

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

"There Is a Balm in Gilead"

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole, there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin sick soul. Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain, but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

You have been nourished by the bread of Christ. You have been anointed by the Holy Spirit. God's living Word lives in you. God's holy Word cleanses you. Go and proclaim God's Word in all that you do.



Please fill out this order form and return to the Church Office with **payment** by March 10. 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 10, 2024.

Given by _____
In Memory/Honor of _____ <small>(circle one)</small>
In Memory/Honor of _____ <small>(circle one)</small>
In Memory/Honor of _____ <small>(circle one)</small>

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!

Prayer List:

Fairhill Manor extends its sympathy to John and Anna Berg on the death of John's brother, Terry Berg on Saturday, February 17 in Georgia. Please keep their family in your thoughts and prayers.

Homebound Members:

Mrs. Mary McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

Chuck and Mary Wiseman
880 S Main St, Apt 214
Washington PA 15301

Elinor Newman (Southmont)
835 S Main St, Rm 513
Washington PA 15301

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

Carol Brown
36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd, Rm 213
Washington PA 15301

Doris Sorice
880 S Main St, Apt 336
Washington PA 15301

Ed Alexey
Avery Allen
Jeannie Allison
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Jim Banish
Martin Berisford
Eleanor Boyles
Mabel Brooks
Leslie Byron
Sandra Carman
Clayton Chalfant
Leslie Chalfant
Denise Charles
Wanda Chicone
MaryAnn Coates
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Sue Donaldson
Benjamin Dube
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Thomas Farabee
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Jay Freudenberg
Lois Gayman
Sue Golsky
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg
Theresa Hancher
Judy Hanning
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris

Aryn Hess
Janet Houston
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Kenger Family
Ivy Lacock
Ty Lacock, Jr.
Bob Lanning
David Leonard
John Lewis
Lee Martin
Dave McConnell
Pam McCord
Norm McDonough
Ruth Mikuta
Dick Moninger
Bob Morgan
Paul Myers
Joe Neckerman
Michaela Nixon
Sandy Nixon
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Deborah Patterson
JoAnn Piatt
Bo & Patty Pryor
Rick Rafferty
Cathy Rentgen
Jeannie Riffle
Lori Riffle
Betty Jo Riggie

Emily Cope Robinson
Dave Ross
John Samida
Sam Sheller
Valerie Shetler
Hannah Simpson
Alexas Skariot
Doug and Tracy Smith
Darci Sprowls
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Bernard Teagarden
Beth Teagarden
Jane Teagarden
Thad Turner
Tammie Wallace
Gary Weaver
Tom Williams
Addison Wittenberg
Sarah Wittenberg

In the Military

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

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.

*currently deployed