

Manor Minutes
Volume 13 Issue 11
February 25, 2022

The Children of the Church will have canisters collecting coins this Sunday before the service for “Week of Compassion”.



The Story Chapter 19 Ezra: First Things First – February 27

Dartball – March 1, 7pm @ Laboratory

Board Reports Due – March 2

Choir Practice – March 3, 6:30pm

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

Bethany Class

February 27: Praise God for His Greatness -Psalms 149:1-5; 150

The Bethany Class Zoom will open at 8:30 am.

The class will begin at 9:15 am.

Meeting ID: 883 3055 7258 Passcode: 344061



Ash Wednesday service will be held in the sanctuary at 7pm on March 2 and also live on Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent out in a separate email but will be the same as Sunday morning service. If anyone would like to receive ashes but cannot make it to the service, please call the office (724) 225-8610 and arrangements will be made for Rev. Chris or Pastor Gena to give them.



The devotional for Lent this year is titled, **“Gifts of the Spiritual Wilderness”** and is available this Sunday in the Narthex. Please pick up one per family and use it to celebrate the ways in which God has blessed us and helped us during our time in the spiritual wilderness. There will be a Zoom discussion during Lent starting Monday, March 7 at 7pm via Zoom. A Zoom link will be sent out in a separate email. If a number of people wish to have a second time during the day another discussion session may be set up. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Chris.



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Kevin Puskarich, Bread
Rita Puskarich, Cup
February 27, 2022 - 10:15am

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Gene Sheller

Mighty Ruler, Most High, Lover of Justice, Mystery Hidden in Cloud, Great King,
Forgiving God, Enthroned One, Mountain Dweller; You are exalted over all people.
We praise your great and awesome name. We worship at your holy mountain.
For you, O God, are holy!

Opening Hymn

“Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven”

Audra Allen, organist

Praise, my soul, the God of heaven, glad of heart your carols raise;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who, like me, should sing God’s praise?
Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Maker all our days.

Blessing of the Thomas Campbell Welcome Home Baskets

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

Holy Lord, stir up our spirits that your Word might be accomplished in and through us. Use us in your grand movement toward wholeness and freedom for all of your creation. Use us, even in spite of ourselves, even without our realizing it, to tip the scales toward truth and justice, grace and peace. Renew in us the confidence that, even when all seems lost and hopeless, you are still writing an upper story of love that is continually calling us to yourself, calling us home.

We are in need of some rebuilding, O God. Many things have changed. We are still scattered, far and near. For some, our home is unrecognizable and no longer a place of comfort. We are unsettled, unsure of the future. Stir up in us your spirit that we might bring all of our resources to the work of your rebuilding and building anew in this place. Stir up in us a generosity of resources, an abundance of compassion and care for each other, a renewed courage to use the gifts you have given each of us for the good of your body, a vision for how we are called to reach out and raise others up in your name.

Give us time and ways to grieve what we have lost, Compassionate God, that we might be able in time to see the new work that you are always beginning among us.

We give you thanks that you have never left us. You are good, and your steadfast love endures forever. You continue to speak to us through your Word, through the Feast set at your Table, through each other, and in your still, small voice in our own hearts.

We thank you for our homes and for our families. We pray for those waiting to return home and begin again. Hasten the process of rebuilding and repair; bless the transition home with meaning and hope.

We give you thanks for the gift of long life. Even as we struggle with bodies that are failing and minds that aren't as quick as they once were, we give you thanks for the lives we have lived to this day. Bless our older years with joy, with connection, with sweet reminiscing, with a willingness to offer wisdom and encouragement to those who follow along after us. Hear our shouts of praise for your steadfast love, for you are good, O God.

Merciful God, be with those in harm's way - those who are under attack from outside and from within. Be with those who do not have what they need to live well and aren't sure where to turn next. Be with those who are confused and disoriented, those adjusting to new and unfamiliar surroundings. Have mercy, O Lord, on all who stand in need of comfort and hope. We pray for all those we have named aloud this morning and those we name now in your presence....

Thank you for your mercies that show up in unexpected places, for your grace that relieves the pressure and lifts us up just enough to let us get our footing again. Bless us and all of these dear ones with the sure knowledge of your presence with us. We pray all of this in the name of our Lord and Savior, 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”

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

Ezra 1

Kevin Puskarich

Special Music

Audra Allen

Children's Message

Cara Hritz

Good morning!

We're going to stand up and try a few things. Can you stand in one foot? How about on the other foot? Now we're going to move to the wall and try again. Stand with your shoulder against the wall. Move your foot next to the wall too. Now, can you lift up the other foot? It's really hard isn't it? But you all stood on one foot just fine over there! The wall changes your balance. It's not as easy to stand on one foot this way. Let's go sit down again. Was that harder than you thought it would be? Have you ever done something else that looked easy but was harder than you thought? If you got to choose, would you keep doing things the easier way? The way you know how? Our lesson today teaches us about doing things that are harder than they look and learning to change. A brand new temple was built to worship God. A lot of people in our story were happy about the new temple. But, some people didn't want a new one. They liked the old temple and they didn't want things to change. Sometimes doing something different can be hard. We have to change. Just like it was easy to stand on one foot here but it was harder by the wall. You had to change things to make it work. Maybe next time you have to do something different and you don't want to change, you can remember this.

Let's pray. God, thank you for your word and all of the ways it teaches us. Help us to remember that we can do hard things and that you'll help us through them. Amen

Second Scripture Reading

Ezra 3:8-13

Rev. Stillwell

The past is a tricky thing. No matter what happened in it the effects linger on into the present. In his book, *The Go-Between*, L. P. Hartley wrote, “The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.” This is so true and might be the most famous literary line concerning the past if it were not for Faulkner’s quip, “The past is never dead. It isn’t even past.”

These quotes are true and it is clear how this can be a bad thing if the past was a bad one. For people who experienced trauma of some form or another the effects of it last long after it has stopped causing problems in a person’s present life and relationships. Some psychologists even speculate that much of neurosis that people suffer come from early childhood traumas long since consciously forgotten but unconsciously remembered. For anyone who deals with ghosts from their past it is clear that the past is not dead.

But this can be true even if the past was good, and perhaps we might say especially if it was good. When we have a bad event in our past that we remember we are quite aware of how it affects us, and hopefully we do our best to not let past pain interfere with present pleasure, but so many people are haunted by a past of pleasantness and joy that they are unaware of how this brings them present pain. Not only that, but many people are haunted by a pleasant past that never truly existed.

Here is what I mean. I bet each of us knows someone who is never happy. They aren’t necessarily depressed, nor are they suffering from the effects of some great tragedy that befell them long ago. Rather, they have had relatively good lives that have provided them with very little to complain about so they complain whenever life in the present does not live up to life in their imagined past. If you do not know someone like this then the type of person of which I am speaking may very well be you. Here I am speaking of someone for whom the present is just never as good as the past, someone for whom the sun just doesn’t shine as bright as it once did, the flowers never smell as sweet as they remember, someone who is quick to remind you every time you see some good in the present day, that things “just aren’t like they used to be.” Well in some ways they are right. Things aren’t exactly like they used to be, but I would argue that it is often the case that the past is not like it used to be either.

This is the problem with our memories. No matter what life was like back in a certain day it is easy to think that it was perfect and better than whatever life is like today. This has been the bane of every generation. I’ve spent my whole life hearing about how terrible my generation is because it just isn’t like it used to be.

First I heard about how the 50’s were the golden age. Everything was so innocent then and carefree. I grew up watching *Happy Days* a show made in the 70’s that remembered the 50’s glowingly, and I almost believed it. When people remember the 1950’s they are quick to remember the early days of rock and roll and car hops and just as quick to forget that people were so worried about the threat of nuclear holocaust that many purchased bomb shelters and practiced air raid drills in school.

Then many of my teachers and friends parents talked all about the 60’s. About how exciting a time that was, and how great the music was then. It was a time of great peace and love I have been told, even though the Vietnam War raged and black people were being terribly abused in their struggle for Civil Rights. Think of all the great leaders who were assassinated in that decade. Whatever it was, it wasn’t very peaceful.

Around these parts most people would tell you that the glory days were in the 70’s. I mean, in those days the gods walked the earth, and many of you probably saw them. Great men of history like Bradshaw, Lambert, and Mean Joe Green. Let me tell you that it is hard to be a Steeler fan that was born just a little

too late to see all of that. Every Steeler team I have seen, no matter how good, is always terrible compared to them. The 70's are remembered fondly here, but it was also the time of gas shortages, hostage taking, Watergate, and continued war. And if you're a hockey fan the 70's didn't give you much to think about. Now we've gotten to the point that people have begun to romanticize the 80's. I was there and even though some of it was great much of it wasn't, and my children will tell you that I had the haircut to prove it. Instead of Happy Days there is a TV show called The Goldbergs which celebrates everything 1980's and I enjoy it very much, but I also remember the Cold War, Iran Contra, and the emphasis on downsizing and outsourcing which has hurt so many of our communities. If the past is another country it is, like all countries, a land of good and bad, a place to visit but not to stay.

Every time in which people live is a time of great joys and terrible lows. They are all euphoric and tragic in their own ways, but after a while a filter takes over in our brains, washing away all the bad memories and negative feelings about the past and we are often left longing for an easier, simpler, more innocent time. In many ways this is good. I do not want to spend my life focusing on the disappointments or pains of childhood. I just want to remember the good times. This type of selective memory is a gift from God so long as we keep it in perspective. Used correctly happy memories of the past bring us happiness in the present and inspire us to make more memories in the future. Used incorrectly the happiness of our past will leave us sounding like a broken record or a scratched CD when we are caught saying over and over again, "It's just not like it used to be."

Rest assured that this is nothing new. This is not a recent phenomenon nor is it an American one either. We need only look to the book of Ezra to see how this has occurred throughout history. In the days of the exile, the Israelites longed for the days when they were safe and happy in the Promised Land. Of course there was never such a time. As we read throughout the Bible we see how the Hebrews entered the Promised Land with war. After settling there the book of Judges tells us about the constant warfare, turmoil, upheaval, and falling away from God that happened. When Israel united under a king still there was constant war and political upheaval, and, as we have seen, their time of unity was very brief.

Out of the exile came a longing for a Messiah to rescue them from their plight. The time they spent under David was so revered and cherished that this Messiah was to be from his line, but remember that he committed adultery, lied, had a man killed, and suffered revolt within his own household.

It is understandable to remember fondly your homeland when you are forced to be away from it. In many ways it was visions of the past that kept the Israelites faithful and prevented them from wanting to stay in Babylon forever, but this waxing nostalgic of the past continued even when they returned. As they built the temple for the second time Ezra tells us that the younger generation shouted for joy as the new temple was built, but the older generation "who had seen the first house on its foundations, wept with a loud voice when they saw this house." For those people the second temple could match the beauty and majesty of the first temple, and they let their nostalgic remembrance of the past, with all its greatness and none of its faults, ruin their enjoyment of what should have been an historic moment in the present. Even if the second temple was not as nice as the first they should still have not let that ruin their joy, but I suspect that the problem was not that the second temple was not as beautiful as the first. Rather I suspect that the second temple was not as nice as the memory of the temple they carried in their head; the one where all the cracks, the dirt, the imperfections of the original temple did not exist.

This reminds me of an even earlier story in the book of Exodus where the people's longing for their past was so great that they even managed to glorify and eulogize being enslaved in Egypt. As they wandered in the desert they wished that they could be back in Egypt where at least they were fed and their lives had structure, as opposed to being free in the desert. Obsession with the past in this case was so great that it almost managed to cause a people to lose their freedom, which is a telling incident. For worship or

idolization of the past enslaves. If we constantly complain about things not being like they used to be we will never be able to enjoy the gifts of the present moment.

Lent begins this Wednesday and for our Lenten devotional Pastor Gena and I have chosen one called "Gifts of the Spiritual Wilderness". The title speaks of the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness preparing for his ministry which was a ministry that would recall much that was good about Israel's past but one that would also challenge much that was wrong. We also liked the title because that feels like where we have been in the last two years, and while I am sure there has been much bad that we will remember from this time, there has been much good as well. As we begin to envision life after exile, it is my prayer that we will not be like those in Jerusalem whose memory of the past was such that it did not allow them to celebrate in the present.

Our church has a rich and glorious past. For almost a hundred and twenty years this church has served God and Washington, and what I have been able to discover about its history is that it has had many ups and downs, many peaks and valleys, and many changes throughout its many the years. This is true of all churches I am sure and what is also true of them is that many of the members of a church have either a short memory or a long one. What can happen in a church like this if we fall into one of these categories? For those whose memories are short, the past is lost. And the troubles and trials of this congregation of the recent past may be the memories that stick. It would help those of you who fall into this category to know that the church has had many such struggles and overcome them to grow and flourish once again.

But what of those of us, who remember the recent glories of this church in the good times? Certainly that would be a blessing for us to continually remember how good it used to be and it would be, as long as we do not let our love of the past interfere with our life in the present and our journey into the future.

As we move forward together there will be many ways in which the church is not like it used to be but those of us who remember have a choice. We can remember the past glories of the church and allow their ghosts to haunt the present so that anything that happens in the present pales in comparison. In this way we will be like those whose memory of Jerusalem was so great that they were never able to back, even when they living in its borders. Or we can be like those who cheered for joy when the temple was rebuilt if we remember the past success and failures of the church and build upon them so that the present, with all of its opportunities can be just as exciting in its own way as the past.

The Psalmist declared "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it." Let us rejoice this day, and let us rejoice in the days ahead for in each day is the heritage of the past, the promise of the future, and the blessed opportunity of the present. The thing about today is that it's just not like it used to be. If it were, it would not be a unique gift worth celebrating.

Call to Offering

Linda Reese

As individuals and as the church, one of the ways we shine in the world is by giving to others through our own skills and talents, as well as through our gifts of money. In so doing, we participate in the great plan of God to transform our world. So, let us give with joy as each of us are able.

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

Blessed God, with these gifts, bring food to the hungry, hope to the despairing, and comfort to the sorrowful. Bless these gifts and our very lives, that we may be blessings of hope for your world.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

Indeed the past is not dead. It is alive and we celebrate that whenever we come to this table to be surrounded, as the apostle Paul describes it, “so great a cloud of witnesses.” Here we feel the presence of those who have gone before who, though they may be dead, are brought to life by our memories, and we celebrate the promise that they live after death as Christ did.

Although the past is alive we must remember that it only exists to serve the present and prepare us for the future. This we see when we come to this table to spend a short time in the foreign country of the past as we remember the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here at this table the past, present, and future intersect as we share this meal in remembrance of him and do this so that it might prepare us now for the days ahead.

As we eat the bread and drink from the cup we remember that in the past his body was broken and his blood shed so that he might be with us now in the present and so that he might secure a home for us in the future. Take this time to live in the past a moment by offering up the sins, faults, and transgressions of yesterday, so that Christ might forgive them today, and you will live into an eternal tomorrow.

Communion Hymn

“According to Thy Gracious Word”

Audra Allen, organist

According to thy gracious word, in meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord, I will remember thee.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Kevin Puskarich

God of grace, as we prepare to drink from this cup and eat this bread that represents to us the shed blood and broken body of our precious Savior Christ Jesus, may it open our hearts to you and remind us of the sacrifice that was made for us all. As we go forward help us to appreciate everything you have given us, be generous to others and conduct ourselves in a way that unites rather than divides. We thank you, we praise you, we love you. 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.

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

"They'll Know We Are Christians"

Jody Mullis, pianist

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

May the grace of God sustain you, may the love of God hold you close, and may the power of God set you free.

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

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

"Join a Meeting" on Zoom at 9:45am 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 be shared during
worship to Rev. Chris at (412) 956-6590.

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.



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

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

Linda Hainer
Kyle Hallam
Judy Hanning
Aryn Hess
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Family of Pam Kloss
Ty, Kerri, Allie, Ivy &
Ty James Lacock
Bob Lanning
Libby LeDuff
Lee & Betsy Martin
Dave McConnell
Don Melvin
Michaela Nixon
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



Please fill out this order form and return to the Church Office with payment by March 20. 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

#_____ Mums @ \$11/each

#_____ Lilies @ \$11/each

Orders with payment are due by March 20, 2022.

Given by

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

The goal was 20 baskets.

Fairhill Manor members exceeded this goal!!

35 Baskets.

Thank you!!

