

Manor Minutes

Volume 12 Issue 8

February 26, 2021



Saturday, February 27
11 am – Noon
Front drive of Church

Board Meeting
Wednesday, March 17
6 pm via Zoom
Reports due to office by
March 8

ZOOM – LIVE at 10:15 am

Zoom log in information is available on the last page of the Manor Minutes.



Lenten Bible Study with Rev. Chris – March 1, 7pm via Zoom
Weekly Lenten Service – March 3, 7 pm by Charleroi Christian Church
Personnel Committee – March 11, 6pm via Zoom
Board Meeting – March 17, 6 pm via Zoom
Stay up to date, check www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar

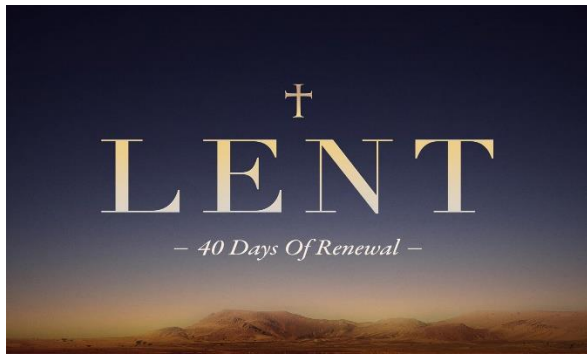
Children Worship & Wonder

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), <https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/children-worship-wonder>

Tween Team

Gather online via Zoom with 4th-7th Graders on Sunday evenings from 5-6 pm. During Lent we are centering our time together around our Lent devotional for families, “Faithful Families: Lent and Easter Devotions.” JC Leasure and Pastor Gena are the co-leaders.

* You can listen to these pieces of worship at
<https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/worship-audio-files>
Previous Worship services can also be found on the Church website or on YouTube,
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmIH3qzih_fzHCC2X0Jhc_sfniJ7C1O3X



Fairhill Manor Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

351 Montgomery Ave.

724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor

Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor

February 28, 2021

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship*

Serena Dube

From generation to generation, God names us and claims us.

Blessed be the Lord, our God.

When we try to tell God what to do, Christ chastens us and leads us back onto the paths of life.

Let all who draw breath come back to the Lord.

From our earliest steps, the Spirit guides our steps and sets before us the ways of life and death.

Let the faithful rejoice in the mysteries of our God.

From generation to generation, God names us and claims us.

Let heaven and earth praise God's holy name.

Opening Hymn

"Rejoice, You Pure in Heart"

Audra Allen, organist

Rejoice, you pure in heart; lift praises to the sky;

Your festive banner wave with joy, the cross of Christ raise high!

(refrain) Rejoice, Rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.

Bright youth and snow-crowned age, strong souls and spirits meek,

Raise high your free, exulting song, God's wondrous praises speak.

(refrain)

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*

Pastor Gena

Leading God, we long to follow you. For when we do follow, even if it is a more difficult and trying road, we lie down in peace and rise up with joy, secure in your love. We come together to worship you this morning, to recalibrate our compass, to set our intentions again to follow in your better ways. What does it mean to follow you? Show us during this hour of worship, we pray. What does it mean to deny ourselves? In the quietness, teach us. In our lives, in this time and place, what does it mean to take up our cross? Lead on, and give us courage and determination to follow.

Merciful God, we confess that we have not been sincere followers of your way. We don't always love ourselves as you love us. We don't always love others as you do. We call ourselves your disciples, but we spend little time in your presence, listening for you, learning of your ways. The cost of following you, of choosing love, is often inconvenient, it means we might end up with less than we think we deserve, it means we might look foolish or not up-with-the-times, it means we might lose what seems important to us or what makes us seem important to others. Forgive us, we

pray. Show us again the fruits of living your way. Thank you for bearing every cross for us, for going ahead of us on every narrow and rarely traveled road. May we find our home in your love and forgiveness.

We give you thanks for those who find ways to speak up and speak out for love. Thank you for those who show love in big and small ways. Thank you for those who lay aside ease and comfort and convenience in order to care for others. Thank you for those who have cared for us.

Now, in care for our world, we pray, trusting in your promise to hear us.

We pray for people of all faiths that we may live together in peace as a sign of your abiding love.

We pray for all who lead, for pastors and teachers, that they might lead your church by humble example, taking up their cross in faithful service and living for the sake of your good news.

We pray for peace among nations and for integrity within governments, that your will might be done on earth as it is in your kingdom.

We pray for those who do not have what they need, for those who hold others down and for those who are being held down. Deliver us all, we pray. Be with those who work to alleviate human misery.

We pray for those who are suffering from illness of mind or body, that they may find relief from their suffering and be restored to wholeness. Especially, we pray for those we name in your presence now... In your grace, Compassionate God, hear our prayers.

Lord Jesus, help us to walk with you this day and every day. If you lead where we fear to go, give us courage and keep us true. This we pray in your name as we pray the prayer you teach 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.

Anthem

Audra Allen

Children's Message*

Pastor Gena

Adapted from https://rfour.org/childrensmessage_b_14.html

We're going to start today by playing two rounds of "Follow the Leader." For the first round, we're going to sit in a straight line (like we're a train) with both of us facing the front end of the line -- which is where I will be. As the leader, I'll sit at the start of the line. Then, whatever I do with my arms and hands, you will do the same thing. Let's begin!

That's the end of Round 1. I think we did an awesome job. What do you think -- was that pretty easy? Now for Round 2 ... for this round I'm still going to be the leader but you are going to sit at the front of the line and I'm going to be the caboose. We are now ready to play round 2. Round 2 is exactly the same as round 1 except you need to keep facing forward. But, since you aren't facing me, you'll just have to guess what my arm motions are going to be. Any questions?

That's the end of Round 2. Let's go back to sitting how we usually sit. What do you think, were you better able to copy my motions during Round 1 or Round 2 or about the same? Why?

I wanted us to do this silly game so that we could feel today's scripture story in our bodies a bit. In our story, Jesus, who is the leader of the disciples, is telling the disciples that really difficult things are going to begin happening to him soon – he will suffer, he will be rejected by other people, he will be killed. When Peter, one of his followers, hears this, he starts telling Jesus to avoid those difficult things.

Peter, in this moment, is doing just like we did in Round 2 of our game. By telling Jesus what Jesus should and should not do, it was like Peter, who had been in line following Jesus, now thought he was at the front of the train. But once Peter did that – he was no longer following Jesus. This is why Jesus then tells Peter to get behind him – as a reminder to get in a place so he could see Jesus again and follow him.

The mistake Peter made in today's story is an easy mistake to make. Peter got so concerned and worried about Jesus' safety, that he forgot to keep following Jesus and instead tried to lead him. The same thing can happen to us. For many different reasons, we can get ahead of Jesus doing our own thing.

That's one of the reasons we worship together, read and talk about the Bible stories together, and pray together – as reminders to follow Jesus in the direction that he is pointing us to. When we keep following Jesus and learning from him, then we will be better able to live God's better way of love and share that way of love with those around us.

And that's the good news for today. Let's pray...

Dear God, thank you for Jesus, who shows us the better way to go. Please help us to keep turned the right way so that we can follow him and share his love with others. Amen.

Scripture Reading*

Mark 8:31-38

Serena Dube

Sermon*

“Pick Up the Cross, Lay Down Your Burdens”

Rev. Stillwell

As we move each Sunday one week closer to Good Friday and one step further on to Easter Sunday, the shadow of the cross begins to grow. During the season of Lent we examine ourselves and ask ourselves if we are able and prepared to walk in Christ's footsteps. This is something that we should do all year round but much more so now than say in the carefree days of summer or the joyous nights of Christmas.

We who call ourselves Disciples of Christ have the benefit of the church calendar to help us determine upon which aspect of Christ and his mission we should focus. The original disciples had no such luxury and no such help. Because they lived all the time in the midst of Christ's ministry and because they did not know how it would end, they had to examine themselves constantly to determine if they could follow Christ, all the while having no idea where it would take them.

They were not the only ones examining themselves, however, for Christ examined them as well. Just before the story we have read for today Jesus asks them who they think he is and Peter is the one with the correct answer. He says, “You are the Messiah, the son of the living God”, to which Jesus responds by telling him that he will give the keys to the kingdom to him.

You can imagine that the disciples, Peter in particular, were feeling pretty good about where they were in their walk with Christ. That good feeling must have lasted for no more than a few moments however, for,

in the story that Mark records for us, things have just gotten a lot harder for them as they have begun to realize what lies ahead. For here Jesus announces, for the first time, that “he must undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

Never certain about the end goal of Christ’s ministry the disciples now learn that it results in death and resurrection, but they only seemed to hear him say that he would be crucified. For this Peter rebukes him, and Jesus responds by declaring, “Get behind me Satan.” First Peter was called the rock, now he is being called Satan. One minute Peter has the keys of the kingdom in his hand and he understands everything, the next, he is a stumbling block and understands nothing.

Christ specifically points out that he will be raised and goes so far as to give them details about saying that this will occur on the third day. He doesn’t give such details about his death other than to generally say that he will undergo great suffering. There was a resurrection but the disciples just could not see it.

Their inability to get passed Christ’s suffering to hear the good news of Christ’s message to them explains their future actions. Jesus announces his crucifixion and resurrection later and again his disciples respond in fear. He says it two more times and by then the disciples say nothing. Eventually the fate that Jesus predicted comes to pass and the disciples, even though he has told him that he will be raised on the third day they abandon him.

I think that it would be hard and unfair to blame them. Even though Christ said he would be raised, he never says that they will be. Should they be captured and linked with him they may be crucified as well. There was a very popular belief in Judaism that the righteous would be resurrected on the last day, and maybe they thought that this was what he was referring to. After all, Israel had seen hundreds of supposed Messiahs come and go, and each one had died, and none had been raised. So we can forgive the disciples if they were not able to see past the cross.

We can forgive them because often we cannot see past it either. We can focus on the suffering in our own lives and become so mired in our pain and trouble that we lose hope and forget that, in God there is always a resurrection. So many people in our society are depressed and they cannot see a future for themselves. People who commit suicide do so because they become so stuck in the pain of the moment that they cannot wait for the healing that is around the corner.

Some cannot get over the loss of a loved one and their period of mourning becomes a lifetime of sadness. Still others grieve over the death of a romantic relationship, the dissolution of a marriage. Those whose faith is strong can live to love again, while others carry the pain like a cross, and they love no more. Anyone who has lost a job that they enjoyed has faced the fear of uncertainty and the sting of failure. Some get back up to try again. Some never get back on their feet.

Likewise, we hear Jesus say to his disciples, “Take up the cross and follow me”, and the person who is in pain thinks that these pains are their crosses to bear, as if Christ would have them live in pain. Too often those who do not see the resurrection that God has for them do not want to see it, for they would rather dwell on their anger and their hurt as Christ dwelt on his cross.

But there is a difference between the burdens that we carry and the crosses Christ asks us to take up. Burdens are unavoidable. These are the things great and small that are thrust upon us. Misfortune, happenstance, tragic sets of circumstances, are the burdens we must carry. Christ is with us and we can turn to him to lift these burdens from us.

Jesus will also say to his disciples, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find

rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” So in Jesus we find rest from our burdens even while we are called to pick up the cross.

The difference is that crosses are chosen. Crosses are taken up. To take up our cross as Christ commands isn't to dwell on our own suffering as if we are the only ones who suffer in the world, to take up our cross is to help alleviate someone else's suffering even at the risk of our own comfort, our own status, maybe even our own safety.

When we confuse these things we seek to use our burdens as signs of our martyrdom. The two things that Christianity has produced the most of are saints and martyrs and we have far too few of the former and way too many of the latter.

One of the temptations that we face hardly seems like a temptation at all. But when we feel powerless to change the world or ourselves we are tempted to fall into a sense of victimization where we do nothing to change our state in life because we feel that it is God's will that we should suffer. When this happens we take up our cross and hold it high and ask God, “Is my cross big enough yet?”

A good friend of mine once said to me while I was in the midst of some sad state of affairs that seemed so overwhelming to me at the time, but now I cannot even remember, she said, “Remember, after three days there is always a resurrection.”

Well that isn't exactly true. It doesn't always happen after three days. Sometimes it takes three months, or three years, but, eventually, we do experience a resurrection and we must never give up before we see it. The problem is that we can make our crosses so big and set them so high up on the hill for everyone to see that we cannot see past them to the empty tomb.

The advantage that Christ had was that he could see outside of the present moment. And so even as he told about his suffering he also told about his resurrection

The disciples did not have this advantage and so they were stuck in a moment that they couldn't get out of and they did not see the resurrection that was right around the corner.

But we do have that advantage. We are not given the gift of foresight. We do not know exactly how things will work out for us, but we believe as the apostle, Paul, said that all things work to the good for those who love God. We know how things turned out for Jesus, and so we can guess at how things will turn out, eventually, for us as long as we can come down from our cross long enough to witness it.

Hear we sit, in the middle of a winter that just won't go away, in the midst of pain and sadness that lingers with us, and a pandemic that has taken 500,000 of our fellow Americans including, for many of us, some of our loved ones. In a world that is too often dark and depressing it is so easy, so tempting to focus on suffering and despair and the cross as the disciples did. But perhaps the greatest challenge that Christ asks of us when he tells us to take up our cross and follow him isn't to believe in the cross. We have plenty of reasons to believe in that. Perhaps the greatest challenge of taking up the cross is believing that doing so will ease our burden. The greatest challenge is believing that we take up the cross so that the cross is not the end.

We pick up the cross and all that involves in the belief that we will one day be able to put it down and see in doing this we will finally be free of all that burdens us. Our fears, our worries, our anger, our frustrations, our sins and doubts, indeed everything that weighs us down ironically can only be taken off our shoulders if we replace them with the cross. At first it makes no sense. The cross was so heavy that

Jesus fell down trying to carry it up the hill and needed the help of Simon of Cyrene to carry it, but Jesus says his yoke is easy and his burden is light and it is true.

Christ calls us to take up our cross, not so that we can stay there, but so that in doing so we can put all of our burdens, all of our pain, all of our sin on it, and then we can leave them there, making us finally free to pass on to resurrection. Let us pick up the cross so that we may lay our burdens down, and experience a freedom we can find nowhere else.

Call to Offering*

Serena Dube

The psalmist proclaims that creation will remember and return to God. As those blessed to be a blessing to others, may we return to God with the gifts of our hands and hearts.

Dedication of Offering Prayer*

Rev. Stillwell

As these gifts go forth to do your work, may they help others hear your voice as you call their names. In the spirit of your grace and peace, we pray that you will receive these gifts. Amen.

Invitation to Communion*

Rev. Stillwell

We Christians are a miracle believing people. We know how the world works, and we know not to expect too much from the everyday, but what keeps us going in the hardest most hopeless times is the belief that miracles do happen. I think that all Christians believe in miracles in some way or another, but what we call a miracle varies greatly. If your health recovered against all odds, you'd call it a miracle. If you saw your child born into the world you might call it a miracle. If you watched the American hockey team win the gold medal at the 1980 Winter Olympics you might say you witnessed a miracle. In every aspect of life we find miracles and we find ourselves longing for them as well.

The problem with miracles is that they are rare. That is their nature, so if we base all of our hopes on them we will likely be disappointed. This is compounded by the fact that we want so many miracles. We need a miracle to improve our life, a miracle to turn around the life of a friend, a miracle to renew our city, a miracle to save this world.

I would say to you that we do not need a miracle, instead we need a memory. We need a memory of the great miracle that has already been performed for our benefit, the miracle of God among us. All other miracles are merely ripples created by this splash of God into the world. As you find yourself through the week praying for a miracle that will lift your burdens, be thankful for the memory of a miracle here at this table. For here we are reminded that all we need, to save ourselves, to renew our hopes, to rebuild our lives, and to heal our world has miraculously already been given to us. As you share in this meal I invite you to draw your hope and inspiration from the memory of this miracle still unfolding before us, before asking for another.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup*

Craig Dotson

Lord we give thanks for the opportunity to worship on this day. We accept this time of communion as a gift and a blessing to respect the sacrifices made for us long before our time on this earth. We pray for those who face special challenges in their lives. We learn from our scripture in today's service that we are called upon to look at the bigger picture and deeper purpose for our Christian lives. We pray for continued guidance and constant reminder of our call to service toward that deeper purpose on this earth and beyond. We offer this humble prayer in your name as our Lord. Amen.

Words of Institution*

Rev. Stillwell

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)

Closing Hymn

"Old Rugged Cross"

Jody Mullis, pianist

On a hill far away
stood an old rugged cross,
the emblem of suffering and shame;
and I love that old cross
where the dearest and best
for a world of lost sinners was slain. (refrain)

O that old rugged cross,
so despised by the world,
has a wondrous attraction for me;
for the dear Lamb of God
left his glory above
to bear it to dark Calvary. (refrain)

[refrain:]

So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.

Benediction*

Rev. Stillwell

Carry proudly the symbol of the cross.
Live in the shadow of the cross.
Cling in faith to the promise of the cross.



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!

Avery Allen
Donna Bakaitis
Bill Behrens
Bristol Allan Berry
Abby Blanchard
Mark & Susan Britko
Jordon Burk
Shirley Cavanaugh
Wanda Chicone
Joanne Coburn
Emily Cope Robinson
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Sue Donaldson
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Fred Engle
Jay Freudenberg
Derek Gardiner
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg

Sloan Amelia Hagy
Judy Hanning
Aryn Hess
James Hritz
Ed & Harriet Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Bob Lanning
Ty & Kerri Lacock
Cheryl Leach
Lee & Betsy Martin
Don Melvin
Ruth Mikuta
Dick Moninger
Georgette Murray
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Deborah Patterson
Joyce and Denny Paul
Kevin Puskarich

Sadie Reese
Ed Reid
Betty & Charles Riecks
Betty Jo Riggle
Chip Rogers and his parents
Jim and Barb Roupe
Theresa Shape
Colby Simkovic
Doug and Tracy Smith
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Beth Teagarden
Melissa Teagarden
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
Sarah Wittenberg
Preparing for Baptism – Nyka Rash

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

Lance Dague
Terrell McClain
Brandon Lipscomb
Daniel Robinson
Shawn Dallatore
Andrew Gregg
Zachary Keene
Sarah Lipscomb
Travis Ringer
Emily Chase
Dylan Demain

ZOOM – LIVE

Zoom Worship this Week - Live from the Sanctuary at 10:15 am!

"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 – 10:15 am.**

Text your prayer concerns to Pastor Gena (724) 263-0033. She 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.

Lent

To mark this special time of the Christian year, a time of examination and preparation leading to the celebration of Easter, we have two exciting opportunities to grow stronger in our faith and spirituality.

Zoom Bible Study

On Monday, March 1, from 7-8:15pm via Zoom, Rev. Chris will continue the Lenten Bible Study on the Gospel of John. The curriculum is written by Rev. Adam Hamilton based on his book, "John: The Gospel of Light and Life". The only reading required is to read four or five chapters of the Gospel each week. NO registration is necessary just click on the zoom link which will be emailed on Monday.

Weekly worship services

We are teaming up with other Disciples of Christ congregations in the area to provide a weekly mid-week worship service during the season of Lent. Each church will take a turn to lead a worship service each Wednesday at 7 pm to be shared to all churches via Zoom, Facebook, YouTube, whatever their method is. Details on how to watch each service will be emailed each week so stay tuned! The schedule for these services is as follows:

Mar 3 - Charleroi Christian Church

Mar 10 - Fairhill Manor Christian Church

Mar 17 - Central Christian Church in Uniontown

Mar 24 - Washington First Christian Church

Mar 31 - Brightwood Christian Church

Lent Devotionals and other resources are available at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/lent

Username: fairhillmanor@yahoo.com

Password: lent2021

Please fill out this order form and return to the Church Office with **payment** by March 15. Indicate the number of flowers you would like. The cost per plant is **\$10**. Make checks payable to **“Fairhill Manor ”** and indicate **“Easter Flowers”** in the memo.



_____ Tulips (6" pot)

_____ Mums

#-----Hyacinths (3 bloom)

**Orders with payment are due by
March 15, 2020**

Given by

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of

(circle one)

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 a – 2 pm. The Church phone is forwarded to Karen’s cell phone.

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.

Fairhill Manor has entered a new era: the age of anytime, anywhere giving. We are now signed up with **Givelify**, the mobile giving app for places of worship and charities.

Givelify gives you a beautiful, easy giving experience using your smartphone. There are no frustrating web forms to fill out, and recurring gifts are easy to set up and modify. Even better, it’s free to download and use. It’s safe and secure and gives you access to your complete giving record.

Want to see how it works? [Watch the demonstration video](#) that shows you all about how to make and track donations.

Ready to get started? [Download](#) the Givelify app for Android or iPhone.

