

Manor Minutes
Volume 13 Issue 8
February 4, 2022



The Story Chapter 16 The Fall of Israel: The Beginning of the End – February 6

Prayer Shawl – February 7, 11am Parlor

Dartball – February 8, 7pm @ Washington Alliance

Elders Meeting – February 9, 6pm via Zoom

Choir Practice – February 10, 6:30pm

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

Bethany Class

February 6: No Bethany Class

February 13: Praise God for Past Deliverance -
Psalm 107:1-9, 39-43

February 20: Praise God for His Presence –
Psalm 84

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

We are looking for folks who would like to help in the **sound room**. You do not need a degree in sound technology. You do not need an advanced degree in computer skills. Seriously, we could use 1 or 2 volunteers. Training is provided, so, if you would like to help please contact Gary Ford (724-344-2193 or fordgary@comcast.net) who can answer any of your questions.



Daffodil order forms can be found in the Narthex or contact Karen and she can send you a form.

All orders must be prepaid and turned in to the Office by February 15.

Rev. Chris is planning an activity for the youth in early April to plant daffodils on the church property. If anyone would like to donate potted daffodils for this purpose, add a note to your order that says “for the youth.”

Check list for Thomas Campbell Welcome Home Boxes:

- 2 Bath Towels
- 2 Hand Towels
- 2 Washcloths
- 2 Microfiber cleaning cloths
- 4 bars of soap
- 1 roll of paper towel
- 1 roll of toilet paper
- 1 large tube of toothpaste
- 1 toothbrush

The Dollar Store has storage cubes and laundry baskets that make a great way to put your items in.

FMCC has a goal of 20 boxes. All items need to be returned to the church by February 27.



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Jackie Nelson, Bread
Diane Palfreyman, Cup
February 6, 2022 - 10:15am

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Isaac Mayen

Great is the glory of God. **We give thanks with hearts of joy.**
Great is the mercy of our creator. **We give thanks with hearts of hope.**
Great is the hope of our Lord. **We give thanks with hearts of faith.**

Opening Hymn

“Rejoice, Ye 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!
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, give thanks and sing.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

O Lord, you are God, you alone. You are enthroned over all the kingdoms of the earth, you who made heaven and earth. You, O Lord, you are God alone. And we praise you.

Come and pull down all within us that is not pleasing to you. Remove from us all that distracts us from worshipping you. Turn your anger away from us, away from our proud and arrogant hearts. Instead have mercy on us that our hearts might be softened and taught to trust in you, O Lord. For you are God, you alone.

Help us to do what is right in your sight. Keep us from serving other masters, putting other things at the center of our lives. Give us the discipline to hold fast to you even when the motivation to do that is not within us. May it be said of us that “the Lord was with them.” For you, Lord, are God, you alone.

Thank you for your patience with us in the midst of our many and ongoing mistakes. Give us patience with each other. Thank you for those times during the week when we feel loved, appreciated, encouraged, and valued. Give us the opportunity to love and uplift one of your children this week. Thank you for connecting us to this family of faith, a place to belong, a place to call home. Give us the grace to reach out and welcome others into your embrace.

O Lord, please be with those who are scattered, displaced from their homes by war or famine or illness. Please be with those who are besieged and feeling beaten down. Please be with those who have been led astray and find themselves in dark and confusing places. Please be with those who have gorged themselves on all of the pleasures of life but still find themselves hungry. Please be with those who have devoured everything around them but are still not satisfied. And please be with those who are sick, those who are weak, those whose memory is fading, those who are in despair or feeling lonely. We lift the names of those on our hearts and minds to you now in this silence....

And now “take Your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and fashion us in Your likeness that the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.”¹ We pray all of these things in the name of your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, and we pray together in one voice as 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.

¹ From “Speak O Lord,” words and music by Stuart Townend & Keith Getty, ©2005 Thankyou Music.

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

2 Kings 18:1-12

Donna Stenski

Anthem

“The Gift of Love,” by Lloyd Larson

Choir

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

I have my phone with me, and, as you probably know, a phone runs on a built-in battery. Most phones will work for several hours before the battery has to be recharged, and to do that, you have to plug it into a charger. These phones are called smart phones because there is so much you can do with them, but there isn't much you can do if the battery isn't charged.

People are like that. We need to recharge our batteries too. We work and play hard, but if we don't get the proper rest, pretty soon we just don't have enough energy to do the things we need to do. It might come as a surprise to you that even Jesus had to recharge his batteries as they say.

Jesus traveled all around Galilee preaching, teaching, and healing people. One day after leaving the synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus and some of his disciples went to the home of Simon and Andrew. When they arrived, Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. They told Jesus about it, so he went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. All at once, the fever left her and she began to prepare a meal for everyone.

I don't know how the town's people found out that Jesus was at the home of Simon and Andrew, but that evening many people were brought to Jesus to be healed of all sorts of diseases. The Bible says that the whole town gathered at the door to watch. No doubt Jesus was very tired after a long day of teaching and healing people. I'm sure that when he went to bed that night, he slept like a baby.

Jesus got up early the next morning before sunrise and went out to find a quiet place to pray. You see, Jesus knew that just as our bodies need to be recharged, so does our spirit. Jesus knew that it was important for him to spend time each day talking to God if he was going to have the spiritual strength to do what God had sent him to do. When Simon and the others woke up, they didn't know where Jesus was, so they went looking for him. When they found him they said, "Everyone is looking for you."

Jesus had recharged his batteries and was ready to go. He said to them, "Let's go to other towns and villages so that I can preach to them too. That's what I came to do." So they traveled throughout the region of Galilee.

If Jesus thought it was important for him to recharge his spiritual batteries, don't you think it is important for us to do it too? Sure it is. That is why it is important for us to spend time in prayer every day and that is why it is important for us to come to Sunday School and church each week -- to get our batteries recharged.

Second Scripture Reading

Isaiah 9:1-8

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Just Under the Surface”

Rev. Stillwell

I once ate a cake that, on the surface at least, was very plain. There was some white icing on top and nothing else. I only ate it out of politeness, but I was glad I did, because, after it was cut, it was revealed that there were layers of chocolate, raspberries, cream, and more underneath. Looking at the top it wasn't very enticing, but once I saw all the layers of tasty goodness that made up the whole cake, I needed to take a bite.

It makes me think of how a geologist would study a land form. It is never enough to just study the surface. In fact doing so is how we get the expression, “Just scratching the surface. Rather, they need to study the whole thing by taking into account the layers that have formed it. In this way a hike into the Grand Canyon is something like a walk back in time. The lower you go, the older the layers of rock are with each layer a different chapter in the story of the Grand Canyon. The surface at the canyon's top is not too much to look at, and it does not tell the canyon's whole story.

Likewise, Isaiah's proclamation to the people of Judah is one whose meaning seems apparent on the surface, but dig a little and we will find that it is a multi-layered story. The "former times" and "latter times" mentioned in verse 1 have multiple meanings. At the surface we may associate this reading mainly with Advent and Christmas. Its promise that "a child has been born for us, a son given to us" resonates with our celebration of Christ's birth. There is far more to this passage, however, than our surface view. Indeed, how we hear its promise in the light of Christ is best served by understanding and appreciating its earlier hopes.

One of the layers of Isaiah's proclamation is what has happened to Israel. He speaks these words to the southern kingdom of Judah, who have just seen their brothers and sisters in Israel conquered by Assyria. It was our first scripture that described this event saying, “In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of King Hoshea of Israel, Samaria was taken. The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria.”

This rocky layer lay beneath the current status of Judah where Isaiah preached as they feared the same fate. Assyria had grown in power and begun to expand west conquering much smaller kingdoms as it went. If Assyria could conquer the ten tribes of Israel, what was to stop it from taking the two original tribes and the small portion of refugees from Israel that made up the nation of Judah? In the midst of this contentious context, Isaiah emerged as God's prophet who explains Israel's fall with some harsh words”

8 The Lord sent a word against Jacob,
and it fell on Israel;
9 and all the people knew it—
Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria—
but in pride and arrogance of heart they said:
10 ‘The bricks have fallen,
but we will build with dressed stones;
the sycomores have been cut down,

but we will put cedars in their place.’
11 So the Lord raised adversaries against them,
and stirred up their enemies,
19 Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts
the land was burned,
and the people became like fuel for the fire;
no one spared another.
20 They gorged on the right, but still were hungry,
and they devoured on the left, but were not satisfied;
they devoured the flesh of their own kindred;
21 Manasseh devoured Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh,
and together they were against Judah.
For all this, his anger has not turned away;
his hand is stretched out still. (Isaiah 9:8-11; 19-21)

Here, in explaining why a bad thing happened, and warning that it may happen again we get the lower story in the Bible, which is that the people forgot how to treat one another, because they forgot the law of God, so their prosperity ended, but the upper story is one that looks to the future.

This is our final layer, which is a layer of hope for the future. This is, of course, the layer that makes Isaiah’s words so enjoyable and why we hear them every Christmas, but, without understanding what lies beneath them they might be all sweet and no substance. Judah was in turmoil yet the layers of promise and hope run deep in this passage. Judah heard this promise as an affirmation of hope to sustain them in their dark time. Israel’s fate would eventually become Judah’s, but Isaiah promised that the darkness of exile would one day give way to the light of homecoming.

Not only that, but it would be better than before. This is the upper story which is God’s story. The chosen people of God, the descendants of Abraham, were promised a nation. Eventually after many years, it is Joshua who delivers them into the Promised Land. Eventually that nation becomes a kingdom, which achieves its pinnacle under David and splits after Solomon. Now the first part of that kingdom has fallen and the second is soon to follow, but we see in Isaiah’s words and others like them the promise not of a return to the old kingdom, but the promise of the coming of a new one, more glorious than any the world has known and everlasting.

This is also where the Jewish story and the Christian story diverge as this passage has been interpreted so differently by the two faiths. For Jewish people the child of which Isaiah is speaking is Hezekiah who will become a king who keeps Judah safe from the Assyrians, but to Christians this passage is about the promise of Jesus.

Jesus’ name in Hebrew means “God will save.” The English name, Jesus, is derived from the Latin version, Iesus, which is itself a transliteration of the Greek. Iesoûs. The Greek form is probably a rendering of the Hebrew name, Yešua, a shorter variant of the earlier Hebrew name, Joshua. The name, Joshua, is associated with God’s deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt. Just as God delivered a people and led them home through Joshua, so now God has freed all people through Jesus, the new Joshua. Jesus’ name takes us to the heart of the upper story, what all the stories of the Bible combine to say to us, and that is, God saves us from the brokenness of sin and restores us to right relations with ourselves, our neighbors, and our God. Living like this is living in the new kingdom. In this story we see the passing of the old kingdom, and mourn its loss, but we take hope in the promise of a new kingdom, and a new king, better than any we have known. So for Christians we see now the turning point of the upper story, which is that even in the midst of darkness, the light of God is coming.

Light and darkness form the thematic imagery of the opening two verses of Isaiah's prophecy. The connection between such imagery and hope is not limited to ancient times. An Internet search using "darkness" and "depression" as key words resulted in 5.7 million hits. Clearly, darkness and depression are still traveling companions. In the midst of depression, in the shadows cast by any number of things such as grief, estrangement, or loss fear can result in tunnel vision. The overwhelming nature of the shadows in our life can prevent us from seeing anything beyond them.

Consider the background of Isaiah outlined earlier. When the armies of Assyria besieged Jerusalem, God's people could only see what was there on the surface; the shadows of impending conquest. When Israel later languished in exile in Babylon, nothing else could be seen but the impossible distance separating the exiles from home. It is hard to see the layers beneath the surface, especially when trying to see in the dark.

Into those experiences of Israel and into our own experiences of gloom and anxiety, Isaiah springs as a word of light, a word of hope, and a word telling us that what seems to be a dead end may in fact be an opening door. For shadows to be dispelled, hope must be spoken, which Isaiah does. For shadows to be dispelled, hope must be trusted which God calls us to do in the light of Isaiah's prophecy.

Such words can be difficult to hear, and such hope can be difficult to see in the midst of shadows, and the darkness they create makes it hard to do anything beyond looking at the surface of our problems. For that reason, we sometimes do not trust words of light and hope. At times, we may fear to claim or say them. The shadows do offer a sort of comfort zone, for disappointment is avoided by having no expectations, and depression is dulled by not risking a way out of it.

What is true of individuals is true of communities and societies. Presuming that what is will always be bypasses the hard work of seeking anything different. Words that promise a realm upheld with justice and righteousness are quietly disposed of lest we become overly optimistic.

This passage is not the first nor will it be the last time that Isaiah casts hope in the form of a child. Chapter 7 deals with Isaiah's attempt to persuade King Ahaz that Judah's future was secure not through a military alliance with Israel and Syria but through trust in God's purposes. When Ahaz balked at such trust, Isaiah offered a sign; "The young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (7:14).

In ch. 11, Isaiah describes God's promise of a kingdom. At the heart of that promise is a vision and lambs, leopards and kids, calves and lions in peace "and a little child shall lead them" are an embodiment of promise and enter this world full of potential limited only by the circumstances into which they are born and the nurture they receive.

Isaiah's passage, this promised child named, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, is also the sign and promise of God's just realm. We claim that child every Christmas seeing him as the infant in Bethlehem. The promised Prince of Peace is the one who, in the Sermon on the Mount, pronounced blessing on the peacemakers in this world. To claim the fulfillment of Isaiah's word in Jesus means for us to be claimed by a call to action that Christ's ministry presents. For if God's promises are trustworthy, so too are they worthy to be practiced.

When darkness engulfs the world around us whether in fear or grief, do we become sources of light? Look around your neighborhood or community, and even your church. Are there persons for whom shadows are overwhelming? What might you do to bring light there? Where is peace in short supply? How might you speak and act in ways that reconcile and defuse hostilities?

When we see things in this world that are not as they should be, when nation fights against nation, when houses are divided against themselves, when darkness seems overwhelming and light in short supply, it might be tempting to give in to despair. It might be easier to throw our hands in the air, but we should remember that what we see is only the surface of things, and God is doing much below the surface that we cannot see. Even in the lowest point of Israel God sent a messenger with a light that there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. If anguish is all we seem to see just hold on, for light is coming. It might be just under the surface of what we can see, but it is our job to search for it, just as it is God's job to find us.

Call to Offering

Diana Crowe

The Divine Deliverer of compassion and care is calling us to serve, and to share our talents and treasures for the good of God's realm. No matter how we have fallen short in the past, God's grace assures us a variety of gifts to contribute. How is God calling us to share today?

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

Receive this offering with our gratitude. Guide those who will distribute them, and work mightily in the lives of those in whom these gifts will be invested.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

I need to quit getting dressed in the dark. Sometimes I have to go before Jessi needs to get up so I try to be as undistruptive as possible, but it sometimes means I think I am putting on a green shirt when it is blue. Sometimes my outfit looks better until I see it in the full light. Once I realized too late that I was wearing two different sandals. Of course we all laugh and recognize how silly this is, but the fact is that many people are doing more than getting dressed in the dark; they are spending their whole lives live in the dark.

The darkness of depression, fear, hopelessness, and addiction can be overwhelming or provide just enough darkness to make a person uncertain as to what to do and where to turn. Of course no one lives in a literal darkness, and they do not need a literal light, rather their darkness is spiritual, and they need a spiritual light. Of all the spiritual lights available I know of there are none brighter and more illuminating than Jesus Christ.

As we share and enjoy this meal, we remember how Christ shared his light with all whom he met and bid his disciples to do likewise. Let us remember that we have no light of our own to share, but that light that comes from Christ. It may not brighten our closets any, but it does brighten our lives immeasurably. Let us also remember that Christ himself teaches us to not keep our lights hidden. Light is meant to be shared and enjoyed. Let us share and enjoy his meal, and let us share and enjoy his light

Communion Hymn

"I Come with Joy"

Audra Allen, organist

I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved and free,
the life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me,
in love laid down for me.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Jackie Nelson

Holy and loving God, how long will your patience for us last? We cannot stand before You and boast of our faithfulness, only our faults and failures.

As we gather at Your table this morning to share this bread and cup we remember Jesus, our example of love and give thanks.

Be with us Lord, have mercy on us. We are thankful for this chance to start over. Holy Spirit, open our eyes, unlock our hearts and give us strength to loving as we should. 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

"Lord, You are more Precious than Silver"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Lord, You are more precious than silver; Lord, You are more costly than gold;

Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds; And nothing I desire compares to You.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

You are the light of the world! Do not keep your light hid but now take that light into all the places that need the light and love of God. Amen.

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.

PRAYER REQUEST

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
John Collar
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
Connie Hanning
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
Georgette Murray
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
Marcie Yocum

In the Military

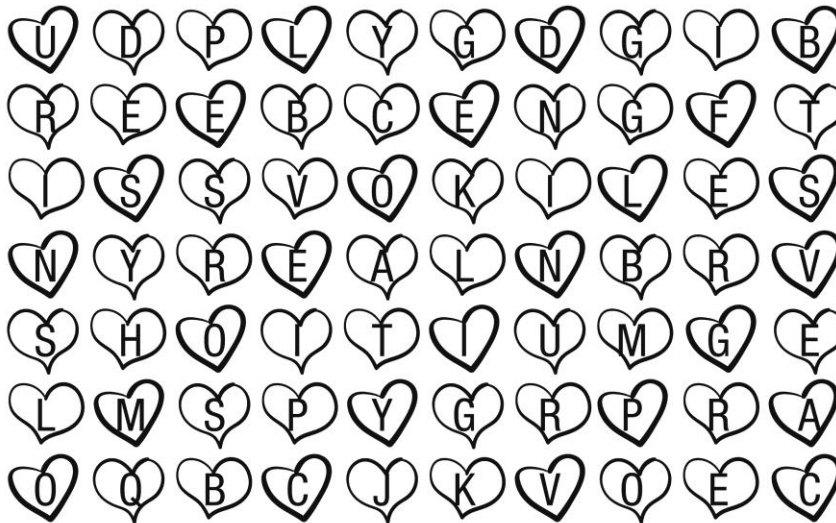
Lance Dague Andrew Gregg
Terrell McClain Zachary Keene
Brandon Lipscomb Sarah Lipscomb
Daniel Robinson Travis Ringer
Shawn Dallatore Emily Chase
Dylan Demain



The heart of a friend

Big-hearted friendliness comes from generously serving others.

Directions: Start with the first D and move according to the arrows beneath the blanks. Then fill in the letters to complete 1 Peter 4:8-10.



Above all, love each other D , because love
 over a multitude of . Offer
 to one another without
 . Each of you should use whatever
 you have received to others, as faithful
 stewards of God's in its various forms.

1 PETER 4:8-10, NIV

Answer: deeply, covers, sins, hospitality, grumbling, gift, serve, grace