

Manor Minutes
Volume 13 Issue 4
January 28, 2022



The Story Chapter 15 Prophets: God's Messengers – January 30

Dartball – February 1, 7pm @ Home

Choir Practice – January 27, 6:30pm Choir Room

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

Bethany Class

January 30: Praise for God's Ultimate Justice -
Psalm 9:1-12

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



Daffodil order forms can be found in the Narthex and also the Manor Minutes.

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

Thank You for supporting the American Cancer Society.



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. Actually, all you need to be able to do is read English!! Seriously, we could use 1 or 2 volunteers.

Craig Dotson, who has served in the sound room for many, many years has decided to step down at the end of April and I would like to thank him for his dedication in this vital portion of our worship each Sunday. 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."



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
Kevin Puskarich, Cup
January 30, 2022 - 10:15am

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Von Lacock

Offer God your worship and your praise. Before God formed us in our mothers' wombs, God knew and loved us.

Offer Christ your love and your devotion. Before we drew our first breath, Christ consecrated us as his own.

Offer the Spirit your gratitude and your thanksgiving. Before we heard the call to heal the world, the Spirit sustained our every heartbeat.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. We will offer God our worship and our praise.

Opening Hymn

"God of Grace and God of Glory"

Audra Allen, organist

God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy power;
crown thine ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo! The hosts of evil round us
scorn thy Christ, assail thy ways!
From the fears that long have bound us,
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

O God who is greater than the most powerful forces in this world, quiet us until we are still, until we know you are God. O Lord who answers out of the whirlwind of our everyday lives, breathe in us your Holy Spirit to strengthen, comfort and guide us in the midst of our storms. O still, small voice, speak to us this hour that we might carry your peace into our homes, our communities, our world.

Forgive us for seeking you in mighty earthquakes and demonstrations of power. Forgive us for listening for you in resounding thunder and the loudest voices. Forgive us for expecting to find you in sweeping victories instead of in the midst of our losses and suffering. Help us to stand still long enough to hear you speaking in the silence; help us to find you in those who have no way to force us to pay attention. Save us from our aimless wandering and running; save us from placing other things at the center of our lives where you belong; save us from all of the chaos we bring on ourselves.

Now, in the silence, like the gentle touch of a quiet rain, we hear the good news of your love for us: "You are my Beloved. I love you."

Be with those who are desperate, feeling compelled to push everything to its limits – even you, O God. Come and with your grace, slow us down.

Be with those who stand exposed to buffeting winds. Come and with your grace clothe us in your peace and put our minds at ease.

Be with those who cannot find their way out of the whirlwind sucking them down into questions and doubts and guilt and self-hatred. Come into the eye of our storms and with your grace reassure us that nothing is stronger than your love.

Be with those who are entangled in worries and fears which consume their lives. Come and with your grace untie our knots and set us free.

Be with those who need your presence so much this morning. Be with these who we name to you now in the stillness... Hear our prayers, O Lord.

Praise be to you who leads and guides us, who feeds and strengthens us, who works through us to lift others up, who never leaves us alone. We pray all of this in one voice as Jesus your Son 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.

Adapted from https://cmbs.mennonitebrethren.ca/worship_resources/elijah-and-the-still-small-voice/

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

1 Kings 18:20-40

Gene Sheller

Anthem

“It is Well with My Soul,” by John Ness Beck

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

Can you guess what I have in my hand? Yes, it is some birdseed. Do any of you have a bird feeder in your yard? Feeding birds is a very popular activity. I have read that there are more than 52 million Americans who feed birds around their home. I wonder why people feed birds. Most people do it because they want to attract more birds to come to their area. Some people find it to be a very relaxing activity.

Many people feed birds, but have you ever heard of birds feeding a person? Well that is exactly what our lesson is about today.

Our Bible story today is about a prophet of God by the name of Elijah. At the time of our story there was a very wicked king in Israel by the name of Ahab. Because of the evil things that Ahab was doing, Elijah told him that there would be no dew or rain for several years until Elijah said so. Because of what Elijah told him, Ahab hated Elijah and wanted to hurt him.

So God told Elijah to go and hide by Kerith Brook where it enters the Jordan River. There Elijah would have plenty of water to drink from the brook, and God directed the ravens to supply Elijah with food there, too. God told the birds to take food to Elijah every day.

So Elijah did what God told him to do and camped beside the brook. And guess what happened? Every morning and evening the birds brought bread and meat for Elijah to eat and he had plenty to drink just as God had promised him.

How did God take care of Elijah in this story? God directed Elijah where to go so that he would be safe and have water to drink. God directed the birds to bring food to Elijah every day. Isn't it wonderful how God took care of Elijah?

I wonder how God takes care of us. I wonder if God ever directs us to take care of others.

God, thank you for taking care of us in so many different ways. Help us to trust in you as you tell us what to do. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Adapted from <https://sermons4kids.com/elijah-is-fed-by-ravens-5>

Second Scripture Reading

1 Kings 19:1-18

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Catch the Still, Small Voice”

Rev. Stillwell

Until March of 2020, I didn't pay much attention to warnings on the news about a sickness that was going around. More often than not the Swine Flu, Avian Flu, or SARS, were all sicknesses you definitely did not want to catch but were also pretty low as far as transmissibility were concerned. As a nation we were warned about these sicknesses but were largely able to prevent them from being a problem.

The fact of the matter is that we are bombarded with news of new ailments that we don't want to catch or reactions we never knew existed that we must be aware of at such an alarming rate, that it can be hard to keep track of all the things with which we should be concerned. In this modern world we worry about conditions like Covid, cancer, or carpal tunnel syndrome in addition to the age old fears of age, Alzheimer's, and ALS. Add to this the superficial but still every worrisome concerns we have about losing our hair or our looks, gaining weight, losing our hearing and eyesight, and the temptation is there for us to be nothing but full time worriers.

But of all the things that we fear happening to us the most, whether we know it or not, we should worry most about becoming like Elijah. I do not mean that we should fear having a queen want to kill us. Rather, I mean that dedicating your life to something, being successful in it but not feeling satisfied is one of the worst fates that could befall a person. It is a first world problem to be sure, but a person can endure much if they feel that their life has been significant, and one's faith is far more threatened by a sense of meaninglessness than by any sickness or disease.

I say this because as we hear our story we find Elijah, God's prophet, who is at the end of his rope. He has been struck with the worst condition the world has ever known, for he is having a mid-life crisis. The fact that this happens towards the end of his career only makes the situation worse. Elijah is a prophet who has lost hope.

It is not because he has failed. It is not because he made mistakes which led to his not being successful. In fact, the opposite is true. He has worked so hard for so long and has less than nothing to show for it. Once a great prophet, now he is running for his life. It had not always been like this.

Just a few short days ago, Elijah performed an amazing feat. It was the kind of act that amazed everyone. It left the people of Israel talking for days, maybe even years. Parents would tell their children and their grandchildren about the day in which Elijah defeated 450 prophets of Ba'al.

It was the kind of feat that should be the culmination of a brilliant career as the prophet of the Lord, and now Elijah should be basking in the glow of his accomplishments. Instead, after Elijah challenged the prophets of Ba'al, a God whom the Israelites had begun to worship after Ahab had become king of Israel, he found himself on the wrong end of an angry queen.

King David had long since died and the kingdom that he had united had fallen into two separate nations. Now the people had turned from the Lord and worshipped another God, but Elijah had been sent to change all of that. He gathered the 450 prophets of Ba'al and challenged them to a contest to determine who was the true God of Israel. The prophets placed a bull upon an altar and called to Ba'al all day to set the bull on fire, but their words were in vain.

Elijah took his turn and placed a bull upon the altar. He doused it in water three times, after which he called upon the Lord to set the bull on fire, which God proceeded to do. After seeing this, the people of Israel once again turned to the Lord their God. Elijah's work had been completed. He had accomplished the incredible task that God had put before him, and now it was time to get the rewards that he had coming to him -- or so he thought.

Upon hearing the news, Ahab told his wife, Jezebel, who was enraged and swore to kill Elijah. For fear of his life, Elijah ran into the wilderness and collapsed under a broom tree. This is not exactly a fitting reception for the Lord's prophet.

What Elijah was experiencing was more than just a mid-life crisis, it was a career crisis. It was a crisis of faith. If he has succeeded in doing the work of the Lord, as it appeared he had done, why did things turn out the way they had?

Most of us have been where Elijah was. We do something with good intentions and we do it well, and yet we are still not satisfied with the result. You slaved on that project at work that took you away from your family and friends and it worked out exactly as you hoped and you're still not happy or appreciated. What do you do now?

Every great prophet and servant of God experiences this. One day they're on top of the world and the next the world is on top of them.

Remember Jacob? Jacob convinced Esau to sell him his birthright and deceived Isaac into blessing him. He fled from his brother and was tricked into working for 14 years before he could marry Rachel. Then, as his brother's army descended upon him, he was attacked by a man who broke his thigh and left. Was this the life that God intended for the father of Israel?

Remember Moses? He stood up to Pharaoh, led the Israelites out of slavery and out of Egypt, parted the Red Sea ensuring a safe escape, and led his people to the Promised Land. Yet in the middle of this was 40 years of wandering in the desert. The Israelites cried out against Moses. They said it would have been better to remain in Egypt as slaves rather than to die in the desert. Is this how God's messenger should be treated?

Elijah was in a similar situation. He had handled disappointment and failure all right. He had preached to the Israelites, and his words had mostly fallen on deaf ears. This was to be expected, after all that is the lot of a prophet, but now he had preached and shown the strength of the Lord, and the people had believed, yet he was more miserable than ever. He had lost his call, and he was at his end.

Although certainly no prophet I was at my end many years ago. I love Buffalo chicken wings, and, while they may have been invented in Buffalo, NY, they were perfected in Wellsburg, WV. I go to the Drover's Inn in Wellsburg, WV whenever I can. When I went to Bethany College in Bethany, WV, no week was complete without dinner at the Drover's. When I lived in Texas I sometimes lay awake in excitement and anticipation over the next time I would return home to eat their wings.

I love them so much that, many years ago, when I had to drive to Parkersburg, WV to meet with my ordination committee, I could not bear the thought of leaving my leftover wings at my parents' house in Wheeling, since I would be heading up to Pittsburgh afterwards, so I put them in my car where they stayed while I made the 2 hour drive down the Ohio River, sat in a one hour meeting, and drove three hours to Pittsburgh in the afternoon summer sun.

I'm not stupid. I did alright in school. I knew that they might be bad. I knew they could be off. But I didn't want to believe it. They smelled good and looked fine and so I let my stomach and my tongue overrule my brain. I had a small taste and they tasted oh so good, so I tore into them. I even gnawed on the bones and wiped the blue cheese with my fingers to get all that fantastic taste. My wife came home and was angry that I had not saved any for her.

The next morning she wasn't so mad about that anymore. You see I got something more than incredible Drover's wing flavor. I had also gotten terrible food poisoning. I spent a miserable day in bed and I prayed much more than I usually do, and wondered if I was going to get through it. Jessi teasingly said to me "the thing about food poisoning is that it's usually gone in 24 hours; or it kills you." I thought my fate would be the latter, but I did pull through.

Despite the pain and discomfort. Despite the missed day of work. Despite the embarrassment of having been a fool, I noticed that something positive came out of the whole situation. The first day I could eat, I sat down and ate a bowl of Campbell's Noodle Soup, which I usually found boring and bland, and it was possibly the greatest tasting bowl of soup I have ever eaten. The broth was so rich and the noodles so plentiful. It more than filled me up and lifted my spirits. I may have enjoyed that meal more than any other before or since.

Not only did food taste better than before, but I began to notice something else as well. I noticed that the day was so much nicer. It was the same temperature as the day before, maybe even hotter, but it felt cooler. The humidity was gone. My friends complained about having to go outside, but I could not be kept in. In short, everything seemed better, and I began to appreciate the simple feeling that we all take for granted. The simple feeling of health. The feeling of not being sick.

We learn to thank God for small blessings, but what I was experiencing was no small blessing. We only notice our health when it's gone, so being able to appreciate my health while I was healthy was a monumental blessing.

The experience reminded me of an essay that I read in high school in which a chronic migraine headache sufferer wrote about what it is like to experience such a pain. Of course she describes the terrible pain, but she concludes with a surprise. She states that, while she does not enjoy migraines, there is a peace and calm and renewed energy that she receives from them. The day after a headache, birds sound sweeter, the sun is brighter, and life is better. While she does not enjoy the trial that migraines bring her, she has come to appreciate the perspective that they give her.

This is a perspective that we all need. We get so caught up in the everything of daily life. We don't notice when we are well, only when we are sick. We don't notice when we are happy, only depressed. We

simply don't notice the abundant blessings that are all around us all the time. I have incredible amounts of pity for those who know nothing but pain and sorrow. But I also pity those for whom everything has come easy. I pity those who have known no pain, and who have never struggled.

It's true that obstacles build character, but they also provide perspective. When you're on top it is important to remember what it felt like at the bottom. When you're at the bottom it's important to remember what it's like on top. With the right attitude and proper perspective everyone can get through a crisis of faith. In fact everyone can grow from a crisis of faith.

Remember Jacob? He wrestled all night until his hip broke. In the end he was blessed, his name was changed to Israel, for he wrestled with God and prevailed, he made amends with his brother, and fathered 12 children. Through him the Lord's prophecy to Abraham of countless descendants was fulfilled.

Remember Moses? He and the people wandered through the desert until a new generation was born and, as he led them from Egypt, he led them to Canaan and looked into the Promised Land before he died.

Remember Elijah? He goes onto a mountain and is blown by the wind that smashes rocks all around, he is shook by an earthquake and burned by fire, but that does not inspire him for he does not feel the presence of the Lord in any of these, but then came silence and out of it rose a still, small voice that said "What are you doing here?" Elijah pleaded his case before God, explaining how hard he had worked and how much he had failed. But the still, small voice said to him, "Go and return." No admonishment, no rebuke, simply a stirring nudge to let Elijah know that he had been faithful, and that there was work still to be done. In the end Elijah's life is not taken by Jezebel. He anoints a new king and a new prophet, and is taken up to be with God; his work and life rewarded.

There are a lot of things that we do not want to catch, but one thing I pray we all catch is perspective whose main symptom is appreciation. It is a cliché to say to someone who has lost something that they still have their health, but the truth of the sentiment is clear when we no longer do. We cannot grow from trials and sorrow without that still, small voice of God.

When you all feel like you are at your end. When you need some perspective to get through some crisis of your own, come to church and ask yourself the same question God asked Elijah, "Why are you here?" Then be still and listen for that small voice that can encourage you to do not so small things. I cannot say that your problems will be solved, or your troubles eliminated, but I do believe that listening for the still, small voice of God, will give us the perspective we need to handle what is in our way.

Call to Offering

Kevin Puskarich

As we have blended our voices in song and have united our souls in prayer, so let us now merge our gifts in an offering of hope and concern. May the morning offering be received.

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

Source of every blessing, you are our refuge and our strength. Even before we were born, you knew us completely. You have watched over us all the days of our lives. Receive these offerings and the gratitude of thankful hearts. Grow the ministries of your church, that we may bring your message of love to a world deafened by clanging cymbals and noisy gongs. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

No one wants to be sick. We spend so much time and effort trying to avoid it, and one of the reasons is because we feel too busy to be sick. Some sicknesses are worse than others, but even a cold or simple flu is something we want to avoid for no other reason than we are busy and don't want to spend time in bed if we do not have too. That is why there is one benefit that comes from being sick, and that is being forced to be still.

We are busy, and we fill our lives with any number of tasks and descriptions. I think it is instructive that we learn from our story for today that God speaks to us but not in a thunderstorm or an earthquake. God does not speak in big, world-shattering ways. Instead, God speaks in a still, small voice, which means that we will not hear it unless we, too, are still.

This is important, because, if we are at the end of our rope as Elijah was, we are more likely to hear God speaking to us. When we are sick and cannot distract ourselves with all of the things we usually have going on, then we are more likely to hear God speaking to us. It is one benefit from being forced to rest, but it would be nice if we could hear that voice in some other way.

Instead of waiting to be sick or to be sick and tired of how things are going in our life to listen to God, let us take the opportunity that we are granted each week to come to this table and take some time to push out all of the thoughts and worries and stresses that fill our minds daily and which prevent us from hearing that still, small voice which comes from God. Take the bread and take the cup and take the time now to listen. I cannot promise that what you hear will make you all well, but I know that it will make you better.

Communion Hymn

"An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare"

Audra Allen, organist

An upper room did our Lord prepare for those he loved until the end: and his disciples still gather there to celebrate their risen friend.	A lasting gift Jesus gave his own: to share his bread, his loving cup. Whatever burdens may bow us down, he by his cross shall lift us up.
---	---

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Rita Puskarich

Holy God,

On this frosty morning, many places in the world desire for peace. It is elusive. Even peace within our own souls is difficult to find because of stress, illness, pressure and conflict from the world around us. Help us to find peace in our souls through Christ. In this quiet time, through this sacred bread and cup, may we experience the holy presence of peace through Jesus Christ. 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

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

"Here I Am, Lord"

Jody Mullis, pianist

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save. I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?	I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain. I have wept for love of them, They turn away. I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone. I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?
---	---

Here I am, Lord. Is it I Lord? I have heard you calling
in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

God sends us forth with words of love on our lips. Christ sends us with acts of love in our deeds. The Spirit sends us with the power of love to sustain our lives. We go in the power of God's love to be ambassadors of Christ's love and peace.

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