

Manor Minutes

Volume 12 Issue 4

January 29, 2021

“Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy.” (Psalm 98:8)

This week concludes our annual stewardship emphasis celebrating what we have accomplished together and asking each member to pledge to take part in the upcoming year’s efforts through the use of their time, talents, and treasure. I hope you enjoyed the videos that Amy and Becca Caldwell shared concerning the Women’s Stories from the Old Testament study as well as Kris Drach describing how the Literacy Council of SWPA is able to help so many because of their partnership with Fairhill Manor Christian Church. If you missed them, you can view them on our website (<https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/together-for-joy>). As we continue to give thanks to God for our blessings and the things that have brought us joy in this difficult time, this Sunday we will offer our pledges to God and ask God to consecrate them to the furthering of the Kingdom. If you haven’t filled out your pledge card please do so and send it to the church office or fill one out on our website and then join us this Sunday as we give thanks and give back to God who has truly brought us “**together for joy!**” As always if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask Rev. Chris, Pastor Gena or the chairperson of our Stewardship/Finance Ministry, Jerry Puskarich.

ZOOM – LIVE at 10:15 am

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

Pastor Gena is inviting us to be a part of the **Children’s Message** this week. Gather up anything in your house that you can use to make some noise and praise God! Do you have a bell to ring, a pot and a spoon to clang, a drum to beat, a horn of any kind to sound, some dry beans in a can to shake? Be creative! Have your noisemakers and your “Alleluias!” ready to make some noise **Together for Joy** during the Children’s Message!

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. We center our time together around "The Beatitudes," a curriculum designed specifically for online interaction and focused on Matthew 4:23-5:12. JC Leasure and Pastor Gena are co-leading this time.



Stewardship/Finance Ministry – February 9, 6 pm via Zoom

Elders Meeting – February 10, 6:30 pm via Zoom

Ash Wednesday – February 17

Drive Thru Food Collection – February 27, 11 am - Noon

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





Fairhill Manor Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

351 Montgomery Ave.

724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor

Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor

January 31, 2021

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship*

Von Lacock

Praise God, who loves us all. Praise God, who is full of mercy and compassion. Praise God, who loves us well. Praise God, who creates honesty and justice. Praise God, who invites us to love. Praise God, who loves through us and our actions.

Opening Hymn

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

Audra Allen, organist

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive our fear and doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

Mortals, join the happy chorus stars of morning, take your part;
love divine is reigning o'er us, binding those of tender heart.
Ever singing, move we onward, victors in the midst of strife,
joyful music leads us sunward in the triumphs song of life.

Installation and Consecration of Church Officers

(Officers being installed, please unmute your Zoom)

Statement of Purpose

Presentation of Officers

Charge to the Officers and Congregation

Prayer of Installation and Consecration

Declaration of Installation

Blessing

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*

Pastor Gena

God of the Symphony of Life, your song rises within us, from the depth of our toes, spilling forth in joyful praise to you. We gather in many places to worship and to praise you this morning, one in your Spirit and glad to be together for joy as a community in your presence.

Thank you for the many melodies that have played in this place among your people. Thank you for all who have preached here and taught here, led here and sang here, played here and learned here. Thank you for the big and booming instruments that we all remember with wonder and awe; thank you for the soft

and perhaps less noticed instruments who fill out and complete our song; thank you for the steady beat of those drums among us who keep us on task and let the beauty of your music shine. We give you thanks for how the notes of our stories have blended and built on each other, creating songs that are uniquely ours.

Thank you for the new songs that we are singing. Slowly, hesitatingly, begrudgingly, wishing things were different, we are hearing the new melody you are teaching us. It looks and feels different, but we find you in it somehow.

We know that joyful noises are not easy for everyone to make right now. So many of us are burdened down with the stresses of daily living and all that involves. Some of us are weary from our tasks of serving and caring for others. Some of us sit in deep darkness, mourning the loss of those we love so much. We are worried over the state of our world. We are restless and looking hard for some joy.

Speak to us, O God, in the stillness of this time. Remind us of Jesus' willingness to take our burdens upon himself. Help us to take him up on his offer. Help us to see ourselves releasing our worries and fears and hurt and pain to him.

We pray for the healing of the earth and all its creatures.

We pray for leaders of nations, for those who have great wealth, for those who have too much power, for those who have destructive weapons, for those who have none.

We pray for children who have witnessed great violence with no one to comfort them, for parents who cannot meet the needs of their children, for those who with courage are bringing greater wholeness and well-being to those around them, for those who are charged with making policies for the greater good.

We pray for the wisdom to serve you in this time and in this place, for the courage to change in ways that bring us closer to you and to each other.

We pray for all who are in pain and in need of care, especially those we have named aloud and those we now name silently.... Into your hands we commend all of these for whom we pray and those it would be easy to forget.

And while Jesus carries all of these, help us to soak in his steadfast love for us. We reach for his joy, knowing that he offers it to us so that our joy might be complete.

And now, Great One, you for whom the floods clap and the hills sing. You, who know our situations better than anyone. Take our credits and debits, our ins and outs, our pluses and our minuses, our surpluses and that which we lack, and show us how to use them all as we join the great chorus of Creation. We pray all of this in the name of your Son, 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.

Anthem

Audra Allen

Children's Message*

Pastor Gena

We are celebrating today...celebrating all the wonderful ways we are "together for joy" as a congregation! You may wonder how we can celebrate being "together for joy" when we are literally not together at all. We are all separated in different places. And many of us are sad or lonely or sick or tired of not being able to do all the things that bring us joy.

Our Scripture for today – Psalm 98 – is a song of great celebration. It builds and grows as it goes, adding more and more voices and instruments and people and parts of creation until everyone and everything is praising God.

So let's climb up this ladder of praise together out of our sadness and separation and grief and disappointments and frustration – let's climb up this ladder of praise until we can see far and wide together and just bask in God's never-ending love!

We will start off quietly. I will read some words, and when I pause, we will all sing or shout or play an instrument or clap – anything we can think of to praise God! We might say "Alleluia!" or "Praise God!" As we go, we will get louder and louder. You can change how you praise God or keep doing the same thing. Let's invite everyone at home to unmute themselves so we can hear all the sounds of our praising God. Don't hold back! Let's praise our wonderful God!

Sing to God a brand-new song.
He's made a world of wonders!
The whole earth comes to attention.
Look – God's work of salvation.
Shout your praises to God, everybody!

[make some noise!]

Let loose and sing!
Strike up the band!
Round up an orchestra to play for God,
Add on a hundred-voice choir.
Feature trumpets and big trombones,
Fill the air with praises to King God.

[make some noise!]

Let the sea and its fish give a round of applause,
With everything living on earth joining in.
Let ocean breakers call out, "Encore!"
And mountains harmonize the finale –

[make some noise!]

A tribute to God when he comes,
When he comes to set the earth right.
He'll straighten out the whole world,
He'll put the world right, and everyone in it.

[make some noise!]

(Psalm 98: 1a, 3b-9, *The Message*)

Sermon*

“Together for Joy”

Rev. Stillwell

They say that life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it. That is a nice saying with a lot of truth to it, but this past year has felt like just the opposite. Things keep coming at us at a rate we have likely never known, and there isn't much we can do to react to them except persevere and wait.

In the last year we have dealt with a pandemic that has disrupted our life like nothing has in generations. We have dealt with lock downs and quarantines, suspension of in-person church services, resuming in-person church services in a modified form, and suspending them again. Some of us have lost jobs or seen our hours cut, while others have had to risk exposure to the virus by going to work. Many of you have cared for the sick, and some of you have gotten sick yourself. More than 400,000 of us have died. Against this backdrop we have also dealt with a divisive election and protests for racial justice that turned up the heat of an already hot summer.

I expect for most of us this was the most tumultuous year of our life, and whatever feeling we had that we were in control is long gone. I am not going to debate what the actual percentage of how we react to what happens to us is, but I will say that how we respond to something matters. How we respond to something thrown our way matters because often our response is the only thing we can control. As a result, it is often the case that two people can have the same experience and come through it very differently.

We have seen this. Two people lose a job. One person takes it as an opportunity to do something they might enjoy more while another sinks into depression. Two people lose a loved one unexpectedly. One person turns to God in their grief and finds comfort while another turns away and finds despair. Two people are warned of a novel coronavirus. One takes precautions and is careful around others while another dismisses it as a hoax to their peril and the peril of others. Sometimes what separates people is their experience, but more often what separates them is their response to a shared experience, and so we end up a very divided world.

The fact of the matter is that there are few experiences in this world that would engender the same response in people. To take the simplest of examples, my daughter rides the Jackrabbit at Kennywood and is ready to take on the Thunderbolt. My son rides the Racer and concludes that roller coasters are not for him. Even in the small experiences our responses are not always the same. So how do we build community through a shared experience if, not only our experiences differ so greatly but our responses to even the most simple shared experiences can vary greatly?

If there was ever an experience that might invoke a common response we can bet that it would be having an encounter with Jesus. For we see in the gospels that every time Jesus heals, cures, feeds, or does anything it produces the same result - joy and wonder. When Jesus tells Nathaniel that he saw him under the fig tree, Nathaniel calls him rabbi. When Jesus appears to Mary in the garden he calls her name and she responds by saying, “Rabbouni (which means teacher)”. At the Wedding of Cana, Jesus performs the small miracle of turning water into wine and the people are amazed. Jesus heals a leper or lame man or a man blind from birth and they are overjoyed and can barely contain themselves even when expressing their joy gets them into trouble.

The only time there is no joy is when Jesus is dealing with an unclean spirit as he does in Mark 1:21-28. Here Jesus encounters a man whom Mark describes as having an unclean spirit who cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.’

Although there is no joy in this encounter because this encounter leads to destruction, still the spirit must respond. It cannot help but proclaim who Jesus is, the Holy One of God.

To this Jesus responds by rebuking him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!'

This response to keep silent might make some sense when dealing with evil but Jesus says this to others as well. Later he will heal a leper and say to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone" (Mark 1:44). Later, when he asks his disciples who they think he is Peter says, 'You are the Messiah.'³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him." (Mark 8:29-30).

In these passages we see that people cannot help but respond to his power and Jesus tells them to be silent for his time has not yet come, but then comes Palm Sunday and Jesus is ready to be revealed so that, when told by the Pharisees to rebuke the cheering crowd, Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (Luke 19:40)

These are all very different encounters; a spirit being exorcized, a leper being healed, a disciple confessing his faith, people recognizing their king, and yet they all have the response of overwhelming joy that cannot be contained. This is because having an encounter with Jesus Christ requires a response. We cannot be silent if we have met him. We cannot contain ourselves if he has healed us. We cannot be restrained if he has fed us. We cannot but give thanks if he has forgiven us.

If we call ourselves Christians then we have encountered the risen Lord and this requires of us a response. So we should ask ourselves, "How do we respond?" Hear the words of Psalm 98:

O sing to the Lord a new song
Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
⁵ Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.
⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.
⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.
⁸ Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy

This describes the way for us to respond in all things. The first verse says it best when it says, "O sing to God a new song, for God has done marvelous things!" When things go well for us let us sing. That is an expected response, but when things go poorly let us make a joyful noise. Whatever our experience let us respond in the same way; praising God from whom all blessings flow and who will not leave us orphaned and who has promised to take our burdens.

This is essential for when we praise God from the heart, our song of praise lifts us up out of the mire of circumstances and struggle, so we can remember who we really are: beloved children of the God of Love and Grace. We are made to praise - and not just in good times! Praise is a ladder for our spirits, a gift to help us climb up out of the shadows and into the light to get a new perspective on things, if only briefly. Praise brings us back in touch with the truth of our situation.

When I am responding to a joyful experience I often go to my favorite songs and sing them for they remind me of joyful times and carefree days. When I am responding to a sad experience I often go to the same songs because they remind me of how they helped me get through hard times in the past, but I also heed the words of the psalmist and sing to God a new song, for in times like these, we have to sing them

in new ways, just as our ancestors did. They had to learn to sing God's song in a new way when their temple was destroyed, and those who learned to sing King Alpha's song in a strange land learned to enjoy God's presence in whole new way.

We have had difficulties in this past year to be sure, but we can give thanks that they still pale in comparison to the people of Israel who were exiled from their homeland for generations. We have been exiled from our sanctuary and we may not be singing together in the same physical space for some time to come - so we have to find new ways of singing, "new songs" to sing, new forms of praise and thanks and delight to give- new ways of being the church, of being God's people, new ways of being "together for joy" (Ps 98:8).

This we have done. We have sung our songs on Zoom in our homes and sometimes in the sanctuary. We have spoken over the phone and visited in the parking lot. We have continued to reach out to the community which needs us now more than ever by doing our food drives as a drive thru. We have watched webinars about the need for justice and social reform and discussed them in ways we had not done previously.

This is who we are, and who we'll continue to be and become. Now more than ever, we need to reach out and lift each other up. Now more than ever, we need to find new ways to be "together for joy." Now more than ever, we need to be the church! The church was made for times such as these: not times of ease and tranquility, but times of difficulty and struggle. Not a stroll along a sunlit path but a pilgrimage through the valley of the shadow of death. And not a whimper or a whisper of silence, but a new song sung out loud, in harmony with all creation, as the seas roar and hills sing together for joy!

And this is why all of us, as a community, ask each other to share our treasure and invest in our mission as a church. Now more than ever, your generosity can and will make an enormous difference. We thank you for your pledge and if you haven't made one you still can, and if you are uncomfortable with making a pledge we are grateful to the ways that you give and support the church as you are able.

In a time of difficulty and despair for so many, we are a community who responds with light and hope. In a time of injustice and struggle, we are a community who responds with love and justice. In a time of silence and isolation, we are and can be a community that responds with old songs, new songs, and new ways of singing, new ways of being God's church for God's world. In a time of scarcity and worry we are a community that responds with giving and generosity. We have each experienced the love of Jesus Christ and now we respond with gratitude as we look forward to the day when we can be together for joy. Thanks be to God!

Call to Offering*

Von Lacock

Today is a special day for our church. The installation of officers for 2021 and also Commitment Sunday. Pledging is so important for the financial stability of our church. It gives us the ability to pay our bills and support the many activities to do God's work. Please give as you can and we thank you for your pledge.

Dedication of Offering and Pledges*

Rev. Stillwell

Holy, awesome God, we bring gifts of paper and coin, symbols of our gratitude and our love. Bless these symbols, that they may become acts of love and grace. Bless us and our gifts, that we may transform the world with love and grace. In gratitude and hope, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to Communion*

Rev. Stillwell

With the bad weather we have had lately, you may not remember the good weather we received in November. It seems like a lifetime ago, but we had several weeks of sun and well above average temperatures. I enjoyed it immensely and took the opportunity to eat outside for as long as I could, but I have a friend who is convinced that we only get a set amount of good weather days a year, and so whenever the weather is unseasonably nice she always says, "We'll pay for it later." Well, she was right that the nice weather wouldn't last and it didn't, but I hardly think that we paid for it. The weather was bound to turn cold, and I see the nice weather we got earlier as a gift not a loan.

But some people think like that about everything. When something good happens they are always expecting that something bad will have to soon come along. It will or it won't, but if during the good times in our life we are just waiting for the bad to come, then we have wasted a precious gift.

Likewise as we gather at this table we remember the awesome gift of grace that Christ offers us, and if we spent our life worrying about how we might pay it back we would waste the gift and our life.

Jesus Christ told us to not worry about the future saying, "Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?" Enjoy the good things and the good times and the good moments that you receive and don't worry about having to pay for it later. These blessings, like God's grace are a gift not a loan. They are meant to be enjoyed and shared, not returned.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup*

Tammie Wallace

As we partake of this bread, his body, and this cup, his blood let it fill us with song and joy. Let it help us go out and share this joy in the world with others so they can be saved. 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

"Sing unto the Lord a New Song"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Sing unto the Lord a new song
Sing unto the Lord all the earth
Sing unto the Lord a new song
Sing unto the Lord all the earth
For God is Great and greatly to be praised.

Benediction*

Rev. Stillwell

Go now to love as beloved children of God. Go now to live as living signs of Christ's presence. Go now to transform the world with the power of the Holy Spirit.

* 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=PLmlH3qzih_fzHCC2X0Jhc_sfniJ7C1O3X



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!

Prayer List:

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
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg

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

Sadie Reese
Betty & Charles Riecks
Betty Jo Riggle
Chip Rogers and his parents
Jim and Barb Roupe
Theresa Shape
Colby Simkovic
Doug and Tracy Smith
Troy, Tammy, Walker & Kolby Smith
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Victoria Strawn
Beth Teagarden
Melissa Teagarden
Frannie Venan
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
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



For those of you who are updating a Recurring Donation in Givelify for your Annual Stewardship Campaign Commitment; here are the steps to take when making a change. Please note that this change will be done on the Givelify App on your phone. **You cannot change a Recurring Amount.** You have to delete the old one and create a new one.

1. Log into your Givelify App
2. At the bottom of the screen click on Profile
3. Next select Recurring
4. Your recurring donation currently being made will appear. Click on Cancel which is in the upper right-hand side of the screen. This step will delete the old Recurring Donation.
5. Next return to the home page and click on Give, "the green button"
6. Enter the amount of your gift. Make sure your bank information is current and correct. You will also select the frequency.
7. Givelify will then ask you if you wish to make this payment recurring and you will answer yes.

If you have any questions you can contact Jerry Puskarich at (724) 503-5658 or at jerrypuskarich@yahoo.com.

ZOOM – LIVE

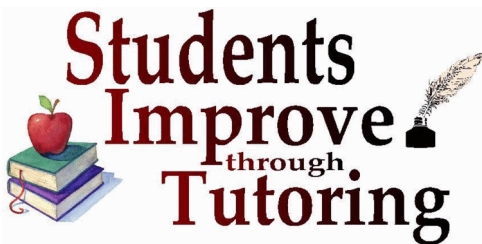
Zoom Worship this Week - Live from the Sanctuary at 10:15 am!

"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.



The Literacy Council of Southwestern PA is in need of tutors. If you would like more information, contact Lauren Berlin, Program Manager, at (724) 228-6188.

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.