

Manor Minutes

Volume 12 Issue 1

January 8, 2021

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.

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 will resume our time together with our study based 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.

Check
this
out →

Elders Meeting – January 13, 6 pm via Zoom

Board Meeting – January 13, 7 pm via Zoom

Women's Stories from the Old Testament – January 14, 5 pm via Zoom

Congregational meeting after Worship – January 17 via Zoom

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

Our **stewardship campaign** will begin next week. For the Sundays of January 17, 24, and 31 we will be emphasizing the need for stewardship in supporting God's ministry through Fairhill Manor Christian Church. Our theme is "**Together in Joy**", and each week we will focus on the ways that being together brings us joy through the sermons, music, and liturgy of our worship. We will also share videos of different groups who use our building for their work so that you will know that when you support the ministries of the church you are helping the community in many other ways as well. Concurrent to these services you will be receiving letters detailing the needs of the church as well as a detailed description of what ministry your offerings fund. We hope you will use this time to give thanks for the blessings of our church and prayerfully consider what level of support you will be able to pledge in this coming year. When you are ready, you can fill out the pledge card on our website or mail the one included with the first letter to Brian Shaw at the church's address. The information on how to complete a pledge card will be included in all three letters that you will receive. Then, on the last Sunday, January 31, we will offer up our pledges to be dedicated to God. We look forward to being together with you in joy as we celebrate a new year of doing God's work in Washington and giving back to God some of the blessings with which God has blessed us.

<https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/together-for-joy>





Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

351 Montgomery Ave.
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
January 10, 2021

Prelude

Dan Baker

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship*

Serena Dube

God's strong voice calls us to worship, calling us to sing and offer praise. God's creative voice calls us to worship, calling us to life and light. God's loving voice calls us to worship, calling us to love and be loved. Listen, for God's voice calls to us now.

Opening Hymn

"I've Got Peace like a River"

Jody Mullis, pianist

I've got peace like a river

I've got love like an ocean

I've got joy like a fountain

I've got peace like a river

I've got love like an ocean

I've got joy like a fountain

I've got peace like a river

I've got love like an ocean

I've got joy like a fountain

In my soul (repeat)

In my soul (repeat)

In my soul (repeat)

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*

Pastor Gena

God of heaven and earth, we gather in the name of Jesus to hear your voice speaking to us, to be immersed in your Spirit, to be cleansed and made new again. You are the one who is always calling us to yourself, calling us to change our ways and live in your best ways. We praise you, for your love is relentless and inviting and more powerful than anything we know.

Today we return to the waters to confess our sins again. God of all glory, you look at us and see us as we are, not worthy to kneel at your feet, not fully ready to welcome your way. Forgive us, gracious God. In Christ, stoop down again to save us; loosen the ties that bind us to selfish, unjust and harsh ways; set us free to love and serve you. We give great thanks for your grace, that in Jesus we are forgiven. Help us to hear you saying to each one of us, "you are my beloved child."

We remember now the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River. In thanksgiving, we remember our own baptisms, we remember the stories of our baptisms that others have told us, we look forward to our baptisms into your community of love.

Cleansing God, you make all things new. And so we thank you for this New Year. And we thank you for this new morning. And we thank you for this new moment. You give us hope that we really can change, we really can start over at any time, for you are God, the one who creates, the one who renews, the one who redeems.

We give you thanks for giving each of us gifts for use in building up the Body of Christ, serving one another and our community in love. Thank you for those who will serve as leaders this year. Bless all who will serve as Officers. Bless our Ministry Leaders, our Elders, our Deacons, our Trustees. Give them wisdom and guidance, energy and creativity, understanding and patience. Renew in all of us the

gifts of your Spirit and the call to discipleship. Prompt each of us to serve in ways that are uniquely ours when the time is right.

Knowing that you take notice of us and are moved with compassion, we pray for the world you made. Move again over these troubled waters, stained with hatred and scarred with misuse. Where carelessness and violence bring chaos, restore order, goodness and life.

We pray for the church you have redeemed. Where history and misunderstandings have divided us, make us one in the baptism we share.

We pray for all the people you have created. Give to the leaders of all nations the wisdom to know what is good. Where people are poor and hungry, provide justice and daily bread.

We pray for the ones you have given us to love. Bless our families, friends and neighbors; keep them safe from trouble and danger. Where there is sorrow, sickness or suffering, send your Spirit of comfort and healing. Hear us now as we pray for those who are in our minds and on our hearts... Teach us how to love.

As we enter this New Year, help us to recognize our place in your plan – whether as forerunner or leader or follower. Help us to point always to Jesus as the one who brings the Good News of your love and mercy. All of this we pray in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, who taught 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.

Special Music

Dan Baker

Children's Message*

Pastor Gena

Have you ever made a promise? Has anyone ever made a promise to you? Why is it important to keep the promises we make? Have you ever watched as someone was baptized in our church? What did you notice? What promises did we make as a church family?

Today's Bible story comes from the Gospel of Mark. In this story, Jesus journeys to find his relative, John, and asks to be baptized in the Jordan River. John wasn't always called "John the Baptizer" or "John the Baptist," but he became known by that name because John agreed to do what Jesus asked.

As Jesus came up out of the water during his baptism, the heavens opened up, and the Holy Spirit came down like a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you, I am well-pleased."

Today we celebrate and remember Jesus' baptism. We also celebrate our own baptism, either by remembering when we were baptized or looking forward to the day we will be baptized. Some children are baptized as babies, and others are baptized when they are older. Some people are baptized as grown-ups like Jesus was. Some people are baptized with just a little bit of water on their heads, while others are baptized by going all the way under the water.

We share in God's promise that we are all God's children. Like the people on the shoreline at Jesus' baptism, we can celebrate our own baptism every time others are baptized. When we do, it is our turn to promise to help others remember they are God's children, and God loves them very much.

Dear God, help us to remember our baptism or to look forward to our baptism! Remind us of your love for Jesus and for us. Help us keep our promises to share your stories and your love. Amen.

Scripture Reading*

Mark 1:4-11

Serena Dube

Sermon*

“Let's Come Clean”

Rev. Stillwell

There is nothing like getting clean. Anyone who has ever gotten dirty knows the truth of that sentence. When I worked on the farm the best part of my day was the shower I took after, which made me feel like a brand new person.

Even if you have never gotten truly filthy in your life if you ever watch a show where people have to go and live in the rough like Survivor you know what I mean. The contestants on that show spend weeks in a jungle or on a beach and they compete in challenges that have rewards and inevitably in the middle of every season one of the most sought after rewards is the opportunity to take a shower.

But it is not natural to be clean. After all, the world is a dirty place. Most of the world is outside and has dirt floors, and the idea of showering frequently is a relatively new idea fueled by a relatively new industry. So many of the advertisements we see on TV are for soap, deodorant, or shampoo in order to make yourself clean and fresh smelling. They usually are labeled “fresh breeze” and are most always blue, even though the wind has no smell or color.

You thought soap and shampoo were enough but now there are so many more products, like facial scrubs, exfoliators, body wash, conditioners, and much, much more. It is a never ending battle because of course as soon as you get clean you immediately begin to get dirty again.

That is why, before we became so civilized and concerned with smelling like a fresh breeze people didn't bath so much. Not everyone can shower as much as we do now. In fact, in medieval days kings and peasants would bath regularly, but, whereas kings would bath daily or weekly, peasants would bath yearly. Just one bath a year is all they were afforded and that would come on New Year's Day. It made the day special as they literally washed away the old and brought in the new by beginning the new year with a clean slate, or face for that matter. It was, to say the least, beginning the year with a fresh start.

A fresh start is what Mark uses to begin his gospel. Like the gospel of John the gospel of Mark begins with a prologue introducing the point of the gospel, and like the gospel of John, the gospel of Mark's prologue focuses on the actions and purpose of John the Baptist. His gospel takes place at a time when people did not bath regular, but even in that time, John was a strange and wild person. He lived far from society near the Jordan River and John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey, and yet he was bathing and cleansing people.

In fact, he was baptizing them, as his name suggests, which involved bathing people in water; immersing them fully into the river, but whether or not their faces came clean wasn't as important as whether or not their souls came clean when they confessed and repented of their sins. The Jewish faith held ritual cleansing as a centerpiece of their actions, but baptism involved adherence to aspects of the law.

The cleansing John offered addressed personal sin. But John cleansed the people of another thing as well. The people came to him with so many expectations. They not only expected him to be the Messiah, they expected the Messiah to be a certain way. They expected him to restore the glory of Israel, to be like King David, to punish the wicked. They expected John to call people a brood of vipers. They just didn't expect him to call them that. The Romans were vipers. The tax collectors and soldiers were vipers. They were the ones coming to him. They expected even less for John to say that he was not the Messiah. After all, anyone who was able to obtain a following immediately laid claim to that title in those days, but John said, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals."⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

So in both the gospel of John and Mark, John the Baptist represented the old expectations born out of the prophets of old. John cleanses the people, of sins and of these expectations.

When Jesus arrives he comes also to bath in the waters of Jordan. He did so not to clean his body of dirt or even to clean his soul of sins, but he did allow John to baptize him to make a clean start. For in the waters of baptism a covenant is sealed. The old is washed away and a new begins. The Old Testament ends and the New Testament starts. The old law is washed away, and the spirit of God descends like a fresh breeze and an era of grace commences.

Although we do not bath only once a year at the start of a new year, we should still use the new year as an opportunity to make a clean start. I spent some time earlier this week as I do every January cleaning out my desk. It was nice to go through and get organized, throw out the clutter and junk that I no longer need, if I ever needed it, and find a few forgotten treasures.

It is good to begin the year with a cleansing. Clean out your desk, your pantry or closet, take a bath or a shower, but don't forget to also clean your soul. It is good to go through your soul and throw out the useless junk that clutters everything and rediscover those nice things you forgot about.

At the same time there things that you just cannot get clean. There are stubborn stains that have been there forever and you can't wash away. The Geneva Historical Society has an entire section dedicated to stain removal now and then and one of the entries in the display remarks that "one day of the week was usually set aside to do laundry in the 19th century. The amount of preparation and knowledge one needed to tackle, what seems today to be quite an easy task, was formidable." Likewise I have heard so many times stories of how it was around this area a few decades ago when the steel mills were running and people would have to know what days they could put their laundry out to dry otherwise they would find once dried it would have to be washed again.

All of this is to say that it is hard for some things to come clean, and no cleaning product, no bath item, can get it done. We can clean our bodies, and we can clean our clothes, but God can clean our souls.

You have heard the expression come clean? It means to tell the truth, be honest, confess. It is a useful expression, because we should come clean to God. Yes we clean ourselves up and look our best when we come to church but that is not what we are talking about. If we want God to clean the stain on our souls, if we want God to wash away the sins that mark our life, we must first admit they are there and then ask for them to be forgiven.

We must come clean to get clean. Come clean about our faults and weaknesses, come clean about the areas where we need Christ's help to be better, come clean about the things we wish to be forgiven for. Once we have come clean to ourselves, then, and only then, can we be washed, truly washed, heart and soul washed by God.

Many of you have already been washed in the waters of baptism, some of you may wish to be, but you are all washed in the grace of God so long as you believe, and that is a more powerful cleaning product than any other on the market.

God's grace has the power to erase any stain and remove any spot. God's grace is the only thing that can clean our soul. I have no idea if it is blue, but it will certainly leave us fresher than any product of human invention. Nothing feels as good as taking a filthy, dirty body and scrubbing it clean and fresh, nothing that is except washing a soul until it is spotless. Let each of us make a fresh start this year, by coming clean. Come clean to God and let God clean you.

Call to Offering*

Serena Dube

God's gifts to the world do not appear from nowhere. God channels His gifts through His people, people like you and me. Let us now become channels of God's gifts through our morning offering.

Dedication of Offering Prayer*

Rev. Stillwell

Bless these gifts with your voice of creation, your healing, and your love, Mighty God. Transform our meager offerings into abundant gifts for a world in need of your light and life. Amen.

Invitation to Communion*

Rev. Stillwell

"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.' And Jesus said to him, 'You have judged rightly.' Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.'

When we are forgiven much sometimes our response is guilt, because we do not feel worthy. Guess what? We are not worthy, and that is the point of grace. Although we can do nothing to earn God's love, God offers it all the same. As a result we should also know that we cannot out-sin God's grace. Therefore, the more we are forgiven the more gratitude we should feel.

I mentioned earlier how dirty I used to get working on the farm and how much of a relief it was to get clean. This principal is also true of the cleaning of our souls. We rejoice that God has given us Jesus Christ for the cleansing of our soul and we should never feel that our souls are too dirty to be presented to him for cleaning since he is the only one who can make them new again. We may have guilt and shame at the state of our soul, but that is okay so long as these feelings do not prevent us from coming to this table because we think we are unworthy. Instead they should bring us to the table with the knowledge that the host of this meal is the only one who can remove those stains.

As we share in this meal together let us bring to the table all of the sins and faults and mistakes that have stained our soul, and let us leave with nothing but gratitude and relief for having made a fresh start once again.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup*

JC Leasure

O God,

You are the one true God. You have led us to the heights of peace and joy, and you have protected us in the depths of tribulation. You alone are worthy of our praise. You have brought us out of a year where many have felt hopeless and lost. You have been faithful to us. As time changes and we enter into 2021, unsure of what the future may hold, you reveal your son to us. Your only begotten son, Jesus, has come to us so that we can return to you. Through Jesus you are faithful to us still. As we share communion with you, reveal your love to us once again. We commune with you to show our faithfulness, as you remain faithful to us.

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

“I’ve Got a River of Life Flowing Within Me”

Jody Mullis, pianist

I’ve got a river of life flowing within me;
It makes the lame to walk and the blind to see.
It opens prison doors, sets the captives free.
I’ve got a river of life flowing within me.

I’ve got a river of life flowing within me;
It started gushing up when God set me free
That I keep the flow is my only plea
I’ve got a river of life springing within me.

Spring up, O well, within my spirit!
Rise up and tell, so all can hear it!
Spring up, O well, so I experience
That life abundantly.

Benediction*

Rev. Stillwell

Share together this blessing and truth: You are God’s child, beloved and pleasing to God. Knowing this about ourselves, let us help others discover it about themselves as well.

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.





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
Wanda Chicone
Joanne Coburn
Emily Cope Robinson
Rick & Dawn Couch
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
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
Elinor Newman
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Deborah Patterson
Denny Paul

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



Fairhill Manor Christian Church received word that Margaret Winters, one of our previous administrative assistants, passed away from COVID. We extend our sympathy to her daughter Alyson, her husband Jack (also very sick at home with COVID), and their whole family. She was an excellent administrative assistant and retired in 2015.

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.



* You can listen to these pieces of worship at <https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/worship-audio-files>

You can help Fairhill Manor Christian Church all year through this program, not just at Christmas.

Choose Fairhill Manor as your charity on **Amazon Smile**. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Sign in to smile.amazon.com. Go to "Your Account," then select the option to "Change your Amazon Smile Charity." Type "Fairhill Manor Christian Church" into the Search box. Choose FMCC as your charity!



TAX TIPS



Under the CARES Act, Congress passed a new law in 2020 that allows taxpayers to take an above the line deduction of up to **\$300** for qualified charitable contributions for those who do not itemize deductions. The deduction from Gross Income will appear on line 10b of the 2020 Form 1040. The deduction is available for qualified taxpayers for both 2020 and 2021. Should you have any questions please contact Jerry Puskarich at 724-503-5658.



KEEP SCROLLING ...

Amy & Becca Caldwell made the Epiphany Stars. I think they are AWESOME!

