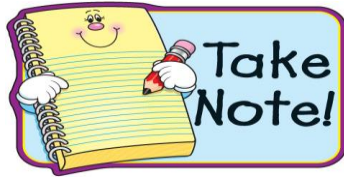


Manor Minutes

Volume 12 Issue 25

June 25, 2021



Food Distribution at First Church of the Nazarene – June 26, 10am-11am

Personnel Committee – June 29, 3pm Library

July Board Reports due to office – July 7

Elders Meeting – July 14, 6pm Shepherds Room

Board Meeting – July 14, 7pm Library

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

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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.

Fairhill Manor extends its sympathy to John Anderson whose mother, Ellen Frances Anderson, passed away June 9. Please keep John and his family in your thoughts and prayers.



Fairhill Manor extends its sympathy to Bill Lewis and his family on the death of his wife Patsy Lewis on June 18. Bill and Patsy were members of Fairhill Manor before moving to Greensburg. Cards can be sent to Bill at 969 Sunset Drive, Greensburg, PA 15601.



We currently have (1) opening on the **Personnel Committee** and (2) openings on the **Stewardship/Finance Ministry**. If you are interested or have any questions please contact Jerry Puskarich at (724) 503-5658 or email jerrypuskarich@yahoo.com.

Fairhill Manor Christian Church is now taking applications for students of our church that will be attending college this fall and wish to apply for a **\$2,000 scholarship under the Reese Scholarship Program**. Applications are available on the FMCC Website. Just go to fairhillmanorchurch.org then click on Ministries and Reese Grant. You will need to move down to the Internal Application which can be downloaded to a PDF. When it is completed, please email it to finance@fairhillmanorchurch.org. The applications are marked on the form to be submitted by July 1 but since we are a little late in sending this out, we will extend it to July 15th. Should you have any questions please contact Jerry Puskarich at (724) 503-5658 or email at jerrypuskarich@yahoo.com. Applications received will be reviewed and awards made in early August.

Scholarship Available



Fairhill Manor Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

351 Montgomery Ave.
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
June 27, 2021

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Amy Caldwell

We wait for the Lord, our souls wait for the Lord, and find hope in God's word.
Our souls wait for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning.
Let us seek hope in our God, whose power is enduring love, whose redemption
brings healing and grace.
We wait for the Lord, and find our hope in God's presence.

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.

All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
changing bird and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in thee.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Holy One, you sent your Son to walk among us, and you ask us to abide in him as branches connected to a life-giving vine. We give you thanks for your constant presence and unending love.

Life-giving God, we confess that we have not always borne the fruit of compassion and love as you have asked us to. We have turned the other way and ignored brothers and sisters in need. We have remained silent while injustice has roared from the sidelines. We have sometimes thought that we could bear fruit on our own and neglected and ignored the vine from which we stem. Forgive us, O God.

Help us to listen closely for your voice. Give us strength to continue to abide in you—to journey with you, to live out the call to be people working for wholeness.

For all that you have given us, God of life, we give you thanks and praise. For your abiding presence and strength, we give you thanks. For opportunities to serve in your name, we give you praise. For this community of faith in which to grow in you, we give you thanks. For the yearning in us to be connected to you, the source of our life, we praise you.

Abiding God, we ask you to continue to be present with those who need you the most: those who are grieving, those in need of healing, those whose situations may feel overwhelming. We pray now for those who need your loving care ... Show us how to love in your name, O God.

Give us strength to go out into the world and serve our brothers and sisters as you have called us to. May we abide with others as Christ abides with us. May we be instruments of your peace, bearers of your fruit, and lamps that shine your light just a little more brightly.

In the name of the True Vine, Jesus the Christ, we pray 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.

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

John 12:20-25

Von Lacock

Special Music

“Morning Has Broken”

Jody Mullis

Children’s Message

Cara Hritz

Have you ever seen a fruit tree? What kind of tree was it? Was there fruit growing? I brought this branch from a fruit tree in my yard. It's a branch from a peach tree. Can you see where the peaches are growing? I also brought this branch from my yard. But, look at it, there are no leaves or anything growing from it anymore. If this branch came from a fruit tree, it will never grow fruit now. It needed to stay connected to grow fruit.

Jesus told a story once about vines and branches. He told His followers that they were like branches and He was like a grape vine. They wouldn't grow fruit unless they stayed connected to Him. They wouldn't grow to be more loving or kind or generous without Him. Just like this branch can't grow anymore fruit, we can't grow without Jesus.

Let's pray: Dear Jesus, help us to find ways to stay connected to you. Help us to grow fruit and show others your love. Amen

Second Scripture Reading

John 15:1-8

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Crushed by God”

Rev. Stillwell

Have you heard the story of Atlas? In Greek Myth he was a Titan who warred against the Gods and when the Titans lost, as a punishment, Atlas was confined to hold the heavens on his shoulders. As you can imagine Atlas became a symbol of strength as embodied in Charles Atlas the bodybuilder who rode dynamic tension to great fame and fortune.

Because of Atlas' reputation for strength, a gym in Monongahela has a statue of Atlas holding up the world outside of its building for some time and, I often drive by it. One day I noticed it was laying down in front of the building as they did some remodeling, but I couldn't help but laugh that it seemed as if the weight of the world was too much even for him.

Certainly, it can be too much for us sometimes. Unlike Atlas, we do not have the weight of the world on our shoulders but we have all felt that moment when we had problem after problem to deal with or one massive problem that pushed everything else to the side. We have all walked around with burdens that weighed on our minds if not our shoulders, and we have asked God, “What am I supposed to do, why did you give this to me?”

We say it like that because we’ve invariably heard the saying that, God doesn’t give us more than we can handle, and when we hear that I wonder does that make us feel better, or does it cause us to curse that God made us able to handle so much? Sometimes we may fear that we will be crushed by the weight of the world or the expectations of Heaven and that is the point.

You see they also say that what doesn’t kill us only makes us stronger, but sometimes it makes us weaker, and that is also the point. One of the first realizations we must come to as Christians is that we do not need to carry the weight of the world by ourselves, and if we try, we will be crushed by it and that will be it, but, if we let God crush us that will not be it for us. Rather it will be the beginning of gaining true strength.

I know it sounds harsh to describe God as crushing us, and I don’t want you to think I am describing God as God appears in the book of Job, hitting us with one tragedy after another until we break, rather I want you to think of God as a farmer who plants a seed of wheat in the hopes that its outer shell will break open and a plant will burst forth, or a man who takes the grapes he has lovingly grown and crushes them in a wine press in order to make wine. The two elements that we have at this table are two things that are crushed in order to make something new. The center of our worship is two things that die to themselves to become something more.

Both the wheat and the grape die to what they were to become something more, just as the grain of wheat died to become wheat, just as Jesus died to become savior. In this sense we must die as well, and I am not talking about the day we stop drawing breath. We must die to ourselves so that Christ will live in us. This is what Jesus was talking about when He says to his disciples when foretelling his death, “Very truly I tell you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” In this image the seed doesn’t die and then cease to exist. It dies and become something more than it ever was before.

If it falls into the dank, dark soil, into the darkness of death, into the destruction and decaying remains of former life it will burst open, find the light, and become so much more of what it was created to be. It will swell from the tiny seed, a mere hint of what could follow, and explode into the life-bearing producer of food for the world.

These are the words of promise Jesus told his disciples so that they would not be afraid when the time came for his death, because it is often in death that we fully find life. Debra Metzgar Shew is an Episcopal priest who once described her experience of being in New York when the World Trade Center was attacked. In a sermon she detailed the scene of death that she saw that day when she said, “It was death before your eyes and under your feet and in the air. It was hatred and evil in visible form, form that you could literally taste and touch and see and smell.”

This was a vivid description of death that she made in a sermon and yet, just a few yards away, within the walls of her church, a different sight was unfolding; a different reality was emerging. Inside St. Paul's Episcopal Church, people from every walk of life, every religious tradition or none, every part of the United States and beyond, were gathering, and were discovering something they had rarely known. They were discovering that what all that destruction outside had torn down was not simply the walls of the

World Trade Center but the walls of division that we create between ourselves. In the face of death they were recognizing the real truth of their lives and existence: that we are all one. That what we have in common is our mortality. That it is precisely at the point of our deaths that we reach the point of our oneness. That when our vulnerability and finiteness is faced, an invulnerable and infinite love emerges. In that moment life emerges.

Amidst the grief and despair and exhaustion, amidst the tangible proof of the cost of human hatreds and religious discontents was the most palpable experience of community and love that she had ever known. She testified to how in the midst of death life was being born because, "Somehow in the recognition of our mortality we were given life. That the explosion outside had become the occasion for an explosion inside, an explosion not of steel and hatred and despair but of life and generosity and hope. We had arrived with our sense of helplessness, arrived with our limits, arrived with a sense of dread and death. And what we found was each other. What we found was life."

Her words are a stirring and an important testament to the power that life has over death. We are all too familiar with the power of death, but as Christians we must trust that life is more powerful. It shouldn't take a ground zero or any other battleground to teach this to us. It shouldn't take a point of destruction to let us know how life can overcome death because Jesus has already told us. Jesus has already shown this to us.

When The Times of London invited several eminent authors in the 1930's to write essays on the theme "What's Wrong with the World?" they returned long detailed treatises on the problems that plagued the world at the beginning of one of its most turbulent periods. The one that stuck out was written by the renowned Catholic theologian and humorist, G. K. Chesterton whose contribution took the form of a letter. In answering the question, What's wrong with the world?, it read, "Dear Sirs, I am. Sincerely yours, G. K. Chesterton"

It isn't that Chesterton was particularly bad. In fact, most who knew him would remark that he was particularly good, it was simply that he was saying selfishness and focus on the self was what was most wrong with the world, and all around we see it is still true today. Politicians, business leaders, regular people put themselves over their nation, employees, customers, and communities. Couples get divorced far too easily. Churches disagree and split rather than work things out. The root of all evil may be the love of money, but the seed of all evil is love of self.

Selfishness has always been our biggest problem and the irony is that in focusing so much on ourselves, we keep ourselves, our lives, and our world, much smaller than it could be. Our world is filled with people who would rather stay a grain of wheat or a single grape rather than die to themselves so that they may be reborn to a life larger and better than any they had previously known.

God calls us to come together like the measure of wheat or a bunch of grapes. God calls us to come together and be strengthened by each other, but we retreat and want to stay by ourselves. Softly and tenderly, Jesus is calling, poor sinner come home, and loudly and brashly we are yelling go away and leave me alone, and if we aren't lucky, he will do just that.

Remember that the wheat is crushed and turned into bread; the grapes are crushed and turned into wine. Grain and grape are crushed and become body and blood. They do not give up their identity completely. The grain of wheat still exists in the loaf and the grape in the wine, but by joining others they are made stronger, richer, better. These elements of the Lord's Supper are for us not only a remembrance of what Christ but a living reminder of who he still is for us, because they are also symbols of the church where we join together to form the body of Christ

God doesn't want to crush our souls, just ourselves, so that our souls can be released and the weight of the world will be loosed from our shoulders. Neither does God want to knock us over; God just wants us to bend down a little. In the words of one of my favorite songs "If you want to kiss the sky better learn how to kneel." It is in praying and giving our life to God that we are only ever to truly leave the ground. It is in dying to ourselves that we can finally leave the weight of the world behind.

Call to Offering

Amy Caldwell

Gracious One, you have given us a love that stretches farther than we can see or even believe. You have given us a grace and a forgiveness that is deeper than our vulnerabilities. You have given us a healing and a hope that makes us whole. Take now the offerings of our hearts and our lives, even as we give away all you have given us.

Doxology

Dedication of Offering Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

Knowing that in our world, in our community, and in our church, so many people are facing storms in their lives, we present these gifts to you, O God, as an umbrella, a lifeline, or a life to help those in need.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

Once on a trip to visit my brother in Colorado, Jessi and I traveled to Colorado Springs where Pike's Peak is located. Pike's Peak is over 14,000 feet, and is one of the 50 largest mountain peaks in Colorado. It is also the most accessible. In fact, it is so accessible that we were able to ride a train up the side of the mountain, climbing 8,000 ft in one hour, in order to reach the summit. As we came up above the tree line, we looked out of the train car and were greeted with the most remarkable sight. Down the sheer face of the mountain was a pristine emerald forest and a sparkling sapphire lake, and, with the mountain range spread out below us, I felt as if I was on top of the world.

Perhaps, I thought, this is how God sees the world. From this perspective everything is wonderful, and I can easily understand how God declared that the creation was good. But we climbed back down and, on the way, we saw litter on the trails. We drove back into the cities and tourists towns that were run down and tacky. We drove back into Denver which was filled with traffic, pollution, and a sprawling mass of less than inspiring buildings. We remembered that as beautiful as the world is there is a lot of ugliness and ordinariness as well.

As we gather at the Lord's Table let us remember that God sees the ugliness in our lives as well as we do. Our failings and sins against each other God knows better than we. But before we get too bogged down in despair let us remember that God not only sees us from the pit, but also looks down from the mountain, where, to our creator, we are beautiful. Let us also remember how God came down into the pit in the form of Jesus Christ so that we might reach heights no mountain could ever approach.

Communion Hymn

"These I Lay Down"

Audra Allen, organist

Before I take the body of my Lord,
before I share his life in bread and wine,
I recognize the sorry things within:
these I lay down.

The words of hope I often failed to give,
the prayers of kindness buried by my pride,
the signs of care I argued out of sight:
these I lay down.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

J.C. Leasure

As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can we, unless we abide in you. We come to this communion with you abiding in your teaching. As we eat of your body and drink of your blood, we recommit ourselves to abide with you again. The seeds of the life you have given us were

planted within us when you died. As we remember your death at this table, we abide in your eternal life and love. Help us to bear much fruit for you, and prune from us the parts of our lives that do not bear fruit. 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 in Communion

Closing Hymn

"Softly and Tenderly"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
patient and loving he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.

Why should we linger when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we wait, then, and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me?

(refrain) Come home, come home,
Ye who are weary, come home;
Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling-
Calling, "O sinner, come home!"

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

May God the vine grower, tend you and make you fruitful;
may Christ Jesus abide in you and give you life;
and may the Holy Spirit cast out all fear and fill you with God's love.

Worship services can also be found on the Church website or on YouTube,
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmlH3qzih_fzHCC2X0Jhc_sfniJ7C1O3X

**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!

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

Don Ainsley
Ed Alexy
Gary Anderson
Avery Allen
Donna Bakaitis
Tom Barnhart
Bill Behrens
Bristol Allan Berry
Abby Blanchard
Mark & Susan Britko
Mabel Brooks
Wanda Chicone
Emily Cope Robinson
Coretta and family
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Sue Donaldson
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Fred Engle
Jay Freudenberg
Jett Fuller
Lois Gayman
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg

Judy Grover
Sloan Amelia Hagy
Kyle Hallam
Connie Hanning
Aryn Hess
Ed & Harriet Jackman
Family of Caleb Jackson
Dallas Jacobovitz
Bob Lanning
Ty, Kerri, Allie, Ivy &
Ty James Lacock
Von Lacock
Cheryl Leach
Libby LeDuff
Frank Lippert
Lee & Betsy Martin
Dave McConnell
Don Melvin
Michaela Nixon
Ruth Mikuta
Georgette Murray
Karen Palfreyman
Deborah Patterson
Betty & Charles Riecks

Betty Jo Riggle
Jim and Barb Roupe
John Shadeck
Theresa Shape
Hannah Simpson
Doug and Tracy Smith
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Beth Teagarden
Nadine Teagarden
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
Sarah Wittenberg
Marcie Yocum
Preparing for Baptism – Nyka Rash

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

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 Friday.

If you need anything at any time, please call the Church Office phone at 724-225-8610.

Have a great day! 😊