Manor Minutes Volume 15 Issue 11 March 15, 2024

- Lenten Devotional Study March 18, 7pm via Zoom
- Stewardship/Finance Ministry March 20, 5:30pm
- Personnel Committee March 21, 3pm
- Tri-County Men's Dinner March 21, 5:30pm (Perryopolis)
- Choir Practice March 22, 6:30pm Stay up to date at <u>www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar</u>



Lenten Devotional Study via Zoom – We hope you will join us in a discussion of the readings of our Lenten devotional "Go To Jerusalem" which will be hosted by Rev. Chris and Pastor Gena. The study continues this Monday, March 18 at 7pm via Zoom. If you didn't join last week, you can still join the discussion this week. The Zoom link will be sent out on Monday via email. If you don't receive the link, please contact the office.

Tri-County Men's Fellowship Dinner – Thursday, March 21 at Perryopolis First Christian Church. Registration is at 5:30pm with the Dinner (creamed chicken over biscuits, mashed potatoes, green beans and dessert) at 6pm. Cost is \$15. Sign up in the Narthex or call the office by March 17 to RSVP.

Palm Sunday – March 24

Maundy Thursday – March 28, 7pm, service to be held at Fairhill Manor.

Good Friday Service – March 29, 1pm service to be held at the First Christian Church in Washington.

Sunrise Service & Breakfast – Join us on the steps in front of the Church for Easter Sunrise Service, March 31 at 7am. Bring a chair and/or blanket and dress appropriately for the weather. A continental breakfast will be shared at 8am following this service. Sign up in the Narthex if you plan to come to the breakfast. If you would like to bring a breakfast item to share, there is a sign-up sheet for that too!

Night at the Wild Things Game – June 7

FMCC Night at Washington Wild Things Friday, June 7, 7pm Fireworks Night

Tickets - \$10/person Parking Pass - \$2/car

Jody Mullis will be singing God Bless America during the 7th inning stretch.

Sign up in the Narthex for tickets and parking passes.

 $\label{eq:please turn in cash or check} \ensuremath{(\text{payable to FMCC})}\xspace$ to the office by May 3rd.

We would like to thank everyone for their texts, calls, cards, visits to the funeral home and prayers, especially the prayers, after Randy's passing. God knows what He is doing because it was a blessing and it was peaceful. With Peace and Love, Gary & Kathy



Twelve Fairhill Manor women joined five women from Fourth Presbyterian Church on Saturday, March 9 to see the movie "Cabrini" at the Highlands Marquee Cinema. Afterward, we ate at Cheddars restaurant, sharing food and meaningful discussion of the movie. It was a wonderful afternoon of fellowship! Thank you to Amy Caldwell for coordinating us - inviting women to participate, purchasing tickets ahead of time, arranging transportation, reserving a place for lunch, and gifting each woman with a yellow rose in honor of International Women's Day!

Fairhill Manor Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) 351 Montgomery Ave. 724-225-8610 Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor Elders: Connie Sheller, Bread Gene Sheller, Cup March 17, 2024 – 10:15am

Pastor Gena

Linda Reese

Leader: We come to be nourished by the Word of God. People: We seek the wisdom of the Holv Spirit. Leader: We come to be challenged by the commandments. People: We seek the guidance of God, our Creator. Leader: We come to be surprised by Jesus, our Savior. People: We seek the grace of Christ, the crucified and resurrected.

Opening Hymn

Welcome

Call to Worship

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made; we will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

"This Is the Day"

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

God of perfect love and never-ending mercy, we gather to worship you as your children. We praise you, for you are continually drawing us toward you, even when we don't know it. You are calling us to address the mess in our lives with your power and your grace, calling us to greater love for you and for our neighbor.

Forgive us for closing off doorways to your presence and love. Forgive us when we get off balance, living in the frenzy of the world around us, allowing our attention to be drawn in so many different directions, looking at the world through eyes of bitterness, fear and judgment. Refocus us, we pray. Bring us to a calm, quiet center where we can hear your guidance. Nourish us in our prayer times and our times of study until we can see everyone around us as your children, about whom you call us to care. Teach us to commit to your ways of love as we relate to each other, serving and spending time together, even if we don't particularly like each other.

Thank you for hearing our questions of faith as we bring them to you. Thank you for teaching us through your Word and through those sent to guide us. Thank you for this time of Lent when we can humble ourselves again, searching out our flaws in the light of your love and mercy. Thank you for a season that grounds us - stabilizing us again, reorienting us to the way of Christ, restoring us. Thank you for opportunities to fellowship with one another and for the care that we receive from each other. Thank you for moments when you give us that impulse, that urge to extend your love to someone we don't know, perhaps even someone we fear. Thank you for the surprising blessings that come to us when we love abundantly.



Pastor Gena

Jody Mullis, pianist

Hear now our prayers as we open our hearts, our minds, and our souls to you. We pray for those who are most vulnerable, those who are marginalized and poor. Help us to take their needs seriously. We pray for spouses and parents, for bosses and workers, for teachers and students. Show us how to love more fully. We pray for children who have been abused and adults who carry the pain of abuse. Bring healing and restoration, dignity and wholeness we pray. We pray for those who are closed off to help, those who are ashamed of their past, those who are sure they are unlovable. Bring healing and restoration, dignity and wholeness we pray. Please be with those who are hurting, those who are facing difficult treatments, those who are lonely, those who are traveling deep, dark valleys. Reach out your hand to them through us, we pray. Be with these loved ones we lift into your comforting arms now...

Renew us and transform us as we open our lives to you. We pray this 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.

Prayer Respo	onse:	"Glory Be	e to the Father"	,	
	Glory be to the Fath beginning, is now, a			oly Ghost; as it was in the end. Amen. Amen.	
First Scriptu	re Reading	Psalm 31			Gary Ford
Anthem	"When Memor		Fades," by Jayne Southwick Cool		Choir
		WHEN ME	MORY FADES		
	W	hen memory fades	s and recognitior	n falters,	
	When eyes we love grow dim, And minds confused, Speak to our souls of love that never alters;				
	Speak to our hearts by pain and fear abused.				
		O God of life a	and healing peac	е,	
	Empower	r us with patient c	ourage, by your	grace infused.	
	As the f	railness grows, ar	nd youthful streng	gths diminish,	
	In v	veary arms, which	n worked their ea	nnest fill.	
	Y	our aging servan	ts labor now to f	inish	
	Th	eir earthly tasks a	s fits your myste	ery's will.	
	We	grieve their wani	ng, yet rejoice, b	pelieving,	
	Ye	our arms, unwearl	ied, shall uphold	us still.	

Within your spirit, goodness lives unfading.

The past and future mingle into one.

All joys remain, un-shadowed light pervading.

No valued deed will ever be undone.

Your mind enfolds all finite acts and offerings.

Held in your heart, our deathless life is won.

Children's Message

Rev. Stillwell

Three folds of the cloth, yet only one napkin is there, Three joints of the finger, yet one finger fair, Three leaves of the shamrock, yet only one shamrock to wear, Frost, snowflake and ice, all in water their origin share, Three persons in God, yet to one God alone we make prayer.

I will be using the three leaf clover as my illustration for the children's sermon to explain how we can believe in the Trinity and yet only one God and I am glad I found this poem to use as well. But why do we celebrate the four leaf clover so much? Because the fourth leaf is the human heart when it is aligned with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. When all four of these are united in perfect harmony, then that is lucky indeed. Don't spend today looking for four leaf clovers. Instead, make one, by combining your heart with Gods will.

Second Scripture Reading

Sermon

"Address the Mess"

Matthew 22:23-40

Rev. Stillwell

Rev. Stillwell

As I mentioned last week in this sermon series on restoration, I am no carpenter. I'm not even a handyman, but I do know that restoration work is difficult. There is a reason why there are so many professionals I can hire to accomplish what I cannot. It does not mean, however, that I haven't tried a time or two. So I can say that the first phase of restoring something is pretty easy. It's the tearing down. Any fool can tear down or dismantle or deconstruct. In fact, that part of the restoration project can be a lot of fun. You might not have any difficulty asking your friends to come over to knock down a wall, but when it comes to rebuilding that wall, not only may you have some difficulty finding friends to do so, you will likely have more difficulty finding friends who know how to do so.

If all you need to do is tear down, you can draw a crowd. When I was in seminary the campus apartments we lived in were in terrible shape. In fact, they had been condemned by the city of Fort Worth but that did not stop us from living in them for two years while nice, new apartments were being built. When we had moved in to the new apartments we were allowed to have one last end of the year party in our now empty set for demolition apartment, and we enjoyed ourselves by knocking holes in the walls. It was fun, but I can assure you that our help was not requested when the new apartments were being built and I can also assure you that we would have been significantly less likely to sign up, because tearing down is often easy, but building is always hard.

The second phase of restoration is much harder. It takes a skilled hand. It takes somebody who knows what they're doing. Not any person can come by and put in new cabinets after someone has ripped out the old. Not any person can just come off the street and put in new tub after you ripped out your old one. It takes someone with real knowledge and skill to rebuild, to restore. That's why when it comes time for us to address our mess, the mess of our lives, the mess that we live in, the mess that we have created, we should not try to do it all on our own. If we do it on our own, it will only get worse. We need someone's

help, but not just anyone's help. We need the help of the one who knows what we're supposed to be like and the only one who knows that is the one who created us.

We need the hand of God in our life, for God is the one who uses the tools that are needed for this job and the only tools that can be used for this job. These tools are not tools that we can go and buy down at the hardware store or that you might have sitting down in your basement or garage. God uses the tool of prevenient grace to ensure that everything is ready and prepared for the time when we recognize that our mess is too much for us to handle. God uses the tool of justifying grace to show us to what we are moving towards, what a new and restored soul would be. God uses the tool of sanctifying grace to make that restoration possible and complete. Just as restoring a house can be hard the process of sanctification is also difficult, in fact, much more so.

In order to do the work of restoration grace must continually identify the flaws and the breaks and the holes in our life. It must find the places that are weak and that are warped beyond recognition. There are parts of our life that need to be shaped up, some fixed up, while other parts need to be completely removed and replaced. The prophet, Malachi talks about this, but he uses a different metaphor, that of a refiners fire.

Whenever I read that passage I think about a steel plant that was near my house. Driving through Follansbee, WV when I was growing up was always a gamble because if you did so at a time when they would fire up the ovens of the steel plant to refine the coal by burning away the impurities of the coal so that the coal could then burn hot enough to melt iron in order to make steel then you were in for a smelly ride. Even rolling up the windows wouldn't help.

The refiner's fire is a good metaphor to describe the process of restoration because that process involves removing the things that are within us that are impure, in other words the sin that has defiled our hearts and our souls, but it doesn't really tell us about what the goal is. Jesus Christ does. After deftly avoiding another of the traps of the Sadducees he takes on the Pharisees' question of which is the greatest of the commandments by saying:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Jesus tells us that we should love the Lord our God with all of our heart with all of our soul and with all of our mind. That is easier said than done. Even for those of us who love the Lord, it is hard to use all of ourselves and to love God with our whole being. Not only do we sometimes want to hold some things back, but we want to make sure it's the right word. We love God for sure, but we also love other things in our life, material possessions, or our habits, some good but some bad. We love God with a large part of our heart and a large part of our soul or a large part of our mind, but the goal for us is to love God with all. That's the goal to which we strive, and I am not sure that we ever fully reached that goal while we live. If we do we can't just coast for the rest of our life. It is continual work to maintain this love. We never reach a time where we no longer need God's help in restoring us. We never reach a time in which we no longer need God's grace. So it is essential that when we are ready to address our mess, it is essential that we go to God to help us. Other people may be able to help us in some way or other, but essentially it is God who does the work of restoration, and Lord knows we will go to everyone and everyone else first.

We human beings generally do the right thing, after we have tried everything else. We try to find any other cure, any other help, any other direction, that we can go with. When my kids were young my wife and I delighted in showing them the TV show, Fraggle Rock. If you're not familiar with the show, it's just

a delightful little show by Jim Henson about these creatures who live underground. Whenever they have a question or a dilemma, which is pretty much every episode, they go to get help and where do they go to get help from? They go to the trash heap. They go to Margie who is literally a big pile of trash to ask her a question because they believe she has wisdom and knowledge. I find it funny because as I watch the show as an adult I see in that a bit of a commentary on our life and our culture.

Whenever we have problems and difficulties we so often turn to very bad sources to help us. When we are lost, we often turn to strange and unreliable people to help us get out or help us decide where to turn. We often turn to people who are in just as big a mess as ourselves and maybe more and often with predictable results. Children will often turn to other children whenever they have questions rather than asking adults who actually know something. Teenagers are likely to turn to slightly older teenagers because hey, they're older, but not to adults because they're too old, and again, with predictable results. We adults are hardly any better. We often turn to gimmicks and advertisers, questionable news sources and websites, pyramid schemes and charlatans, drug dealers or worse to help us before we will make the right choice and go to the right source. We all have our trash heap that we have turned to time and time again for help, again, with predictable results.

We are like a seagull who goes to the garbage dump to find food and while searching through it gets trapped in a plastic bag around its neck so that a creature that has been made by its creator to soar is now grounded because of the mess that it has found itself in.

Therefore, it is not enough for us to simply want to be rid of our mess. It's not enough for us to acknowledge that we're in a mess, and it's not enough for us to want to get rid of that mess. We also need to know who to go to for help. We have to go to someone who knows what it is to create something beautiful. It's not enough for us to want to avoid jealousy or anger or grudges in our life. We need to turn to someone who can replace our tendency towards those sins with a tendency towards love. That's why King David asked, "created me a clean heart, O God and put a new and right spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me a willing spirit."

That's the key. Turn to God to ask for a complete restoration in the heart; a clean heart. Turn to God to restore your faith and the joy of your salvation. This is the first step but we also need to have within us a willing spirit that is sustained. Once we become a restoration project of God, we have the ability to help take part in restoring someone else not because we know how to fix them, or because we can fix them ourselves, but because one we know where they can go. Likewise, we can be a model for them for forgiveness, joy, and restoration. Those who have received forgiveness will be much more likely to extend it. Those who are grateful for not being judged should be less likely to judge others. Those whose lives have been restored by God's love should be more likely to show love.

God has the tools to restore us for sure, and when we are restored we are able to model that for others, but there is one thing that we must do. There is one tool that we ourselves must have in order for God's tools to do anything at all. We must have a tool of humility. We must have this first because we have to admit that we have made a mess of our lives, and that is humbling. To be sure that is the hardest step of all. We have to confess that we can also not fix ourselves, and that is hard. And we have to acknowledge that the life God has for us is better than life that anyone else can possibly offer.

We have to tear down those barriers that hide us from God. And only humility can do that. Humility is a slippery virtue. If I said to you that I've been working on humility, and I dare say that I am the most humble person in this entire room maybe even the most humble person you will ever meet then I will have destroyed all my hard work. The virtue of humility is such that we have to work on it, and we have to take no pride in it, or else we will undo all that we have done. Humility, it should be noted, comes from the Latin word "humilitatem", which means lowliness or submissiveness and it's derived also from the

word "humus", which means earth. So a humble person is someone who is well grounded and down to earth.

We don't need just a dose of humility in our life. Rather, we need humility to be our constant state of being. It needs really to be the earth and the soil in which we are planted so that we can grow and it needs to be the ground in which our foundation is built. The way we accomplish is to remember always:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

In this Trinitarian formula we note that God comes first, neighbors second, then ourselves. Before we can finish our restoration project. I want to say that there is a big difference between humility and humiliation. When humility is a part of our being we are less likely to gossip, we are less likely to put others down in order to build ourselves up, we are less likely to exalt ourselves and therefore end up humbled. In short humility will help us to avoid humiliation, because it's only the arrogant and proud who are humiliated when the humble are exalted.

Our mess is best addressed by thinking of ourselves a lot less and thinking of God and our neighbors a lot more. So much of what we need and must do can only be provided by the God. So let us focus on God and let God restore your soul and your joy. Join me next week when we will finish our sermon series on restoration as we celebrate the way in which it is accomplished through Jesus Christ and to prepare for the ultimate celebration of restoration--the resurrection

Call to Offering

One of the only times we see Jesus truly angry is when those in the temple cared more about profit than prayer. It is a sobering challenge for all of us; we are called to use our resources to help this world, instead of hoarding profit for ourselves. In that spirit, let us offer our gifts to God.

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

Merciful God, you have richly blessed our lives with love and bounty beyond measure. Bless these gifts we return to you now, that they may bestow the same richness of your love and grace in the world. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

I once got to go see the Christmas Story house. The Christmas Story is one of my favorite movies, and it was just such a great joy to see that house in which it was filmed. The house is in a section of Cleveland that had fallen into disrepair, but someone purchased the house and they have restored it to the way it was when they filmed it. This is nice enough in and of itself, but a side benefit of that is that it was located in a neighborhood that was very much rundown and when they fixed up the Christmas Story house and people came to see it and enjoyed it. This inspired the owners to take some of the money that they made from people coming to tour the house, and they invested it into the community in the form of loans for other people to use to fix restore their houses.

Now they did this for partly selfish reasons. If every other house in the block was a mess and ugly, it would make people not want to go to see their house, but they also did it because they didn't want to just make money. They wanted to help restore the whole neighborhood. And oftentimes once one house gets

Rev. Stillwell

Rev. Stillwell

Von Lacock

fixed up, another house gets fixed, and another. I can tell you that not every house in that block is in great shape, but most of them are, and it is a far sight better now than when this all began in the 90s.

What is true for houses can also be true for people. When one person gets their life in order, it might inspire someone else to say, "I want my mess fixed up too." When one person has the joy of salvation and remembers it another person may see that and say, "I want that too". When one person has their house fully restored it may cause someone else to say, "I don't want to mess up the neighborhood. I want to take part in it also."

That is why we are invited and attracted to this table. Here we're given the tools we need to be restored, and we are tasked with not keeping them to ourselves, but to let others know where they may find restoration for their soul as well.

"Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether" Carson Throckmorton, organist **Communion Hymn**

Draw us in the Spirit's tether, for when humbly in your name, two or three are met together, you are in the midst of them; Alleluya! Alleluya! Touch we now your garment's hem.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, we thank you for dying on the cross taking our sins upon yourself so that our sins are forgiven. As we take this bread and cup, representing your broken body and shed blood, we rejoice, knowing you rose from the dead so that we may spend eternity with you. Amen

Words of Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Sharing Holy Communion

You will receive the bread and cup together. Please hold them; we will take each together as one body. Disciples of Christ believe in an Open Table. All who profess Christ and follow Him are welcome to share His meal. Gluten free wafers are available in the Narthex.

Call to Discipleship

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 "Open My Eyes, That I May See" Carson Throckmorton, organist Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me; place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see. Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Benediction

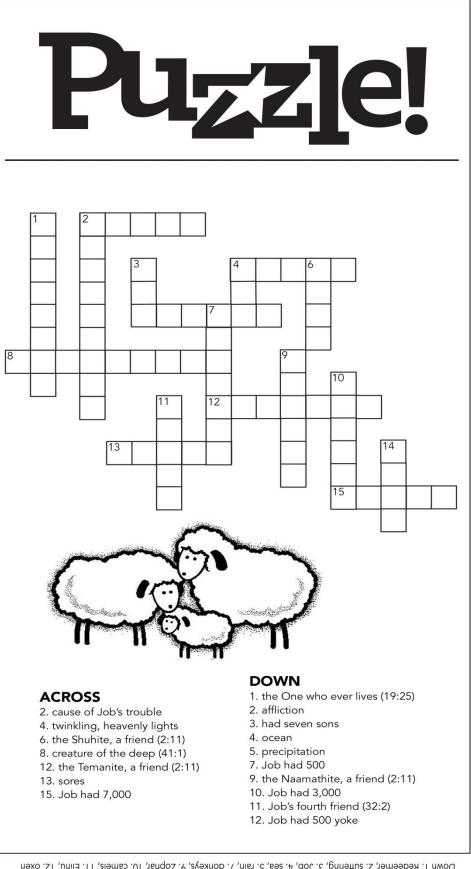
Rev. Stillwell

Affirm one another with your words. Strengthen one another with your prayers. Honor one another with your lives, as Christ honored us with His.

Rev. Stillwell

Rev. Stillwell

Connie Sheller



Answers: Across 2. Satan, 4. stars, 6. Bildad, 8. Leviathan, 12. Eliphas, 13. boils, 15. sheep; Down 1. Redeemer, 2. suffering, 3. Job, 4. sea, 5. rain, 7. donkeys, 9. Zophar, 10. camels, 11. Elihu, 12. oxen **Do you have a prayer request or need help?** Please feel free to contact Rev. Chris (412-956-6590) or 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. We are One Body in Christ!

Prayer List:

Homebound Members:

Mrs. Mary McDonough 949 Bruce Street Washington PA 15301

Alice Cokeley 900 N Cass Lake Rd, Apt 324 Waterford MI 48328

Ed Alexey Avery Allen Jeannie Allison **Terry Bailey** Donna Bakaitis Jim Banish Martin Berisford **Eleanor Boyles** Mabel Brooks Leslie Byron Sandra Carman Clayton Chalfant Leslie Chalfant Denise Charles Wanda Chicone MaryAnn Coates Ruth Cox Irma Davis Sue Donaldson Benjamin Dube Jessica Duke Libby Eberhard Thomas Farabee Kathy Moninger-Ford Jay Freudenberg Lois Gayman Sue Golsky Joe Greene **Bonnie Gregg** Theresa Hancher Judy Hanning Irma Harper

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Emily Cope Robinson Dave Ross John Samida Debbie Sekorky Sam Sheller Valerie Shetler Hannah Simpson Doug and Tracy Smith Darci Sprowls Cathy Stewart John Stewart Bernard Teagarden Beth Teagarden Jane Teagarden Thad Turner Tammie Wallace Gary Weaver Tom Williams Addison Wittenberg Sarah Wittenberg

In the Military

Lance Dague Terrell McClain Brandon Lipscomb Travis Ringer* Dylan Demain Andrew Gregg Zachary Keene Sarah Lipscomb Emily Chase

The brave men and women who serve our country make incredible sacrifices every day. We are forever grateful for their service and dedication. Please remember the military members that are deployed and away from their family that they may return to their homes safely.

*currently deployed