

Manor Minutes
Volume 15 Issue 12
March 22, 2024

- Lenten Devotional Study – March 25, 7pm via Zoom
 - Maundy Thursday Service – March 28, 7pm
 - Good Friday Service – March 29, 1pm at First Christian Church
- Stay up to date at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar



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 Gená. The study will conclude Monday, March 25 at 7pm via Zoom. The Zoom link will be sent out on Monday via email. If you don’t receive the link, please contact the office.

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!



On Sunday, March 31, we will collect a 5th Sunday of the month offering for the **Funeral Dinner Fund**. Envelopes will be included in the bulletin. Please give as you can.

Night at the Wild Things Game – June 7

Your gift to the Disciples Mission Fund Easter Offering is part of God’s enduring love...

Love that creates...

Love that inspires...

Love that makes a difference...

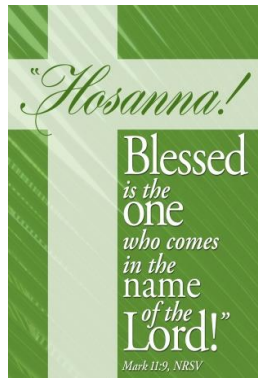
Your gift to the Easter special offering benefits General Ministries, allowing us to do more together than we can alone. More ministry. More impact. More of God’s love in the world. You can give by placing your gift in the envelope in the bulletin, on Givelify through the church’s website or directly to disciplesmissionfund.org/give.



Children's Corner

Sunday (March 24) is **Palm Sunday**. We are looking forward to a great celebration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. The children and youth will gather in the Sanctuary at 9 am to **practice bells** for Easter Sunday. After Sunday school, they will meet in the Narthex to help give worshippers **palm branches** as they come in. During the opening hymn, children and youth (and any adults who would like to join them) will walk down the center aisle of the Sanctuary, waving their palms. Once they reach the front of the pews, they will go around to the side aisles and return to their seats.

On **Easter Sunday** (March 31), the kids will **ring bells** together with the organ and congregation for the opening hymn, "Christ the Lord is Risen Today." We would like this to be a joyful time. There will be **no Children Worship & Wonder** on Easter Sunday. Pastor Gená will tell the CW&W Easter story during the Children's Message. We will have some **coloring and activity pages** for the kids to work on during worship. The kids will receive a special gift from Paradise Candy after worship.



Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
351 Montgomery Ave.
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Rita Puskarich, Bread
Jody Mullis, Cup

March 24, 2024 – 10:15am

Prelude

Carson Throckmorton, organist

Piano Solo

Charlotte Stillwell

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Connie Sheller

Leader: In joy, we gather this day.

People: Hosanna to Jesus, the Christ.

Leader: In remembrance, we gather this day.

People: Hosanna to the son of David.

Leader: In festive celebration and quiet reflection, we gather to worship and pray.

People: Hosanna to the Son of God.

Opening Hymn

“Hosanna Loud Hosanna”

Jody Mullis, pianist

Hosanna, loud hosanna, the little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple the lovely anthem rang.
To Jesus, Who had blessed them close folded to His breast,
The children sang their praises, the simplest and the best.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

“Hosanna! Save us! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” Come, come this way, Lord Jesus, into our city, into our homes, into our church, into our lives. Come and save us. We worship you, we welcome you, we lay down what we have to prepare a path that is just a bit more special for you, for we are glad you are coming this way! We open our hearts again to receive you, this time a little more willingly than the last.

Holy Lord, forgive us for misunderstanding what your kingdom is about. Forgive us for relying on power and might, prestige and merit. Forgive us for admiring those who have the newest and biggest and best. Help us to see that without anything, without any achievement, without any accomplishment, we are enough. We are your children and in you we have everything we need. Give us the courage to be ourselves as you have created us, willing to be vulnerable, willing to depend on you, willing to show others love and mercy and grace, willing to lose and to serve in your name.

We give you thanks for inviting us to walk this journey with you this week, knowing how easily our thoughts and emotions, our loyalties and commitments change. You know this about us and yet you still stretch out your hand to us and call us to come with you on the way. We want to do it right this time, but even if we could, that would not earn us your love any more. Your love is already here for us. And so we

lift our voices in thanksgiving that this week shows us that nothing we can do can separate us from your love or earn it for ourselves any more. Help us to rest in your endless love, to bask in it, to share it and live it, as we walk with you.

Lord Jesus, you humbled yourself, even to death, to show us the power of loving service. Guide those holding positions of power, that their decisions might be those of a servant, helping the world you love to flourish together.

Lord Jesus, the violence you endured continues in our world each day. Raise us to a new and rightly ordered world through your reconciling love, where all victims of violence find healing and know your peace.

Lord Jesus, you consoled others in life and in death. We pray for all who are distressed, broken, or sorrowful, that they may be healed and raised up in you.

Lord Jesus, we know the comfort of your presence and strength in our lives, and we want others to experience that too. So please be with these we name now in your presence... You know what each one needs. Show us how to love and care for each other in your name.

Lord Jesus, in your passion and resurrection, you show us there is no place you have not been and no place you fear to go. Morning by morning, awaken us more deeply to this truth. And then send us into the world this day and every day with the courage and wisdom to be faithful witnesses to your coming reign of justice, mercy, and peace.

We ask all of this your name, Lord Jesus, and we pray as you teach us, 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 Response:

“Glory Be to the Father”

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

First Scripture Reading

Psalm 130

Kevin Puskarich

Anthem

“Ride On, King Jesus”

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

Today is Palm Sunday. How can you tell it is Palm Sunday? What have we done differently in worship today? We have palms to wave, we’ve been singing words like “Hosanna” and “Ride On, King Jesus,” we had a parade into the Sanctuary with our palms, we special banners up. All of these things are signs that today is a special Sunday of celebration. We are remembering the day when Jesus came into Jerusalem and the people welcomed him with joy, like a king in a parade. His friends put their coats on a donkey and then Jesus road on that donkey into Jerusalem. Other people put their coats on the road and spread branches there too to make a special path for Jesus to ride on. People were shouting “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!” They were praising Jesus and asking him to save them.

But Palm Sunday was the start of a very hard week for Jesus. We call this week Holy Week. During this week we spend time remembering the stories of Jesus' last days and remembering the love he has for each of us. On Thursday we will come together in worship to remember Jesus having his last supper with his friends. And on Friday we will come together in worship to remember the very sad time when Jesus died on the cross. Maybe these palm crosses will help you to remember Jesus this week and to thank him for his love.

Jesus, we praise you for being our God who lived in our world and who still lives in each one of our hearts. We love you. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Mark 11:1-11

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“The Meaning in the Mess”

Rev. Stillwell

I thank you for coming on this journey with me as we have been preaching these last five weeks on this theme of God restoring us not only to how we were when we were kids, but how we are intended to be, and not just each of us individually, but humanity the world over. We all acknowledge that to some degree we have a mess in our life, and we must also acknowledge that this mess comes from our own doing, pursuing our own desires or our own will and not listening to the will of God in our life. Since we created it, therefore we are not the ones who can fix it. We can improve our lives, and we can better our habits, but in the end, the mess of our life is only removed by the one who created us.

Our life is often described as a journey. Our faith development is often described as a walk. We want to walk with Christ in our lives, we want a closer walk with Thee. The idea is that the further we travel along the path that is our life the more our faith allows grace to work within us and the more like Christ we become.

I like to think of life like this, but our life is not a typical journey, because often when we go somewhere we want to get there as fast as possible. Most of the time, we care only about reaching our destination and not the journey itself. I think our life's journey is the opposite.

Our life certainly has a destination, but much of our life is lived during our journey on the way to the destination. The destination really has very little meaning if we do not savor the time on the journey well. When you play Chutes and Ladders with your kids or your grandkids, you want to hit that spot where you can just scoot right forward. Maybe you prefer Candyland where you want to hit that spot where you can just jump past half the board. That's not how it could be in our life, and that's not how it can be with our faith. There can be no shortcuts, because the journey itself has a great deal to teach us.

I think this is why I have always been drawn to the idea of the prayer labyrinth, which is something I used to build every holy week. I first encountered one when I was 22 and it was a truly amazing experience for me. If you are not familiar, the prayer labyrinth is a maze, but it's not a maze where you get lost and have to find your way out. Rather you just wind your way into the center, and the center is where you find God. After spending time in prayer you then wind your way back out. The idea is that in our life, we often get lost because of what we have done or the turns that we have made, and it's not until we finally stop, turn to God and let God guide us, that together we make our way out of the maze. With God's help we make our way out of the mess that we made our life.

Now I was 22 when I first entered a prayer labyrinth, so I only had 22 years of making a mess, but the problem is, I was 22, so I thought I had it all figured out, and I thought I knew everything and I thought I was in control. The longer we go through life the less control we realize we have not only of our own life but of the world at large, and the more we need God's help just to get through it.

So the prayer labyrinth is like a 15 to 20 minute metaphor of our entire walk of faith for, as you go in you lift up to God the things you need help with. As you go out you give thanks to God for the things that God has helped you with.

Finding God and asking for God's help in your life does not mean that our journey will be smooth and easy from then on. Instead, it means that we learn how better to handle the obstacles that get put in our way. On our journey there are obstacles to overcome, power through, or go around, but on our life's journey many of the obstacles in our way have been put there by us.

This metaphor of life and faith as a journey works even if you do not go anywhere. Think of this, just about everything that happens in Jesus' ministry took place between the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem. This is a distance of 65 miles. As far as we know that is the most distanced the disciples ever traveled, but boy did they travel far on their journey of faith. They were certainly not the same people after three years of following Jesus, and we shouldn't be either after three or thirty years or more.

Our life of faith is a journey, and there are no shortcuts. There is no way to get from inexperience to experience, no way to get from foolish to wise, no way to go from young to old without going through everything that you have to go through. If our life is a journey we will encounter different challenges along the way so that, while we might have peace and contentment now, when we get to the bumps and turns in the road, we may find ourselves needing God's help in a new and entirely different way than we did before.

So long as we have breath to breathe, and as long as we have another day to greet we have more learning to do, and we have more need of God's help. Faith is a journey because sanctification is a lifelong process. We never arrive in this life, and therefore are always in need of God's grace, in order to be restored to right relations with God.

Remember the different types of grace God uses to restore us? First is prevenient grace, the grace that ensures that whenever you do turn to God for help, God is ready. The seeds have been planted. The foundation has been laid. Next comes, justifying grace which is the grace that bridges that gap between us and God. Finally, comes sanctifying grace, the grace that works on us all the rest of our lives, to continue to smooth out the rough edges and to overcome our obstacles and to continue to maintain our lives.

One of the great expounders of these types of graces was John Wesley. His brother Charles Wesley is one of the great hymn writers of Christianity, and in his hymn, "Love Divine All Loves Excelling." he wrote:

Love Divine, all Loves excelling, joy of Heaven to Earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble Dwelling, all thy faithful Mercies crown;
Jesus, Thou art all compassion, pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.

I love that line, "fix in us thy humble dwelling" because the idea that Christ will live within us, each of us, who would not want to be a humble dwelling for his love? Who would not want the love of Christ in their heart? Well quit a few people actually, including many of those who claim to follow him. You see if being a dwelling place for Christ meant peace and satisfaction then nobody would refuse it. If it meant peace and contentment you could not keep people from getting it, but we also know that that's not the whole story. Take for instance Palm Sunday.

Today we celebrate the day when Jesus Christ entered into Jerusalem culminating a journey that had begun many weeks before, the people that day recognized Him as King and of course they worshiped him. They greeted him with shouts of, "Hosanna!" which means save now, and waved palms. That's what you do for king. At that point, he was a king coming into his kingdom and it required nothing of the

people to welcome him. Maybe some people were even afraid not to welcome him, not to shout and to wave, but we know that Christ enters our heart in order to fix it, to clean it up, to restore it and us. That can be hard.

We've talked before about how the work of restoration can be difficult because it means giving up control. It also means giving up our own desires, and this is something that the crowd learned within five short days. By the time Good Friday rolled around, the march that had begun on Palm Sunday was now a full on retreat. What began as a great celebration, now had turned into an absolute mess. Those who cheered now jeered, those who waved palms now waved fists. Those who shouted, "Hosanna!" now shouted "Crucify!", but that was when the real work of restoration was beginning.

Again, Charles Wesley:

Finish, then, Thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation perfectly restored in Thee.

You hear a lot about the seven last words of Christ upon the cross, and one of those words are, "It is finished". Maybe he meant his life, or maybe he meant the pain, but maybe it also meant the work of restoration of sanctifying grace poured out into the world. You can see how difficult it was for Christ, the one doing the restoring, but for us it will not be that hard to be perfectly restored.

When we began this series, I reminded you of the picture of the Sistine Chapel where God is reaching out to Adam, and Adam is reaching out to God. They're so close to touching, but there's just that little gap and in that gap is so many things. In that gap is the fall of humanity, in that gap is the difference between what we are created to be and what we are, and in that gap is the suffering we see in the world, but it is God who reaches out. God is always reaching even when sometimes we are turning away or we have forgotten even to look or even to know that God is there. It is God who reaches out longing for us to grab his hand. Because it is God alone who can restore us.

It all begins with a leap of faith. Once we believe that God will forgive us, once we trust that God will help us, once we know that God can restore us we will trust that God will find a way. This is good news because, if it depends on us we will make a mess of things, but if it depends on God, who is perfect, then we need not worry, need not fear, just trust and go. If we not only reach out to God but let ourselves be held in the palm of God's hand, we might have a bumpy journey but we will have a safe and joyful arrival to our destination.

My prayer today on Palm Sunday is that each of us seeks this restoration in our life. And let us each be assured that in the words of the apostle Paul, "The one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." Amen.

Call to Offering

Barb Bailey

Give thanks to God, who is faithful and good. Give thanks to Christ Jesus, who is steadfast and faithful. Give thanks by sharing your tithes and offerings this day.

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below! Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Dedication of Offering Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

Gracious God, you have given us blessings beyond measure: hearts of mercy, hands of grace, and the presence of Christ in our souls and in our lives. We can never repay what we have received, so help us carry it forward.

May we use the gifts of hearts and hands to sustain the weary in word and in deed. May we be awakened to all who long for God's peace, and have courage enough to walk with them.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

It is amazing how easy a crowd can be formed, and even more amazing how quickly it can be turned. Although a crowd can have many people it usually is manipulated by only a few and most of the people in it don't even realize the shift until it happens. For the few who do realize what is happening they often feel powerless to resist the crowd's push.

The call of Christ is to resist the desires of the crowd even if their desires seem good. On Palm Sunday the crowd that cheered Christ as he entered the city wanted good things—freedom, independence, glory, but God wanted better things—love, grace, freedom from want. The crowd wanted economic security for Israel, but God wanted abundance for the world. The crowd wanted justice at the point of a sword, but God's justice “will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the warhorse from Jerusalem; and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations.” (Zechariah 9:10)

And of course later in the week, the crowd wanted terrible things. They wanted vengeance, but God wanted forgiveness. They wanted judgement, but God compassion. They wanted death, but God wants life.

They say that nothing attracts a crowd like a crowd and never was that more true than that week in Jerusalem. The question for us as followers of Jesus Christ is, what kind of crowd will we be? Will we be the kind of crowd that tyrannizes all who oppose us and disagree? Or will we be a crowd that knows why we are gathered, welcomes all, and loves and serves even those who stand outside of our circle? Will we be a crowd who follow the most popular member of our group, Jesus Christ, not out of fear or desire for power and prestige, but because we love him, even though we know it will be hard?

This is the choice that is before us every week, but none more so than this week. That is why it is good to come to this table and be reminded of who Christ was. A man who ate with disciples he loved even though he knew they were a mess. May this meal increase our gratitude towards Christ and improve our attitude towards each and other and ourselves. May the time you spend in communion with Christ keep you from getting lost in the crowd.

Communion Hymn

“A Stable Lamp is Lighted” Carson Throckmorton, organist

A stable lamp is lighted whose glow shall wake the sky; the stars shall bend their voices, and every stone shall cry. And every stone shall cry, and straw like gold shall shine; a barn shall harbor heaven, a stall become a shrine.

This child through David's city shall ride in triumph by; the palm shall strew its branches, and every stone shall cry. And every stone shall cry, though heavy, dull, and dumb, and lie within the roadway to pave his kingdom come.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Rita Puskarich

Most holy God, we raise our palm branches and praise Jesus. Let us think on that holy week as Jesus entered Jerusalem. It was no ordinary journey into town. We each come around this table on our own faith journeys. We are aware of Jesus' suffering and sadness but wonderfully we have the after knowledge of

his resurrection which gives us hope for our eternal life. We ask your blessing on the bread and cup just as Jesus did on that last meal with his disciples. Amen

Words of Institution

Rev. Stillwell

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

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Sharing Holy Communion

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

Rev. Stillwell

If you have come to know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior and you would like to profess that you intend to begin a life of faith, learning to walk in his way of Love, you are welcome to contact one of the Pastors to take this step. If you would like to join this part of the Body of Christ at Fairhill Manor Christian Church, to covenant to journey together in this life of faith, please reach out to one of the Pastors to learn more. We all take these moments to rededicate our lives to following Jesus.

Closing Hymn

"Tell Me the Stories of Jesus"

Carson Throckmorton, organist

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear; things I would ask him to tell me if he were here: scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea, stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

In the hours and days and week ahead, Christ goes with us, leading the way. Where Christ leads, we will follow. Let us journey together to the cross.

Puzzle!

Follow the arrows and fill in the blanks to discover what the women found at Jesus' tomb on Easter morning.

T

BEGIN ▶

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Answer: The stone was rolled away from the door. (See Luke 24:1-8.)

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

Chuck and Mary Wiseman
880 S Main St, Apt 214
Washington PA 15301

Elinor Newman (Southmont)
835 S Main St, Rm 513
Washington PA 15301

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

Carol Brown
36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd, Rm 213
Washington PA 15301

Doris Sorice
880 S Main St, Apt 336
Washington PA 15301

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
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris

Aryn Hess
Janet Houston
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Kenger Family
Ivy Lacock
Ty Lacock, Jr.
Bob Lanning
David Leonard
John Lewis
Lee Martin
Dave McConnell
Pam McCord
Norm McDonough
Ruth Mikuta
Dick Moninger
Bob Morgan
Paul Myers
Joe Neckerman
Michaela Nixon
Sandy Nixon
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Deborah Patterson
JoAnn Piatt
Bo & Patty Pryor
Rick Rafferty
Cathy Rentgen
Jeannie Riffle
Lori Riffle
Betty Jo Riggle

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

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