

Manor Minutes
Volume 13 Issue 21
May 6, 2022



The Story Chapter 30 Paul's Final Days – May 8

Bethany Class Wednesday Zoom – May 11, 1pm via Zoom

Elders Meeting – May 11, 6pm Shepherds Room

Board Meeting – May 11, 7pm Small Fellowship Hall

Choir Practice – May 12, 6:30pm Choir Room

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

Blanket Sunday

Blanket Sunday will be held this Sunday, Mother's Day, May 8, 2022. This is an event our Disciples Women's Ministries sponsors for Church World Service. \$10 will purchase a blanket. A single blanket can provide a person with warmth, a pillow, a place to store their belongings, shade from the sun, a way to carry wood or food, comfort to a wounded person, etc. Please give as you can. Cash will be accepted and checks may be written to: Disciples Women's Ministries or DWM. Donations will be collected after the Children's Message.

Bethany Class

The Bethany Class Zoom will open at 8:30am on Sunday.

The class will begin at **9am** on Sunday.

Meeting ID: 883 3055 7258 Passcode: 344061

Unit 3: Liberating Letters

May 8	Freedom for the Future	Romans 8:18-30
May 15	Freedom from the Law	Galatians 3:18-29
May 22	Freedom, Love, and Faith & The Fruit of Freedom	Galatians 5:1-26

This Zoom class will also be available Wednesdays at 1pm.
You will use the same Meeting ID and Passcode as Sunday link.

*Thank
You!*

Carmen would like to thank everyone for their cards and prayers while he was in the hospital.

Zoom Worship will continue to be live at 10:15am each Sunday

"Join a Meeting" on Zoom at 9:45am using the following 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 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
May 1, 2022 - 10:15am

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Rev. Stillwell

Call to Worship

Shyla Rash

Leader: Christ is our shepherd.

People: We are Christ's sheep.

Leader: The shepherd is calling us to join God's flock.

People: We will follow our shepherd.

Leader: Rejoice, little ones, for no one can snatch us from the shepherd's hand.

People: In God's flock, we rest secure.

All: Come! Let us worship.

Opening Hymn

"How Firm a Foundation"

Audra Allen, organist

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in God's excellent word!

What more can be said than to you God has said, to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Loving God and Parent of All,

Thank you for gathering us today as children birthed in your image, blessed offspring of your creation. As a mother hen gathers her brood under her wing, so today gather us in, joined together to hear your teachings and experience your love as we worship you.

We thank you for the women among us and around us to whom you have given the privilege and the challenge of being mothers and mother figures. Especially this day, we thank you for all mothers, everywhere. Strengthen them as they raise their children and give them courage as they let their children go.

We thank you for grandmothers, sisters, aunts, teachers, Sunday school teachers, adult mentors, big sisters, and everyone everywhere who plays a motherly role in the life of another. Grant all women the ability to model the example of Christ for all within their influence, that they might share the love that you have so freely shown to all of us.

We pause to remember those for whom Mother's Day is a source of discomfort, perhaps even anxiety and pain. We lift up those for whom this day brings sadness in remembering their own mothers who have died, especially those experiencing this Mother's Day for the first time without their mothers. Bring them peace and comfort, we pray.

Do you have a favorite blanket? Is it big or little? What color is it? Is it heavy or light? Does it always stay on your bed, or do you carry it with you to the couch when you are feeling sick or when you need to be comforted? Do you like to snuggle with your blanket?

Have you ever made a fort or a tent with a blanket? Do you ever use a blanket as a cape like Superman? What are some of the other things you can do with your blanket? What else do you like about your blanket?

How would you feel if you lost your blanket or didn't have it anymore? Well, sometimes storms come, and children have to leave their houses with their mommies and daddies and find a good, dry, warm place to sleep. And sometimes they can't bring their favorite blankets with them.

But we can help those children and their moms and dads by sending them warm blankets. And they only cost \$10.00. That's it! So for every \$10 that our church gives to Church World Service, we can send a blanket to keep someone warm. A warm blanket is like a warm hug.

Or with our \$10, we can provide a blanket to a mommy or daddy, and they can make a tent out of it to keep the hot sun off them; or make a big bag out of it to carry their belongings or even use like a cape to keep them warm when it's cold.

So, when you hold YOUR favorite blanket tonight as you cuddle up in your warm, safe bed, say a prayer for the children in this world who are in need of a CWS Blanket.

Loving God, we thank you for the things that give us comfort. Can you please help us to keep growing generous hearts so that we can help provide comfort for our neighbors in need? Amen.

A Litany for Blanket Sunday

Connie Sheller

Leader: A mother covered her children with a blanket to shield them from the cold.

People: May my gift of a blanket shelter families from the cold and help to keep them warm here in the United States.

Leader: A volunteer distributed blankets to the homeless living on the streets.

People: May my gift of a blanket provide shelter to people without homes around the world.

Leader: After the flood, God sent a rainbow of hope and promises.

People: May my gift of a blanket give hope and promise to victims of floods, hurricanes and earthquakes.

Leader: The Good Samaritan took the beaten man to a safe place, so he could receive care.

People: May my gift of a blanket provide warmth to our brothers and sisters who are seeking a safe place to stay.

Leader: Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, a refugee with nothing.

People: May my gift of a blanket provide shelter for displaced people around the world.

Leader: After Jesus had risen, he returned to his followers, instructing them to care for his sheep.

People: May my gift of a blanket give warmth and shelter, comfort and privacy and healing and hope wherever God's people may need care.

Leader: In Jesus' name, we offer these gifts. Amen

If you have ever gone to a play you may have noticed that whatever the content of them they all have something in common. They all have three acts. Now there are some plays that are simply one act plays, but if you go to see one of those it will describe itself as a one act play so that you don't go to the theater watch the first act and then sit around waiting for the second and the third act to come.

Traditionally plays have three acts to represent the beginning, the middle, and the end. As we heard about the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost we heard the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. Last week we read the middle, where Saul who once persecuted Christ's followers, not only becomes a follower, but becomes Paul, Christ's chief instrument in spreading the good news. Now we come to the end, the last chapter and story in Acts wherein, Paul goes to Rome to stand trial for causing a disturbance in Jerusalem.

Now another thing about plays is that they are generally broken down into two categories--Tragedy and Comedy. A tragedy, as the name implies, is a sad, tragic play in which a hero comes upon hard times, falls from grace, and ends up in despair. Usually there are deaths at the end. The quintessential tragedy is Hamlet in which everyone ends up dead on the stage at the play's conclusion. A comedy, on the other hand is not exactly what the name suggests. Sometimes they are funny and filled with jokes, but, in order for a play to be a comedy it merely needs to have a happy ending. More often than not these types of plays ended in a marriage.

Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, we have had tragedy such as, when Stephen was stoned, and we have had comedy such as, when Paul escaped his many near death experiences. The question we have now, as we see Paul's final act is which type of act will this be? Will the play of Paul's life end in tragedy or will it have a happy ending?

After surviving the shipwreck and spending three months on the island of Malta, Paul finally reaches his destination of Rome. He has gone there as a prisoner to answer to charges of disturbing the peace by preaching about Christ, but when he gets to Rome notice the first thing he does.

When he landed he lived under house arrest and then three days after landing he called together the leaders of the local synagogues. When they assembled he told them of his journeys and adventures and preached to them. Some believed and some didn't and then Luke concludes with saying, “³⁰He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.”

This is all well and good, very similar to what has happened everywhere else Paul went, but what happened? Everything in the book of Acts was building up to the climax where Paul would testify to the emperor himself. Would he find tragedy and be executed or imprisoned? Would he find happiness and freedom? Would he at least establish the church in Rome where, four hundred years later it would flourish into the Holy Roman Empire?

We have no idea. Tradition has it that this passion play ends in tragedy when Paul is executed by the Romans for disrupting the peace. He was beheaded, his head bounced upon the ground three times and in each spot a fountain sprung up. Some scholars suggest that there was a happy ending to Paul's final act arguing that the two years he spent in Rome were his prison sentence and then he was released and went to Spain as he had intended for so long.

And as for establishing the church, Paul discovered that it already existed just outside of the city in a town called Puteoli, so even though he makes a few new converts his reason for going to Rome wasn't to start the church there.

Regardless of how we would like to think of the ending of Paul's journey we know that Luke does not tell us, and you have to wonder why. The purpose of Luke's writing was to write an orderly account of the events which had been fulfilled and this purpose was itself fulfilled when Paul gets to Rome and the reader learns that the church was established in that most important city. At the end of Luke's gospel Jesus announces that all things written about him must be fulfilled including that forgiveness of sins is to be preached in his name starting from Jerusalem to all nations. If the book of Acts began in Jerusalem, the capitol of God's nation, now it ends in Rome the capitol of the world's nations. So Luke's purposes are fulfilled even as the story of Paul is left open ended.

It is rather frustrating at first to read this ending. If you had gone to see a play and the final act ended so abruptly without a resolution you might want your money back, but when it comes to this book of the Bible I think that there is a sort of blessing in having the book end the way that it does.

As we read stories in the Bible, and particularly the stories in the book of Acts, we get inspired by what happens to the characters in the hopes that we might strive, ourselves, to achieve great things for the Kingdom of God. We may not do all that Peter, Paul, and the others have done, but we may do something, and that is what is important. In that regard, then, if Luke recorded that Paul was executed then we may come to believe that the only fitting end for a Christian is martyrdom. If Luke recorded that Paul was set free and set off into the sunset, we may smile and assume that everything was and is happily ever after, and then we might believe that we wouldn't have to do anything ourselves.

But Paul's final act remains unwritten, and by leaving Acts open ended the reader, then as now, is not painted into a corner. Even though Paul's journeys must have come to an end either way at some point by now, we know that the end of our own story is still unwritten, and when we read the end of Acts we are reminded of that.

We are all in the middle of a different act of life. Some of us are in the first act while others are in the final act, most of us are somewhere in between. The question is, after all that you have been through so far, after each scene, every plot twist, each happy and sad moment that makes up the passion play of your life, when it comes to writing the final act, what will your final act be? Will it be tragedy or comedy? Will it be filled with regrets and mistakes and longings for what could have been, or it will it be happy ending knowing you did your best and gave all you had for the things that you loved?

Will your final act be the one where the hero completes the journey, defeats the monster, receives the reward, and rests in glory? It will be if you finish your life by walking in the ways of the Lord, showing compassion and kindness to all, even your enemies, and letting your faith be witness to all. If, however, at the end, after all that you have been through, your faith stumbles, cynicism wins out, and you leave this life with debts and grudges to pay what a tragedy that would be.

For those of you who know that you are in the final act of your life this question has a special urgency, and I suspect that you have already been working on making your final act a good one, but for those of us who believe that we are in the first or second act of our life, it is important to remember that we never know when the play will come to an end, so don't put this question off until a later day when it will seem more relevant to you. Take it seriously now, make every day a day of joy and Good News so that if you should unexpectedly find yourself in the middle of a one act play, you can be sure that the final act will be a good one.

The Rev. Clarence MacCartney has a classic sermon based on these scriptures called “Come Before Winter” that I used to preach at Connellsville every fall. He talks about Paul’s letter to Timothy written while under house arrest in Rome and he asks him to come to him to be with him before winter comes. He asks this not so much because he is concerned with being alone when it is cold, but because if Timothy delays he might be able to come at all because winter causes travel on the Mediterranean to cease. If Timothy waits until winter he might not be able to get to Paul until spring and Paul may not be alive still when that happens.

MacCartney uses this as a call to each of us to choose to do the things we have been meaning to do and to live the life we know we should live today rather than tomorrow, because he knows that tomorrow is not guaranteed. He concludes his sermon by saying:

But Paul says, “Now or never.” Christ says, “Now or never!” Experience, conscience, common sense all say, “Now or never!” Now is the time – today – to build a life that is worth living. Now is the time – today – to show your love and appreciation and forgiveness to family and friends, not after they are gone. Now is the time to become involved in creating a new kind of society in which all humanity can share. Now is the time to open your life to the love of Christ, that this love may guide all your decisions and all your days and all your involvements. Don’t wait until it’s too late! Do your best to “come before winter!”

Winter is often used as a metaphor to describe the final act of our life in many theaters they have on the wall a sculpture of two masks. One is a sad face that is crying and the other is a happy face with a wide smile. One is the representation of tragedy; the face of the sad ending. The other is the representation of comedy; the face of the happy ending. Each of us must ask ourselves which one we will be wearing when the curtain falls on our final act and it is vital that we understand that this is not a choice we will make when that day comes. Rather it is a choice we will make today, and tomorrow, and every day for as long as the passion play that is our life lasts. Let us choose today to do our best so that the mask we wear at the conclusion of our final act will be a happy one.

Call to Offering

Kevin Puskarich

Jesus, in calling himself the Good Shepherd, said, “I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd” (John 10:16). Let us give generously so the words of Jesus can be fulfilled.

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

Loving Shepherd, we thank you for your tender care. Everything we have comes the goodness of your love. Receive the gifts we return to you now, that sheep in other flocks may come to know you and discover that you are the one who lays down your life for the flock. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

When I was growing up it seemed like I spent most of my time with my mother in the car. She was always driving me somewhere, to and from practice, to and from doctors and dentist, or to church, the grocery store, or the mall. Most of the best conversations I ever had with her were in the car just passing the time. Rarely if ever, did she begin the conversation by saying, we need to talk, or I have something important to tell you. We would just talk and issues would come up and lessons that she would teach me would spring up naturally and spontaneously. Most of what my mother taught me came in the everyday conversations as we ran from place to place.

It seems to me that our conversations with God are a lot like that. Sometimes we do need to sit down with God to have a serious conversation, or we feel that God does need to get our attention to tell us something important, but, most of the time we run back and forth to so many places that are so important and the only time we can find for God is the respite of the dashboard confessional that is our car. Much of what we say and talk about may seem inconsequential, but just knowing that we have that time, to block the loud world out and hear that still, small voice is a significant grace.

As we come to this table let us give thanks that our God, like a mother, is always available to us, and let us make use of every available opportunity to speak with Her. We don't always have to have deep and serious conversations; we just have to keep the conversation going whenever we can.

Communion Hymn *"An Upper Room with Evening Lamps Ashine"* Audra Allen, organist

An upper room with evening lamps ashine, the twelve disciples, and the table spread;
Now in our turn Christ bids us pour the wine, and in remembrance bless and break the bread.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Connie Sheller

Heavenly Father, as we study your word, we are reminded of Paul's great work to make believers of Christ. And he instructed us to be chiseled to look like Christ through our faith. Give us the desire, passion, perseverance, and love to strive for this every day. As we eat this bread representing Christ's body and drink this cup representing Christ's blood, we thank you for your sacrificial love given for each of us. May we be Christ today to someone. 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.

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

"Here I Am, Lord"

Jody Mullis, pianist

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send? Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Christ is our peace, so live as people of peace, breaking down the walls of separation, living together as one body, united in love and in purpose

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



Do you have a prayer request or need help? Please feel free to contact Rev. Chris (412-956-6590) and Pastor Gena (724) 263-0033 directly and confidentially. Or scroll down on the opening page of our website (www.fairhillmanorchurch.org) to "Requests for Prayer or Help." There you can send an email which will go directly to Rev. Chris and Pastor Gena. We are One Body in Christ!

Homebound Members:

Phyllis Cimino
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Susan Britko
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Sandra Carman
Denise Charles
Wanda Chicone
Emily Cope Robinson
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Benjamin Dube
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Fred Engle
Jay Freudenberg
Jett Fuller
Derek Gardiner
David & Lois Gayman
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg

Linda Hainer
Kyle Hallam
Judy Hanning
Aryn Hess
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Kenger Family
Family of Pam Kloss
Ty, Kerri, Allie, Ivy &
Ty James Lacock
Von Lacock
Bob Lanning
Libby LeDuff
Lee & Betsy Martin
Dave McConnell
Don Melvin
Michaela Nixon
Carmen Oliverio
Ruth Mikuta
Deborah Patterson
Bo & Patty Pryor
Kayda Richards
Cathy Rentgen
Betty Jo Riggle
Dave Ross
Jim Roupe

John Shadeck
Hannah Simpson
Doug and Tracy Smith
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Bernard and Jane Teagarden
Beth Teagarden
Nadine Teagarden
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
Sarah Wittenberg

In the Military

Lance Dague	Andrew Gregg
Terrell McClain	Zachary Keene
Brandon Lipscomb	Sarah Lipscomb
Daniel Robinson	Travis Ringer
Shawn Dallatore	Emily Chase
Dylan Demain	

With Heartfelt Sympathy

Fairhill Manor expresses its sympathy to the family of Barbara Roupe who passed away on Friday, April 29. Please keep her husband Jim and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

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 Tuesday during the school year.

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

Puzzle!

Solve this cryptogram puzzle, using the clues R=I and M=T, to complete Psalm 111:10, NIV.

M Y L C L O Q Z C M Y L
 P Z Q N R V M Y L
 H L D R F F R F D Z C G R V N Z U ;
 O P P G Y Z C Z P P Z G
 Y R V B Q L T L B M V
 Y O K L D Z Z N
 J F N L Q V M O F N R F D
 M Z Y R U H L P Z F D V
 L M L Q F O P B Q O R V L

PSALM 111:10, NIV

Answer: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. Psalm 111:10, NIV