

Manor Minutes
Volume 12 Issue 43
October 29, 2021



The Story – October 31 – Chapter 7 Joshua: The Battle Begins

No Dartball – November 2

Board Reports due November 3rd

Personnel Committee – November 4, 4pm Library

Choir Practice – November 4, 6:30pm

Croppers – November 5, 4-9pm Large Fellowship Hall

Croppers – November 6, 9am-6pm Large Fellowship Hall

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

Our annual **Service of Remembrance** will be held on All Saints Sunday, November 7. If you have lost a loved one since last year's service (November 1, 2020), and would like to include him or her in this special service, please provide the following information to the Church Office by Wednesday, November 3: name of loved one, relationship to you/your family, date of passing and any remarks you would like included in the bulletin.

**ALL
SAINTS'
SUNDAY**

Upcoming events:

November 21: Baptism

Come and celebrate with our Membership Class as they join the church through the waters of baptism. Nyka Rash, Eli Graff, Molly Johnson, and Owen Stillwell have been learning about what it means to be a part of the Body of Christ so let's have as many members of that body present as possible to uplift them, and maybe you will be uplifted too.

**November 21:
Congregational Meeting
following worship**

**November 28: 1st Sunday
of Advent**

**November 30: Deadline
for poinsettia orders**





Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(*Disciples of Christ*)

351 Montgomery Ave.
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
October 31, 2021

Prelude

Josh Garrett

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Owen Stillwell

As we come before you in worship, we open our minds to your word,
we open our spirits to your Spirit, we open our wills to your guidance,
so that we may truly be your people and walk your way.

Opening Hymn

"I Will Sing of the Mercies"

Jody Mullis, pianist

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,
I will sing, I will sing.
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever,
I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.

With my mouth will I make known
thy faithfulness, thy faithfulness.
With my mouth will I make known
thy faithfulness to all generations.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Holy God, on this All Hallows' Eve, when time somehow seems more holy, when the boundaries between death and life, night and day, good and evil grow thin, we recognize those forces in our world that seem beyond our senses and perception. The forces that seem to shape our lives for good or for ill. Come and be very close to us, we pray, as we sit in this holy space.

As we play in this season, pretending for a time to be that which we are not, sharing good cheer and treats, reaching out to neighbors and friends and strangers, bless our interactions with your holy and loving presence. Make our common times special and our fun meaningful. Give us courage to carry forward the connections and warmth of these days.

Today we remember that evil and distress and death are all too real for many around us. Be with those who are enmeshed in evil, and those whose lives are being plundered by addiction or crime or abusive human situations. Be with those who are living in darkness and pain, struggling to find hope and meaning. And please be especially with those whose names we have spoken aloud in your presence this morning and those whose names we speak to you now in this silence....

Holy God, use this holy day to remind us of the ways good and evil are often interwoven in our world, not so easily distinguished. Humble us with the knowledge that each of us has the capacity for good and evil, love and hate, destruction and redemption within us. Help us this day and every day to pledge anew our loyalty to Christ, and to see more clearly how to live your ways in this world.

Bless us with a strong sense of what is good for us and what is pleasing to you. Secure in our hearts and minds memories of Jesus and his resistance to temptations of security and wealth and power, memories of his turning instead toward truth and the common good and dependence on you. Teach us to not always

surrender to the easiest path that opens before us but to wait for your guidance. Help us to make decisions that bind us closer to you.

At all times, but especially in times of fear, desperation and chaos, enable us to call upon your Holy Spirit to strengthen and sustain us. Bring to us a deep knowledge of your undying, unending love, a love that casts out all fear.

And now may we use this day to celebrate your victory over death. May we rejoice in the freedom from fear that we enjoy as we come to know the depths of your love. Break us free to love and to serve and to live in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, who teaches us to pray this way...

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

Joshua 11:16-23

J.C. Leasure

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

During the weeks and days leading up to Halloween, sometimes scariness seems to be all around us. We see haunted houses and scary hay rides and spooky skeletons. In fact, a lot of people put Halloween and fear together —fear of death, fear of evil, fear of darkness. I wonder what you are most afraid of. Do you think of Halloween as more scary or more fun?

Fear is actually a natural and good feeling that we have. Without fear we would make many more mistakes, hurting ourselves and others in the process. Without fear, we wouldn’t know to run away from things that are really dangerous to us.

So fear is a normal thing that we all have. But sometimes fear can feel so big. One of the ways people have dealt with their fears is by making fun of the fears itself. That, in fact, is part of the origin of Halloween. Most people were naturally afraid of death and dying, and so they decided to face those greatest fears by poking fun at death.

That’s one way to deal with our fears. The Bible tells us about another way. In 1 John 4:18, we are told that perfect love drives out fear. That is to say, when we come to know God's love, we don't have to be as afraid anymore. It's as if God is the parent who comes in at night and tucks us in, turns on the night light, and tells us that there are no monsters. When we come to trust in God's great love, our fears start to melt away.

Another way we can deal with our fears is by serving and loving others. When we serve others, we often discover that our fears lessen as our friendship and love deepens. Again, love drives out fear.

As you and I think about our fears now, I hope that we can know that just as God has been with those who have come before us, God is with us, too. And God promises that even death will not separate us from God. When God gave Jesus life again after Jesus died, we realized that God is stronger than even death! We have nothing to fear, even when we die. We will die, but we will have new life again with God.

So, go and have lots of fun on this Halloween! Celebrate all the love that makes our fears less powerful. Spread lots and lots of love. And give thanks to God for being with us, even in the scariest times.

Dear God, thank you for the healthy fears you give us that can keep us safe. Thank you for always being with us. Help us to feel safe and at peace in your love. And help us to spread lots of love this Halloween. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Adapted from <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/1954/no-fear-in-love-a-halloween-devotion>

Special Music

Josh Garrett

Second Scripture Reading

Joshua 24:22-33

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Freedom and Responsibility”

Rev. Stillwell

So far we have been going through The Story. The book from which we have been preaching in church and studying in Sunday school calls the story of the Bible “God’s great love affair with humanity”. This makes me think of the great hymn, “I Love to Tell the Story” with its chorus, “I love to tell the story. It will be my theme in glory. To tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.” Our book describes the narrative of the Bible as being composed of an upper story and a lower story. The lower story is whatever specific story we are reading in the Bible at the time, whether that be Jonah and the whale or Saul on the road to Damascus. and we as readers are called to view the lower story through the lens of the upper story, which, however you might define it, inevitably would be about God’s love for us. This helps us to understand how the story goes from one story to another, and helps us understand how it all fits together, but when the lower story we read is not one of love, but of violence and killing, as our story for today is, it can be hard to understand, and harder to preach.

I do not know too many people who are turned off of the Christian faith by the teachings of Jesus. In fact, it is usually the inability of Christians to live up to those teachings that causes people to not claim the name, Christian. In other words, people more often reject the messengers rather than the message. When they do reject the message, it is usually because they have a hard time reconciling the first half of the story with the second. I understand why that is.

When Jesus came many people thought he would be like Joshua, a warrior general, who would lead the Israelites to victory over their enemies. Joshua led the Israelites into the promised land after their wanderings were over and helped them settle there by killing just about everyone who was living there already. It was the land God gave them, and they were not going to share it with anyone. This not only met with God’s approval but was done at God’s command.

“So Joshua took all that land: the hill country and all the Negeb and all the land of Goshen and the lowland and the Arabah and the hill country of Israel and its lowland, ¹⁷from Mount Halak, which rises towards Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He took all their kings, struck them down, and put them to death. ¹⁸Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. ¹⁹There was not a town that made peace with the Israelites, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all were taken in battle. ²⁰For it was the Lord’s doing to harden their hearts so that they would come against Israel in battle, in order that they might be utterly destroyed, and might receive no mercy, but be exterminated, just as the Lord had commanded Moses”

So when Jesus came years later, and Rome was occupying the land that God had given the chosen people, many people refused to believe that he was the Messiah because when he ascended into Heaven after his resurrection the Romans were still there. No worse for the while.

So this is a hard story to preach on since preaching means preaching the good news of Jesus Christ, and with a story of so much violence and bloodshed, it is hard to find the good news. This is after all a story that has inspired centuries of bloodshed which has soured so many on religion. In fact one could say that it is very much at the root of the current problems in Israel because when Joshua talks about the land of our ancestors he is going back to Abraham who was not born in the land but was led there by God. Remember that Muslims trace their ancestry back to Ishmael, Abraham's second son, so claiming land rites based on ancestral history is not a sufficient way to solve the problem of disputed land ownership as evidenced by the fact that many who would use it in Israel would never advocate using it in America where most of our ancestors came here from other countries not that long ago. Even when we evolved somewhat we still wanted to conquer by conversion. Only now are we beginning to learn to coexist with people of other faiths.

So this is a hard book to preach upon. In fact this book is to my mind the most Old Testament of the Old Testament books. What it does is set up the contrast of the Israelite's God and the Canaanite's gods, and sets up the conflict of God and Mammon versus God or Mammon.

The Bible explains that the Canaanites are killed because they were wicked but also so that God's name would be made known throughout the world, just as it was through the plagues in Egypt. Another reason is so that the Israelites would be less tempted to stray from Yahweh to other gods, because these former slaves are now free and they have a choice to make. They have freedom from, but now they are going to experience freedom to, and when people experience freedom for the first time, it is often best to limit their options.

Freedom is nothing more and nothing less than the ability to choose, so Joshua asks the Israelites to choose. "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua announces to his community that he and his household will follow, the Lord who has given both the land and the commandments of Sinai. But he fully recognizes that other choices are available, other gods and other ways of life. And a decision must be made! Israel, and the church, must decide again and again about identity, about defining passions and loyalties. And beyond religious community, the civic community continually needs to decide again what kind of society it intends to be. Joshua receives a positive response from his community.

"²⁵So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem. ²⁶Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak in the sanctuary of the Lord. ²⁷Joshua said to all the people, 'See, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it has heard all the words of the Lord that he spoke to us; therefore it shall be a witness against you, if you deal falsely with your God.' ²⁸So Joshua sent the people away to their inheritances."

The people are ready to make the same choice that Joshua has made. They know the recital of YHWH's good deeds of protection, guidance, and nurture. They know that God requires a society that is just as God is just that will result in economic fairness not exploitation. In fact we will see that the Israelites will get into trouble with God when they forget God's justice and exploit one another as the god's of the Canaanites would do.

This is the good news that we seek for it lays the ground work for how our relationship with God will be. We will not be like angels who have no choice, it seems, to follow God, and we will not be like animals

who have no knowledge of God. We will be a free people, free to choose or not choose God, but if we do choose the Lord, then we will also receive responsibilities.

We hear so much about freedom these days. We all want it. We all celebrate it, but we hear precious little about responsibility. Any time we think our freedoms are being infringed upon we are quick to cry out persecution and send out an angry tirade on social media, but as soon as we are asked to acknowledge our responsibilities to others we are silent. In fact, pointing out that we have responsibilities to one another is often seen as an infringement upon our freedoms, itself. Like the child who cannot wait to grow up so that they can have the freedom to stay up as late as they want and eat whatever they want, but is blissfully oblivious to the responsibility of paying bills and running a household, we too often want the freedom God gives without the responsibility God demands. As the story progresses we will see that when the Israelites choose freedom over responsibility things will not go well for them, so let that be our take away from our story today.

Saying yes to God means nothing if there never was an opportunity to say no, so let us celebrate our freedom, but let us also acknowledge that choosing God by choosing to call Jesus Lord means nothing if we do not also accept the responsibility to love our enemies, forgive those who sin against us and to love one another as he first loved us. The Israelites have reached the Promised Land which is a place where they are now free to choose how they will live, but God is leading us to the Kingdom which is a place where all accept responsibility for their choices and for one another. Let us celebrate our God given freedom by living up to our God given responsibilities.

Call to Offering

Owen Stillwell

As we give, we recognize our potential for doing good and strengthening the kingdom of God. Therefore, let us remember the words of Jesus, “Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.”

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

Open our eyes, Lord God, not only to see our own opportunities for advancement and success, but also to see the needs of our world and the needs of those around us. Bless these gifts that we give, that we may recognize our potential for doing good and strengthening your Kingdom.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

This last week it got cool enough to wear my first sweater of the season. It was so exciting, because sweaters are my favorite things to wear, especially on a day when it is just cold enough to wear one, but not so cold that you have to wear one. It was like being reunited with an old friend. I don't know why they are so comfortable, but I suspect that it has more to do than the actual fabric of the sweater

There's something wonderful about many strands of material, made of different fabrics and colors woven carefully together into a pattern that is far more beautiful than any individual strand could have ever been. Someone like me, who cannot knit, looks at them and marvels how it all came together, and how each string has an equally important part. Pull one string here or another one there, and the sweater comes undone all that is left is a heap of threads.

In the words of the hymn “Restless Weaver”,

Restless Weaver ever spinning threads of justice and peace; dreaming patterns of creation where all creatures find a home; gathering up life's varied fibers, every texture, every hue; grant us your creative vision. With us weave your world anew.

As we gather at the communion table we are reminded that Jesus Christ, like a master weaver, has taken each individual one of us and woven us together to make up the fabric of the church. Each of us are different. Each of us are important in our own way. Each of us are necessary to make the church all that it can be. Each of us are made greater by the communion that we have with one another, with our lord Jesus Christ, and with our God.

Communion Hymn

"I'm Gonna Eat at the Communion Table"

Jody Mullis, pianist

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, Allelu. I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus, Allelu.
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus,
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table, Allelu. I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus, Allelu.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Connie Sheller

Loving Father. As we hear the stories of the Old Testament, we are reminded of the faithfulness of Joshua who trusted and obeyed God as the Israelites went into the Promised Land. In our lives, complicated at times, may we always trust and obey You knowing that You take care of our every need.

As we gather at this table, we are reminded of your Son, Jesus, who came to establish a spiritual kingdom on earth for everyone. He came to show us how to trust and obey with His teachings and actions. Thank you, Father, for sending Jesus, who died and rose from the dead, promising each of us eternal life through our faith. This broken bread represents His broken body and the cup, His shed blood. Through partaking, may we be awakened to always trust and obey in You! 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

"My Life is in You Lord"

Jody Mullis, pianist

My life is in you Lord, my strength is in you Lord,
my hope is in you Lord, in you, it's in you, (2 times)
I will praise you with all of my life.
I will praise you with all of my strength.
With all of my life, with all of my strength,
all my hope is in You.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another...so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Recorded worship services can be found on the Church website or on YouTube,
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmIH3qzih_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!

Homebound Members:

Phyllis Cimino
317 Wellness Way
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Alice Cokeley
149 Meadows View Rd
Washington PA 15301

Mrs. Mary McDonough
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Ed Alexy
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Lisa Amistade
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Jim Banish
Tom Barnhart
Abby Blanchard
Susan Britko
Mabel Brooks
Denise Charles
Wanda Chicone
John Collar
Emily Cope Robinson
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Fred Engle
Jay Freudenberg
Jett Fuller
Derek Gardiner
Lois Gayman
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg

Kyle Hallam
Connie Hanning
Aryn Hess
Ed Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Family of Pam Kloss
Ty, Kerri, Allie, Ivy &
Ty James Lacock
Bob Lanning
Marylee Lawrence
Libby LeDuff
Frank Lippert
Lee & Betsy Martin
Dave McConnell
Don Melvin
Michaela Nixon
Ruth Mikuta
Georgette Murray
Deborah Patterson
Bo & Patty Pryor
Kayda Richards
Cathy Rentgen

Betty Jo Riggle
Dave Ross
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
Owen Stillwell
Eli Graff
Molly Johnson

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.

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	

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.