

Manor Minutes

Volume 12 Issue 11

March 19, 2021

In-person worship will resume THIS Sunday, March 21

The sanctuary will reopen to limited, in-person worship beginning Sunday, March 21. We will use the same guidelines as we did in the Fall. Please enter using the back door, wear your mask, sign in, and a guide will lead you to an open seat. There will be no printed bulletin; the bulletin can be found at <https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/bulletin>. You will leave the sanctuary using the side door that leads to the parking lot. Zoom worship will continue for those not able to be in the sanctuary.

Those with last names beginning with A-E & F-O worship in the sanctuary March 21 at 10:15. The Worship Schedule can be found at: <https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/sanctuary-schedule>

ZOOM – LIVE at 10:15 am

Zoom log in information is available on the last page of the Manor Minutes.

Prayer Shawl – March 22, 11am

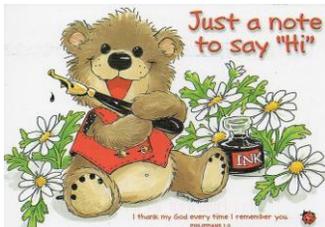
Lenten Bible Study with Rev. Chris – March 22, 7pm via Zoom

Stewardship/Finance Ministry – March 23, 6pm via Zoom

Weekly Lenten Service – March 24, Washington First Christian Church

April Newsletter deadline – March 25

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



Take a minute this week to send a card or letter to Ruth Cox and let her know you are thinking of her.

Ruth Cox
3821 Wilson Blvd, Apt 515
Arlington, VA 22203

Those wanting to help Ty and Kerri Lacock and their family can give to our **Caring Fund** - either on Givelify or with a check to the church with Caring Fund in the memo. This will help with gas, parking, eating out, hotel rooms, etc. We can also celebrate the birth of Ivy and Ty with cards of congratulations. Correspondence can be sent to:



Von & Lynn Lacock
25 Webb Drive
Washington PA 15301

Allie, their older daughter is
2-1/2 years old.



Contact Karen at the Church Office (724) 225-8610 after you have been fully vaccinated. She will keep a confidential list. This will help future decisions on increasing in-person Worship attendance.



Fairhill Manor Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

351 Montgomery Ave.

724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Pastor

Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor

March 21, 2021

Prelude

Audra Allen, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship*

Von Lacock

Have mercy on your people, O God. Wash us. Cleanse us. Make us more perfect in your love. Open the skies and pour down your grace upon your people. Open our hearts to hear your voice. Let the thunder of your presence awaken us! Have mercy on your people, O God. Restore within us the joy of your salvation.

Opening Hymn

"A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

Audra Allen, organist

A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing,
our present help amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe,
with craft and power great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth without an equal.

God's word above all earthly powers,
no thanks to them, abideth.
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
through Christ, who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also.
The body they may kill,
God's truth abideth still,
God's reign endures forever.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer*

Pastor Gena

Wonderful Parent God, we want to see you; more and more, every day, we want to see you.

Each day as we rise, train our eyes to see your glory in creation, teach our hearts to feel your presence as we love each other.

We confess that we love our lives as they are; we struggle even with the idea of change.

And when you call us to do things differently, we often wrestle with you.

Never doubting that you can give us true life in full, we still feel safer clinging to a life that is really only half a life.

Teach us by your Spirit to let go of our agendas and assumptions, our self-righteousness and false notions of power.

Thank you for giving us the strength and courage to try new things.

Opening ourselves to you, letting go of ourselves, we can begin to more fully embrace you, Holy God.

Seeking your wisdom and guidance, asking for your comfort and presence, we pray for ourselves and for our world.

Each day we hear of those who are sick, lonely, in despair, struggling with overwhelming grief and loss. Embrace with your loving arms all who live in fear and pain and those who are lost, that they may find a home in you as we care for them.

Joining with Christians throughout the world, we pray for your church, that our prayers would lead to action as we hear the cries of those who so need your love.

Even as we hope in vaccines, give us the endurance to continue to care for each other, working for the common good and making sure that all have what they need to live well.

Satisfy our longings for peace and justice by showing us how to stand with those who are oppressed, left out, rejected and ignored.

Up from our knees we bound now with joy, thankful to be together again as we worship you, praising you for your steadfast love and faithfulness.

Show us now the seed of hope in all of our disappointments and challenges, the seed that helps us to more faithfully depend on you.

Through Christ, with Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, we join our voices to pray...

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.

Anthem

Children's Message*

Pastor Gena

Have you ever made a mistake or broken a rule? I know I have! How do we feel when we mess up or make mistakes? I wonder why it is important to repair what was broken or hurt when we make mistakes or mess up.

Let's read Psalm 51:10-12. I wonder what these words might mean; what might have been going on in the person's life who wrote them.

Many people who study the Bible think King David wrote this poem as a prayer after he made a terrible mistake. He had broken a rule, abused his power as king, and hurt many people because of his actions. In this prayer, King David is honest with God about what David had done wrong. He asks God to examine David's heart—to see he is truly sorry and wants to repair the hurt he caused. David asks God to give him a second chance at doing the right thing; another way to say this is David asks God to forgive him for the ways he hurt himself and others.

When we make mistakes, break rules, or hurt others, we can ask God to forgive us, too. Asking for forgiveness doesn't always make everything okay. Our actions still have consequences; people might still be hurt by what we have done. It is important to say, "I'm sorry," to someone we hurt, and also ask, "How can I help make things better?"

God still loves us when we make mistakes and mess up. God creates clean hearts in us because God forgives us for the things we wish we hadn't done. Being honest about our mistakes and asking for forgiveness are hard things to do, but they are important ways we receive and share God's love.

Dear God, thank you for forgiving us when we make mistakes. Show us how to ask for forgiveness and how to listen when someone else apologizes for hurting us. Give us clean hearts so we can all try again. Amen.

Scripture Reading*

John 12:20-33

Von Lacock

Sermon*

“Something God Alone Can See”

Rev. Stillwell

In addition to the scripture we have just heard, I want to share a companion scripture from the prophet, Ezekiel. In this passage the prophet is taken to a valley where there are old and dry bones and he is asked by God, “Mortal, can these bones live?” Ezekiel answered,

“O Lord God, you know.”⁴ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.”⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. ¹¹ Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ ¹² Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people.

Well of course the dry bones could live by God’s command, but this was to show Ezekiel that the nation of Israel which was scattered to the winds by exile, like the bones scattered in that valley, could live again because of the work of God. As we were discussing this passage one time in Sunday school the question was asked what in our life could be compared to “dem dry bones”? I thought of the plants in my front yard.

We plant bushes, rhododendrons, creeping phlox, lymphadoras, mums, and lavender in our yard to make it look nice, to bring color and life to our yard, to add, as the real estate shows call it, curb appeal. At the height of springtime when all are in bloom the landscape is very appealing, but now, at the end of winter, before spring has truly arrived, they look like a plant graveyard, dead and barren. Taken out of context a person viewing them would assume they had lived and now they will live no more, but if you know that spring is coming then you know there is hope for them yet.

I have lived through 44 springs and they always amaze me, because it seems like every March I look at my plants, my brittle forsythia, my almost leafless lime tree, my bushes whose names I do not know and which were there when I moved in, and I think to myself, if I didn’t know better I would not believe that they could come back to life.

And then there are the bulbs. It is amazing that an ugly bulb can become such a beautiful flower. When we bought our plants they already looked nice; they were just smaller than they are now. The bushes and the trees were always there as far as we are concerned, but the bulbs look nothing like the flowers that

they become. We plant them in the ground and leave them to their own devices and, eventually, the ugly brown bulb is no more but a beautiful, colorful flower.

Jesus spoke of this type of thing in our main scripture when he said, "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Now, here there is either an issue of translation or a metaphor, for anyone who plants knows that if a seed dies, there will be no plant. The seed does not die but it no longer exists. Its life as a seed ceases to be and its existence as a plant begins. In this passage Jesus uses wheat as his example but the same is true of the flowers that we have planted for spring. Whether by bulb or seed, what the flower begins as it no longer is when it blooms. If it began as a seed it will drop new seeds in the hopes that new flowers will come back in the spring, but if it began as a bulb it returns to the bulb, lies dormant in the ground, awaiting its return in the spring.

The same is also true of human beings. Jesus goes on to say about us humans, "Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life." Jesus is not talking of suicide or martyrdom here, and if anyone tells you that you must take the Bible absolutely literally then show them this passage and they will never bother you again.

Here Jesus is speaking of what Paul said when he wrote about dying to sin. It is not that sin has killed us or that we are really wanting to sin, it is that in Christ we have lost the hold that sin had over us and our new life has begun. Again Paul tells the Corinthians "I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you." Paul is not some player 1 in a video game who dies every time he makes a misstep but respawns every time he dies ready to try again. Rather he is a human being who dies to his self everyday so that he can follow God's will.

I once had the honor of meeting an author named James Still whose novel "River of Earth" was required reading in an introduction to fiction class I was taking. He spoke to our class and someone asked him if he at 73 felt like he was the same man who wrote the book at 22, and he said, "Well every cell in your body will be dead in seven years' time, so I suppose that I am truly not the same person I was when I wrote the book."

That thought has stuck with me. Of course we keep our personality, experiences, knowledge, and memories, but we change as we grow. It may sound harsh to say that our old self dies as our new self is born, but at least we can think of it as a transformation from one stage of life to another.

Every seven years we are a completely new person. Jesus knew that he would be a completely new person in seven days, and then explains his own death that is to come, and the transformation that is to follow, and the crowd, now made up of Greeks as well as Jews, like his disciples before them do not understand.

I can't blame them. I do not understand completely how the bulb becomes the flower. I don't understand at what point is it no longer a bulb and is a flower. But I do understand that God does.

When I was young there were many things that I did not see, but God did. I didn't understand how what I learned in school would help me, or how I would survive high school, or how I would ever get to do the thing I wanted to do, but God alone could see.

When I was in college I could not see how my future would turn out or how I would find the woman I would marry, but, even as I sat in the same room with her in class after class for three years before many eyes were opened, God alone could see.

When Owen was born I didn't see what he would be like or how my life before being a father had died and my new life as a father was born but God alone could see. When I began my ministry I had no idea what challenges I would face or rewards I would receive, and I do not know now here with you, but God alone knows, for God alone can see.

This is how God works with us. We put something into motion by turning to God for help, we plant the initial seed, and God makes it grow. We cannot always see how it will work out or what it will look like in the end, but God can see. Often it is good we cannot see. We will face challenge in our life that are daunting and if we knew ahead of time what awaited us, we might never plant those seeds, but God gives us just enough information to go on and we trust that we will receive more as we need it, so we plant those seeds of faith and water them with our tears both of joy and of sorrow, and wait for things to grow in our life.

When Jessi and I stuck those bulbs in the ground way back when, we forgot all about them. If they come back it won't be because of anything we did, but I believe that they will. I believe not because of anything that I see in the world right now. It still gets close to freezing at night, the plants still haven't added new blooms, things don't look much different than they did in February. I believe not because of anything I have done. I haven't watered, pruned, or covered the plants. I believe because it has happened before.

I believe because it is happening now. I believe because I know that:

In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

If God can do this to the trees and the plants and the flowers why won't God do it for us to? God is right now as I speak. We are growing in Christ, dying to sin. It takes place the moment that we ask Christ to plant the bulb of faith in our hearts, but it doesn't happen right away. Every day of our life our old self is dying and our new self is growing, and it happens in fits and in starts, and we cannot see how it will end, but God alone can see.

Of all the things that you plant this spring, if you have not done so, ask Christ to plant that bulb of faith in your heart, and if you already have rejoice in knowing that God will watch it, tend it, and grow it until it blooms beautiful and true. You don't have to give up your life, but if you let God tend to it, then, like the spring flowers even the driest deadest life can and will bloom again.

Call to Offering*

Von Lacock

As we anticipate the transformation already begun within us, as we look toward being made perfect in God's holy love, let us respond in the joy of our salvation and in the hope of God's covenant people by bringing our offerings to God.

Dedication of Offering Prayer*

Rev. Stillwell

Generous and all-loving God, as we give our gifts and tithes today, we recommit ourselves to your service and to the service of your people. May we do so in response to your unending call that beckons us and leads us home. We pray as followers of the glorified Christ. Amen.

Invitation to Communion*

Rev. Stillwell

Not everything that dies comes back. For plants that wither when the winter comes, some lay dormant and return when the warmth of the spring returns while others die and stay dry and lifeless. There are many reasons for this but usually it comes down to how much of a root system the plant had, and how insulated it was from the cold. When the winter comes it matters for plant and for us how strong our roots are and how much we are able to prevent the bitter cold from reaching us.

That is why this table is so important to us, for it is one thing to profess our belief in the springtime of our life or the carefree days of summer. But when the wind blows, the snow falls, and the days are dreary, our faith remains, indeed sustains us, if we have tended to it in all time so that the roots of our faith grow strong and run deep.

We come to this table as often as we can to nurture our faith and sustain it. To tend to it and to prune the dead branches that no longer bear fruit. We come because the one who invites us knows a thing or two about coming back to life. Jesus calls us to partake in this meal as he calls us to partake in his life and if we partake in a life like his we will partake in a resurrection like his.

Jesus calls us from our coldest winter to partake in an eternal spring. We give thanks for the signs of resurrection that are happening all around us, and in the sharing of his meal, acknowledge the resurrection that took place 2000 years ago and anticipate the resurrection that is to come.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup*

Linda Reese

Gracious Lord, we thank you for the season of Spring, a time of awakening and renewal. During these 40 days of Lent, we go through a period of reflection, awakening, and renewal to enable us to plant our grain to bear fruit. In the partaking of the bread and cup at this table, we remember the grain, Jesus who died and rose from the grave to bear fruit for our salvation. Bless us as we go forth to plant our grain. Amen

Words of Institution*

Rev. Stillwell

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

Closing Hymn

"In the Bulb There Is a Flower"

Jody Mullis, pianist

In the bulb there is a flower;	In our end is our beginning;
in the seed, an apple tree;	in our time, infinity;
in cocoons, a hidden promise;	in our doubt there is believing;
butterflies will soon be free!	in our life, eternity.
In the cold and snow of winter	In our death, a resurrection;
there's a spring that waits to be,	at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,	unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.	something God alone can see.

Benediction*

Rev. Stillwell

Go in peace, for God's greatest glory is the glory of his grace.

* You can listen to these pieces of worship at

<https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/worship-audio-files>

Previous Worship services can also be found on the Church website or on YouTube,
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmlH3qzih_fzHCC2X0Jhc_sfmiJ7C1O3X

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!

Gary Anderson
Avery Allen
Donna Bakaitis
Bill Behrens
Bristol Allan Berry
Abby Blanchard
Mark & Susan Britko
Jordon Burk
Mary Chase
Wanda Chicone
Emily Cope Robinson
Ruth Cox
Irma Davis
Sue Donaldson
Jessica Duke
Libby Eberhard
Fred Engle
Jay Freudenberg
Lois Gayman
Rose Ann Gorby
Joe Greene
Bonnie Gregg

Sloan Amelia Hagy
Judy Hanning
Aryn Hess
Ed & Harriet Jackman
Dallas Jacobovitz
Bob Lanning
Ty, Kerri, Allie, Ivy &
Ty James Lacock
Cheryl Leach
Stanley & Dolores Majeski
Lee & Betsy Martin
Don Melvin
Michaela Nixon
Ruth Mikuta
Dick Moninger
Georgette Murray
Deborah Patterson
Joyce and Denny Paul

Betty & Charles Riecks
Betty Jo Riggle
Chip Rogers and his parents
Jim and Barb Roupe
John Shadeck
Theresa Shape
Hannah Simpson
Doug and Tracy Smith
Steve Smith
Cathy Stewart
John Stewart
Beth Teagarden
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
Sarah Wittenberg
Preparing for Baptism – Nyka Rash

Southmont-Presbyterian Medical Center

Bill Behrens Rm 437
835 S Main Street
Washington PA 15301

Homebound Members:

Phyllis Cimino
317 Wellness Way
Strabane Trails #325
Washington PA 15301

Mrs. Mary McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

In the Military

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



WISDOM FROM THE WORD

God makes a special promise to people who study Scripture.

Directions: Arrange the word list in alphabetical order. Then write the circled letters in order below to complete Joshua 1:8, NIV.



school	— ○ — — —
paper	— ○ —
wisdom	— — ○ —
read	— — — ○
play	— — — — —
learn	○ — — — —
grow	— ○ — — — —
pencils	— — — — —
pray	— ○ — —
art	— — — — —
student	— — — ○ — —
kids	— — ○ — — —
apple	— — ○ — — —

“... meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be _____ and successful.”

JOSHUA 1:8, NIV

Answer: apple, art, grow, kids, learn, paper, pencils, play, pray, read, school, student, wisdom, prosperous

Holy Week Worship Schedule

- March 28 Palm Sunday 10:15 am
Last names beginning A-E and P-Z
- April 1 Maundy Thursday
7pm via Zoom
- April 2 Good Friday
7 pm via Zoom
- April 4 Sunrise 7am
Worship open to everyone
Weather permitting outside
Masks required, bring your Own chair
- April 4 Easter Worship 10:15 am
Last names beginning F-O and P-Z

Fairhill Manor has entered a new era: the age of anytime, anywhere giving. We are now signed up with **Givelify**, the mobile giving app for places of worship and charities.

Givelify gives you a beautiful, easy giving experience using your smartphone. There are no frustrating web forms to fill out, and recurring gifts are easy to set up and modify. Even better, it's free to download and use. It's safe and secure and gives you access to your complete giving record.

Want to see how it works? [Watch the demonstration video](#) that shows you all about how to make and track donations.

Ready to get started? [Download](#) the Givelify app for Android or iPhone.



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 a – 2 pm. The Church phone is forwarded to Karen's cell phone.

Pastor Gena is off on Friday.
Vacation : April 5 - 18

Rev. Chris is off on Friday.

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

Children Worship & Wonder

We invite children age 3 – Grade 5 to participate in Children Worship & Wonder. Join CW&W on Zoom around 10:30 am (contact Pastor Gena for the login information). To learn more and register your child(ren), <https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/children-worship-wonder>

Tween Team

Gather online via Zoom with 4th-7th Graders on Sunday evenings from 5-6 pm. During the Easter Season we will continue centering our time together around, "Faithful Families: Lent and Easter Devotions." JC Leasure and Pastor Gena are the co-leaders. Tween Team will NOT meet on April 4.

ZOOM – LIVE

Zoom Worship this Week - Live from the Sanctuary at 10:15am!

"Join a Meeting" on Zoom at 9:45 am 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 Pastor Gena (724) 263-0033. She will share these during worship. At 10:15 am, mute yourself on Zoom (Not sure how to do that? Login at 9:45 am and someone will help). Those on Zoom are visible to each other for the entire worship service. If you would like to see but not be seen, click Stop Video on your Zoom screen.

Lent

To mark this special time of the Christian year, a time of examination and preparation leading to the celebration of Easter, we have two exciting opportunities to grow stronger in our faith and spirituality.

Zoom Bible Study

On Monday, March 22, from 7-8:15pm via Zoom, Rev. Chris will continue the Lenten Bible Study on the Gospel of John. The curriculum is written by Rev. Adam Hamilton based on his book, "John: The Gospel of Light and Life". The only reading required is to read four or five chapters of the Gospel each week. NO registration is necessary just click on the zoom link which will be emailed on Monday.

Weekly worship services

We are teaming up with other Disciples of Christ congregations in the area to provide a weekly mid-week worship service during the season of Lent. Each church will take a turn to lead a worship service each Wednesday at 7 pm to be shared to all churches via Zoom, Facebook, YouTube, whatever their method is. Details on how to watch each service will be emailed each week so stay tuned! The schedule for these services is as follows:

Mar 24 - Washington First Christian Church

Mar 31 - Christian Church in Uniontown

Lent Devotionals and other resources are available at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/lent

Username: fairhillmanor@yahoo.com

Password: lent2021