

Manor Minutes

Volume 11 Issue 12

March 20, 2020

With the suspension of church activities for the next few weeks, our Manor Minutes will adapt from a news sharing of church activities to a substitute for our Sunday worship service. We will seek to share with you information of our members who are in need of prayer and will offer an abbreviated worship service for you to follow for yourself and others in your household. Pastor Gena and I hope you will join us and other Fairhill Manor members in worship from your home on Sunday using the materials below.

To heighten your experience of worship I would suggest lighting a candle as you gather at a table. This is a way of entering into a sacred time allowing your home to become a holy place of worship. You are encouraged to gather what you need to observe the Lord's Table and to get your Bible to read the scripture text for the day.

This is certainly not what any of us would prefer, but in order to keep yourselves and others safe, we need to be creative. Always remember that the church is the people of God. It doesn't require that we have a building to be the church. Please let us know how you like this material and offer suggestions for ways we can improve the experience of worship for coming weeks. It is our hope that for those of you able to access Facebook to do some video through Facebook live in coming weeks. Watch your Manor Minutes for more information.

Please also note the information from Jerry Puskarich, our Stewardship and Finance Ministry Chairperson about giving your offerings during our absence from the church building.

In times of challenge and anxiety may we focus on the truth of God's promise from Deuteronomy: "Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you."

Darwin

The delivery of daffodils has been suspended because of c o v i d - 19. We have honored our agreement to the suppliers and paid them. For those of you that made a donation to the American Cancer Society in the hope of receiving or having flowers delivered, we regret that because of the current circumstances we are prohibited from delivering the flowers. Please know that your donations to the American Cancer Society helps to insure that we are here today to help those facing cancer. Thank you for your donation. Thank you, Peggy Oliverio and the American Cancer Society.





Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

351 Montgomery Ave.

724-225-8610

Rev. Dr. W. Darwin Collins, Interim Pastor

Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor

March 22, 2020

Welcome to our Home Worship Service!

Pastoral Prayer*

Pastor Gena

O God who sees,
We long to be seen, to be recognized, to be held in your loving, compassionate gaze.

Jesus, Light of the world, come and shine the warmth of your light on and all around us as we pray.

Spirit, unseen yet winding your way among us all, gathering us one to another, drawing us as one body near in spirit, we welcome your peaceful yet joyful presence.

O God who sees and gives sight,
We are disoriented, we cannot see exactly where we are headed or what exactly we will need for the journey.
We are afraid of something which we cannot see until its harmful effects become apparent.

We are grasping at what we think best, living one day at a time – some of us in the loneliness of silence and isolation, others spending hours on end with parents, children, brothers and sisters.

We are trying to adapt, but are we doing the right things?

God, we long for something as concrete and straightforward as dirt and mud to solve our problems and dilemmas.

We long for clear directions we can trust – “go and wash.”

We long to come home seeing clearly.

We need your grace in these days.

Forgive us for all that we have done that is not what you would have us do.

Forgive us for all that we have failed to do that was ours to do.

Forgive us for jumping to conclusions, for being quick to assign fault.

Come with your mud and open our eyes until we can see ourselves just as we are. Come with your mud and open our eyes until we know ourselves as your beloved, completely and persistently loved by you. Come with your mud and open our eyes until your ways become visible to us and our lives give you glory.

And then give us the courage to embrace and trust the transformation you are working in us – and in others. Give us words to tell widely the story of how you help us to see with clarity, with insight - how you center us in times of trial and turmoil.

O God who sees,
We know your faithfulness in our lives,
And so we bring before you the lives of others,
The cares of this world,
Entrusting all things to you.

Bring healing to those who are ill in mind, body or spirit.
Be with those who are afraid, overwhelmed, confused.
Be with those who are lonely and with those who can find no time and space for themselves.
We pray for those who are living in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, for those who are living in the midst of war, hunger, and natural disaster.

Show us how you want us to help each other, how to stand in solidarity with those who are struggling, how to reach out for help when we need it. May generosity overflow from our own hands and resources until all your children have what they need.

When rules and routines are suspended, help us to find you. When we aren't in the Sanctuary, help us to find you. When we can't be together, help us to find you. Show us where you are.

Calm our fears. Bless us with meaningful interactions and purposeful days.
Shower us with your grace as we adjust and learn.

All of this we pray in the name of Jesus, the Light of the World, the one who enables us to see, Amen.

Scripture Text*

John 9:1-41

Jim Ulery

Sermon Reflections

“Closed Minds and Opened Eyes”

Rev. Collins

This is the third week of this Lenten season and we find ourselves once again reading of an encounter of Jesus with a single person. Two weeks ago, we shared the meeting of Jesus with Nicodemus in the darkness; last week we talked of the accidental (perhaps) meeting of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well; and today we find Jesus once again coming upon a single man with a need. He is blind and has been since birth but do notice that the man is an innocent caught in a revelatory miracle. He doesn't ask Jesus for a healing...Jesus recognizes his need and making a mudpack

covers his eyes for him to cleanse them in the pool of Siloam. Once the man assents to Jesus request to wash the mud off in the pool...the blind man is given sight.

I say this man is an innocent because he didn't request anything from Jesus. He seems oblivious to who Jesus really is. He is merely at the well...perhaps waiting to ritually cleanse himself so he can approach the nearby Temple. Little does he know that Jesus' disciples make of him an example of their own misguided belief that anyone with any misfortune or physical ailment are victims of their own sin or the failures of their family. You may remember this was the very same belief that Job's friends had of his misfortune...he must have done something to deserve his suffering.

Have you ever noticed that we oftentimes become victims of a closed mind...whether our own or those we associate with? It surely is commonly found these days in our partisan environment. If you believe this way, you're wrong. No question...no way to discuss...no possibility of my being wrong. So, for those disciples the man was an obvious sinner and deserved his blindness. Closed minds.

And when Jesus heals him and opens his eyes to see...to see that Jesus was someone special. Notice that at the beginning he's uncertain as to who exactly Jesus was...a healer for sure...but something more? And then this poor man, now given the beauty of sight must contend with another group of closed-minded people...the Pharisees. Their minds about Jesus were made up. He was a troublemaker. A threat to their leadership and understanding of faithfulness. So, in their partisan way of thinking they question the man as being blind. They disbelieve him and then seek to threaten his parents and his faith...and the unlikely status of Jesus as a person sent by God. Their minds were closed...and nothing that the formerly blind man could say would change it. The Pharisees minds were set and nothing that they saw could adjust their beliefs that Jesus was not of them and must be eliminated.

As for the man now given physical sight...his beliefs were somewhat uncertain. He knew he could see; he knew it was Jesus who gave him that sight, but as to his belief in God's messiah, the Son of Man...well, that was not so clear. His eyes were opened to really see Jesus before him, and in turn, his mind was open to belief.

It was a revelatory miracle showing the true presence of Jesus despite others being blinded to Christ. In these days of heightened anxiety and fears, I wonder...will we be open to see Christ's presence in the midst of troubling news and modified ways of living or will we, like the disciples and the Pharisees, close our minds to that which is different and unfamiliar?

Gracious God, who guided the Israelites through the darkness of the wilderness and who brought our ancestors through world wars, plagues and pestilence, open our eyes and our minds to see your presence in the world around us. Bring your light, O God, into our darkness. Reveal your love in our time of need. Embrace us, enfold us, hold us ever closer to you! In Christ's name. Amen.

Service at the Lord's Table

(We invite you to prepare a roll of bread or a cracker with a glass of juice or a beverage. Place it on the table before you and your family and share it after repeating the following prayer offered by Rita Puskarich, our Elder, and the Words of Institution.)

Invitation

From what was a rather small gathering in that Upper Room, Jesus took what was most readily available to him in the bread and cup of the Passover table and offered it to generations of the church to remind us of God's everlasting love and presence in our midst. And although, we are not gathered at the Lord's Table at 351 Montgomery Avenue, we remain the church scattered in our homes this day, recognizing that it is neither the location or the building that makes this meal meaningful, it is the presence of God's beloved people seeking Christ's presence. Whatever table you are near is the Lord's Table as you share this meal.

Prayer for the Bread and Cup*

Rita Puskarich

Holy and Awesome God,

Today, help us not to feel scattered, but joined - as we gather in thought around Your universal table – a place of communion with You that can happen at any time and any place when we lift our hearts and think of You. By the might of your Spirit, lift us as we pray, give us strength to overcome our fears. We have not lived through a time such as this; however, You have given us a constant comfort and blessing in knowing that You care for us. Your love for us is so complete that You sent Your Son, Jesus, to give His life for us. In the safety of our homes, we take whatever bread we have as His body and the cup as His blood remembering our confidence in your grace. Amen

Words of Institution

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

I Corinthians 11: 23-25

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Closing Prayer

Through him, with him, and in him, in the power of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor be to you, O God, now and forever. “And now with the confidence of being God's children, we offer the prayer our Savior taught us, ‘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.’”

* You can listen to these pieces of worship at <https://fairhillmanorchurch.org/worship-audio-files>

For those who can access [YouTube](#), you may wish to search for the Anthem, “We Are Not Alone,” by Pepper Choplin at the Sandy Ridge Mennonite Church.

Blessing of Mud

(inspired by John 9: 1-41)

Lest we think the blessing is not in the dirt.

Lest we think the blessing is not in the earth beneath our feet.

Lest we think the blessing is not in the dust

like the dust that God scooped up at the beginning and formed
with God’s two hands and breathed into with God’s own breath.

Lest we think the blessing is not in the spit.

Lest we think the blessing is not in the mud.

Lest we think the blessing is not in the mire, the grime, the muck.

Lest we think that God cannot reach deep into the things of earth,
cannot bring forth the blessing that shimmers within the sludge,
cannot anoint us with a tender and grimy grace.

Lest we think that God will not use the ground to create us once again,
to cleanse us of our unseeing,
to open our eyes upon this ordinary and stunning world.

~ written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on The Painted Prayerbook.
<http://paintedprayerbook.com/category/gospel-of-john/page/2/>



Photo Challenge for This Week: Rita and Kevin Puskarich shared this photo of the worship center they set up at home. Email a photo of how or where you are in worship at home this week. These will be posted in a gallery on our website, so please only share if you are comfortable with this.

Reflection Question for This Week: Nyka Rash is preparing for baptism. During our first Pastor’s class, we thought about how the Bible tells many different stories and yet all the stories work together to create one big, overarching story that might be entitled, “God’s Persistent Love.” The story of God and God’s people has been full of ups and downs, of times when the people were listening to God and times when they were choosing to go their own way. Our own stories of our relationships with God have these same ups and downs, and yet God’s love for us is persistent through them all.

Question: **When and how have you known God's persistent love?** Email your thoughts. We will collect and share them in Manor Minutes next week. If you would like to remain anonymous, please let us know. Thank you for helping Nyka and our other young people think about a life in relationship with God through Jesus.

PRAYERS NEEDED:

Please keep the Pastoral Search Committee in your prayers:

J.C. Leasure (Chairperson), Becca Caldwell, Jackie Nelson, Diane Palfreyman, Rolinda Sprowls and Mike Sweeney

PRAYERS NEEDED:

Avery Allen
Bill Behrens
Bristol Allan Berry
Mark & Susan Britko
Jim Chase
Emily Cope Robinson
Fred Engle
Bonnie Gregg
Judy Hanning
Ed & Harriet Jackman
Tom Lane
Lee & Betsy Martin
Dick Moninger
Jody Mullis
Ed Palfreyman
Joe Palfreyman
Denny Paul
Jeannie Riffle
Lori Riffle
Betty Jo Riggle
Barb Roupe
Shirley Sanders
Beth Teagarden
Melissa Teagarden
Shirley Teagarden
Gary Weaver
Nikki Wells
Tom Williams
Chuck & Mary Wiseman
Preparing for Baptism – Nyka Rash

In the Military

Lance Dague
Terrell McClain
Brandon Lipscomb
Daniel Robinson
Shawn Dallatore

Andrew Gregg
Zachary Keene
Sarah Lipscomb
Travis Ringer
Emily Chase

During this time of precaution and limited visitation, take a moment to send a card or note to those in nursing homes or who are homebound to let them know that you are thinking of them.

In Care Centers:

Southmont-Presbyterian Medical Center, 835 S Main Street, Washington PA 15301

Bill Behrens Rm 437
Rev. Marge Frank
Jim Chase

Homebound Members:

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

Mrs. Mary McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington, PA 15301

Dear Congregation:

As we face a time of high uncertainty and nervousness from a virus that has resulted in us cancelling our worship services and associated church activities for the next two weeks, until Palm Sunday, it is important that we continue to send our donations to Fairhill Manor Christian Church. God has provided us a tool called Givelify that allows us to make donations safely and securely through the comfort of our home through the use of the Givelify App on our phone or personal computer. The instructions for the use of the App are provided weekly in the Manor Minutes or you can quickly access them on line by going to givelify.com.

Although we will not be meeting for the next two weeks, the commitments we have to pay our employees and to pay our bills does not stop. The Givelify App provides an extended pipeline for us to continue to provide our gifts to church and will track our donations for us to review at any time and any place. If you wish, you can still provide your donations by check and mail them to the church. However, this tool that God has given us allows us to continue to fund our church during this time of uncertainty in the most safe and secure way possible. Using the Givelify App to make your donations will also result in less effort that is needed by our Financial Secretary and those who assist him which is important during this critical time of uncertainty.

We hope and pray that in two weeks we can again worship together in our church home and celebrate the passing of this critical time period. In the meantime,

stay healthy and safe. Remember to place your fears in God's hands as we pray together.

Jerry Puskarich
Stewardship/Finance Ministry Leader

Givelify
Tap. Give. Done.



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.

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Psalm 130
Romans 8:6-11
John 11:1-45

Scriptures for March 2nd

Rev. Collins is available to you for your pastoral needs.
Cell: (412) 337-4293
Email: wdar1950@gmail.com

THINK positive
BE positive
ACT positive
LIVE positive

Have a great day.
Choose happy 😊
Karen