

**Manor Minutes**  
**Volume 15 Issue 17**  
**April 26, 2024**

- Bethany Class Lunch – April 30, Noon at Eat'n Park
- Choir Practice – May 2, 6:30pm

Stay up to date at [www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar](http://www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar)

# Wild Things

**FMCC Night at  
Washington Wild Things  
Friday, June 7, 7pm  
Fireworks Night**

**Tickets - \$10/person Parking Pass - \$2/car**

**Jody Mullis will be singing God Bless America  
during the 7<sup>th</sup> inning stretch.**

**Sign up in the Narthex for tickets and parking  
passes.**

**Please turn in cash or check  
(payable to FMCC) to the office by **May 3<sup>rd</sup>****



## **PENTECOST SUNDAY**

**May 19**

- Baptisms
- Last day of Sunday School & CW&W
- Sunday School Teacher & CW&W  
Volunteer Recognition
- Pentecost and Sunday School  
Celebration Cookout after Worship  
(sign-up sheet in the Narthex)
- Wear **RED**



## **Altar Flowers**

If you would like to order Altar Flowers in memory of a loved one, in honor of a loved one or “just because”, you can find order forms on the bulletin board in the Narthex. A vase of flowers is \$25. Orders need to be placed one week in advance. If you have any questions, call Karen in the office at (724) 225-8610.

### **CAMP LAURELVIEW 2024 SCHEDULE**

MAY 31ST- JUNE 2: FAMILY CAMP  
JUNE 16- JUNE 22: CHI RHO CAMP  
JUNE 23- JUNE 29: CONFERENCE CAMP  
JULY 7- JULY 13: JUNIOR CAMP  
JULY 14TH- JULY 17: MINI CAMP

Scholarships are available to cover part or all of the cost of camp. Ask Pastor Gena for more information. Camp is often a life-changing experience for young people. Please encourage the young people in your life to participate.



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister  
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor  
Elders: Sheila Harris, Bread  
Gary Ford, Cup

April 28, 2024 – 10:15am

**Prelude**

Carson Throckmorton, organist

**Welcome**

Pastor Gena

**Call to Worship**

Gary Ford

Leader: Once we were not a people,

**People: But now we are God's people.**

Leader: Once we were alone,

**People: But together we are the family of God.**

Leader: Here in this time of worship, and later when we go forth to serve,

**People: Christ is our cornerstone, strengthening us for the journey.**

Leader: In our living and in our dying,

**People: Christ is our sure foundation, strengthening us along the way.**

**Opening Hymn**

*"We Are Walking"*

Jody Mullis, pianist

We are walking in the light of God, we are walking in the light of God. (2x)

We are walking, walking, we are walking, we are walking in the light of God. (2x)

**Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer**

Pastor Gena

God who speaks, God who guides, God who walks in front of us into new territories and new experiences and new relationships. You are love: the beginning and source of all love. Your love is wide and deep and never-ending - available to all. Praise be to you that we can live in your love without fear. We rejoice in the new life we find in you.

Forgive us when we create categories of us and them, in and out. Instead, let us embrace your command to love one another. We love because you first loved us. We love you and show that we know you by loving all of your children.

Thank you for sending your only Son into the world that we might live, that we might be made right with you despite our sinfulness. Help us to recognize Jesus the Christ as Savior of the world. May your love be known far and wide.

Thank you for the gifts you give each of us to use for the good of all. Help us to recognize our giftedness through your Spirit. Give us the courage to use our gifts of encouragement, mercy, wisdom, craftsmanship, faith, teaching, serving, administration, evangelism, and so many others for the good of all. Help us to recognize that we are each an essential part of the Body of Christ and our gifts are needed to make the body complete.

Teach us to get up and go at your direction, open to the Spirit's leading, open to others who want to learn about the Good News of Jesus – no matter their status or where they come from or what they look like. Inspire us with the fervor to study and dig deep into your word, seeking understanding of how it applies to our lives, so that we might be ready to share with others.

Be with those who are preparing for baptism. May their minds be open to new understandings, their hearts open to your love, their souls ready to commit to your ways and open to your grace. Prepare us as their community of faith to celebrate with them and to welcome them into the fellowship of believers, pledging to walk with them as we all grow in faith together.

We pray for those who are poor, those who are marginalized, those who are always seen as the “other.” May they be included and filled. We pray for those who are elected to serve and to lead. Give them wisdom, courage, and a heart for the good of all.

We pray for those who are sick and in distress, those who are battling cancer, those who are in chronic pain. Give those with addictions the courage to admit they need help. Show us how to rebuild relationships when we are in recovery. Strengthen those who are caring for others. Comfort those who mourn. Connect those who are lonely or afraid. Please be with those we have named aloud and those on our prayer list. We lift these and many others on our hearts to you now...

Having heard the good news of your love through song, word, and service this morning, send us on our way rejoicing, sharing the love we find in your Son, our 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:**

*“Glory Be to the Father”*

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

**First Scripture Reading**

**Acts 8:26-40**

Charlotte Stillwell

**Anthem**

“Here I Am, Lord,” by Craig Courtney

Choir

**Children's Message**

Pastor Gena

Have you ever used a song to memorize something? Maybe you learned your ABCs by singing them. Or maybe you learned the books of the Bible by singing them.

Did you know that we can use songs to memorize verses from the Bible? Can you think of any Bible verses that we sing? We sing “This is the Day” and that is actually Psalm 118:24. “Be Still and Know” is Psalm 46:10. So we have already used songs to learn Bible verses by heart. Knowing some verses by heart can help us to remember God's words in our daily life. It's fun when a Bible verse comes to mind when you hear something. Sometimes a Bible verse can encourage us or guide us.

Today our second reading comes from 1<sup>st</sup> John and there are two verses in it that are especially good to memorize. Verses 7 and 8 say, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

These verses remind us that we show we know God by loving others. Let's learn a song that will help us remember these words from God.

*Beloved, let us love one another.*

*For love is of God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

*Those who love not, know not God, for God is love.*

*Beloved, let us love one another. 1 John 4:7-8*

God, thank you for loving us. Help us to love one another and to remember your words each day. Amen.

## **Second Scripture Reading**

**1 John 4:7-21**

Rev. Stillwell

## **Sermon**

**“What Is To Stop Us?”**

Rev. Stillwell

Now that the spring time is here that means that there is a lot to be done. I have to cut the grass once a week. I have to paint the deck and prep the garden. I have to water the plants or if they got too much rain I have to drain the pots. Whenever there is something that needs to be done. I am very good at finding an excuse, which is just another thing that I have to do. Sometimes I cannot cut the grass because it rains. Sometimes I can't wash the clothes because the washer is all the way downstairs in the basement. Sometimes I've been meaning to fix my gate door. I just don't remember where I put my hammer.

These are all easy relatively easy things to do, but still it is even easier to find an excuse. So things get put off until eventually, I either run out of excuses, or I realize that now it's going to be very difficult to do because I have been putting it off.

I know I am not alone in this. We all are good at coming up with excuses. It's almost as if it is second nature to come up with reasons why we can put off until tomorrow what we could be doing today. If it is easy to do when it is something that is not very hard t much easier is it to come up with an excuse or reason to put off doing something that is hard?

In biblical times, it seems like everything was hard. Certainly things were much harder than they are today. There were a lot of things for people to do just to get by in their everyday life when they didn't have the modern conveniences we have. Things like electricity and running water save us time and help us to have more time in our life and still we often feel like time is one thing we have too little of. In addition to all of the work around the home, there was some serious work the people had to do to get right with God. They weren't just going to church every now and again. They had to go to their services, they had to make their sacrifices, they had to tithe their amounts, but they also had to follow the laws in the Old Testament.

These were the things that were between them and God. These were the things that they had to overcome in order to achieve the righteousness that God expected. Therefore, they followed their laws and whenever they did not observe the law correctly they had to perform rituals to be made right. Other times they even had to practice rituals as part of the law itself. This would involve making a sacrifice in the right place in the right time and in the right way saying the right words in order to appease God.

Can you imagine then how easy it was to find an excuse for people in Jesus' time to not get right with God? The big argument early Christians had was how much of Judaism to keep in the faith. Specifically do Christians need to be circumcised and follow the law in order to be Christians. Paul would eventually and convincingly argue that these were all stumbling blocks that kept us from Christ, but, just before he became Christ's most famous convert, there was an apostle named Phillip who had the first encounter with a non-Jewish convert to the faith.

Luke describes this encounter in the book of Acts saying:

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’ (This is a wilderness road.)<sup>27</sup> So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship<sup>28</sup> and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.<sup>29</sup> Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over to this chariot and join it.’<sup>30</sup> So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’<sup>31</sup> He replied, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’

Of course he could not understand the scripture. It would be hard to understand what the texts meant even if he knew the language and knew what they said. Imagine reading the holy scripture of Islam or Buddhism without having grown up in the Middle East or Asia. This eunuch was from Africa and presumably had no contact with Judaism until he came to Gaza with his queen. There he found a scroll of the prophet Isaiah which intrigued him.

Now if Jewish people had a lot between them and God, how much more did this man? He was African, and did not know about Yahweh. When he learned about the Jewish faith through Isaiah he could not understand it. Moreover, he was a eunuch and therefore would never have been allowed to enter the temple or even become a convert. All of this was against him, but when he reads and learns about Jesus he asks his teacher, Phillip, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” And Phillip says nothing. Literally nothing.

This is the radical effect of Christ because now there is nothing between us and God. So Phillip baptizes him right there and then. This is truly an amazing grace. This story illustrates that there is nothing between us and God or as Paul puts it later in Romans:

<sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,<sup>39</sup> nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The work of Christ, therefore, has removed all the barriers between us and God, so why do we keep putting them up? We still put so much in the way. Class and race, gender and politics do not just divide us outside of the church, they also divide us within. In fact sometimes these divide the church long after they have stopped being so divisive in the outside culture. Add to this however the very particular issues of doctrine and dogma.

The founder of our denomination, Alexander Campbell, was inspired to join what was called the Restoration movement when he was required to prove he was in good standing in the Presbyterian Church in order to receive communion. The way he could do this was to recite the Lord’s prayer and ten commandments but also to be quizzed on all 600 plus pages of the Westminster Confession. But when asked by the eunuch “What is to stop me from being baptized? Phillip says nothing!

The Restoration Movement sought to restore the simple, radical nature of the New Testament church as a place where all were welcome at the Lord’s Table. There was no excuse not to receive this wonderful gift, but we often make excuses for ourselves if others don’t make them for us. I have known people say they do not come to church because they don’t have the right clothes to wear, while one time a woman told me someone told her she was sitting in their pew, so she decided never to come back.

Sometimes I think we look for excuses, not to come. We look for excuses, not to follow. Look for excuses not to be right with God when God has taken away every excuse we could possibly make up. Phillip does

not put anything between the eunuch and Christ he merely reinforces the teaching that he had already given him.

God has cleared the way so that nothing will prevent us from receiving the divine gift of Christ. All we need to do is to stop putting things in the way for ourselves or for others so that we can accept it and get on with the work God has called us to do.

We all are part of a family. Family is something we are born into whether we like it or not. We do not always get along with our brothers and sisters but we still feel a connection all the same. One of the benefits of a family is that even if you have not seen them in years you still have that connection. But there is also a family you can choose, and that is God's family, what we call the Body of Christ or the church. It is one you join upon your baptism, and sometimes, like a family, we have trouble loving our brothers and sisters or make excuses not see each other for a while. Even when that happens the ties of family still bind, and the grace that welcomed us the first time still welcomes us when we decide to return, but still we often look for an excuse to stay outside of the circle.

Because of Jesus Christ, we have no excuse. To get right with God is to be immersed in the waters, is to be forgiven, is to be made a family. All excuses have been taken away and the only thing that can prevent us from celebrating that wonderful joy and receiving that amazing grace is our human penchant for rules, and obstacles, and fences.

What is to stop us from being Christian? What is to stop us from being the church? What is to stop us from being a family? Only ourselves. Let us not get in the way of the great thing that God is doing. Let us come together and do the work that God is calling us to do together with no excuses.

### **Call to Offering**

Von Lacock

As the family of God, let us bring our offerings and gifts, so that others may know the loving foundation we have found in Christ Jesus.

### **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

Through these gifts, proclaim your word of grace. Shine forth through our offerings and our lives, that others may see your face and know your steadfast love. In your love and grace, we pray. Amen.

### **Invitation to Communion**

Rev. Stillwell

The other night we were watching TV and there were some very small rumblings of thunder and there were some dark clouds that had begun to roll in but nothing prepared us for the bolt of lightning that erupted out of the sky and which exploded the sky with booming thunder. It was so random, so sudden, so unprecedented that the only conclusion could be that it was God smiting someone. Someone, somewhere in my neighborhood must have said something blasphemous or terrible to God's ears, and God sent a bolt right out of the blue to smite them. That is how God works right? After all, I cannot tell you how many times people have told me that they don't come to church because they are afraid that the church will be struck by lightning, as if God would be offended by someone who hadn't been going to church going back. Isn't that what God wants?

There are certain understandings of God that we have that are imbedded in our thoughts and feelings. We worship a God of mercy and forgiveness, but sometimes we talk about him like he is a god of wrath and

irrational anger. We worship a God who allowed Christ to die so that we may live, but sometimes we talk about God as one who sends tornadoes, earthquakes, viruses so that we might die.

Our God is indeed an awesome God, not because God punishes and smites, but because God could do that, but instead loves and helps. Jesus worked hard to get people to understand God differently and the work continues today.

This we see most clearly at this meal, when God would have had more reason than any other to smite someone. If anyone was ever going to get struck by lightning or killed in a tornado because of God's wrath it would have been in the events preceding and following the Last Supper, and yet Christ told them to love one another as he loved them.

As we share in this meal let us examine ourselves and ask ourselves if we have done this, and if we find ourselves falling short let us be glad that God will not smite us, but gives us a chance to try again.

**Communion Hymn** *"Come, Share the Lord"* Carson Throckmorton, organist  
We gather here in Jesus' name, his love is burning in our hearts like living flame; for through the loving Son the Father makes us one: Come, take the bread, come, drink the wine, come, share the Lord. No one is a stranger here, everyone belongs; finding our forgiveness here, we in turn forgive all wrongs.

**Prayer for the Bread & Cup** Sheila Harris  
Wonderful majestic Lord, who offers us salvation to the world and to all your children, we thank you for the bread and cup given to us this day. We break the bread and drink the cup at the Lord's Table in memory of Jesus, asking that your Spirit be within each of us. We need you, Lord, not only in the moments of communion but also in our daily lives as we dedicate ourselves to you. We ask you this in Jesus name. Amen.

**Words of Institution** Rev. Stillwell  
For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.  
(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

**Sharing Holy Communion**  
*You will receive the bread and cup together. Please hold them; we will take each together as one body. Disciples of Christ believe in an Open Table. All who profess Christ and follow Him are welcome to share His meal. Gluten free wafers are available in the Narthex.*

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

**Closing Hymn** *"In Christ There Is No East or West"* Carson Throckmorton, organist  
In Christ there is no east or west, in him no south or north,  
but one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.

## Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

As we have been strengthened, we go forth to strengthen others. As we have been blessed, we go forth to bless the world. As we have been loved, we go forth to love with compassion and grace

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

## Prayer List:

### Homebound Members:

Mrs. Mary McDonough  
949 Bruce Street  
Washington PA 15301

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

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

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

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

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

Ed Alexey  
Avery Allen  
Jeannie Allison  
Terry Bailey  
Donna Bakaitis  
Jim Banish  
Martin Berisford  
Eleanor Boyles  
Mabel Brooks  
Leslie Byron  
Sandra Carman  
Denise Charles  
Wanda Chicone  
MaryAnn Coates  
Zach Correll  
Ruth Cox  
Irma Davis  
Sue Donaldson  
Benjamin Dube  
Jessica Duke  
Libby Eberhard  
Thomas Farabee  
Kathy Moninger-Ford  
Jay Freudenberg  
Lois Gayman  
Sue Golsky  
Joe Greene  
Bonnie Gregg  
Theresa Hancher  
Irma Harper  
Sheila Harris

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

Emily Cope Robinson  
Dave Ross  
Sandy Ross  
John Samida  
Debbie Sekorky  
Sam Sheller  
Valerie Shetler  
Hannah Simpson  
Doug and Tracy Smith  
Darci Sprowls  
Cathy Stewart  
John Stewart  
Bernard Teagarden  
Beth Teagarden  
Jane Teagarden  
Thad Turner  
Tammie Wallace  
Gary Weaver  
Tom Williams  
Addison Wittenberg  
Sarah Wittenberg

### In the Military

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

The brave men and women who serve our country make incredible sacrifices every day. We are forever grateful for their service and dedication. Please remember the military members that are deployed and away from their family that they may return to their homes safely.

\*currently deployed