

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 8
February 20, 2026

- Bethany Class Luncheon – February 24, noon at Eat'n Park
- Dartball – February 24 @ First Lutheran, 7pm
- Stewardship/Finance Ministry – February 25, 5:30pm
- Choir Practice – February 26, 6:30pm

Stay up to date at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar

There will be a **Disciples Women's Ministry** meeting on Wednesday, March 4 at 7pm in the Shepherds Room. If you didn't have a chance to sign up for this group you are still welcome to attend. If you have any questions, contact Connie Sheller.



Order forms for **Easter Flowers** can be found in the Narthex, bulletin and Manor Minutes. You can order tulips, hyacinths, mums, or Easter lilies in memory of or in honor of someone. All flowers are \$11 each. Orders with payment are due by March 15. Please turn in orders to Karen's mailbox (bottom right mail slot).



April 11
1pm

Sign up in the Narthex

Save These
DATES

The 2026 calendar is filling up fast. While we don't have all of the details worked out for each event and some events are still tentative, you'll want to mark these dates on your calendar! Watch the Manor Minutes and Bulletin for more information.

- March 5 – Bethany College Founder's Day
- March 18 – Scam Awareness Workshop 2pm
- March 21 – Chuck Wiseman memorial 11am
- March 27 – Drive-Thru Fish Fry
- March 29 – Palm Sunday
- April 1 – Labyrinth Experience 6-9pm
- April 2 – Maundy Thursday 7pm
- April 3 – Good Friday service, noon at First Christian Church
- April 3 – Drive-Thru Fish Fry
- April 5 – Sunrise Service 7am
Breakfast 8am (no Sunday School)
- April 11 – Ladies Tea 1pm
- April 25 – Spaghetti Dinner
- May 1 & 2 – Rummage Sale
- May – Tri-County Men's Dinner
(date to be determined)
- June 26 – Wild Things game 7pm
- September 13 – Church Picnic
- October 3 – Spaghetti Dinner



Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
351 Montgomery Avenue
724-225-8610

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Connie Sheller, Bread
Gene Sheller, Cup

February 22, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Von Lacock

Leader: "Return to me!"

People: Christ calls, and we hear.

Leader: "Return to me!"

People: Christ calls, and we listen.

Leader: "Return to me!"

People: Christ calls, and we respond.

Leader: "Return to me!"

People: Christ calls, and we turn . . .

All: *Toward life, toward love, toward God.*

Opening Hymn

"He Is Exalted"

Jody Mullis, pianist

He is exalted, the King is exalted on high; I will praise him. He is exalted, forever exalted, and I will praise his name! He is the Lord; forever his truth shall reign. Heaven and earth rejoice in his holy name. He is exalted, the King is exalted on high.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

God of Compassion, it is your heart, reflected in each of us, that is moved by the hurts of the world. You have created the world in love, and that love endures, finding its way into all the cracks and broken places. Wherever we turn, we see and hear and feel the aching of the world, the sorrow of all who are hurting, whether by chance, by negligence, or even by malice. May we not turn away. May we not seek to dull our senses or numb the ache. Let our hearts break, even as yours does, that we might be moved to act.

Response: Fill us with your spirit of compassion, that we may bring healing where there is hurt.

We pray for those in need – for all who lack shelter, food, clothing, and care. For communities that have long been denied the resources they deserve, and for those who have been driven to poverty by war and disaster. Help us to be grateful for what we have, that we might share your abundance with those who know scarcity.

Response: Fill us with your spirit of compassion, that we may bring healing where there is hurt.

We pray for those whose lives are uprooted by violence and instability, hemmed in by hostility behind and before them. Give us the courage to be ambassadors for peace. To dismantle the machinery of war and free ourselves from its industry. Open our eyes to the threads that connect us to those whose suffering feels far away. Help us to cultivate hospitality for all our neighbors, both near and far, welcoming them as you have commanded us.

Response: *Fill us with your spirit of compassion, that we may bring healing where there is hurt.*

We pray for people recovering from disaster, seeking to rebuild their lives and their homes in the aftermath of devastation caused not merely by nature, but by human neglect and mistreatment of your creation. Help us to imagine systems of protection, care, and resilience that endure long after the news cameras have left the sites of ruin and destruction, and make our hands ready to work in what ways we can to build, re-build, and restore what is broken.

Response: *Fill us with your spirit of compassion, that we may bring healing where there is hurt.*

We pray that you would raise valleys and flatten mountains, make a way in the desert, clear the stones from the soil, and remove whatever obstacles stand in the way of the work of healing and repair you have invited us into. Even when the thing that obstructs it is nothing more or less than our own self-imposed limitations that fetter our imaginations and dampen our spirits. Give us a double measure of the creativity and boldness that come from your unquenchable Spirit, that we may grow from who we think we are to who you know we can be.

Response: *Fill us with your spirit of compassion, that we may bring healing where there is hurt.*

Now open our ears to the words of Jesus, open our hearts to the love that heals, reconciles and renews, and open our hands with readiness to do what you have called us to do. We pray all of this in the name of our Savior and Lord, Jesus the Christ, who teaches us to pray, saying...

The Pastoral Prayer was adapted from Week of Compassion Special Offering 2026 worship resources (www.weekofcompassion.org).

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 Lesson

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Gene Sheller

Anthem

“Lay Up Your Treasures in Heaven,” by Pepper Choplin

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

Together we will look at an interactive map of where Week of Compassion responded during 2025. Go to <https://www.weekofcompassion.org/stories/2025-year-in-review> to see what the children will be looking at during the Children's Message this week.

Then we will collect the Noisy Offering from the congregation in our coffee cans and make lots of NOISE!

May God bless our offering, the offerings being collected in many churches this Sunday, and the work of Week of Compassion and its partners around the world, around the year.

Second Scripture Reading

Acts 6:1-7

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Multiplication By Division”

Rev. Chris Stillwell

As we enter into Lent, we can sort of begin to think of gardening season. Not that it's here of course, but I can actually see my yard now that the snow is gone, and that's a start. It's more the idea that when these 40 days are through and Easter has arrived so too will spring. It feels like I spend two months to get my yard and garden ready and often don't have much to show for it. Last year was one of the worst in part because it was so hot and dry that I barely got anything out of the garden. Two years before that my tomato plants were so big they were taking over my patio.

It seems like everything in my yard is feast or famine. We have a rhododendron plant that will not grow, and I believe that is because it is in the shadow of a bush that was normal sized when we bought our house but is now actually bigger than the house. We planted lilacs that have grown so tall that we can no longer see anything out our living room window. And then there is the hops bush.

I planted two hops bushes and put up a trellis with the idea that they would grow up it and look nice while giving a pleasant citrus aroma in my back yard. I cannot believe what a monster this thing has become. As my kids were performing in “Little Shop of Horrors” last year I could not help thinking that Audrey II was like that plant in my back yard that takes over everything unless I fastidiously trim it.

When trying to grow something the worst result is no growth. The second worst result is explosive growth. This is the kind of growth that is such you can't keep up with it, and you worry that if you do not direct it it will fail, die, go in the wrong direction, or some other bad fate. This is true of plants, and it is true of the church. After Jesus ascended into Heaven the apostles were not worrying about growing figs or mustard trees. Instead, they were growing the church and having so much success that it was becoming a problem. What a good problem to have, but it was a problem nonetheless.

What began with 12 had grown into thousands and with it came the headache of how to organize and care for these new followers. This is especially problematic because the apostles were not just trying to have a weekly worship service. The book of Acts tells us that they were creating a community. Luke describes the nascent Christian community like this:

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.³³ With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.³⁵ They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

This intentional community was the beginning of the church and the model later used for monastic communities and it sounds wonderful, but of course not easy. Some held back their wealth and did not

share, while others did not receive what they needed. This is where we are at the beginning of our reading where Luke writes:

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food.

Here is a dispute within Christianity where the Christian widows who were Hebrew were getting cared for to the exclusion of widows who were Greek. So now we have a church growing so fast that it was having trouble maintaining itself and a crisis was growing.

I am told that the Chinese word for “crisis” is made up of two word-symbols – one meaning “danger” and the other “opportunity.” That’s what a crisis is: a danger and an opportunity rolled up together. The church was growing so much that it was in danger of collapsing, so the apostles used this crisis as an opportunity to create a new office, the deacon. Now this word is never mentioned in this passage, but the apostles say, “It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables.” The word deacon is derived from the Greek word *diákonos*, which is a standard ancient Greek word meaning “servant” or “waiter”.

As a result, seven men are chosen to take care of making sure the widows are cared for. In effect this is the origin of deacons in the early church. Later a woman, Phoebe, is mentioned in Romans 16:1–2 as a deacon or deaconess of the church. Nothing more specific is said about her duties or authority, although it is assumed she carried Paul's Letter to the Romans.

Just as an interesting side note we can go even earlier than this when it comes to talking about church deacons. In Mark, Jesus heals Simon’s mother-in-law, and when he does, she began to serve them. Again, in this passage we see the word, *diákonos*, “ministry, service.” This is the same root that gives us the word “deacon”. What’s more, the word *diákonos* literally means “to kick up dust” — this is an active, practical, on-the-move, change-the-world sort of work. In short, she is lifted up to serve. She is freed for ministry, to kick up some dust and get some things done. She is the pioneer who blazes the trail for the group of women at the crucifixion who stay and keep watch and remain with Christ’s body, even as the twelve disciples panic and flee.

Deacons and deaconesses, collectively called the diaconate, therefore have been important figures in the life of the church from the very beginning. They are the ones who get things done. That is the case in any church but especially a Disciples of Christ church since our deacons are used primarily for serving and preparing communion. Since we do that every week, the diaconate are important pieces of the church’s puzzle.

We are very different from the early church but there are two ways in which we must continue to be similar if we want the church to grow. The early church did not grow because their worship service was so exciting and their kids’ programs so innovative. It certainly did not grow because they captured the levers of power in the Romans Empire. In fact, just the opposite was the case. Even After Constantine became the first emperor convert to Christianity this reprieve from persecution was short lived because two emperors later his nephew, Julian, became emperor and began a campaign to bring Rome back to the old gods.

For this Christians have called him Julian the Apostate, but even he had to admit that Christians were on to something when he wrote letter to his high priest demanding that he encourage the priests to act more like Christians. He wrote:

It is disgraceful when no Jew is a beggar and the impious Galileans [Christians] support our poor in addition to their own; everyone is able to see that our coreligionists are in want of aid from us.

The church was so impressive in its helping those in need that even its enemies had to give it begrudging praise. As a result, the church survived this last purge and became the faith of the empire. The apostle's preaching was important to be sure, but the church would not have survived without its deacons.

So, for the church to grow it must meet people's needs and not just the needs of its members, and to do this it must have strong deacons. Today it's not just widows that get fed, and when we worship, we are not talking about meals. Now we are talking about the Lord's Supper and making sure that all receive the bread of life and the cup of forgiveness. Preaching is important. Music is important. Maintaining our building and having a nice sanctuary is important, but for two thousand years the church has survived and thrived because of the waiters, the servants, the deacons. People who kick up the dust of complacency in order to serve.

In every gospel Jesus extols the virtue of serving as being the highest act of any Christian. He says:

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. – Matthew 25:40

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. – Mark 10:45

The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. – Luke 22:26

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. – John 13:14-15

There is a common trope that in a church 20% of the church does 80% of the work. That is not an equation for growth. You have heard of addition by subtraction, but God calls us to learn multiplication by division. If you want to add to your numbers better learn to divide – divide the work, divide the blessings. As we strive to grow God's church, may we all strive to be servants and waiters so that needs of others will be met and in doing so those who receive bread will also receive the bread of life.

Call to Offering

Donna Stenski

With grateful hearts, let us share a portion of the bounty God has given us. We do so as an act of faith, and in support of God's work in this congregation and the world.

***The Doxology**

#46

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

God of signs and wonders, from the first fruit of the ground, we offer you our gifts. Cultivate good things in us, we pray, for the sake of the world you love. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

A colleague recently wrote about discovering that termites had eroded a large portion of the wall in his bathroom, and he hadn't known until they brought in a contractor to remodel the bathroom. They saw the outside every day and it looked fine, but it wasn't until they took a good look on the inside that they saw a problem that needed to be fixed.

The same can be true of us. As we project our best faces and look fine on the outside, we all have things in our life and in our heart that we need to fix or at least improve. Just like a physical house our spiritual house needs regular maintenance, so that it remains in order and Lent is a good time to do just that. It is a time of self-examination, that brings with it vows to focus on an aspect of our spiritual life that we can improve. We can do this any time to be sure, but often it helps to have a reminder.

During this season are invited to a fast by a God who loves justice and desires freedom and plenty for all people. We are invited to join in the work of sharing our food with the hungry, satisfying the needs of the afflicted, and turning away from serving only our own interests. As we enter the season of Lent, let us seek God not just in our thoughts but in our actions, and communion is as good a time as any to begin the process of restoring and remodeling our inner spirit.

Even when we have lost our way, God calls us back, guiding us, restoring us, cleansing us, rebuilding us. Here at this table God's promises still await us. Come. Return. Restore.

Communion Hymn

"In This Very Room"

Sam Johnson, organist

In this very room there's quite enough love for one like me, and in this very room there's quite enough joy for one like me; and there's quite enough hope, and quite enough pow'r to chase away any gloom, for Jesus, Lord Jesus, is in this very room.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Connie Sheller

Our Father, we recognize that we can never get enough, be enough, or have enough on our own ... we must have You! Please forgive us when we try to live our own way rather than by your will. We thank you for this bread representing your broken body and this cup representing your shed blood. As we partake, draw us closer to you and your way. 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 need a community to belong to, if you are thirsty for the word of life, and want to live as a disciple of Jesus, join us in his ministry and mission. You are welcome and needed here. If in the work and

worship of this congregation you are being nurtured and fed in Christ our Lord, we invite you to join us in his service. There is a place for you in this family of faith.

Closing hymn

“The Old Rugged Cross”

Sam Johnson, organist

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame; and I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain. So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross, and exchange it some day for a crown.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Even as we go forth on this journey, God goes with us to guide our way. Let us go forth with grace and love!



Lenten Reading Plan: A Countdown of Hope

Get ready for Easter with this family Bible Reading Plan. From Ash Wednesday to Resurrection Sunday, read a promise from God each day. May God bless you as you discover his love and faithfulness through Scripture.

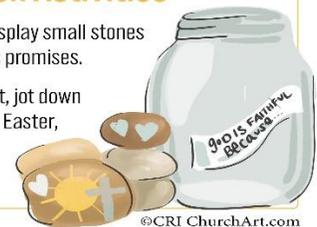
- [] The Promise of a Savior, Genesis 3:15
[] The Promise to Never Again Flood the Earth, Genesis 9:13-15
[] The Promise to Bless Abraham, Genesis 12:1-3
[] The Promise to Multiply Abraham's Offspring, Genesis 22:17-18
[] The Promise of Deliverance, Exodus 3:7-8
[] The Promise of God's Presence, Exodus 33:14
[] The Promise of Blessing for Obedience, Leviticus 26:3-12
[] The Promise to Raise Up a Prophet, Deuteronomy 18:15
[] The Promise of Strength Through God, Joshua 1:6-9
[] The Promise of an Everlasting Covenant, 2 Samuel 7:12-16
[] The Promise of a Shepherd, Psalm 23
[] The Promise of Wisdom, Proverbs 2:1-6
[] The Promise of a Messiah, Isaiah 9:1-7
[] The Promise to Strengthen and Help, Isaiah 41:9-10
[] The Promise of a Suffering Servant, Isaiah 53
[] The Promise of Restoration, Jeremiah 29:10-14
[] The Promise of a New Covenant, Jeremiah 31:31-34
[] The Promise of Renewal, Ezekiel 37:1-14
[] The Promise of the Spirit, Joel 2:28-29
[] The Promise of Jesus, Luke 2:1-20
[] The Promise of Provision, Matthew 6:25-34
[] The Promise of Rest, Matthew 11:28-29
[] The Promise of Eternal Life, John 3:16-17
[] The Promise of Christ's Return, John 14:1-3
[] The Promise of Peace, John 14:27
[] The Promise of Answered Prayer, John 15:7
[] The Promise of Guidance, John 16:13
[] The Promise of Power from on High, Acts 1:8
[] The Promise of Grace, Romans 6:14
[] The Promise of Freedom from Condemnation, Romans 8:1-4
[] The Promise of Adoption, Romans 8:15-17
[] The Promise of Purpose, Romans 8:28
[] The Promise of Victory Over Death, 1 Corinthians 15:54-57
[] The Promise of Comfort, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
[] The Promise of New Life, 2 Corinthians 5:17
[] The Promise of God's Faithfulness, 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5
[] The Promise of Eternal Glory, 2 Timothy 2:11-13
[] The Promise of Perseverance, James 1:2-4
[] The Promise of a New Heaven and a New Earth, Revelation 21:1-4

Try the bonus activities to make Lent more meaningful

Family Lenten Activities

Make promise stones. Paint and display small stones that remind you how God keeps his promises.

Fill a jar with blessings. During Lent, jot down ways that God is faithful to you. On Easter, read aloud the slips of paper as a family.



©CRI ChurchArt.com



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) 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!

Homebound Members

Mrs. Mary Lou McDonough
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

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

Barb Bailey
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Bereznay
Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Maci Caster
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Ruth Cox
Sue Donaldson
Benjamin Dube
Steve Engle
Connie Faust
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Terry Gahagen
Barb Graff
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Aryn Hess
Judy Hanning
Danni Iams
Kari Johnson
Shelly Kubincanek
Marylee Lawrence

Southminster Residents

880 S Main St
Washington PA 15301
Bo & Patty Pryor, Apt 102

Southmont Resident

835 S Main Street
Washington PA 15301
Barb Bailey, Room 311
Doris Sorice, Room 554

Chris Lewis
Charlie McConnell
Pam McCord
Norm McDonough
Dick Moninger
Joe Neckerman
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Michelle Oneal
Sandy Petry
Dick Pilgun
Betty Riecks
Jeannie Riffle
Joan Riffle
Lori Riffle
Mike Ryan
John Samida
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Sprowls
Wayne Starnes
Cathy Stewart
Jan Stillwell
Beth Teagarden
Ginger Throckmorton
Cece Watson

Premier Resident

36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd
Washington PA 15301

Carol Brown, Room 213

Transitions Healthcare Resident

90 Humbert Lane
Washington PA 15301

Doris Haniford, Room 121

Evergreen Personal Care

336 N Main Street
Washington PA 15301

Donna Bakaitis, Room 224

In the Military

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

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.



Please fill out this order form and return to the Church Office with **payment** by March 15. Indicate the number of flowers you would like. Make checks payable to **“Fairhill Manor”** and indicate “Easter Flowers” in the memo.

_____ Tulips (6” pot) @ \$11/each

_____ Hyacinths (3 bloom) @ \$11/each

_____ Easter Lily @ \$11/each

_____ Mum (assorted colors) @ \$11/each

Orders with payment are due by March 15, 2026.

Given by _____

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)