

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 5
January 30, 2026

- Pastor's Cabinet & Gathering to Grow – February 2, 5:30pm
- Dartball – February 3 @ Holy Trinity, 7pm
- Choir Practice – February 4, 6:30pm

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

**Make plans for lunch
with the**

**BETHANY
CLASS**

Tuesday, February 24
Noon at Eat'n Park

Karen Thomas will be taking orders for daffodils and tulips for the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days 2026. Spring is right around the corner and what better way to celebrate than with a bouquet of fresh flowers. Order forms are in the Narthex or you can call the Church Office (724) 225-8610 to order. All paid orders are due by February 17 and the flowers will be delivered to the church during the week of March 23.

Bunch of Daffodils: \$15
Bunch of Tulips: \$15
Mini-Potted Daffodils: \$20
Gift of Hope: \$25

A "Gift of Hope" is a bouquet of flowers that are delivered to a local cancer center/hospital/nursing home facility in our community.

Thank you for your support of the American Cancer Society.

**FREE
ADMISSION**

Fairhill Manor received coupons for free admission to the Remodeling Expo being held January 30-February 1 at Acrisure Stadium in Pittsburgh. The coupons are in the Narthex.

**SouperBowl Lunch & 2-Person
Team Cornhole Tournament**

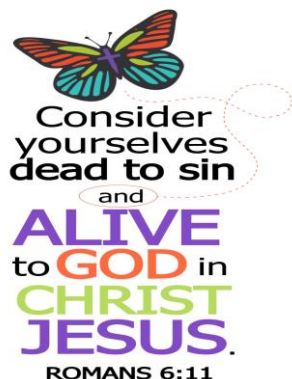
Sunday, February 8, 2026
Large Fellowship Hall
following worship

Sign up in the Narthex to bring a soup for lunch and to enter your team in the tournament. Donations of canned soup or cash will be accepted and donated to the Community Circle Food Pantry.

Since 1990 this event has been held on the same Sunday as the football Super Bowl to raise awareness about hunger in our community.

You do not have to bring soup OR enter the cornhole tournament to attend. Just come for the fellowship!





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

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

February 2, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Kevin Puskarich

Leader: Come, one and all. Gather together! For this is the day of the Lord!

People: Let us gather at the river that flows by the throne of God.

Leader: We have come to offer God our worship and praise.

People: Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Leader: The Lord's life and love are like a fountain rippling in our lives.

People: Let us receive the living water from the fountain that was not made by human hands.

Opening Hymn

"Come, Now Is the Time to Worship"

Sam Johnson, organist

Come, now is the time to worship. Come, now is the time to give your heart. Come, just as you are to worship. Come, just as you are before your God. Come. One day every tongue will confess you are God. One day every knee will bow. Still the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose you now.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

O Lord, sometimes your promises confuse us and seem like too little too late. Together with so many we cry, "If only you had been here, Lord, this wouldn't have happened." Lord, come and see our suffering. Come and see our grief, those we have loved and lost. Come and see our bodies, worn and achy, unable to do what they used to do. Come and see our families, torn apart with conflict and misunderstanding. Come and see our communities, where far too many cannot feed their families. Come and see our world, with leaders whose first priority is power and prestige, self-gain and control. Come and see, Lord. We will show you our suffering.

You are greatly moved, even to the point of tears, by the ways we are broken and torn apart, by what we have lost and the difficulties we endure. You have suffered as we do, enduring loss and grief, even death, to show that you understand and to promise that things will not be this way forever. In you, we are made new and resurrected to abundant life. In you, we are brought from oppression to agency. In you, we are unbound and set free. Praise be to you, O Lord.

Forgive us our sins, those ways we have hurt each other and ourselves. Help us to live as people of grace, as those who know what it's like to be extended mercy when we don't deserve it. As those who have experienced an opening in the clouds when the storm was heavy and persistent, never seeming to let up. As those who have tried so hard and have done everything we knew to do, knowing it would never be

enough, only to experience the relief of falling on you to fill in the rest. Help us to live as people of grace, extending the same mercy, sunlight and relief to others who may not seem to deserve it.

Lord, please use us to bless those who are in need of your care this morning. Show us how to love and lift up, to unbind and set free, those we have named aloud, those on our prayer list, and those we name in this silence...

You are the resurrection and the life. You are mercy and grace. You are the water that washes us clean. Yours are the hands extended to raise us to new and abundant life. It is in your name that we pray all of this together as you taught us, saying...

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

John 11:17-44

Gary Ford

Anthem

“A Time for Praying,” by Helvey

Choir

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

Can you tell me what you think the word “ordinary” means? I’ve been thinking about this word some myself and one of the easiest ways I’ve found to explain what the word “ordinary” means is to say what it is not.

Something that is ordinary is something that is NOT special, NOT amazing and NOT hard to find. To be ordinary, then, is something we often try NOT to be, right? We try to be special, amazing, and important. And sometimes, it seems that we think we need to work really hard at being special, amazing, and important so that we are “more than ordinary”

In the time and place of Jesus, this is what the religious teachers looked for in their students – they looked for the people who were extraordinary to be their students. They thought they needed the best students to learn their special teachings and that the learning had to take place in the amazing and not-ordinary Temple, which was located in the fancy, special city of Jerusalem.

But Jesus did the opposite of all of this. In the Bible we hear that Jesus goes to a very ordinary town. Once Jesus was there, he then asked very ordinary people to be his disciple, and he tells these ordinary people who are from ordinary places, “I’m going to teach you how to do what I’m doing so that you can then do it, too.”

This is one of the things Jesus means when he tells them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” Sometimes, when we hear the stories about Jesus, it is easy to think that he was able to do all those amazing things because he was really important, amazing, and special.

And, it might also be easy to think that we can’t possibly do what Jesus did because we are too ordinary and not amazing enough in comparison to Jesus, but, when we read the gospel we are reminded that that is NOT how Jesus thought or acted about us.

Jesus thought anyone – even the most ordinary people – could do what he could do, and then his ordinary disciples from ordinary places went and proved him right! Those ordinary disciples from ordinary places went and followed Jesus. Though it took them some time to learn what Jesus was teaching them, Jesus’ disciples DID learn what Jesus was teaching them about how to live God’s better way – and then they went and did many of the same things that Jesus had done.

So, if Jesus’ disciples, who were ordinary people from ordinary places, can follow and do what Jesus did — that means we can too! No matter how ordinary or extraordinary we are – we can do the same thing as Jesus and the disciples did!

And that’s the good news for today. Let’s pray.

Second Scripture Reading

Romans 6:1-11

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“God’s Touch”

Rev. Chris Stillwell

It’s funny how a person can hold so many memories in their mind. So many things learned, so many things said, so many moments lived, so many experiences shared. Conscious memories of each of these reside in our minds, but psychologists tell us that many more reside in our unconscious minds. It is as if our mind is a vast ocean, and our memories are just the surface, but if every now and then something triggers a memory from deep down below and it surfaces fresh and intriguing.

Different things can trigger a forgotten memory. My brother once told me of the time he spent in Scotland, he had a vivid dream of being in the grocery store and a Steely Dan song was playing on the PA. He never liked that band that much, didn’t own any of their records, but every word of the song filled his dream, and he spent his days backpacking through the hills of Scotland singing “Are you reeling in the years? Stowing away the time?”

He was amazed that every word and note of that song was stowed away somewhere in his head, just waiting for the trigger to be unleashed. Sometimes a picture brings out a long-forgotten moment. Other times it is smell. I could never describe for you what my neighbor’s house smelled like, but something comes along that is reminiscent of it, and I’m back in the days of my childhood playing matchbox cars with Mikey Cupp in my head.

Of all the things that can trigger memories that we didn’t even know we had possibly a touch is the most effective. Whenever either of my parents place their hand upon my shoulder it reminds me of all the times that they have been there for me. It assures me of their presence, because it reminds me that they have always been there. In particular it reminds me of the times in which they have comforted me when I was low, when after crashing their car I expected wrath, but their loving arms around my shoulders only conveyed forgiveness, mercy, and love.

I am grateful for this touch that brings me memories of their grace and love. Without memories how would we know who we are? And without our senses how would we trigger our memories that are too numerous for us to keep track? I am grateful that I can always remember my parent’s love for me, and I am grateful that I can also remember God’s love for me as well.

I may never have met God face to face. I may not know what God looks like, or smells like, or feels like, but I do know that God loves me. I do know that the God who is above all else in this world thinks of me, cares for me, and longs for my truest happiness, and when I think of what I have come to know about God I also remember that this just and righteous God will forgive me when I do not live up to all that I have been created to be.

I know this because I remember the words of the Bible that I have learned. Whoever believes in me will not perish . . . nothing can separate us from the love of God . . . if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

These words when heard remind us of God's love for and mercy to each of us, but there is something more. Just as things learned by rote are not remembered as deeply within us as those physical memories that plant themselves deep within us, so too is there a physical reminder of God's glorious grace that goes deeper to assuring us of this truth than any verse of scripture.

It is the act of baptism, recognized by all Christian churches as a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace. We are baptized for the remission of sin, even though our sins are forgiven in faith. Therefore, the physical act of baptism does not itself wash away our sins, that takes place with the baptism of our heart that must come first in order for the ritual to have any meaning, but baptism has its own place.

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ both taught that baptism occurs "for the remission of sins." 1800 years later Alexander Campbell, in leading a movement that placed scripture at the center of God's revelation and which sought to "restore the ancient order of things" by creating a New Testament church, certainly agreed with John and Jesus. In a debate with William Macalla he said, "The blood of Christ *really* washes away our sins. Paul's sins were *really pardoned* when he believed, yet he had no solemn *pledge* of the fact . . . until he washed them away in the water of baptism."

Salvation begins and ends with God. We have a part to play in it, which is accepting God's grace, i.e. letting God into our heart, but baptism is not required in order to do this. Remember the criminal on the cross who asked to be remembered when Christ came into his Kingdom. Jesus didn't get down from the cross to baptize him. Instead, he said, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

So why be baptized then? Go back to Campbell's words about Paul needing a "pledge" of pardon. Paul was saved that hour he first believed, yet human beings are weak and insecure. We need outward and visible assurances of inward and spiritual graces. We need a "pledge". We need baptism. We need it in order to feel God's amazing grace for ourselves. We need it to know that, through Christ, God has truly forgiven our sins. No amount of true belief or repeating of creeds or scripture could assure our troubled souls of this more than the act of baptism.

This is why we as Christians are baptized and why we as Disciples of Christ, the branch of the church begun here in Washington by Alexander and his father Thomas Campbell, baptize by immersion at an age that we can remember. Ronald Allen, retired preaching professor of Christian Theological Seminary, calls baptism by immersion a "body memory" of grace, and he says that it is through this physical act that we feel the veritable touch of God. He writes:

You do something you shouldn't do—maybe on the job, or in the church, or at home. Your insides are empty from the guilt. But the feel of the water comes to you, and it is for you the almost physical feeling of God putting an arm around your shoulder and saying, "I haven't given up on you. Let's see what we can do to set things right."

He argues for the importance of baptism as a fully physical act of experiencing grace, which is the most spiritual thing a person can experience. It is an important act, because it is so easy to forget about God's grace in this ungraceful life. It is so easy to be distracted by all that we must do to survive that we forget that God calls us to live. It is so easy to be made cynical by the despair in the world that we forget about the hope we have in Jesus Christ. It is so easy to go back to our old ways, and make no mistake, no Christian who has ever been baptized has been made perfect, but when we do, somewhere, in the back of our mind, or perhaps the depths of our soul, that physical memory of the warmth of the water covering our bodies and cascading off of us as we rose from the water brings us back to where we need to be, and that is in the arms of our savior, in the hands of our God, who loves us, who never gives up on us, and who calls us to live each day as one who has been reborn because of God's touch.

I may never have met God face to face. I may not know what God looks like, or smells like, but I do know what God feels like for I have felt God's touch when I entered into those waters, and you can too if you haven't already.

Communion Hymn

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

Sam Johnson, organist

Let us break bread together on our knees; let us break bread together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

I was watching the TV show, *The Office*, this past week that takes place in Scranton, PA, and I was impressed as I watched one episode that the cars in the parking lot were covered in snow and cinders. They looked just as our cars looked out in our driveway. I was impressed by this because often, shows on TV are almost all filmed in Hollywood and look like it even though they take place somewhere else. Another show we like claims to take place near Baltimore, but there are palm trees clearly visible in the background.

I was impressed by this attention to detail because I often lack such attention myself. I do well with the big important things in life but often I miss the details. I remember to bring the leftovers from the restaurant in from the car. I forget to put them in the refrigerator. I remember to bring all the things I need for work in the morning, but I leave my lunch on the counter. I buy gifts for Christmas but forget to save the receipts in case they need to be returned.

That is why I am so glad that our God is a god of details. All life on this planet is so detailed down to its tiniest little aspect. The balance of life is kept by an infinitely complex ecosystem and planned down to the last detail. Likewise, God sent Jesus Christ into the world to save us, and, although things went terribly wrong, God's plan was so detailed that it did not fail.

Here at this table we come with the overwhelming realization that God has blessed us with a world so suffused with divine grace that we see it down to the last detail. Here we give thanks that in creating this world, creating us, and saving us from ourselves, God has dotted every I and crossed every cross so that we don't have to worry about every little detail.

We need only believe in Christ. They say that the devil is in the details, but I've only ever found God there, and for that I am truly thankful. Come to this table and let God take care of the details of your life.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Gary Ford

Jesus, you died on the cross so that we may live even though we have sinned. Your death means a new life for us if we are baptized and believe. When we are baptized our old life ends and a new one begins. We come to this Table to say to You and the world we believe You are the Christ who died to save us from sin. But, we must demonstrate that faith, so, we take this bread and cup to celebrate and give thanks for that new life that You have called us to live. 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

All are invited to share in this meal. Please come forward down the center aisle, as you are able, take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and partake. Place your offering in the trays as you return to your seats by the outside aisles. If you are unable to come forward, the meal will be brought to you. Gluten-free wafers & individual servings are available in the Narthex.

Call to Discipleship

Rev. Stillwell

This is the promise of the gospel: God already knows you. God already loves you. God has already gifted you. God has already called you. You are invited— to deepen this knowledge, to feast in this love, to cultivate these gifts, and to follow this calling. There is a place for you among the people of God in this community of faith.

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

“Shall We Gather at the River”

Sam Johnson, organist

Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod, with its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God? Yes, we'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river; gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

May the Christ who offered himself to bear the sins of all, touch your life in a personal way. May his saving grace erase the darkness of the past and keep you in his loving presence. Amen.



Name: _____

American Cancer Society
Daffodil Sale

_____ Bunch of Daffodils \$15

_____ Bunch of Tulips \$15

_____ Mini Potted Daffodils \$20

_____ Gift of Hope \$25 (flowers donated to local cancer centers)

To order, please return this coupon to Karen Thomas or place in the Administrative Assistant mailbox. Orders must be prepaid and are due by February 17, 2026. Make checks payable to “American Cancer Society.”



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 Berezney
Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Maci Caster
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Ruth Cox
Sue Donaldson
Craig Dotson
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

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

WeCare at South Hills

201 Village Drive
Canonsburg, PA 15317

Donna Bakaitis, Room 307

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.