

**Manor Minutes**  
**Volume 16 Issue 28**  
**July 11, 2025**

- No Meetings this week
- Pastor Gena is on vacation July 16 – July 26
- Karen is on vacatin July 18 – July 27

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



There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for help needed before and during the Spaghetti dinner.

**The Bethany Class will meet at Eat'n Park on August 19 at noon for lunch. Everyone is welcome ☺**



Two gift cards were purchased on 7/6 without payment. Please make sure to pay Pastor Gena for these cards.

Each gift card has \$25 loaded on it. The church earns an average of 10% on each card sold. Please see Pastor Gena after worship if you would like to purchase a card.

Gift cards available for purchase this week:

- Dick's (1)
- Olive Garden (1)
- Outback (1)
- Panera Bread (1)
- Texas Roadhouse (5)



FMCC Night at  
Washington Wild Things  
Friday, August 22, 7pm  
Fireworks Night

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

Sign up in the Narthex for tickets and parking passes.

Please turn in cash or check  
(payable to FMCC) to the office by **August 3**

FMCC will be taking orders for new bricks for the **Memorial Brick Garden**. All paid orders are due by September 7. New bricks will be dedicated on All Saints Sunday, November 2. Order forms are on the credenza in the Narthex. If you have any questions, contact the Church Office.



**Rummage Sale**

Friday, August 8, 9am-6pm  
Saturday, August 9, 9am-2pm

**Church Picnic**

Washington Park  
Kiwanis Pavilion  
September 7  
1:03pm



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  
Jackie Nelson, Cup

July 13, 2025 – 10:15am

## Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

## Welcome

Pastor Gena

## Call to Worship

Chuck Riggle

Leader: Come in, all who are tired and thirsty.

**People: The Good Shepherd leads us to grassy meadows and restful waters.**

Leader: Come in, all who are anxious and afraid.

**People: The Good Shepherd protects us and leads us through dark valleys.**

Leader: Come in, all who are empty and exhausted.

**People: The Good Shepherd fills our lives with goodness and faithful love.**

Leader: Come in, to be refreshed, to rest, and to receive.

**People: The Good Shepherd has brought us here.**

## Opening Hymn

*"In the Garden"*

Sam Johnson, organist

I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses; and the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And he walks with me, and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own, and the joy we share, as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

## Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Oh, God, we don't like surprises in the darkness. We don't like it when things aren't exactly as we left them, where we left them. We don't like people doing things we don't anticipate, like moving away, dying unexpectedly, taking what isn't theirs to take. It unsettles us; it upsets us. It leaves us trembling with fear. It turns everything upside-down. It leaves us traumatized and distressed, frozen in place or running for our lives.

Thank you for friends and companions who can calm us down and create a sense of safety for us. Thank you for those who enter the scary moments with us. Thank you for tears and words and hugs that help us express how we feel. Thank you for those who ask us what we need, and those who have been in our shoes and so reach out with meaningful comfort and support. Thank you for those who get it, who understand. Loving God, you care for us and embrace us in all of these ways, and we give you thanks.

We pray for those who are going through difficult times right now. For those looking for loved ones and for those missing loved ones, we pray. We pray for those whose worlds have been turned upside-down by floods and fires, by disease and illness. For those who have made mistakes they cannot fix and for those who live with the anguish of a missed opportunity, we pray. We pray for those whose traumas leave them with depression, anxiety, anger and loneliness.

Lord Jesus, you have experienced scary and lonely times, disappointing and violent times, exasperating and frustrating times, and you walk with us through ours. Help us to recognize you in those who care for us and help us. May we too know your voice when you call our names, for you are the one who gives us hope that love is stronger, that grace is wider, that forgiveness is deeper than we can fathom. You are goodness, you are mercy, and you are life abundant now and forever.

Hear our tears of joy as we lift our praises and our thanksgivings to you now... Hear our tears of pleading as we lift into your arms all of those on our hearts, those receiving care in hospitals and nursing facilities and at home, and all of those we have named aloud this morning....

Now send us out with the good news that you hear our prayers and are right beside us, even when we don't realize it. In the name of the Risen Savior, our Teacher and our Lord, we pray together...

*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 Lesson**

**Amos 8:1-12**

Rita Puskarich

**Hymn**

*"Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus"*

Sam Johnson, organist

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross; lift high his royal banner, it must not suffer loss: from vict'ry unto vict'ry his army shall he lead, till ev'ry foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.

**Children's Message**

Pastor Gena

Adapted from "Jesus Is Risen: Appearance to Mary Magdalene," pp. 193-195, *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman, © 1989, Westminster John Knox Press.

**Second Scripture Reading**

**John 20:1-3, 11-18**

Rev. Stillwell

**Sermon**

**"Why Are You Crying?"**

Rev. Chris Stillwell

Why do we cry? It always fascinates me that we respond to some of the biggest and most important moments of our life with water coming out of our eyes. I went to TCU where our mascot was the Horned Frog. Do you know what comes out of the horned frog's eyes when it gets stressed? Blood. That's right. When threatened, they shoot blood out of their eyes. Why can't we do that?

Instead, God has made us so that when we are sad, when we are happy, when we are scared, when we are anxious, water comes out of our eyes. There are many reasons for this, but mostly it is a way to release stress and emotion, and we are the only species who does this. Therefore, crying is a uniquely human trait, and, since there are many reasons why a person cries, it is understandable if you were to see a woman crying you might be confused as to why she was crying.

If the woman was Mary Magdalene, however, and you knew her, and you knew that she was standing outside of the tomb of her teacher just days after he was crucified you shouldn't have to ask. You shouldn't have to ask, but Jesus does anyway, and this is just after two angels standing near to her asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

I can think of many reasons why Mary Magdalene might have been crying. Jesus was dead, not only that but he was tortured and humiliated. She might have feared the same for her. She might have been afraid of these three imposing figures asking her questions.

The reason she gives however is, “They have taken my Lord away, and I don’t know where they have put him.” Here she mourns his body as well as the inability to do the one thing she came to do and the only thing she had left to do. It was one more, final indignity.

They had to be playing with her. They had to know that she was weeping because she was alone, she was afraid, she felt powerless and hopeless. She was weeping because she had lost the most important person in her life, the one who saw wonderful things in her when no else would, the one who gave her a new identity and meaning, the one who loved her.

We do not know in what tone of voice Jesus asked this question to Mary and what he actually meant by it. So let's use our imaginations. Perhaps Jesus sounded perplexed and disappointed.

“Woman, why are you crying?”

He had told his disciples about His death and resurrection. He had specifically told them that on the third day of his death he would rise. He had promised that he would come back. So perhaps he was disappointed at or puzzled by Mary's weeping.

Perhaps Jesus sounded sympathetic. “Woman, why are you crying?”

Jesus knew why Mary was crying. She was distraught. The teacher and mentor who had healed her and given her a new life had suffered and died on the cross, and now his body was missing. She did not know what to do next. She felt completely lost in her sadness and sorrow, her desolation and despair, her helplessness and hopelessness. Jesus perfectly understood Mary's emotions. He had experienced them, such emotions himself at the death of his dear friend, Lazarus, as well as in his own death. So perhaps Jesus was trying to comfort Mary.

This image is very comforting to us. God knows us. God knows where we are and what we are going through in our pain and suffering, God in Christ comes to us and stays with us like a good friend, comforting our heavy hearts, full of sadness and sorrow, even in the darkest times of our lives. God, who raised Jesus from the dead, is with us, guiding us out of the darkness, leading us to light and raising us up to new life.

Martin Luther, the great reformer, often struggled with severe depression. He had good reasons for feeling down. The Pope was after him, and his colleagues were bickering among themselves. He was trying to balance among his many responsibilities, the life of a professor, pastor and father. He also had kidney stones that caused him excruciating pain.

One day, his wife put on her black, mourning clothes, and thinking she was going to a funeral service, Martin Luther asked her, who died? She replied, “God.” Luther rebuked her saying, “What do you mean God is dead. God cannot die.” She said, “Well, the way you have been acting, I was sure he had.”

Do you think he got the message? In response, he wrote down a Latin word on his desk, “vivet,” which means “he live,” and whenever things were not going well for him, and he was tempted to complain about them, Luther looked at the word and was able to get out of his downward spiral quickly.

So here is a final imagining. Maybe Jesus's question to Mary sounded at once challenging and encouraging when he asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" According to the Gospel of Luke during his trial, Jesus noticed that a group of women were beating their breasts and wailing for him, and he said to them:

Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. <sup>29</sup> For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. <sup>30</sup> Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

Perhaps Jesus wanted to remind Mary what he had told her and the other women that she'd better not cry for him, but for herself, for her children and for the future, because things would not get any better, but worse. In fact, soon after this, persecutions toward the Jesus followers began and following a revolt, the Roman Empire captured Jerusalem and destroyed both the city and the temple in it.

If we imagine Jesus' question in this way, it calls our attention to others, those who are crying among us. They cry because they are hungry or hurting. They cry because they feel rejected and lonely. They cry because they have lost their loved ones. They cry out of their helplessness and hopelessness. They cry with fear, and their cries ring out from the refugee camps and detention centers, from the prison cell and in the hospital.

Their cries ring out unheard inside of homes and ignored on the streets, in a world where democracy feels fragile, where hatred rears its ugly head, where migrants are treated like problems, where families struggle to make ends meet while the rich grow richer, where children grow up under the weight of violence and fear. God calls our attention to those who are weeping, crying and asks us to cry for and with those who are crying.

We do not know Jesus' tone, but we do know that it seems a strange question to ask of her since she did not know that her Lord was risen, but it would not be a strange question for us, for we know that he is. We know that the cross is not the end, and we know that Christ is with us always, but still we weep. Sometimes we weep openly other times we weep inwardly. There is much in every life that gives us reason to weep.

Why are you weeping?

Is it because, like Mary, you have lost a loved one? Is it because, like Mary, you are scared, or worried about the future? Is it because, like Mary, you are upset over the indignities and injustices in the world? Is it because, like Mary, people do not see your full worth? Is it because, like Mary, you're tired of being left out or finishing last?

Episcopal priest and theologian, Kelly Brown Douglas, says resurrection is God's definitive no to crucifying realities and resounding yes to life in all its fullness. In other words, Easter is not an escape from pain, but a confrontation with it. Easter is God saying, "I see you suffering. I know your pain and grief, and I am doing something new."

Mary Magdalene weeping outside the tomb is who Jesus shows up to first, and he calls her by name, her name, and in that moment the gospel becomes real. It is not just cosmic, but personal, not just victory over death, but intimacy with Christ, with the living Christ. This is the heart of the gospel, the good news, that Jesus, the risen Christ, meets us not when we have it all figured out, but when we are still crying.

He comes to us right where we are, in the garden, in the dark and in our tears. He comes to us where we least expect him. It's so unexpected that we may not even recognize him, just as Mary failed to do so at first.

Whatever it is that makes you weep, rejoice, for Christ is risen from the dead, and the grace that he offered and the forgiveness that he promised, and the comfort that he extended all is true. That doesn't mean that we should never weep, that our loved ones will be brought back to us, or that we will be able to run faster and never feel humiliated, but it does mean that because the tomb was empty, nothing in our life has to be, and the sorrow and the pain that we experience in this life shall pale in comparison to the joy we will experience in the next.

The Bible ends with one of the most comforting passages in Revelation that says:

God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Far be it for me to contradict scripture, but I think there will still be tears in Heaven. There will still be crying, only it won't be bitter tears and certainly not blood (unless horned frogs get to Heaven). Rather, when asked why we cry, it will be because the old order of things has passed away and our tears will be tears of joy.

### **Call to Offering**

Serena Dube

May our gifts bring God's love, justice, and compassion to where they are most needed in our world. May God help us be good neighbors to everyone we meet. May the gifts we bring bear the fruit of God's love to our neighbors around the world.

### **The 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

Holy One, we offer these gifts with gratitude for the many ways you care for us. Use these gifts, and our very lives, O God, that all might have life, and have it abundantly. Amen.

### **Invitation to Communion**

Rev. Stillwell

As we hear, once again, the story of Christ's resurrection there are so many things we could focus on. There's so many things that we can talk about. There were three people who saw the empty tomb, according to the Gospel of John, and they were, Mary, Simon Peter and John. They all had very different reactions. Mary, of course, was upset. Simon and John raced there to see what was there. Simon looked in and he was confused and he left. John walked in, and it says that he understood and he left. Mary, meanwhile, did nothing but stand there and cry.

I think it's fantastic that the disciples ran, so excited they were to know what was going on, that they missed it. Jesus and the angels were there in the garden and they ran right past him, presumably. It was the one who stood there and cried and she was the one who saw him.

One of the things I identify with Mary so much in the story is that, as a child, I would run with my brother and my cousin who were both 7 years older than me, and of course, they always ran so much faster. I remember one time just stopping and crying until they came to find me.

As we gather at this meal, give thanks to the Lord for so many things, especially the knowledge that we would never be left behind. Indeed he has promised that he will be with us always, now until the end of the age.

Maybe Jesus appeared to Mary specifically because she was crying, because she was the one who needed his comfort, or perhaps her tears were seen as tears of devotion, but as we come to this table we can give thanks that God rejoices with those who rejoice and mourns with those who mourn, and God meets us right where we are.

### **Communion Hymn**

*"Take Time to Be Holy"*

Sam Johnson, organist

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord; abide in him always, and feed on his word. Make friends of God's children; help those who are weak; forgetting in nothing God's blessing to seek.

### **Prayer for the Bread & Cup**

Sheila Harris

Heavenly Father, Lord, as we eat this bread, we remember that you are the bread of life. You nourish our souls and give us strength for the journey. As we drink from this cup, we remember your blood poured out for our forgiveness. May this communion renew our faith and deepen our love for you. In Jesus' name we pray, 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

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**

*"I Am Thine, O Lord"*

Sam Johnson, organist

I am thine, O Lord, I have heard thy voice, and it told thy love to me; but I long to rise in the arms of faith, and be closer drawn to thee. Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to the cross where thou has died; draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to thy precious, bleeding side.

### **Benediction**

Rev. Stillwell

May the gift of Christ this day bring hope and compassion to those who weep. May the Holy Spirit bring shouts of joy to those who weep with bitter tears. May the grace of God bring fullness of life. Amen.





**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!

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Beth Teagarden  
Jane Teagarden  
Ginger Throckmorton

**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.