

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 18
May 1, 2026

- DWM Ruth Group – May 6, 1pm
- Personnel Committee – May 6, 6pm
- DWM Tabitha Group – May 6, 6pm
- Stewardship/Finance Ministry – May 7, 5:15pm
- Choir Practice – May 7, 6:30pm

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



May 10

Blanket the World with Love
“I was in need, and you cared for me.”
Matthew 25:36

Blanket Sunday is sponsored by our Disciples Women’s Ministries and Church World Service. It is a wonderful opportunity to buy a blanket for \$10 that can be given by CWS to a person in the states who has experienced the loss of their home due to fire, storm, earthquake, etc. Blankets are given to people around the world where they are used to carry wood or other necessities, cover a dirt floor, divide a one-room tent for privacy, shelter from the sun, carry a baby on the mother’s back, etc. Please give as you can to blanket this world with LOVE.



May 21, 2026

\$15/per person

5:30pm Registration

6pm Dinner

7pm Entertainment by Sam Johnson

Sign-up sheet in Narthex

RSVP by May 17

THANK YOU

Kevin Puskarich would like to thank everyone who contributed to making the spaghetti dinner a success. There is still spaghetti sauce for sale, \$7/container. If you are interested in sauce, contact Kevin.



- May 24 – Pentecost Sunday
Baptism
- May 26 – Bethany Class Luncheon, noon
at Eat’n Park

 **RaiseRight™**
GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Now is the time to think about Mother’s Day gifts and Graduation gifts. The perfect solution is buying gift cards through the **RaiseRight** program. FMCC earns a % of every order. We currently have the following gift cards:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Applebee's | Oliver Garden (3) |
| Bath & Body | Outback (5) |
| Bob Evans (2) | Panera (3) |
| Eat'n Park | Red Robin |
| Jimmy Johns | Texas Roadhouse (3) |
| Old Navy (2) | |



Fairhill Manor Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
 351 Montgomery Avenue
 724-225-8610
 Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
 Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
 Elders: Jackie Nelson, Bread
 Diana Crowe, Cup
 May 3, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Gary Ford

Leader: Listen to the voice that shouts:

People: God’s dwelling is with us now.

Leader: In work and in play,

People: God makes a home with us.

Leader: In sorrow and celebration,

People: God makes a home with us.

Leader: Lift your voices in praise for this good news:

People: God’s dwelling is with us now!

Opening Hymn

“Shout to the Lord”

Jody Mullis, pianist

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing. Power and majesty, praise to the King; mountains bow down and the seas will roar, at the sound of your name. I sing for joy at the work of your hands, forever I’ll love you, forever I’ll stand. Nothing compares to the promise I have in you.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

Open our hearts today, O Lord, to feel the powerful strength and love you have for us.

Help us to listen, not only with our ears, but with our spirits for your words of compassion and healing.

Enable us to become more faithful disciples for you;

Ever-Present God, we thank you that your glory and your love is revealed in this place--in song, in scripture, in symbol, in sacrament. Most especially, we see your glory in the faces of one another, all your children, all being restored day by day to reflect your image more and more.

But sometimes life is like a giant spider web. We seem to get caught and entangled in its threads, not knowing which way to turn or how to pull ourselves out of the dilemmas in which we are trapped.

Lord, you know that so many of these dilemmas and burdens are of our own creation, coming out of our stubbornness and fear.

Merciful God, we know that in Christ, we are set free. In him our bonds are broken and we find ourselves in the arms of loving Savior. Help us to receive your grace.

O God, we often seek of understand ourselves, to establish an identity of who we are by looking to labels. But none of the labels we give to ourselves, none of the labels we give to others and others give to us

define us or tell the true story of who we are. And yet we feel naked, vulnerable without our labels. And while we cling to them for security, we search. We search for what we are about, what our lives mean, who we really are.

Help us to find ourselves in you. You, who made us. You, who remakes us. You, who called us from the foundation of the earth, who knit us in our mother's womb, who has seen every moment of every day of our lives, who has heard our cries in the night and the deepest yearnings of our souls, who will receive us into the arms of your mercy when we take our last breath.

You call us to lay down our lives, to be crucified with Christ, to make our lives not about us but about him. And yet, you have loved us most. And you have promised that if we would lay aside our lives we would find them. And so we give ourselves to you again, hoping to find ourselves in finding you.

Trusting in your grace and provision, we bring before you the names of people near and far, known and unknown to us, in need of care. Show us how we might be part of the answer to these prayers and give us courage to do our part. And if we are not part of the answer, please give us rest from worry and anxiety. We trust you, God, to lead us.

Bless us with whatever it is that we ourselves most need this day.

Help us to hear your voice whispering love and hope for us, your gathered community, your individual people praying 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:

“He Is Lord”

He is Lord, he is Lord! He is risen from the dead and he is Lord!
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

First Scripture Lesson

Genesis 1:26-31

Serena Dube

Anthem

“O For a Thousand Tongues,” by Pepper Choplin

Choir

Children's Message

Pastor Gena

We often talk about how we are all God's children and how much God loves each one of us. We talk about how we are different in many ways but we are also all the same as children of God. We all need love and want to be accepted.

But sometimes it almost seems as if we are saying that we shouldn't focus on how we are different. We should focus on how we are the same. I'm wondering if we can do both. Can we realize that we are all God's children and each one of us is important and valued and loved, and also celebrate how wonderful all of our differences are?

Last week we had a spaghetti dinner here at the church. We had to focus on working together to make that happen. Nobody was more important than someone else. Each person was important and needed. But each of us had different gifts and skills that we used. We needed a diversity of gifts. If we all had exactly the same gift or job, like washing dishes, that wouldn't be much of a spaghetti dinner, would it?

Let's talk to a few of the people here in the sanctuary and find out what they did to help in the spaghetti dinner. All of these people are children of God and loved so much, aren't they? But each person has different skills and gifts.

People in the Disciples of Christ church like to say, “Unity, not uniformity.” That means we can all work together in unity but we don’t have to be exactly the same as each other, uniformity. In fact, we are glad that we aren’t exactly the same because we can do so much more together with all of our different gifts!

Dear God, thank you for creating each one of us as your children with so many differences. Help us to appreciate and celebrate how we are different. Help us to work together with all of our different skills and gifts so that we can do great things in your name. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Galatians 3:23-29

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Before and After”

Rev. Chris Stillwell

Some advertisements thrive on presenting various “before-and-after” scenarios. Diet pills and plans like to place side by side pictures of people who were overweight before they went on their regimen but looked healthier after they completed it. Remodelers and others also employ pictures of kitchens before and after they did their work in order to showcase its quality.

The New Testament scholar, N.T. Wright, calls this passage from Galatians a “before-and-after” picture. It sketches, first, how things were earlier for Jewish people, and, second, how they now are for people who are Jewish who believe Jesus is the Messiah. In verse 23-24 Paul says:

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be reckoned as righteous by faith.

The phrase, before faith came, links to the apostle’s somewhat complex discussion of the law that preceded this passage. In verse 19 he remembers how God gave the law to rein in human sinfulness. In other words, before the Spirit graciously implanted faith in all of God’s dearly beloved people, God’s law served to lock us up.

It’s not easy to fully understand just what role the apostle is saying God’s law played in the lives of God’s people before Christ’s coming. It reminded God’s people, on the one hand of some of our most destructive impulses –to worship other gods, work without resting and dishonor our parents. But God’s law also serves to at least try to protect our neighbors, in part by calling us to be truthful with them, show hospitality to the stranger, help those in need. That law even carried with it curses that fell on those who failed to love God above all and our neighbors as ourselves.

Of course, that law had severe limitations. Because it can’t soften hearts to God’s ways, it can’t fully restrain God’s people from living out our most dangerous impulses. God’s law can’t force anyone to love God more than anything and our neighbor as much as ourselves.

Each time I drive on I-79 between my house and the church I’m reminded of the law’s limitations. Its speed limit is clearly posted along every stretch of it. Engineers designed those limits to protect all drivers along that busy interstate, but some drivers treat that law as little more than a suggestion. They routinely and aggressively break the speed limit. Sometimes, I confess, those law breakers are me.

Paul basically admits that God’s law has similar limitations. God designed it to restrain some of our baser impulses, but finally both our well-being and our acceptance by God depends on something entirely other than our obedience of God’s law. Because we can’t keep the law well enough to earn God’s acceptance of us, we needed someone else to perfectly keep that law for us. We needed, quite simply, Jesus the Christ.

Because of God’s grace that we receive with our faith, we no longer need God’s law to be our guardian. That law still reminds us of both our need for God’s grace and the best way to faithfully respond to that grace. Now, however, “In Christ Jesus” we “are all children of God through faith.” Jesus’ friends are no

longer what we once called “wards,” under the custody of someone but not legally children of anyone. Those who receive God’s grace with our faith are, instead, God’s adopted children.

In verse 27 Paul goes on to link that status to our baptism. God graciously connects those who are baptized to Jesus Christ. People who are baptized in the name of the Triune God are not anything or one’s “wards.” We are, by God’s amazing grace, God’s adopted children and Jesus’ adopted siblings.

God, in fact, clothes those who receive God’s grace with our faith in Jesus Christ “with Christ.” While this is another complex idea, Paul seems to mean at least this: when God looks at God’s adopted children, God sees not our sinfulness, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ. As a result, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ friends seek to imitate Jesus Christ in what we do, say and even think.

Yet we’re never alone in either that status or remodeling project. In verse 28 Paul says:

There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Here, Paul is not claiming that Christians who fit in these various categories are exactly the same. We remain shaped by many if not all of those statuses. But the apostle is insisting that since God doesn’t view and treat people any differently on the basis of those statuses, God’s dearly beloved people shouldn’t either. No matter our ethnicity, gender or social status, we should view and treat each person as first of all bearers of God’s image whom God deeply loves.

In fact, it’s as if Paul insists that what distinguishes Jesus’ followers from each other is far, far less important than what unites us. Whether Christians are Jews or Gentiles, men or women, slaves or “freedmen,” we are equal in both our desperate need for God’s amazing grace and in our faithful reception of God’s grace. Jesus’ followers aren’t just God’s adopted children and Jesus’ adopted siblings. We’re also each other’s adopted siblings. We are brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

So, while Jesus’ followers belong to various ethnic, gender or socio-economic “groups,” we first and last “belong to Christ.” God’s dearly beloved people are not our own, but Christ’s own. No matter what labels we attach to ourselves or others attach to us, we are what Paul calls “Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.”

This truth, however, is far easier to proclaim and even believe than actually live out. While Christ prayed with almost his last breath that all Christians would be one, there are an estimated 45,000 Christian denominations worldwide and 200 Christian denominations in the United States alone. What’s more, while Paul insists that all Christians are members of God’s family, there seem to be countless groups of North American churches that are too loosely allied to be considered denominations. The United States also has almost countless churches that consider themselves to be independent.

Again N.T. Wright writes:

It seems to me obvious that Paul would not only be shocked at our disunity; he would not be able to comprehend that we don’t care about it. He would simply not be able to grasp how people who have read and preached Romans and Galatians and the rest for hundreds of years could collude with rampant disunity.

I get that, but I would like for a moment to put in a word for diversity. It is frustrating to me that such a word can ever be controversial when it is so obviously biblical and historical. We worship a man who lived two thousand years ago three thousand miles away. The number of cultures and lands that the word has had to pass through to get to us is astounding to me. Outsiders look at all the denominations and see that as evidence against Christians but to me it is a sign of our strength – if we do it right.

What I mean is this. Every time the gospel comes to a new people they respond differently. Their worship is different, their theology is different, their language and even pictures of Christ different. I like that. That is as it should be. If God made us in so many ways in our color and culture, custom and communication, then we would be doing a dishonor to the ways in which God created us if we demanded uniformity.

One of the great sins of the church is when it came to a new land and said you must worship in this way, in this language, and in these customs. In that way the church has done violence to all of the many civilizations in service of Christ. When Paul went to Greece and brought the gospel with him, he decided the best approach was not to tell them they were doing everything wrong, because they were different from him. Rather, he complimented the people for their desire to find God even as he corrected their method and spoke to them using their own language. His success was not overwhelming but he did win a few converts from the most difficult audiences he ever faced.

When the approach has been taken to respect the culture, customs, and language of a people the gospel has flourished, and with it the diversity and witness of the church. In my membership classes I always use the image of a tree to describe the church. In this image the roots are Judaism, the trunk is Christ for it is Christ that holds the tree together and he is what all branches are rooted in even if some of the branches look very different than others. In this way God reaches us. There is something for everyone on this tree, for here there is diversity without disunity.

It is an ideal, and in this world the ideal is only ever glimpsed, but we should strive to imitate as best as possible. There is no right denomination, right language, right culture, or right translation. We must always look for ways to inspire a kind of holy restlessness within ourselves about our failures to live out the unity for which Jesus prayed and Paul so earnestly pleaded. We must confess the times we have thought you must become like me before I will see you as a brother or sister in Christ. If we are able to see the kingdom for the tree then by God's grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the "before" of the church will pale in comparison to the after not because we have forced it to look a certain way, but because we have allowed our holy imagine to see it different than we ever could before we knew Christ.

Communion Hymn

"Softly and Tenderly"

Sam Johnson, organist

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me; patient and loving, he's waiting and watching, watching for you and for me. Come home, come home, ye who are weary, come home; earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling—calling, "O sinner, come home!"

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

One of my favorite paintings of Christ is one in which, from a distance, it is Christ's face wearing a crown of thorns, but when you look at it closely, you will see that his face is made of many other people's faces. These faces vary in age, color, and gender and the point of the painting to me is twofold. One is to say that all of these people are made in the image of God.

This is great news for each of us to receive. To learn that we are made in God's image should help us feel good about ourselves, but it also means that we should feel good about others. Sometimes that is good news and sometimes, it is not. We should, a always remember that whatever difficulty and difference we have with someone we must remember they are made in the image of God. It may not make their behavior or personality easier for us to take, but if we all remember to think of others in that way, then our behavior toward another would change.

The second thing it tells me is that we are equally made in God's image, which reminds me of Paul's teaching that in Christ there is no Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free. By saying Jew or Geek

Paul wasn't speaking of two types of people who are made in God's image but literally the whole world as Paul knew it. The words are Jew and Goyim, often translated as Gentiles, but literally means not Jewish.

To me the faces in the painting resemble cells which make up the body, therefore, since all people are made in the age of God, we only are the body of Christ when all of its cells can come together to make him present. It isn't enough to allow our belief that all people are made in God's image to tolerate others, it is required that we welcome them and understand that we are incomplete without each other.

So, we come to this table to give thanks that we are created in God's image and to receive God's grace poured out through Jesus Christ, but, in this act of eating and drinking, we are only in communion with Christ if we are in communion with each other. May God grant us the ability to see in each other some aspect of God that we would miss if we didn't see each other as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Jackie Nelson

Almighty Father, ruler of Heaven and earth, maker of all that is seen and unseen, graciously hear our prayer. Here at Your table this morning, O God who judges the heart, help us to rightly see the body. We break this bread and drink this cup and remember how Your Son Jesus was crucified for us. Jesus, whose sacred heart was stopped, with His Mother watching, out of love and obedience to You Father. Holy Spirit, come, and fill us with gratitude and vision as we partake together. May we see others as God sees them. Not by outward appearances, but their heart. In Jesus Holy name I ask all this. Amen.

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

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

"In Christ There is No East or West"

Sam Johnson, 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

Sons and daughters of God, God dwells with us. Go as God's people. Keep God's word. Embrace God's message. Receive God's peace. Amen

FAITH 
is the bird
that feels the **LIGHT**
and **sings** when the
dawn is still **dark**.

-Rabindranath Tagore



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
499 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

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

Southminster Residents

880 S Main St
Washington PA 15301

Patty Pryor, Apt 102

Evergreen Personal Care

336 N Main Street
Washington PA 15301

Donna Bakaitis, Room 224

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

Mary Allison
Barb Bailey
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezney
Jacquie Best
Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Maci Caster
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Jane Correll
Ruth Cox
Sue Donaldson
Benjamin Dube
Steve Engle
Connie Faust
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Raymond Fraley
Terry Gahagen
Barb Graff
Judy Hanning
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Aryn Hess

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

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.