

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 34
September 4, 2026

- Labor Day – September 7, office closed
- Dartball – September 8, 7pm @ Glenn Street
- Elders Meeting – September 9, 5:30pm
- Board Meeting – September 9, 7pm
- Choir Practice – September 10, 6:30pm

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



Sunday, September 13
1:04pm

Provided:
Chicken
Hot Dogs
Drinks

There will be BINGO!

Please sign up in the Narthex to let us know how many people are coming so we can have the appropriate amount of Chicken, Hot Dogs and Drinks. You do not have to bring anything to attend the picnic.



There is still a need for help before and after the Church picnic. Sign up in the Narthex to let us know if you're able to help in any way.

thanks!

A big thanks to the **Trustees** for purchasing and for **Terry Houston** installing the new water cooler in the hallway near the restrooms. It's fantastic to have cold, filtered, refreshing water to fill our bottles.

Mark your calendar.

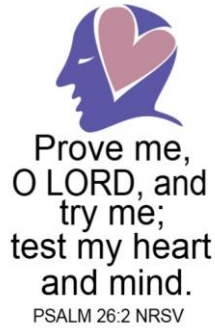
It's time to make Church World Service
School Kits!

Please plan to stay after Worship on
September 27 to put the kits together.



The Blessing of the Pets service will take place **Sunday, September 27 at 5pm** on the front lawn. You are invited to bring your pet on a leash or carrier to receive a blessing from Rev. Chris and Pastor Gena. Photos of your pet can also be brought to the service.

To celebrate your pet during the month of September, text a **photo** to Pastor Gena, or bring a photo to have the office scan, for us to display on the photo frame in the Narthex. Pets are an important part of our lives. Let's share photos of our pets with one another!



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

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

September 6, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Connie Sheller

Leader: How good it is when we gather in unity and love.

People: How beautiful is this body of Christ.

Leader: How good it is when we gather in mercy and grace.

People: How beautiful is the love we have come to share.

Opening Hymn

"Blessed Assurance"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long; this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Loving God, we come for an hour, we come for a few moments, we come to this time of prayer, our spirits longing to meet you here, knowing that you will meet us here. How sweet it is to know that at any moment in our anxious days we can pause and recognize the deliciousness of your presence. We hunger to see our Savior's face and to sit in the warmth of his love. And so, we hasten to this place and gladly take our station here, in this sweet hour of prayer.

O God, we call you Father, Mother, Parent, because your love is like the love of one who gives us life and loves us more than life itself - and yet your love is even so much greater and all-encompassing. In your love we sit while we share with you our every care. They are so many and they weigh us down. So we hand them one by one to you to carry for us, as you offer and promise to do. We give you our earth itself and the pain with which it is groaning. We give you those who are suffering in the fury of natural disasters. We give you those who are suffering in the quiet desperate advance of drought and famine. We give you all of our arguments and wars, our misunderstandings and our hatred for each other. We give you the privilege and safety and health that we take for granted. We give you the disease and illness and old age that is taking the lives of those we love. We give you the stress of our family life, our work life, our school life, the countless decisions and moral dilemmas we face every day. We give you the hidden hurts, the painful secrets, the desperate thoughts only we know about.

We come to sit in your presence, especially when we don't have time to, when we don't feel your presence, when we are vulnerable and looking for anything to fill our emptiness. For in those moments, you hold our cares and fill us up with gifts only you can give – peace, joy, self-control, goodness, patience, gentleness. These are what we need. Come, Lord Jesus, come and bless our waiting souls.

In this time with you, give us a sense of your grandeur and your majesty, of how long your story has been running and the small part we play in it. Help us to lean on the stories of your faithfulness throughout the generations, of your constant longing to be in a relationship with your people, of the creativity of your attempts to show us how much you love us. Help us to place our trust in you, our Creator, the one who promises to never leave us. Give us courage to take back from you the pieces of work you give us to do as we push back the darkness just a little bit more, revealing your future of hope, justice, mercy and peace.

Call us into your presence, not just today, not just when we can sit in and see this Sanctuary, but every day, every moment. May we taste the sweetness of trusting in you, waiting for you and hunger all the more for it. In Jesus' name we pray, praying together with one voice the prayer he teaches us...

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:

"Spirit of the Living God"

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

First Scripture Lesson

Psalms 26:1-8

Gary Ford

Special Music

Children's Message

Connie Sheller and Pastor Gena

Connie Sheller will tell "The Mustard Seed" and Pastor Gena will tell "The Leaven," both Children Worship & Wonder stories. We will wonder about what we see in common between the stories and what they might tell us about the Kingdom of God.

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 13:31-38

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

"The Yeast That We Can Do"

Rev. Chris Stillwell

This is the shortest verse I have ever preached on.

It is the shortest verse because this is the shortest parable that Jesus has to offer. It occurs in the middle of an entire section of parables and is usually tied in with its preceding parable that of the mustard seed, but the parable of the yeast stands out on its own, not only for its brevity but also because of its stunning word play.

In regards to this brevity, it is proof that sometimes the less said the better. This one sentence leaves so much unsaid that the reader must finish it themselves. They are tricked into actively listening in order to make any sense of his teaching. In a normal parable Jesus would say that the kingdom of Heaven is like a . . . and then give some explanation as to why. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a woman who lost a coin, she searched until she found it. Usually there is an action and a reaction, the lost are searched for and found, the wounded are healed, the prodigal is welcomed back, but this parable has no such resolution. The kingdom of Heaven is like yeast which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened. What does the woman do with the bread? What happens next? Doesn't matter. The point has already been made. To say any more is to take away from the parables meaning.

Sometimes small things get our attention better than anything else. Walking through the woods this week we stopped to marvel at an inchworm that was more like a quarter of an inchworm dangling from a thread

so thin it was invisible. In the midst of a large forest surrounded by giant trees and lush vegetation it was the smallest thing which caught our attention because it stood in such contrast to its surroundings.

This parable likewise stands in contrast to the parable of the tares or the laborers in the vineyard or the sermon on the mount, or the accounts of the Last Supper and Jesus' crucifixion which are long stories with many lessons to learn. It would be easy for this parable to be lost in the midst of all the others.

Have you ever read the Gettysburg Address? It is one of the greatest presidential speeches in our nation's history, and it is less than a thousand words. It took ten minutes to give and was significantly shorter than the speech given before it. The speech given before it is not remembered, but Lincoln's speech is, not only because it was short but because it was short and meaningful. Let that be a lesson to us. Sometimes we can say too little by saying too much.

But, by saying so little, Jesus says so much. Sort of like yeast itself. A loaf of bread goes from a small flat dough to a big hearty loaf because of a few small flakes. Add too much and you'll ruin the taste and consistency of the bread. Add just a little and the dough is transformed.

Because of this you would think that yeast would be a perfect illustration to use. After all it is as basic a concept as there is. It is something with which his audience would surely be familiar, but that is precisely what might have astonished people to hear Jesus compare the Kingdom of heaven to something as base and common as yeast.

For the people were familiar with it, but what they knew of it was not good. Another word for yeast is leaven and to add yeast to bread is to leaven it, thus the bread that is eaten at the Passover meal in honor of escaping the armies of pharaoh is unleavened bread because that meal recalls that the Israelites were in such a hurry to escape Egypt that they had no time to add yeast to their bread.

Because of this, bread without yeast is seen as holy bread and yeast is seen as a bad thing. It is not exactly unkosher to eat leavened bread as it was to eat pork, but it was the next closest thing. There are 44 mentions of yeast in the Old Testament, and each one refers to it negatively, usually instructing the people to eat bread without yeast.

Then you get to the New Testament, and the first mention of yeast is this verse and it is positive. It is positively Godly. It is not that attitudes had changed. The word yeast still had pejorative connotations as evidenced by Jesus later warning his followers to beware the yeast of the pharisees. In that example yeast is unseen evil that gets into things and corrupts it, so this parable which appears so simple and harmless was quite controversial, and Jesus knew it, as he always does.

The goal here isn't to offend or to shock and certainly not to change the observance of the Passover meal as evidenced by our communion meal. Instead, the point is to get people to question the inherited wisdom. In many ways that was the point of all the parables.

The conventional wisdom of Jesus' day stated that those who were righteous prospered and those who did not were wicked. It claimed that God protected all of his followers and punished their enemies. It argued that the sick were being punished by God and only the priests could talk to God. If all of this was true then the only conclusion and observant and faithful Israelite could come to is that this man Jesus who ate with sinners and outcasts, who was crucified and whose followers were persecuted was clearly not the Messiah. But he is, because the kingdom of God is like yeast which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal.

Through this one single verse Jesus uses the illustration of yeast to teach his audience a number of things that they will need to know in order to understand and interpret the coming events, those that were coming in two months or year's time and those that would be coming in two thousand year's time.

First, he was trying to teach them that the growth of the kingdom is not always seen. Sometimes things seem awful. Persecutions take place, tragedies occur, stuff happens as some have put it. Of course, the worse example of this is that Jesus himself is killed. It would seem, therefore, that because Christ was gone the kingdom was no longer growing, but remember that the woman hid the yeast in the meal just as Christ was hid in the tomb or that Christ is hid from us now in heaven so to speak. Just because we do not see God or Christ at work does not mean that the growth has stopped. While his disciples were heartbroken the yeast of God was working until one day, when they least expected it, Christ was alive. Let us always remember that when things look bleak.

Secondly, we must know that the kingdom is irresistible. Once you mix the yeast in the bread, I don't know how you take it out or how you stop it. All that remains is to enjoy the end result. Likewise, once God's spirit is mixed into the world, I don't know how you stop it. All that remains is to enjoy the result.

Third, we see from this parable that the kingdom transforms. The growth may seem slow and gradual, but the final result is not just an incremental change or a small improvement, it is something brand new and far greater than before. If we see this nowhere else let us see that the yeast of faith that God mixes in us will Transform us at the point of our death when it seems that nothing will be able to help us.

Also, we should learn that the kingdom is abundant. Jesus says that the woman hid the yeast in three measures of meal which could feed as many as 150 people. It might as well be enough to feed a thousand people for how little bread Jesus followers would have likely had. We should know, therefore, that the yeast that is mixed into the bread of life will never run out.

Finally, we must know that all things, even the kingdom of God, especially the Kingdom of God, comes in God's own time. We get so used to things happening quickly and technology brings the world to us faster and faster every year. But nothing can bring the kingdom faster. The yeast must do its work, and, when it is done, it will be done. When my mom made bread, it smelled so good, and I would ask if it was ready, and she, tired of my persistence, would finally exclaim, "It will be ready when it's ready." It was true of bread and it is true of the Kingdom.

It would be nice if the other qualities of baking bread applied to the Kingdom as well. It would be nice if we could smell it and taste it. It would be great if we could sample it to know how close it is to being done, but Jesus could only fit so much into one verse. For the time being it is up to us to take notice of the little signs around us that the yeast is still at work and one day its work will be done. The woman's bread will be leavened. God's Kingdom will come. Paying attention to these signs and responding to them in faith is the yeast that we can do.

Communion Hymn

"Restless Weaver"

Sam Johnson, organist

Restless Weaver, ever spinning threads of justice and shalom; dreaming patterns of creation where all creatures find a home; gathering up life's varied fibers—every texture, every hue: grant us your creative vision. With us weave your world anew.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

Many people have a hard time dealing with uncertainty, which is a problem because we live in such an uncertain world. Many people turn to God for certainty, but many others feel as if they cannot turn to God until they find certainty. The idea is that these people do not believe that they can come to church or take communion until they are certain about God and their faith is certain about all the important parts of God. This is a fool's errand along the lines of waiting until you are well to go see the doctor or fit to go to a gym. Proverbs tells us to trust in God and not to our own understanding which is important because our understanding is always limited.

Because of this there is little that we should be certain of, and I would advise you to be wary of those who seem so certain. It seems to me that, in this world, the people who cause the most trouble are the ones who are often so certain. The only certainty we need to have is the certainty of God's love and care for us.

When we are uncertain about what to do, where to go next, or how to live let us lean upon the certainty that God is there for us and pray to the Lord. Above all let us be certain in God's grace, for even if it passes our understanding, we know that we are saved because of it, and it is by God's grace that we are called to this table.

And one more thing is certain. We have never arrived. The yeast of the Kingdom is forever at work in us and causing us to grow into what God wants us to be. So let us not be so certain in our understanding of God's love and will that we do not continue to strive, and seek, and search to know better and to live better. We continue to come to this table because we are certain that we are continually in need of God's grace and wisdom. May God grant it to each of you as you share in the Lord's Supper today.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Serena Dube

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, who nourishes us with the bread of life and cup of salvation. As we partake of this bread and cup may we be united in faith and love reflecting your grace in our lives. Strengthen us through this holy communion, that we may serve you and others with joy and compassion. As we receive this bread and cup, help us to remember the sacrifice of Christ and to live in a way that honors his love. Amen

Words of Institution

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

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

"God Be with You"

Sam Johnson, organist

God be with you, God be with you, God be with you till we meet again, O God be with you,
God be with you, God be with you till we meet again. Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet our
spirits keep, till we meet, till we meet, our souls in love do keep, O till we meet, till we meet, keep
us humble at thy feet, God be with us till we meet again. If we nevermore shall meet you, if we
nevermore shall greet you, God be with you till we meet again, keep on working for the Master,
he'll be with you here and after, God be with you till we meet again.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Go forth from this gathering, nourished by the fellowship found in broken bread, strengthened for your journey together, grounded by Christ's peace, which surpasses understanding, and inspired to embrace the new reality of resurrection. 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) 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

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
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Doris Haniford, Room 121

Mary Allison
Barb Bailey
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezney
Jacquie Best
Gary Blackhurst
Jeff Caldwell
Maci Caster
Wanda Chicone
Jim Cope
Angel Corbett
Jane Correll
Ruth Cox
Mickey Cunningham
Benjamin Dube
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Raymond Fraley
Terry Gahagen
Barb Graff
Judy Hanning
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Aryn Hess

Danni Iams
Dave Kania
Charlie McConnell
Pam McCord
Norm McDonough
Barb Moninger
Dick Moninger
Joe Neckerman
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Michelle Oneal
Sandy Petry
Jeannie Riffle
Joan Riffle
Lori Riffle
Perry Riffle
Mike Ryan
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Sprowls
Kristie Sprowls
Wayne Starnes
Cathy Stewart
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.