

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 47
November 21, 2025

- Rev. Chris will be on vacation November 23
- Dartball – November 25, 7pm @ Home
- Office Closed – November 27 & 28 Happy Thanksgiving

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

November 23

- Blessing Box Offering
- Congregational Meeting, following worship
- Hanging of the Greens, 5pm

November 30

- Memorial Garden new brick dedication
- First Sunday of Advent - **Advent devotionals** are available in the Narthex. If you are unable to pick one up, please contact the church office and we will make arrangements to have one sent to you.

Raise Right Gift Cards

There was such a tremendous response to the **gift card** ordering that Pastor Gena wants to take orders again. Order forms will be in the bulletin and in the Narthex. If you need one sent to you, contact the Church Office. Orders and payment need to be turned in by December 1. The gift cards will be ready for pick-up on December 14.

DRIVE-THRU NATIVITY

The **Drive-Thru Nativity** is December 13 & 14, 6-8pm each night.

Character signups have hit **70%**. There is still a need for additional characters and animals. Ask your relatives, neighbors and friends to participate. Give Connie their contact information if they can help

The sign-up sheet for food needed during the Nativity is almost complete. Please check to see if there are any additional needs listed on the sheet in the Narthex.

Scene Set Up

The Trustees are looking for **help** setting up the scenes for the Drive-Thru Nativity. They are hoping to have a workday on Saturday, November 29 at 10am. If you would be able to give a little bit of time they would appreciate it. Please contact Ed Palfreyman or Von Lacock if you can help.

Christmas Party

The Bethany Class will hold their **Christmas Party** on Friday, December 19 at noon in the Small Fellowship Hall. RSVP to the Church Office by December 15. Everyone is welcome to join the party for food, fun and fellowship.

POINSETTIA ORDERS

Order your **poinsettias** for our Christmas Eve display in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Order forms can be found in the Narthex, the bulletin and at the end of the Manor Minutes. Orders are due to the Church Office by **November 30**. **If you do not need a specific color poinsettia, please make a note of “no preference” on your order. We will order the color needed to complete the Poinsettia Tree display.**

Angel Tree

The **Salvation Army Angel Tree** tags are available in the Narthex. When you take a tag, please write your name on the sheet on the credenza. This is helpful when gifts are returned. Do not wrap gifts, but place them in some type of bag (reusable bags work the best) All gifts need to be returned to the Church by **November 30**. This is a short turnaround time. The Salvation Army was running behind this year on tag distribution. Disregard the return date on the tag, as the Salvation Army will pick the gifts up from the church.

Salvation Army Red Kettle Drive

FMCC will be ringing bells for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive at the Washington Giant Eagle (left door) on Wednesday, December 3, from 10am-4pm. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex with 1-hour increments. More than 1 person can sign up for a slot.



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Linda Reese, Bread
Sheila Harris, Cup

November 23, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Von Lacock

Leader: Let the heavens be glad! Let the earth rejoice!
Let the nations say, “The Lord rules!”

People: Let the sea and everything in it roar!
Let the fields and their crops burst forth in joy!

Leader: Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise before the Lord!
For he is coming to establish justice on earth!
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

People: His faithful love endures forever.

Opening Hymn

“We Gather Together”

Sam Johnson, organist

We gather together to ask for God’s blessing, to turn to a wisdom surpassing our own; the pow’rs
that oppress us now cease to distress us. O God, be present with us, and make our will known.

Counting Our Blessings: Dedication of Blessing Box Contributions

Connie Sheller

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices.

O God, we give you thanks for all that you have done for us.

That you have created us, and have given us the gift of life and set us to live in this fair earth;
that you have given us work to do, and the strength to do it.

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices.

We give you thanks for all that others have done for us.

For those who taught us when we were children; for those who in the days of youth gave us the guidance
that kept us from going astray;
for those who to this day love us and surround us with their care.

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices.

We give you thanks for all that your church has done for us.

For strength and guidance each week for life’s way;
for the friendship and the fellowship which we here enjoy;
for the sacraments of your grace, and the prayers of your people.

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices.

We give you thanks for all that you have done for us in Jesus Christ.

That in Christ you have shown us the length and breadth and depth and height of your great love for us; that in Christ you have opened to us a new and living way into your presence.

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices.

We give you thanks for everything that has given us strength for earth and hope for heaven.

Accept this our sacrifice of praise for your love's sake. Amen.

William Barclay, 20th century British biblical scholar (adapt.), Chalice Hymnal #716

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

Psalm 100

Carol Daniels

Anthem

“Thanks and Blessings Flow,” by Tom Fettke

Choir

Children’s Message

“How the Church Tells Time”
Children Worship & Wonder Story

Pastor Gena

Second Scripture Reading

Luke 19:1-10

Pastor Gena

Sermon

“The Cycle of Life in Christ”

Rev. Gena Sheller

Baptism is not just something we do because we have turned 12 or because we want to become a member in a church or because our parents told us it was time or because everyone else is doing it. Actually, that is often why we are baptized. But baptism is so much more than that.

When we come to be baptized, we state our intention for our life and how we are going to live it. We make a public profession of faith, saying aloud in front of witnesses, that, falling on God’s mercy and grace, we are turning from the ways of sin - all of the ways which are not loving, all of the ways we break our relationships with God and with each other. We renounce evil and its power in the world. We are saying that we believe that evil and hate will not have the final word. We are saying we believe that there is a force more powerful than any other. We make it known that we are turning toward a specific path, a path which we intend to follow for the rest of our lives. We name the One we intend to follow on that path, the One we give the first and ultimate authority in our lives, the One we trust more than any other with our ultimate fate, the One who will show us the way to live in love. Jesus the Christ. And we commit to learn from Christ, following what he tells us, living as he lived, loving as he loved.

In baptism we are stating our intention to turn from “that,” to turn toward this path, and to trust this One we are choosing to follow in this life and into the next, knowing that he promises to never leave nor forsake us.

These are profound intentions that we proclaim. Being lowered into the water, we die to the old way we were living. Being lifted out of the water, we rise to a new way of living. It is a physical symbol of the turning we are making. And it is a trusting in a merciful and gracious God who even allows such a turning to happen, such a washing away of our past mistakes to take place. With thanksgiving, we rise in God's arms.

Yes, we are wet from head to toe. Yes, our underwear may be showing through our robe. But a profound intention has been made. A profound trust in God has been demonstrated. And our feet are set on the path of love with Christ as the One we are following.

So many of us treat baptism as the endpoint, the last time we are seen among the community of believers - others who have spoken the same intention and are trying to walk that narrow way of love that is difficult, with Christ as our guide. But baptism is literally a symbol of the beginning point. It is the first turning of many, the first repentance of many we will make. How can baptism be the endpoint when, after our baptisms, we still so often stray from the intention we have set to follow Christ on the path of love? We stray over and over and over again. We renounced evil, but evil is ever with us, oh-so powerful and disguising itself in ways that make it so tricky to recognize.

How many of us have stayed permanently on the path of love, following Christ in loving God with our whole being and loving each other, since our baptisms? None of us. So we need a process to help us come back to the way over and over and over again, knowing that we will be received with the grace and mercy of God and equipped with the strength of the Holy Spirit to try again. That process is what we have been talking about throughout the month of November.

It begins with recognizing that we are off the path of love that we intended to be on. Something opens our eyes and prompts us to see ourselves clearly in relation to who Christ is.

Actually, the process begins before that – because we need to know what the path of love looks like first in order to know when we are off it. And it helps to know Christ and who he is so that we can recognize when and how we are off the mark, what we call sinning. How do we know these things? We enter into a constant and continual process of learning, of being a disciple of Christ, that lasts throughout our whole lives. It means reading and studying the Bible on our own and with others, examining the narratives of how others have struggled to live God's ways throughout the history of our faith. It means spending time in meditation and prayer, asking Christ to show us who he is and how to love as he does. It means practicing the disciplines we are examining this year, disciplines that Christ himself practiced, that Christians throughout time have found helpful. It means gathering for worship, which reminds us that there is One who is more powerful than us - more powerful and more loving than anything or anyone we face.

With all of that practice, it becomes easier to recognize when we are off the path of love that we intended to be on. Something opens our eyes and prompts us to see ourselves clearly in relation to who Christ is. When we know Jesus and come face-to-face with him as Zacchaeus did, the places of brokenness in us become easier to see.

As Cynthia Campbell writes, "Jesus is the mercy of God made flesh; the steadfast love of God becomes human so that we can see what holy love looks like. In his presence, then it is easier for us to turn away from the wrong path because we can see so clearly what the right path looks like" (Cynthia M. Campbell in the Foundational Essay for the Confess series from the Follow Me curriculum). When we compare

ourselves to each other, sometimes we don't look like we are so far off the path. But God calls us to become more Christ-like.

When Jesus invites himself to our house like he did to the home of Zacchaeus, suddenly all the mess becomes very apparent. And I don't mean the dust-bunnies and dirty laundry. Well, not literally. Zacchaeus hurries down out of his treetop vantage point and is happy to welcome Jesus, the text says. In case he hadn't seen his mess himself yet, others are quick to point it out for him, grumbling that Jesus is going to be the guest of one who is a sinner. That doesn't really narrow it down much, as everyone crowded around has fallen short of the mark, but Zacchaeus is quick to identify himself and admit that he had ceded authority in his life to the Romans he works for and to wealth, taking more money from his neighbors than just the taxes they owe. Broken relationships – with God and with others. Confession – the practice of recognizing, before God, ourselves, and others how we have fallen short of God's hopes and expectation of us.

The “examen of conscience” is a spiritual process that people of faith have been used for centuries in which before bedtime we pause to identify where we have fractured relationships or hurt someone or failed to love that day. Then we pray, confessing these things before God, knowing that our loving God assures our forgiveness.

Repentance follows closely behind recognizing the ways in which we are off the path of love and confessing these to ourselves others before God. Repentance is a turning around, a turning from what we are doing and a turning back toward the way of Christ. Recognizing our mistakes or complicity in broken systems, accepting them and apologizing are very important. After all, learning to say “I'm sorry” is not easy, especially to our children or anyone over whom we feel we have authority. But saying “I'm sorry” for tracking mud into the house is only as good as changing behavior and ways of doing things so that it is less likely that we will track mud into the house again. The next time we apologize, perhaps follow it up our “I'm sorry” with a plan for repentance: “I realize I need to work on leaving my muddy boots outside so that I don't take mud into the house again.” Repenting is turning around, charting a different course into the future. Asking ourselves, how did I leave the path of love that time? What practices or safeguards will keep me from doing that again? Communicating these plans to others assures others that we have truly considered the hurt we have caused and that we are going to work on a change so that we won't repeat the hurt. Following through with these plans goes a long way to re-establishing trust and mending a broken relationship.

We assume from the story of Zacchaeus that he is sorry for what he has done and will change his course forward in some way. Perhaps he will resign from his job collecting taxes for the Romans. Perhaps he will collect only the taxes owed and find a more honest way to make a living. But in the story as we have it, Zacchaeus jumps straight into making amends, repairing, setting things right. Sometimes I think that it is easier to repent, to change our ways and look to the future. But looking into the past and realizing the damage we have caused is difficult. And trying to repair that damage may seem impossible.

If I were playing baseball and hit a ball through my neighbor's window, first I would need to recognize that, yes, I did that. Confessing is admitting my action to myself, to my playmates and to my neighbor. Repenting is paying attention to which of my actions led up to that broken window and changing my behavior so that it doesn't happen again. My neighbor would probably be glad to hear my apology and my future plans to play baseball in the park instead of in my front yard, but they would still be left with a broken window. Making amends, repairing what is broken as a result of my action or inaction, is the last part of this process, this cycle of regaining the path of love. I look back to see the wreckage I have left in my wake and I consider how I might fix it. This includes realizing that I may have gained an advantage

from my mistakes and behavior that I may need to relinquish now. When it hits our pocketbooks or our egos, we know we are doing some real work.

Zacchaeus promises in front of everyone to make amends, to lift up the people he has been stepping on for a long time now. He announces this plan to give half of everything he owns to those who need it. That's a hit to his pocketbook and his ego, but he *was* a chief tax collector and he was rich. Then Zacchaeus goes further, drawing on the strictest of all the rules of restitution that God set forth for the people in the desert centuries before - rules that say, when you cause this harm, here is how you are going to make it right. Zacchaeus proclaims that he will pay back four times as much as took from those he defrauded. That is going to be difficult if he has defrauded very many people. He himself could very well end up without anything to live on, and his dignity and self-worth may take a hit as well.

Sometimes it's just easier to pretend like nothing has happened, to deny that what we do or don't do causes real damage to others. But paying back four times as much acknowledges that having money garners Zacchaeus much more of an advantage than just having extra money laying around. Having money gives Zacchaeus a sense of self-worth, a sense of accomplishment, perhaps a social standing among the Romans that will open doors to him that wouldn't otherwise be opened, a promotion to chief tax collector that will allow him to make even more money, which will allow him to feed his family better food and help him move to the cleaner, nicer side of Jericho, which will allow his children to be safer from harm, which will enable them to spend more time in a better school in east Jericho, which will enable them to get an even better job than their father Zacchaeus. Those children will likely feel that they are much better human beings than those poor people over in the slums of Jericho, not even realizing that the extra money their father Zacchaeus took from those poor people took away much more than just their money. It took away their dignity and ability to make a life for themselves. And that extra money gave Zacchaeus and his children much more than the money he took unfairly. It made them feel better than their neighbors and self-sufficient. Perhaps none of that actually happened to Zacchaeus and his family, but nonetheless this tends to be the pattern when one person exploits another.

Some mistakes, like lost time and damaged dignity, trust destroyed and innocence lost, are very difficult to repair – and sometimes beyond reparation except in the hands of God. But we must ask ourselves when we choose not to attempt repair whether we are protecting ourselves or those who have been hurt.

Jesus says to Zacchaeus “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek out and to save the lost” (Luke 19:9-10). Zacchaeus is back on the path of loving God and loving others.

Just to be clear, we are saved by God's grace, not by our own efforts. But we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in our baptisms which empowers us to live new and grace-filled lives. It is because we know that, in Christ, we have been and will be forgiven that we are even able to acknowledge our sin in confession, turn away from sin and toward Christ in repentance, and make amends where we can in acts of reconciliation and repair. This cycle of seeing, confessing, repenting, repairing is one that we go through countless times in our lives. With time and practice, study and prayer, we become more adept at seeing the ways we have failed to love, and when we are wrong, we more likely to readily and promptly admit it, chart a different way forward, and repair the brokenness left as a result of our wrong. This is a continuous process, the Cycle of Life in Christ, that we practice until we pass into the next life. On this day, the last Sunday of the church year, we recognize, celebrate and give thanks for the Reign of Christ – that Christ is both more powerful and more loving than anything or anyone and that Christ will indeed reign in love fully one day. May the Cycle of Life in Christ help us to recognize and celebrate the Reign of Christ breaking into our world in this life and to dwell completely in it in the next.

Call to Offering

Donna Stenski

God has entrusted us with a variety of gifts; let us return to the Lord a generous measure of our bounty with thanksgiving and praise.

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

Pastor Gena

For all that you are and all that you do, we give you thanks, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. We wait in hope for the coming of your realm and offer these gifts to further your kingdom on earth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Pastor Gena

Thanksgiving is not a holy day we mark on the Calendar of the Church Year. But, as Disciples of Christ, we come to the Thanksgiving Table every week. At this Table, we give thanks for the God-with-us gift of Jesus for which we begin to prepare this evening. We give thanks for Christ's coming to show us how to live with love. We give thanks that in his death and resurrection, Christ has shown us that life is stronger than death, that love is stronger than hate. We give thanks that God does not leave us alone in our mistakes or brokenness but has provided a way back to the path of love. We give thanks that God stands ready to welcome us back with mercy and grace and does not tire of us. You are welcome to this Thanksgiving Table. It is Christ's Table, and there is room for all.

Communion Hymn

"For the Fruit of All Creation"

Sam Johnson, organist

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God; for good gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God; for the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we
are sleeping, future needs in earth's safe-keeping, thanks be to God.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Linda Reese

Words of Institution

Pastor Gena

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

Pastor Gena

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 do not need a specific color poinsettia, please make a note of “no preference” on your order. We will order the color needed to complete the Poinsettia Tree Display.



The beautiful poinsettia tree that adorns our sanctuary each Christmas Eve is a tradition that we all look forward to every year. Please fill out this form and return it to the church office by **November 30 with payment**. Indicate the color and number of poinsettias you would like to order. Cost per plant is \$12. Please **make checks payable to “Fairhill Manor” and indicate “Poinsettias” in the memo line**. Plants may be picked up following the Christmas Eve service.

_____ RED Poinsettias

_____ WHITE Poinsettias

_____ Poinsettias (no color preference)

ORDERS are due by November 30

Given by

In Memory/Honor of (circle one)

In Memory/Honor of (circle one)

In Memory/Honor of (circle one)

Additional Comments:



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

Bo & Patty Pryor, Apt 102
Chuck Wiseman, Apt 214

Southmont Resident

835 S Main Street
Washington PA 15301

Doris Sorice

Premier Resident

36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd
Washington PA 15301

Carol Brown, Rm 213

Transitions Healthcare Resident

90 Humbert Lane
Washington PA 15301

Doris Haniford, Rm 121

Barb Bailey
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezney
Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Ruth Cox
Dave Davis
Sue Donaldson
Craig Dotson
Benjamin Dube
Connie Faust
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Terry Gahagen
Barb Graff
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Aryn Hess
Danni Iams
Ed Jackman
Kari Johnson
Shelly Kubincanek
Marylee Lawrence
David Leonard
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 Spowls
Wayne Starnes
Cathy Stewart
Jan Stillwell
Beth Teagarden
Jane 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.