

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 9
February 27, 2026

- Dartball – March 3, 7pm @ Home
- Personnel Committee – March 4, 6pm
- Disciples Women's Ministry – March 4, 7pm
- Choir Practice – March 5, 6:30pm

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

There will be a **Disciples Women's Ministry** meeting on Wednesday, March 4 at 7pm in the Shepherds Room. If you didn't have a chance to sign up for this group, you are still welcome to attend. If you have any questions, contact Connie Sheller.



Order forms for **Easter Flowers** can be found in the Narthex, bulletin and Manor Minutes. You can order tulips, hyacinths, mums, or Easter lilies in memory of or in honor of someone. All flowers are \$11 each. Orders with payment are due by March 15. Please turn in orders to Karen's mailbox (bottom right mail slot).



April 11
1pm

Sign up in the Narthex.

**thank
you!**

This year's noisy offering totaled **\$362.35!** Thank you to Anna and Cori for collecting a very heavy and very noisy \$242.35 in coins, and to all who gave to Week of Compassion through this offering. Due to an endowment that covers all administrative expenses, 100% of our giving to Week of Compassion goes directly toward the relief, refugee, and development efforts of partners in the US and around the world. What a wonderful ministry to be a part of! Learn more at www.weekofcompassion.org.

Fundraiser



The **Literacy Council** is having a fundraiser at Texas Roadhouse on Sunday, March 29. 10% of your bill will be donated to the Literacy Council. You can purchase a **gift card or e-gift card** from RaiseRight and FMCC will earn 8%. This one meal will benefit both the Literacy Council and FMCC when using a RaiseRight gift card. If you would like to order a gift card from Pastor Gena, sign up in the Narthex. Paid orders are needed by March 15th for Pastor Gena to order and receive the cards in time for the fundraiser. If you have any questions, contact the church office (724) 225-8610.

Pastor Gena has a few **gift cards** from RaiseRight available now. She has \$25 gift cards to:

- Applebee's
- Bath & Body Works
- Jimmy John's
- Olive Garden/Longhorn/Cheddar's
- Old Navy/Athleta/Banana Republic/Gap
- Outback
- Red Robin

Each gift card is \$25. If you would like one or more gift cards on Sunday, let Pastor Gena know.



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
Gary Ford, Cup

March 1, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Kevin Puskarich

Leader: In the wilderness of life, we are not alone.

People: God is with us, even in the midst of our loneliness.

Leader: On the treacherous paths, God's guidance is ours.

People: We will walk in God's ways of wisdom and truth.

Leader: Come to hear. Come to learn. Come to the dwelling place of God.

People: Here we find grace. Here we find love.

All: Here we will worship and pray.

Opening Hymn

"He Is Exalted"

Jody Mullis, pianist

He is exalted, the King is exalted on high; I will praise him. He is exalted, forever exalted, and I will praise his name! He is the Lord; forever his truth shall reign.

Heaven and earth rejoice in his holy name. He is exalted, the King is exalted on high.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Dear Lord, thank you for inviting us to come near to you, to get to know you better, to share every part of our lives with you. Help us to seize opportunities to make space to nurture our relationship with you. We are grateful for the bonds we have with each other that helps us to keep company with you. Small groups, like our Sunday school classes, gift us with supportive companions on this faith journey, and we are thankful. Help us to find more ways to intentionally engage in experiences that bring us near our neighbors, knowing that you will meet us as we serve. As we try out different spiritual disciplines this Lenten season, help us to sense your presence, your guidance and your call in our lives through them. May your Holy Spirit work on us, that the practices and habits we engage in might help us to grow in faithfulness and to become more aware of your movement in our daily living.

Should we choose to fast during this season, guide us in making a healthy fast. Show us those things in our lives to which we cling most closely, those habits that absorb an out-sized amount of our time and energy, those things on which we are more reliant than we've realized. In going without for a time, reveal to us where our dependences really lie. In going without for a time, may we fill those spaces and moments with prayer and reading your Word, meditating on your goodness. In going without for a time, show us how our freed resources might be shared with those who would welcome and use them. Bring a sense of community among us as we each try new ways to draw closer to you this Lent, as if we are all in

this together. Bring trusted friends and companions to share this fast, this voluntary denial for a time for a spiritual growth and renewal.

Bring to the surface those things from which we need to turn, those habits and actions of which we need to repent. May our honesty with you lead us to reconciliation with one another. Clarify and rejuvenate our prayers, we pray. Turn us toward yourself for guidance. We long for pure hearts, so we ask you to help us with the cleansing and refining process. Transform us as we clear space in our daily lives to keep company with you.

We share with you those parts of our lives that are difficult and challenging right now. Hear our prayers. We remember before you those who are sick or struggling with disease, those who long for health in their minds, those who are preparing to die and those who are grieving a loss, those who are afraid and have no settled safe place to call home. Hear our prayers. We ask that you might draw near to those we have named aloud this morning, all of those whose names are on our prayer list, and these ones we name in our hearts now... Hear our prayers.

Walk with us on this Lenten journey, as we seek to walk with you. We pray in the name of our Savior and our Lord, Jesus the Christ, who teaches us to pray saying...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Prayer Response:

“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”

Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your spirit in this place;

Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us pow’r, send us grace.

First Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 58:6-11

Gary Ford

Anthem

“10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord),” by Heather Sorenson

Choir

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

Have you ever known someone who just liked to show off and brag all the time? What do you think about people who show off and brag all the time?

In his sermon on the mount Jesus said this,

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret.

Do you think Jesus want us to give money to help poor people? Does Jesus want us to make a big deal about it when we give money and tell everyone that we’re doing it?

Jesus wants us to do good things, but He doesn’t want us to show off when we do them. We don’t do good things to get attention or to make people think about how great we are. We do good things because we love God and we love other people, and it’s what God wants us to do.

Do you think Jesus want us to pray? Does Jesus want us to show off and use big words and talk for a long time in front of people when we pray? Using big words and talking for a long time in front of other people when we pray is just showing off. What does Jesus say we should do when we pray?

He says we should go in our room or somewhere where we can be alone and have time to talk to God by ourselves. Jesus said that we don't need to pray for a long time and use a lot of words when we pray. Why not?

God knows what we need before we ask Him. We don't need to explain everything to God or try to convince Him to help us. He already knows what we're going to ask for. We should simply ask Him for it in a simple way, like we would ask our parents for something.

So, remember, do good things for God and pray to God, but not because you want to show off in front of other people when we give or when we do something nice for someone, Jesus doesn't want us to show-off about it. Sometimes, when we do something nice for someone, they don't even need to know that it was us. We can do it in secret so that we make sure we're not showing off about it.

Closing Prayer

Jesus, help us to want to do things to honor You, not to show off to other people. When we pray, help us to do it because we want to talk to You, not because we want other people to see us praying. Help us to do things for the right reason. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Give, Pray, Fast”

Rev. Chris Stillwell

I had an experience recently in which I found myself living out a scene from a TV show. I was at my favorite coffee shop, and, after ordering my usual, I reached into my wallet to put a dollar in the tip jar. As I reached for the jar, however, my hand held back for a split second. It's not that the service was less. They know my order and usually have it started by the time I get to the register. It wasn't that they were not friendly or that the coffee wasn't going to be perfect as it always is. I realized with no small amount of shame that my hesitation came from the fact that none of the baristas were looking. Should I tip even if they do not see? Should I wait until someone was looking so they would know that I appreciate them?

I say this was like a scene out of TV because on the show, Seinfeld, the character, George, once tries to tip the man making his calzone, but, when he realizes that he did not see it, takes his tip back out to try again when the man could appreciate the good deed. Unfortunately for him, the man did not see him put the tip in, but he did see him take the tip out, and an argument ensued. Fortunately for me, I realized I was being silly and put the tip in the jar. I was saved the embarrassment by thinking to myself, “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing”

This was Jesus' instructions to his followers when it came to giving alms and could apply to living one's faith generally. Here in Matthew, as part of the famed Sermon on the Mount, we have a threefold discourse given by Jesus to his followers on the proper way of piety. Here Jesus instructs them on the fine line between sharing one's faith and making a show of one's faith.

In Jesus' time it was not uncommon for people to publicly talk about their faith for the faith of the people was interwoven into every aspect of their lives. There were no TV or radio stations then, of course, so the only media was the street corner, and on the corners of Jerusalem, a person could see any number of religious practices being carried out at all times of the day. Instead of a TV in which every click gives the viewer another channel to view, each city block of the holy city gave the citizens another example of how to live out religious faith.

In the midst of all of this, Jesus assumes that people of good faith would do three things, and he gives them instructions for each. First, he assumes that all people, no matter which branch of Judaism they belong, will give alms to the poor. For this he says:

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² ‘So, whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Next, he assumes that all will pray saying:

‘And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Finally, he assumes that all will participate in days and times of fasting.

And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

To all of this he sums up by saying “Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does.” In other words, do not be so self-conscious for you do these things not for yourself but for God. If even your own left hand does not know what your right hand does, then you can be certain that others won’t know what you do either. These are clear teachings, but if we take these sayings of Jesus literally does that mean we should not talk about faith at all? It sounds like Christ is telling us that if we tell someone what we believe in or share our faith with a stranger then we are not practicing our faith in secret as Christ commands us to do. Some good, and very well-intentioned people who would not otherwise take scripture so literally have interpreted this passage as close to the letter as possible and believe that we must not talk about faith or God publicly because that would be “practicing your piety before others.”

Certainly, this behavior in which our faith is so private that we dare not let anyone even know that we have it will keep us from committing the cardinal sin of pride, but I cannot believe that the one who told us to let our light shine would want this either. On the other hand, we all know people who talk the talk but don’t walk the walk. I have met many people who are very good about talking about how great their faith is, but spend anytime wish them and you begin to see that their personal conduct leaves much to be desired.

Here’s a situation where sharing one’s faith I think becomes an impediment to spreading the faith. Many people who do not go to church do not go because they remember a hypocrite. We often find ourselves trapped between these two polarities. The result is on one hand those who use religion as self-promotion. How many preachers and religious leaders puff themselves up with their piety and build massive empires only to demonstrate through their actions that they are only interested in promoting themselves? On the other hand, those who say nothing to challenge because they are uncomfortable talking publicly about something private like faith. For certain, one of the reasons that charlatans are able to exploit the faith is because reasonable moderate voices are sometimes too uncomfortable speaking about their own faith.

In a consumer driven society where I have hundreds of choices of the types of soap I can use to shower, you would think we would have more than just two choices about how to present our faith. Thankfully, Jesus offers a third. He speaks not against piety but false piety. He encourages humble piety. He assumes

that people have faith. He tells them to be humble about it. Combining these two things is the secret of faith.

We do not give to be praised. We do not pray to be seen as holy. We do not fast to be show-offs. If there is one personality, we do not like it is the show-off, particularly when it comes to faith. If you have to tell me how faithful you are, chances are you are not. We might use the term holier than thou to describe them for they announce their religiosity in many ways to receive praise. Jesus knows the people for whom religion was a costume to wear, and he condemned them in blistering language.

The 20th century German theologian Helmut Thielicke, in his book of sermons on the Sermon on the Mount, told of his hospital experience of being cared for by a nurse who for some 20 years had worked only the night shift. Admiringly, he asked her if this work was a great strain that would eventually wear her out, and where did she find the strength to do it with a radiant look in her eyes? She replied, "Well, you see, every night I put in adds another jewel to my heavenly crown, and already I have 7,175 jewels in a row." The gratitude suddenly vanished he said. He could no longer believe in her love, and the feeling of security he had experienced under her care disappeared. He wrote, "She was looking through me as if I were just so much air. Her eyes were secretly fixed upon her crown in heaven."

Our good works, therefore, have no value if they don't come from a heart that loves and serves others, because we have been loved and served by God in Christ. True giving, praying, and fasting are done for spiritual reasons and not as a material achievement to get praise from others. There is a danger in substituting the ritual, the practice, for the intention behind these acts. Our own selfish human desires for recognition and credit from others sometimes leads us to seek glory, and, if we do that, we are hypocrites. We want others to see and remember our good works and praise us for them, but Jesus says, keep these things secret, do them and forget them. He gives us a very clear choice. If we want human praise, we can get it. People will see our acts of piety and praise us for them, but seeking this social approval is hypocrisy to God, and God rejects it. Giving, praying, and fasting is an act of individual and corporate humbling.

Give, pray, fast. These are the commands Christ has given us to humble ourselves and to keep us from thinking too much of ourselves, but let us not pervert these acts into yet another opportunity for self-aggrandizement. So, take a tip from me. This Lent, let us continue to learn to trust that God is good and gracious and loving and forgiving, and what other humans think of us isn't anywhere near as important as our relationship with God-and what we do for others out of that relationship. This Lent, let us take up a discipline of doing something positive solely for the purpose of pleasing God, or perhaps giving something up in order to make room in our lives for God's Spirit to move around more freely in us. This Lent, let us make God the focus of our attention, our love, our piety. This Lent, let us give, pray, and fast.

Communion Hymn

"Blessed Assurance"

Sam Johnson, organist

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.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

It is ironic to hear Christ's call to fast and then to come to the table to feast. Fasting itself is not associated with the food laws nor is it required as a means of losing weight. Part of its purpose is to be in solidarity with the poor, and to be reminded of those who do not have as much to eat as we. Part of it is to be reminded of Jesus' fasting in the wilderness and his suffering on the cross.

Although a physical thing, the main purpose of fasting is spiritual. The spiritual outcome of fasting is an intensification of our prayer life and a heightened awareness of the imminence and presence of God in our lives. Feasting and fasting and proper balance speak to us about moderation in all aspects of living.

So let us fast and let us feast.

Fast from thoughts of illness; feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute; feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent; feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger; feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism; feast on optimism.

Fast from complaining; feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives; feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures; feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from bitterness; feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self concern; feast on compassion for others.

Fast from personal anxiety; feast on eternal truth.

Fast from discouragement; feast on hope.

Fast from shadows of sorrow; feast on the sunlight of sincerity.

Fast from idle gossip; feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from problems that overwhelm; feast on prayer that undergirds.

Fast from instant gratifications; feast on self-denial.

Fast from sin; feast on the abundance of God's mercy.

Let us fast of ourselves, and feast with the one who has given us an abundance of mercy, love, and forgiveness, all of which are available to us in this meal; the Lord's Supper.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Jackie Nelson

Almighty and eternal God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit please hear our prayer. As we gather on this second Sunday of Lent, open our hearts to the benefits of what fasting means. Fasting, can we just deny ourselves this world and spend a little more time with Jesus every day? A special time of preparing for the joy and promise of Easter. A special time as we remember, before Easter there is the horror of Good Friday. We remember Jesus now at this Sacred table, as we do every communion. He knew the price and still thought we were worth it. That's love. Holy Spirit, be with us now and during this Lenten season. Open our eyes and teach us. We ask in the Holy Name of Jesus, Amen

Words of Institution

Rev. Stillwell

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Sharing Holy Communion

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

Call to Discipleship

Rev. Stillwell

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

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”

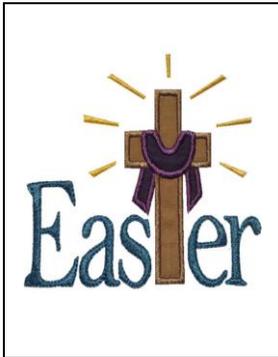
Sam Johnson, organist

Jesus, keep me near the cross: there a precious fountain, free to all, a healing stream, flows from Calv’ry’s mountain. In the cross, in the cross, be my glory ever, till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Having been forgiven, go forth and forgive others. Having experienced acceptance, go forth and accept others. Having been strengthened, go forth and strengthen others.



Please fill out this order form and return to the Church Office with **payment** by March 15. Indicate the number of flowers you would like. Make checks payable to **“Fairhill Manor”** and indicate “Easter Flowers” in the memo.

_____ Tulips (6” pot) @ \$11/each

_____ Hyacinths (3 bloom) @ \$11/each

_____ Easter Lily @ \$11/each

_____ Mum (assorted colors) @ \$11/each

Orders with payment are due by March 15, 2026.

Given by _____

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)

In Memory/Honor of _____
(circle one)



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

Southmont Resident

835 S Main Street
Washington PA 15301

Doris Sorice, Room 554

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

Evergreen Personal Care

336 N Main Street
Washington PA 15301

Donna Bakaitis, Room 224

Mary Allison
Barb Bailey
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezney
Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Macy Caster
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Ruth Cox
Carol Davis
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
Dick Pilgun
Betty Riecks
Jeannie Riffle
Joan Riffle
Lori Riffle
Mike Ryan
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Sprowls
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.