# Manor Minutes Volume 16 Issue 33 August 15, 2025

• Bethany Class Luncheon at Eat'n Park – August 19, noon

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

# **Special Board Meeting**

There will be a **Special Board Meeting** this Sunday, August 17, following the Worship Service to consider flooring for the Chapel. The flooding in June destroyed the carpet in the Chapel; it is being replaced with tile.

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



FMCC night at the Wild Things is **Friday**, **August 22** at 7pm. If you ordered tickets, they will be on the credenza in the Narthex.

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

# Church World Service School Kits

Our goal this year is to make 100 school kits to donate to Church World Service for distribution to children who need them. Tags for items to purchase can be found on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

# **BOXES NEEDED**

We are in need of some boxes for a project. If you have any boxes around 12x10x10, please put them in the coffee center. We do not need larger boxes.



The **Annual Church Picnic** is coming up soon! We are looking forward to a great time of food, fun and fellowship on September 7 at 1:03pm at Washington Park's Kiwanis Pavilion. Here are some ways you can help make this an enjoyable afternoon for all:

- Donate a wrapped gift for a Bingo prize (one idea: a gift card to an area restaurant or store)
- Pick up two boxes of pre-ordered, pre-paid chicken at Walmart at noon and take it to the park.
- Make and bring lemonade in a drink cooler/dispenser (supplies available at the church)
- Bring a small pot and supplies for coffee
- Take 4 folding tables, table covers, dinnerware, and games to the Kiwanis Pavilion that morning
- Arrange and cover tables in the Kiwanis Pavilion that morning (directions provided)
- Clean up after the picnic
- Return tables and other items to the church after the picnic

Sign up in the Narthex or call the Church Office.



# Gift cards available for purchase this week:

- Bath & Body Works (1)
- Bob Evans (3)
- Cracker Barrel (2)
- Dick's Sporting Goods (3)
- Eat'n Park (4)
- Jimmy John's (1)
- Old Navy (2)
- Olive Garden (3)
- Outback (1)
- Nike (1)
- Panera (4)
- Red Robin (1)
- Texas Roadhouse (5)

Each gift card has \$25 loaded on them. The church earns an average of 10% on each card sold. Please see Pastor Gena after worship if you would like to purchase a card or  $2 \odot$ .

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



# Children Worship & Wonder resumes August 24

All children age 4 - Grade 5 are welcome to participate in **Children Worship & Wonder**, an age-appropriate, Montessori-based worship experience. Join the CW&W Greeter at the back of the Sanctuary after the Children's Message. Parents are encouraged to accompany their child(ren) on their first visit. All Fairhill adults working with children have required clearances on file, have been selected through a rigorous screening process, and undergo frequent training on abuse awareness and prevention.



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

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

August 17, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome Pastor Gena

Call to Worship Gene Sheller

Leader: Give ear, God of all people.

People: Stir up your strength and deliver us!

Leader: Once you rescued your children from bondage.

People: Now, set your people free.

Leader: Look down from heaven, God of hosts. **People: Turn to us anew and see us in our need.** 

Leader: Restore us, God of Creation. **People: Let your face shine upon us.**Leader: May our suffering cease.

People: May all your children be saved.

**Opening Hymn** 

"Tell Me the Stories of Jesus"

Jody Mullis, pianist

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear; things I would ask him to tell me if he were here: scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea, stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

## Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

Loving God, with you, every transition and new start is a reminder of your goodness, for you are always creating fresh, amazing things in us and through us. Though we are sad about the summer drawing to a close, we are grateful for this new and coming school year. We appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow, knowing it is one of the biggest privileges we have. With thanks and love, we now offer everything we are to you, asking for your blessing.

We pray as and for students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We pray for our hearts and all they hold—excitement and nervousness, disappointment and hope. We give you all our loves and fears. We pray for steady self-love and deepening resilience.

We pray that our minds will expand in wonder and celebration, learning not just from the books we study but from the people around us. Open our minds with a willingness to be changed in unexpected ways, and please settle our minds in please when they are restless.

We pray that we will speak words bringing life and connection. Remind us to take deep breaths when we're feeling anxious or afraid. Remind us to ask for help when we need it and to speak up when things aren't right.

Bless our steps down hallways and sidewalks. We know you are with us wherever we go and wherever we stay. May we stand by those who need encouragement and a warm welcome.

We pray that we may see ourselves and others with compassion. Bless what and how we see, whether we're looking at screens, whiteboards, or the beauty of another person's face. Help us see with the most important eyes—the eyes of your Spirit within us.

Help us to genuinely listen to all voices, especially those that haven't been listened to much. When things get noisy, help us to listen extra carefully for your voice.

Bless our parents and guardians, as the start of a new school year is always another leap of faith. Wrap them with your reassuring love. When questions remain unanswered, and they cannot control everything, bless them with peace and the promise you are right there with their child, whether heading to preschool or driving to college.

Bless our teachers, staff and administrators with courage and confidence, knowing you are in their classrooms, lunchrooms, offices and on their buses, with a steady hand on their shoulders. Give them peace, patience, and balance in the pressures they face. Give them delight in the young ones before them, and recognition of the many ways children are also teachers.

Loving God, would you be very near those who need an extra measure of your comfort and care this day? Would you strengthen and bring your peace to those we have named aloud this morning, each person on our prayer list and those whose names we speak to you now....

We pray for health and wholeness, fun and growth, surprise and amazement, for we know you will hold us all the way through. We love you and we pray to you in the name of Jesus, our Lord and our Savior, 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:**

"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 30

Linda Reese

**Special Music** 

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

Jim Cope

#### Children's Message

Pastor Gena

How are you feeling about starting a new year at school? Thank you for being brave and sharing how you feel.

Going back to school always invites big feelings to come along with us, and those feelings can be different for everyone! Whether we're starting school for the first time, moving to a new school, or staying at the same school, we can all feel happy, nervous, scared, or curious. Sometimes, we can even feel all those feelings at the same time, and that's okay!

But there is some good news in the midst of all those big feelings. God is always with us and knows all about our big feelings. No matter where we go and how we feel, God is always with us. Sometimes God is with us in the friend who includes us in a game or conversation. Sometimes God is with us in the teacher who encourages us or in the bus driver who makes sure we have a seat. Sometimes God is with parent or neighbor or coach or church friend who listens to how we feel and helps us work through those feelings. Sometimes God is in a deep breath or a silent prayer for peace or a feeling of being loved in our hearts.

As we start a new year at school, I want to give you this backpack tag so that whenever you look at it, you can remember God loves you and is always with you in so many ways, no matter what.

Let's share a blessing with other. A blessing is something that you receive, so can you open your hands like you are ready to receive a special gift? As I speak, repeat after me, and imagine the words landing in each one of our hands and on our backpacks.

May these tags remind you that God is always with you. As you sit and as you stand, as you learn and as you play, in every fear and every celebration, may you know that God, your friend, is always there.

Let's take that blessing and put it right into our hearts.

Let's pray together. God of fresh starts and new beginnings, we bring ourselves, our feelings about a new school year, and our backpacks to you. In our backpacks and in our hearts, we carry many things. We wonder what we might learn this year, who we will meet, and how we will grow and change. God, you are our friend. You are always with us. Help us to know you are right with us through it all. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

# **Second Scripture Reading**

John 21:15-25

Rev. Stillwell

## Sermon "Do You Love Me?"

Rev. Chris Stillwell

Today we turn to the gospel of John to hear about Jesus' final post-resurrection appearance to his disciples. Once the resurrection happens we might be tempted to think that its the end of the story, but the Gospel of John has a little more to say. After all, I am sure the disciples were thrilled and amazed that Jesus was returned from the grave but what did it all mean? He gave them no instructions and explained nothing to them. So he went to Jerusalem and was crucified and now he is resurrected but aren't they in the same spot they were in before Palm Sunday? The same rulers were ruling, the same system was in place, the kingdom of God was not here. What had really been accomplished?

Well the gospel writers like to tell things in threes and so John tells of Jesus appearing three times to the disciples. This time, the third time, he appears to them on the shore of the Galilee where he first met them and where they had gone back to their previous life of fishing.

It was daybreak, and they had caught nothing when a stranger appeared on the shore telling them where to cast their nets and we are told that "the disciples did not know that it was Jesus." Only when it worked and they could not pull in their nets because of all the fish that were in it did Peter recognize the man as Jesus. Jesus had said previously that he came so that we could have life in abundance, so when the disciples see their abundance of fish they see in it Christ, himself. When they get back to the shore Christ invites them to share a meal with him.

There is something very special about eating together. Maybe it is because we all must eat that it breaks down the barriers that human beings put up between one another, but the breaking of the bread helps people to let their guard down and communing to commence.

I think it is instructive that the most important act of Jesus Christ, the resurrection, is flanked by two meals. The first meal (which we call the last) started out joyous and ended confusingly as they learned of all that would happen. Now this meal begins confusingly with the disciples not even recognizing Jesus and ends joyously with their redemption.

I would like to think that the sight of Christ brought joy to the disciples' hearts, but I know that if I were Peter, and I had abandoned and denied Christ after I specifically said I wouldn't, it would bring some anxiety as well.

This meal serves as Peter's redemption when Christ asks him "Do you love me?" three times. Each time Peter says that he does and Christ says, "Feed my lambs," "Tend my Sheep", "Feed My Sheep."

This exchange is important because Peter was to be the one upon whom the church would be built, so Christ gives him the keys to building it. Christ had fed his sheep both physically and spiritually and now he hands this awesome responsibility over to Peter.

I don't think Jesus only meant this as a social justice type message in which the disciples are sent out to feed the hungry as they did with the loaves and fishes when Jesus told them, "You give them something to eat" but neither would I suggest we just spiritualize it away either. This is not an either/or choice but a both/and command.

I certainly think this is part of Jesus's message and the church has embarked on a mission that has feeding the hungry as central to its core. A colleague of mine once expressed hope during the recession of 2008 that turmoil would cause more people to value the church because as she put it, no one goes hungry in a church. We feed our sheep.

This is true to be sure, but I think Jesus also meant something more. In the book of Acts it describes the way that the church lived saying:

They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

In this passage, which takes place shortly after Jesus told Peter to feed His sheep if he loved him, Peter and his fellow disciples were certainly doing just that, but we are also led to believe that the disciples were fed as well. The call to follow Christ is an individual call that comes to every person and every person must respond in their own way, but once a person responds to Christ call to follow Him they then find themselves in a community with an obligation on behalf of others.

This is why when we pray the Lord's Prayer we say "give *us* this day *our* daily bread." We pray a communal prayer as part of Christ's "beloved community" as Martin Luther King Jr. described the church. It is that sense of community that is the difference between Heaven and Hell. Listen to this old story:

Upon his death a man was given a tour of both heaven and hell, so he could select his final destination. First, he was taken to Hell. He saw a lot of people sitting at a long banquet table loaded with all kinds of delicious food. However, he noticed that all the people seated were unhappy, and they looked frustrated. They each had a fork strapped to the left arm and a knife strapped to the right arm. Each had a four-foot handle which made it impossible for them to eat. With all kinds of food in front of them they were not able to taste any of it.

After this scene in Hell he was taken on a tour of Heaven. There he noticed that the people in Heaven were also seated at a long banquet table loaded with all kinds of delicious food. They also had forks and knives with a four-foot handle. The difference

here he noticed was that the people here were cheerful and enjoying themselves. They were busy eating because they were feeding each other. Each person in Heaven was feeding the one across the table from him and was being fed in return. The people in Hell were unable to eat because they were trying to feed only themselves.

The story describes that as Hell, but doesn't that also sound like our world? We live in a society that is obsessed with feeding itself. Enough is never enough. Banks engage in risky practices that risk the life savings of their clients for bigger profits, charities are ripped off by Ponzi schemes that promise unrealistic returns, athletes that have the world at their feet throw it all away for lurid affairs, people, who could afford \$100,000 houses not just want but need \$300,000 and it all goes bust. The irony is that the more we worry about taking care of ourselves the more trouble we get into and the less happy we are.

Jesus tells Peter to feed his sheep in order to help the sheep, the ones who are hungry and in need of assistance, but also in order to help Peter, to make him humble, to get him to worry about others instead of just himself, to teach him the lesson that Christ tried to teach at their last meal together that:

The greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. <sup>27</sup>For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

When we feed Christ's sheep, therefore, we are fed as well. We receive the perspective, the humility, indeed the grace that Christ offers over and above all else. Certainly, we see this anytime we help at a food bank, anytime we donate food for a food drive, anytime we help someone purchase groceries, or anytime we prepare a meal for a grieving family. All of these things fulfill Christ's command to "feed my sheep" and all of this is a natural response to the question, "Do You Love me?"

It is not enough to say we love Christ if we do not love each other. We cannot answer Jesus' vital question with a "You know that I love you" if we do not love the people he died for. We cannot love Christ in the church if we do not love Christ in the gutter. Put simply if we love Christ we will love others. If we love them we will feed them. We will work to meet their physical needs.

But there is more. Whenever we commemorate the Lords Supper we call it communion because we are in communion with Christ and also with one another. There is something very powerful in the passing of the plate and the cup as we feed each other. Certainly we could each of us take the cup and bread ourselves but in handing the tray from person to person we acknowledge the presence of others, our place in the community and our interdependence on one another.

That is why I like having communion weekly. Some churches do it monthly or quarterly so as to maintain its specialness, but I think we need to be reminded of our connectedness as often as possible. After asking Peter three times Do you love me, Jesus goes on to say to him:

Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.

We like to think that we are independent, but we are not. We feed others in part because we know we need to be fed ourselves. There are days when we are strong and at our best and we need no one's help for anything, but the days do come when we are down, we ache, we worry, and we need someone else to feed us physically or perhaps spiritually and we hope that others will do for us what we have previously done for them.

A common refrain from people who leave a church is that "I just wasn't being fed." What does that mean? Maybe they didn't like the sermons, maybe the worship style wasn't to their taste, maybe there were not enough opportunities for service, but I suspect that it speaks to a passiveness in their mind set. Some people just want to be fed like babies not because they cannot do it for themselves, but because they don't want to do it for themselves.

This type of faith is no faith at all. Paul tells us that we are saved through faith but James reminds us that faith without works is dead. In other words we are called to an active faith, and we will find that we are fed best when we more concerned with feeding others. This is true physically when we pass the bread and the cup to one another, but it is most true spiritually.

Those who give shall receive. If you say you love Christ then share Christ's love. If you want joy, share joy. If you want a deeper connection with God, help others develop their connection with God and I think that you will find your own grow as well.

That is what happened to the disciples. How beautiful that Jesus Christ was recognized by the disciples in the breaking of the bread. For whether we feed each other bread or we feed each other encouragement Christ is there, the kingdom has come near; on earth as it is in heaven. Let us show our love for Christ by making sure that the church is a place where people get fed by feeding each other just as Jesus commanded.

Carol Daniels

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Yet how good it is to see living acts of faith in Christ's church and its people. Bless, O Lord, the offerings we give, that others may know your love, and come to trust your provision and peace. Amen.

# The Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow! Praise God, all creatures here below! Praise God above, ye heavenly hosts! Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## **Dedication of Offering Prayer**

Rev. Stillwell

Great Spirit, receive the gifts from our hands this day. For you rescue us from ourselves and free us to love others, as you have loved us. After a long slumber in ignorance and fear, we offer you our gratitude for the joy that comes in the morning. Accept this offering, as a sign of our commitment, to tend your sheep and feed your lambs. Amen.

# **Invitation to Communion** Rev. Stillwell

If you have ever been hungry then you know how important it is to find food. I am sure we take this for granted for most people for most of their lives have some idea from where the next meal will come. To know true hunger is to not know how you will get your next meal, and if you have ever experienced that then being told where you can be fed would be a true gift, indeed. I think of this when we come to this table for many reasons. The first, is that in Jesus's time people often did not know when or how they would eat next, so when a man came to town and fed thousands with so little fish and bread, it was indeed an important and exciting miracle. When we share this meal we first remember that Jesus met people's physical needs.

Second, I think it is beautiful and instructive that Jesus was identified by his disciples in the breaking of the bread. This occurred during his appearance to Peter and the others on the shore of Galilee and also to Cleopas and the unnamed disciple on the road to Emmaus. We meet Jesus Christ in the same way. None of us knew him when he lived in this world. None of us saw him on the cross or rising out of the tomb. Without the act of communion we would be simply trying to retell the story that was retold by someone who retold a story of the first disciples, and we all know how stories change and get distorted the more degrees of separation that exist in the retelling. Without this meal we would have no personal connection to the story.

But Christ is revealed to us in word and sacrament. We see him and come to know him in the breaking of the bread. There we have a personal encounter, a true connection. We go to the communion table and find ourselves walking on the road to Emmaus or sitting on the shore of Galilee.

Finally, whenever we share in this meal I remember the words of the preacher D. T. Niles who said, "Christianity is one beggar telling another beggar where he found bread". Sometimes it is literally bread, but often times it is grace, forgiveness, and hope. That is all evangelism is, and it is quite enough.

We come to this table to be fed physically and spiritually and we are called to go out and tell others where they can find their needs met. Even in times of famine God provides a table for us, feeding us with mercy. Come to this table— where strangers become siblings and foes become friends; where wanderers are welcome and humble ones are honored; where the sick find salvation and the outcast find open arms.

Come the table is set and all are invited.

### **Communion Hymn**

"Fairest Lord Jesus"

Sam Johnson, organist

Fairest Lord Jesus, ruler of all nature, O thou of God to earth come down; thee will I cherish, thee will I honor, thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

## Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Gary Ford

Heavenly Father, as we come to Your table and prepare to take this communion we remember your message to your Disciples and then to us, that we are to care for one another. Each of us has failed you and for that we ask forgiveness. May this bread and cup fill us with your love, help us to serve others and to be faithful disciples. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Words of Institution Rev. Stillwell

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

#### **Sharing Holy Communion**

You will receive the bread and cup together. Please hold them; we will take each together as one body. Disciples of Christ believe in an Open Table. All who profess Christ and follow Him are welcome to share His meal. Gluten free wafers are available in the Narthex.

Call to Discipleship

Rev. Stillwell

This is the promise of the gospel: God already knows you. God already loves you. God has already gifted you. God has already called you. You are invited—to deepen this knowledge, to feast in this love, to cultivate these gifts, and to follow this calling. There is a place for you among the people of God in this community of faith.

If you have come to know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior and you would like to profess that you intend to begin a life of faith, learning to walk in his way of Love, you are welcome to contact one of the Pastors to take this step. If you would like to join this part of the Body of Christ at Fairhill Manor Christian Church, to covenant to journey together in this life of faith, please reach out to one of the Pastors to learn more. We all take these moments to rededicate our lives to following Jesus.

**Closing hymn** 

"My Jesus, I Love Thee"

Sam Johnson, organist

My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine; for thee all the follies of sin I resign; my gracious Redeemer, my Savior art thou; if ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

**Benediction** Rev. Stillwell

Christ asks, "Do you love me? Feed my lambs." We love you. Receive our love, Lord. Christ challenges, "Do you love me? Tend my sheep." We love you. Receive our service, Holy One. Christ entreats, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep." We love you. Receive our gifts, gracious savior. Having been fed let go to feed the world.



**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 McDonough 949 Bruce Street Washington PA 15301

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

Barb Bailey Terry Bailey Donna Bakaitis Todd Barnhart

Vanessa & John Bereznay

Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Ruth Cox
Dave Davis
Sue Donaldson
Craig Dotson
Benjamin Dube
Connie Faust
Gary Ford

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Cece Watson

# In the Military

Bo & Patty Pryor

**Doris Sorice** 

880 S Main St, Apt 102

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Washington PA 15301

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.