

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 35
August 29, 2025

- Office Closed – Labor Day, September 1
 - Dartball – September 2, 7pm @ Home
 - Personnel Committee – September 3, 6pm via Zoom
 - Choir Practice – September 4, 6:30pm
- Stay up to date at www.fairhillmanorchurch.org/calendar



Annual Church Picnic – September 7, 1:03pm
Washington Park Kiwanis Pavilion. Bring a side dish and/or dessert to join in the fun and fellowship. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex to let us know how many people to plan for.

Sunday School News

Safe Conduct Orientation - all children and youth who participate in any Fairhill Manor program for the 2025-2026 year must attend the Orientation on **Sunday, September 7 at 9am**. We will meet in the Small Fellowship Hall. Breakfast will be provided. Parents and/or guardians are required to attend this orientation along with the young people they will bring to church activities. All adults working with children and those who hold church offices are strongly encouraged to attend. Please let Pastor Gena know by **September 2** that you will be attending.

Children Class: Cara Hritz will teach the children's class and meet in the children's room downstairs next to the women's restroom. She will be using the "Follow Me" curriculum.

Youth Class - Pastor Gena will teach the youth class and meet in the balcony. She will be using the "Follow Me" curriculum.

Bykota Class (mixed age adult): The Bykota Class will meet in the Small Fellowship Hall and will be led by Connie Sheller. She will be using the "Present Word" curriculum. All are invited and welcome.

Board Reports due to the office by Thursday, September 4, at noon.

Memorial Brick Garden

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.

We will collect a 5th Sunday of the month offering for the **Funeral Dinner Fund this Sunday, August 31**. Envelopes will be included in the bulletin. Please give as you can.

 **RaiseRight**
GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Gift cards available for purchase this week:

- Bath & Body Works (1)
- Dick's Sporting Goods (3)
- Eat'n Park (3)
- Jimmy John's (1)
- Old Navy (2)
- Olive Garden (3)
- Outback (1)
- Panera (3)
- 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 ☺.

Who Do You



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Chuck Riggle, Bread
Jody Mullis, Cup
August 31, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Gene Sheller

Leader: Where can we stand when God is shaking the Earth?

People: We will stand on the promises of God.

Leader: Where can we find support when our foundations fail?

People: We will lean on the everlasting arms of God.

Leader: Where can we find hope in times like these?

People: We will live for the one who died for us all.

Opening Hymn

“Standing on the Promises”

Jody Mullis, pianist

Standing on the promises of Christ my king, through eternal ages let his praises ring; glory in the highest, I will shout and sing, standing on the promises of God. Standing, standing, standing on the promises of God my Savior; standing, standing, I’m standing on the promises of God.

Dedication of Sophia Pearl Roach

Pastor Gena

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

O Lord God, how majestic is your name in all the earth! The heavens and the earth proclaim your glory from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, as the air grows cooler and we settle into our warm homes, we praise you, for you are with us in all times and in all places.

Forgive us, Lord, for forgetting your presence with us when things are easy in our lives. When we are well, when we have more than we need, when we are settled and secure – it is often in these times that we rely on you less and turn to other things for fulfillment. As you are with us always, so turn us toward you, that we may find joy in your presence in all sorts of circumstances, sharing our thanksgiving, our relief, and our hearts with you. Turn us always toward you, our fountain of living water. Keep us ever learning more about who you are.

We give you thanks for communities of support in times of grief and loss. For those who gather around us to support us, to soothe us, to listen to us, we are grateful. We give you thanks for our children and for all who help us raise them. Give us the courage to allow them to discover their own interests and ways of being while surrounding them with the constancy of your love and grace. May we marvel at your creativity as they grow and change.

Please comfort those who are mourning. Bring an extra measure of your presence to those who are lonely. Lift up and encourage those who are healing and recovering. Bring peace to those who are waiting and wondering. We pray for relief for those who are in pain. Now hear our prayers for those who are on our prayer list, especially those who long to be home and those who cannot leave their homes, those whose names we have spoken aloud this morning, those whose name we don't know but who surely need your help, and those we name to you now in this silence...

O Lord, you know what each of us needs. Prompt us to reach out when we can be the source of comfort and encouragement, presence and grace that someone else needs. We pray all of this in the name of the Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, 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

Jeremiah 2:4-13

Connie Sheller

Anthem

“Standing in the Need of Prayer”

Choir

Children's Message

Pastor Gena

There is a lovely process that we can use at the close of our day to look back over the day, to read a story from the Bible, to consider what God might be saying to us, and to pray for and bless each other. Some people have called this series of steps FAITH5. This is something you can do with a parent or another adult before bed. You can do this with a brother or sister. You can do this over the phone with a grandparent or someone else who loves you.

Let's try it together. (See more at www.faith5.org)

One type of blessing might be to draw a cross on each other's' foreheads, saying “God loves you” as you draw the up-and-down part, and “and I love you” as you draw the across part.

The sooner you begin this process as a nighttime practice, the more routine it becomes for you, and you actually feel like something is missing when you don't do it. Some people start this practice before their children even realize what is going on by blessing them each night. As their children grow, they add in more of the pieces until they have the full FAITH5.

Here is a bookmark that can remind you of the steps.

Dear God, thank you for each day. At the end of each day, help us to pause and reflect, growing closer to each other and to you. Bless us as we go. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 16:13-20

Rev. Stillwell

When our fish, Flanders, died many years ago I cleaned up the fish tank and put it in the garage. I threw out the little colored rocks that lined the bottom and I was figuring on taking the big rocks and throwing them into the garden, but Jessi made sure that I did no such thing, because, it turned out, that she took those rocks from Lake Erie when she was a child for her own fish tank because she said they were just the most perfect little rocks.

Now to me they were just rocks. A little bigger and a little smoother than other rocks, but rocks just the same. The thing with rocks is that none of them are perfect. Any rock you look at will have bumps and nicks and pores. Even in the greatest wall, such as the Great Wall of China, there are millions of rocks with many imperfections, but they come together and make one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Usually when we think of rocks we don't get inspired. Rocks are generally ugly or plain and they just sit there. We use phrases such as dumb as a rock because we do not hold rocks in high regard, until we need them that is. When that moment comes we use them for the building blocks of just about anything like, walls, buildings, roads, and foundations.

So I wonder how Peter felt when Jesus called him a rock. More specifically he said “you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” The grammar of the sentence indicates that when Jesus says, “on this rock” he was not pointing to a rock by the side of the road, but to Peter himself. Peter was the rock.

In fact, that is how he got his name. Remember that he was called Simon originally and sometimes Simon Peter. When Jesus said he was the rock he did so in Greek, so he said, “You are Petros.” In this way Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter, and when we read Simon Peter it is the gospel writers writing from after the resurrection letting us know that the man whom Jesus called by the Galilee would later become the famed apostle, Peter.

So not only was he called a rock, he became known as the rock. If I called you a rock you might think I was insulting your intelligence, but you might also think that I was saying that you are steady, steadfast, or strong. While the disciples had come to expect the unexpected with Jesus it would still have been too much of a stretch to believe that Jesus was going to build a church on Peter because he was dumb. It was much more likely that he would build it on Peter because his faith was strong as evidenced by the fact that he was the first of the disciples to confess Jesus as the Christ when he said, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

I guess being called the rock made Peter feel good, but apparently it made him feel too good, because, only a few verses later, Jesus declares that he will be crucified and so Peter, the rock upon which the church will be built, takes the authority vested in his new position and uses it to rebuke Jesus.

We might think that if Peter thinks Jesus is the Messiah then whatever he says goes. Peter, however, thinks that if Jesus is the Messiah then he is bound by what the Bible says about the messiah and nowhere does it say he will die, or so Peter believes. Peter was rewarded for his strong and unmoving faith, but it was his unmoving faith that also got him into trouble. Peter was just keeping the faith and if he had to tell God what to do, so be it.

It is all about expectations. Some people expect God to be God so when new and unexpected things come their way, they look for the hand of God knowing that God can do all things, while others expect God to be bound by the Bible, but of course, their own interpretation of it.

After Jesus' crucifixion most gave up hope that Jesus was the Messiah, possibly even Peter, certainly his faith wavered tremendously. They concluded that that was not how the scriptures proclaimed the Messiah would be. After the resurrection the gospel writers and church fathers worked to explain how the Bible did predict Jesus' life. According to them, thousands of years of Jewish interpretation had it wrong.

The problem is that we can have it wrong too. Just because we are Christian does not mean we know everything about Christ. Just because we read the Bible doesn't mean that we should ever believe that we always know the right way to read it. We can never assume that our knowledge is so great that we know exactly how God should act, for only God knows what is best.

Fred Craddock was a Disciple's preacher of great renown. He is probably the most well-known disciple's preacher and one of the best Protestant preachers there is and I have quoted him often. In his devotional for Lent he says "We believe the Messiah has come, but, even so, we tend to talk less of what he said and more of what we want. We may be disappointed."

We may be disappointed, not because God is not great or because Christ's grace is not sufficient, but because we want to be in control. We want to be the mason and not the rock upon which he builds. That's what Peter wanted. When he found out the church was to be built upon him it made him arrogant and made him start telling God what to do. He had it confused. Jesus told him he would be a rock in the church, but Peter thought he would be the architect.

Peter does a lot of things wrong. He rebukes Jesus, he denies him, he has a lot of doubts along the way, yet Jesus never takes back his words, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church." I think Peter is the rock because he represents humanity in all of its forms; the good and the bad. Like Peter we get it right sometimes, and we get it wrong sometimes, still God chooses to use simple people like you and me to build God's kingdom. The qualification to be a rock in God's kingdom is not perfection, but faith; the ability to see Christ for who he is and believe that he is the Messiah.

If Jesus were to ask you, "Who do you say that I am?" what would be your answer today? Some might call Him a great teacher. Some might call Him a good example. Some might call Him a legend. These are superficial experiences with Jesus that are reminiscent of the crowd's answers in our passage. Jesus is inviting each person to live out an experience of faith that boldly proclaims His identity to the world. He is the Messiah! The One who has come to save the world from sin.

Our answers to "Who is Jesus?" are as varied as our experiences: Healer, Friend, Strength, Guide, and Redeemer. Peter serves as our example to be ready to answer for what we know to be true about who Jesus is. He writes later in one of his letters: "You must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope, always be ready to explain it" (1 Peter 3:15). As followers of Jesus, we are called to be ready to answer the question of who Jesus is in our lives. We can answer he is the Messiah, which is true, but we could also answer he is my friend, he is my hope, he is my guide and comfort. We are not asked as if it were a test, but to share from our own lived experiences of how Christ's goodness has changed our lives.

This works as long as our faith doesn't go to our heads. This works as long as we remember who is in charge and let God be God. Jesus used the image of rock to describe Peter because of the sturdiness of his faith, but remember rocks can still sometime roll. Sometimes, if the Spirit blows strong enough rocks do move from one place to another as Peter did when he acknowledged that what Christ had said concerning his crucifixion was true. If even the great apostle can be wrong why can't we?

When we confess that Jesus is the Messiah and believe that he is the one who builds the kingdom of God then, like Peter, we can be used as stones. Even with all of our imperfections together we can build a kingdom.

Call to Offering

Charlotte Stillwell

Friends, by the mercies of our God, let us present our whole selves and all of our gifts as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, so that we might discern God's will and participate in God's work.

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

Receive our gifts, Holy One, and attune our awareness to those who are in need. May today's offering help welcome the stranger, uphold the prisoner, feed the hungry, and lift the poor and needy from poverty. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

I once ate a cake that, on the surface at least, was very plain. There was some white icing on top and nothing else. I only ate it out of politeness, but I was glad I did, because, after it was cut, it was revealed that there were layers of chocolate, raspberries, cream, and more underneath. Looking at the top it wasn't very enticing, but once I saw all the layers of tasty goodness that made up the whole cake, I needed to take a bite.

It makes me think of rocks. I know that sounds strange but bear with me a moment. Rocks seem plain and boring, and individually they may be, but when piled on top of one another they can make something beautiful. Think of the way that a geologist would study a mountain. It is never enough to just study the surface. In fact doing so is how we get the expression, "Just scratching the surface." Rather, they need to study the whole thing by taking into account the layers that have formed it. In this way a hike into the Grand Canyon is something like a walk back in time. The lower you go, the older the layers of rock are with each layer a different chapter in the story of the Grand Canyon. The surface at the canyon's top is not too much to look at, and it does not tell the canyon's whole story.

On the surface we may not be much to look, underneath is our memories, our experiences, our feelings, and all that makes up who we are. We give thanks that Christ looks beyond the surface of things to get to all that we are. It makes sense because, on the surface of this table this meal doesn't look like much, but it is so important to us because of the many layers of meaning that undergird it.

There are the symbols of cup and bread which reminds us of Christ's sacrifice, the table itself, which reminds us of his last supper and betrayal, the passing of the emblems which reminds us to serve one another as Christ served us, and there is the great cloud of witnesses which we believe surround us when we partake together. As we share in this meal let us give thanks that Christ is one who does not look only at the surface of things. Let us go and do likewise

Communion Hymn

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"

Sam Johnson, organist

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms; what a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning on the everlasting arms. Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms; leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Chuck Riggle

Dear Heavenly Father, we humbly bow down before you on this sunny and warm last Sunday of August. We thank you for your constant presence in our lives and pray that we will continue to experience your many blessings. We are extremely grateful to be reminded today of your son, Jesus Christ, whom Simon Peter proclaimed in scripture to be the Messiah, the son of the living God. We are also reminded that your son and our savior gave his life for us. As we partake of the bread and the cup which represent Jesus' broken body and shed blood, make us worthy Christians as we participate in this holy ritual. 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

“Living for Jesus”

Sam Johnson, organist

Living for Jesus a life that is true, striving to please him in all that I do; yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free, this is the pathway of blessing for me. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to thee, for thou, in thy atonement, didst give thyself for me; I own no other master, my heart shall be thy throne, my life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for thee alone.

Benediction


Rev. Stillwell

May the joy of the Lord warm your hearts; may the peace of the Lord calm your spirits; and may the word of the Lord direct your ways.

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ?

James 1:17 reminds us about the source of every blessing. According to this verse, how is God described?

- A. The one who changes like shifting shadows
- B. The giver of wisdom to the faithful
- C. The Father of heavenly lights who does not change
- D. The one who rewards those who are generous



Answer: C (See James 1:17)



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 Berezney
Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Ruth Cox
Dave Davis
Sue Donaldson
Craig Dotson
Benjamin Dube
Connie Faust
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Barb Graff
Doris Haniford
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Alberta Haught

Southminster Residents

880 S Main St
Washington PA 15301

Bo & Patty Pryor, Apt 102
Doris Sorice, Apt 336
Chuck Wiseman, Apt 214

Aryn Hess
Danni Iams
Ed Jackman
Kari Johnson
Brandon Keenan
Von Lacock
Marylee Lawrence
David Leonard
Linda Martin
Pam McCord
Norm McDonough
Dick Moninger
Joe Neckerman
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Michelle Oneal
Sandy Petry
Dick Pilgun
Nyka Rash
Betty Riecks
Jeannie Riffle
Joan Riffle
Lori Riffle
Dee Ryan
Mike Ryan

Premier Residents

36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd
Washington PA 15301

Carol Brown, Rm 213

John Samida
Gene Sheller
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Sprowls
Wayne Starnes
Cathy Stewart
Jan Stillwell
Beth Teagarden
Jane Teagarden
Ginger Throckmorton
Candy Wasalasky
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.