



Thoughts from Rev. Chris



As Christmas approaches once again, so, too, does my son's birthday. I marvel that it has been 18 years since Christmas changed for me forever. I will never again celebrate just Christmas, but I will celebrate Christmas and birthday, the birth of Christ and the birth of Owen, all in the same week. A busy time became even busier. A merry time became even more merry. An expensive time became much more so. One thing that comes with Christmas that never changed and never will change, however, is the hope that comes with the belief that God is born and is with us.

I need that hope now more than ever, and I imagine you do as well. Christ comes not for celebrations and parties, not for fun and games, not for TV specials and store sales, but so that each person may know his or her true worth. Our value is not measured by how many presents we get and neither is our spirit judged by how many presents we give. Rather, our value is shown in that God became human and endured the pains of this world for us; each of us. Our Spirit is based on how we respond to that fact, which is partly how we give, but mostly how we live. Charles Dickens' classic, "A Christmas Carol," ends with Scrooge putting away his miserly ways and embracing generosity, but one day of such living would not have negated his lifetime of stinginess and greed.

It must be assumed that Scrooge spent the rest of his life living as if every day were Christmas, and every day he knew that every person was valuable no matter their class, creed, or politics, and every day he gave from his spirit the treasures he could share, whether they were gold, cheer, kindness, or encouragement.

That's what we must do each Christmas, or the hope of Christ will die in us like a candle running out of wick when Christmas future fades into Christmas past. Each Christmas is different. Each has different memories and moments, but they all have the same hope. Let that hope be your greatest Christmas gift this year.

Rev. Chris

# Manor Talk

A Publication of  
Fairhill Manor  
Christian Church

**Rev. Chris Stillwell**  
Senior Minister

**Rev. Gena Sheller**  
Associate Pastor

**Karen Thomas**  
Administrative Assistant

**Gary Ford**  
Congregational Moderator

**Brian Shaw**  
Financial Secretary

**Jim Cope**  
Choir Director

**Sam Johnson**  
Organist

**Jody Mullis**  
Pianist

**Claudia Lopez**  
Custodian

**Stacy Thomas**  
Wedding Coordinator

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1 Cadence Shetler  
3 Beverly Lane  
Tammie Wallace  
5 Ed Palfreyman  
7 Chris Crowe  
8 Von Lacock, Jr.  
10 Joshua Hatfield  
11 Kristin Ramirez  
12 Lauren Kunkle  
13 Chuck Riggle  
17 Lela Davidson  
Rita Puskarich  
18 Sheila Harris  
Elizabeth Herrnberger  
Ty Lacock  
Owen Stillwell  
19 Avery Allen  
Linda Dallatore  
20 Carol Daniels  
21 Waylon Newman  
26 Hollan Martinek  
29 Lisa Shriver  
31 Carmen Oliverio



Happy  
ANNIVERSARY

1 Zach & Laura Houston  
6 Kirk & Debbie McDonough  
8 Charles & Patty McConnell  
28 Kevin & Sharel O'Connell  
31 Justin & Courtney Gatten

**Drive-Thru Nativity**  
**December 13 & 14**  
**6-8pm**

**Bethany Class Christmas Party**  
**December 19**  
**Noon**  
**Small Fellowship Hall**

**Blue Christmas Service**  
**December 17**  
**7pm**

**Breakfast at the Manger**  
**December 21**  
**9am**

**Christmas Eve Service**  
**December 24**  
**7pm**

12/2 @ West Washington  
12/9 @ Laboratory  
12/16 @ Home  
12/23 No Dartball  
12/30 No Dartball

The **Community Circle Food Pantry** is collecting items for their holiday boxes.

**Christmas** box items needed are instant potatoes, green beans, cream of mushroom, stuffing, corn, gravy, cake mix with icing or cookie mix, and candy canes.

**Christmas** donations are needed by December 12, 2025.



Pastor Gena is looking for someone who likes to decorate to help spruce up the tables for the Breakfast at the Manger to create a warm welcoming atmosphere.

Meet Claudia....

Claudia Montoya Lopez began working as our Custodian in October 2025. She is a native of California but has lived in Washington for 10 years with her husband Cesar, mother Maria and three children, Cesar (13), Evelyn (11) and Joshua (6).



Claudia first became acquainted with Fairhill Manor Christian Church about 10 years ago when she studied English as a Second Language (ESL) with the Literacy Council of Southwestern PA, which is housed in our building. Claudia began cleaning for a living about 6 years ago. She finds this work allows her the flexibility she needs to take care of her children and her household while also helping to support her family financially.

Claudia enjoys spending time with her family, especially going to parks and paddle boating at Oglebay Park.

We are blessed to have Claudia with us. Her spirit is uplifting and her dedication to her work is admirable. Be sure to stop by and introduce yourself to our newest staff member!

### Blue Christmas Service December 17, 7pm

If Christmas brings for you the pain of a loved one lost or a feeling that, after the last present is opened, something is still missing, or if Christmas brings along with its excitement stress and strain, then we invite you to come to Fairhill Manor Christian Church on Wednesday, December 17 at 7pm for "Blue Christmas: A Service of Hope and Comfort." This year we will worship in the chapel to share the hope and light of Christ to those who have been sitting in darkness.

This is a service that takes place near the winter solstice, which is the longest night of the year, in order to remind us that Jesus Christ came as a light in the darkness. This will be a simple, low-key service, with candle lighting, a sermon, communion, and a prayer that acknowledges whatever pain you are feeling amidst the celebration. Above all, however, it will give you a time to grieve your loss, lift your cares from your soul, and rest in God for a while.



**Fairhill Manor Christian Church Board Report**  
**Secretary Minutes**  
**November 12, 2025**

**We Assemble in God's Name**

Moderator Gary Ford called the meeting to order at 6:59pm. He opened the meeting with a devotion, prayer and lighting of the Christ Candle.

**We Celebrate our Past**

The FMCC Board reviewed the submitted reports from the Senior Minister, Associate Pastor, Board Secretary, Treasurer and Church Clerk.

Moderator Gary Ford asked if there were any questions regarding these reports or if there were any comments from the person submitting these reports.

Jerry Puskarich suggested a couple corrections. On page 2 of the Senior Minister's report, the word "add" should be "ad." On page 4 of the Associate Pastor's report, the word "continue" should be "continues."

Brian Shaw noted that the \$4,300 deficit showing in the Roof Fund will be offset with funds from the Fawcett Fund through the Trustees' checking account.

A motion to accept these reports was made by Ed Palfreyman and seconded by Linda Reese. The motion was carried unanimously.

**We Present Our Offering**

The FMCC Board reviewed the submitted Ministry Reports. Reports were received from the Elders, Trustees, Stewardship/Finance Ministry, and Personnel Committee.

Moderator Gary Ford asked if there were any questions regarding these reports or if there were any comments from the person submitting these reports.

Jerry Puskarich presented additional notes to the Stewardship/Finance Report verbally (see attached Jerry's written report).

Serena Dube noted that members of the Personnel Committee, Trustees, and the Pastors met today with Claudia Montoya Lopez for the 30-day review of her work as our new Custodian. Claudia is doing well.

Serena also added that the Operating Deficit Task Force would like to establish itself as a permanent "Ministry" rather than continue as a Special/Standing Committee. Jerry Puskarich suggested that the name of the new Ministry be "Gathering to Grow." Rev. Chris questioned why the Task Force could not continue under the name of the Evangelism/Outreach Ministry or the Fellowship Ministry since that is the nature of the work they are doing. This will be discussed further at the January Board meeting.

A motion to accept the Ministry Reports was made by Peggy Oliverio and seconded by Carmen Oliverio. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Concerns of the Past (Old Business)**

No old business was brought forth.

## **Issues of the Future (New Business)**

### **1. Calling Commission nominations for 2026 Church Officers**

The Calling Commission submitted its nominations for Church Officers in 2026. Moderator Gary asked that Candy Wasalasky be added to the list as Secretary, as she has agreed to serve in that capacity.

Linda Reese made the motion to recommend the slate of nominated 2026 Officers to the congregation. Jerry Puskarich provided the second. During discussion of the motion, Gene Sheller noted that the Moderator can nominate someone at any time to serve on the Personnel Committee, should someone be willing to serve. A vacancy in any Office can be filled by nomination of the Moderator in consultation with the Pastors and election by the Board. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **2. Salting/Plowing the church parking lot**

Trustee Ed Palfreyman told the board that Shane Fowler cannot do the salting and plowing of the church parking lot this winter due to his upcoming surgery. The Trustees are actively seeking bids for doing the salting and plowing and will welcome any contacts. Kevin Puskarich suggested that only part of the lot could be plowed during the week to help save on salt and snow removal costs.

### **3. Proposed Budget for 2026**

Treasurer Brian Shaw highlighted that there is a 2.7% increase for staff. A full or partial increase can be given based on performance. We have saved \$3600 by switching to Verizon for internet and phones. Key costs to consider for next year will be increases in the plowing/salting, electricity and gas bills. The new janitor will receive the same hourly rate as the former, but she will be working fewer hours (20 instead of 25).

The motion to recommend the 2026 budget to the congregation was made by Kevin Puskarich with a second by Ed Palfreyman. During discussion, Serena Dube asked if it's time to retire the church van. Jerry Puskarich said we can't justify the cost of keeping it, and getting rid of it would open up more room in the garage. Trustees will see what they could get if they sold the van. Will discuss further. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **4. Outside groups interested in using the church facility and grounds**

#### **a. Dalton Harps – Car Cruise**

Rev. Chris received a request from Dalton Harps of Rick's Auto to use the church parking lot for car shows on Sunday afternoons from May through September. Discussion followed. Jamie Hatfield knows from experience that selling food at car shows can be quite profitable. Carmen Oliverio made a motion to permit the use of the parking lot for car shows. Jamie Hatfield seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

#### **b. Soccer Shots – Large Fellowship Hall**

Rev. Chris received a request from a group called "Soccer Shots" to use the large hall on Saturdays in January and February from 9-1:30. Discussion followed. Chuck Riggle made a motion to let Soccer Shots use the large hall and Kevin Puskarich provided the second. The motion was carried unanimously.

## **Other Discussion**

Von Lacock said that the church has received a check from the Literacy Council (a grant from EQT) for \$25,000 to air condition the Large Fellowship Hall.

Chuck Riggle said 50 people attended the Notes of Thanks concert and \$827 was raised.

Connie Sheller stated animals are needed for the Drive-Thru Nativity.

There is a Congregational Meeting scheduled for November 23, 2025 following worship.

### **Leaving in God's Name**

Carmen Oliverio motioned to adjourn the meeting with a second by Ed Palfreyman. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **In Attendance**

Gary Ford (Moderator), Eleanor Boyles (Zoom), Carol Davis, Dave Davis, Serena Dube, Jamie Hatfield, Sheila Harris, Terry Houston, Von Lacock (Zoom), Jody Mullis (Zoom), Jackie Nelson, Carmen Oliverio, Peggy Oliverio, Ed Palfreyman, Jerry Puskarich, Kevin Puskarich, Rita Puskarich, Linda Reese, Chuck Riggle, Brian Shaw,\* Connie Sheller, Gene Sheller, Tom Ulery, Candy Wasalasky, Senior Minister Chris Stillwell,\* Pastor Gena Sheller.\*

Non-Board Member – Lois Shaw (Zoom)

\*Indicates non-voting members.

**The next board meeting will be Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 7pm.**

Submitted in Christian love,  
Rita Puskarich  
Board Secretary



**Altar flowers** are a beautiful way to honor your loved ones: as a memorial for those departed, on a special occasion for those who are near and dear, or even "just because." If you would like to order altar flowers, contact Karen in the Church Office at (724) 225-8610. The cost is **\$35** for a vase arrangement. Flowers need to be ordered on the Monday of the week you would like them on the Altar. Order forms are also available in the Narthex.

## December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	NA 7pm	Dartball 7pm @ West Washington	NA 6:45pm	Choir Practice 6:30pm  NA 7:30pm		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sunday School 9am  Worship 10:15am	NA 7pm	Dartball 7pm @ Laboratory	Elders Meeting 5:30pm  NA 6:45pm	Choir Practice 6:30pm  NA 7:30pm		Drive-Thru Nativity 6-8pm
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Sunday School 9am  Worship 10:15am  Drive-Thru Nativity 6-8pm	NA 7pm	Dartball @ Home 7pm	NA 6:45pm  Blue Christmas 7pm	Choir Practice 6:30pm  NA 7:30pm	Bethany Class Christmas Party Noon Small Fellowship Hall	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Breakfast at the Manger 9am  Worship 10:15am	NA 7pm	No Dartball	Christmas Eve Service 7pm		Office Closed	
28	29	30	31			
No Sunday School  Worship 10:15am	NA 7pm	No Dartball	NA 6:45pm			