

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 27
July 4, 2025

- Elders Meeting – July 9, 5:30pm
- Board Meeting – July 9, 7pm

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

Lela Davidson has a **new phone number**. It is (724) 795-6023. Please use this number to contact her.



Wild Things

FMCC Night at
Washington Wild Things
Friday, August 22, 7pm
Fireworks Night

Tickets - \$10/person
Parking Pass - \$2/car

Sign up in the Narthex for tickets and parking passes.

Please turn in cash or check
(payable to FMCC) to the office by **August 3**

FMCC will be 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.

 **RaiseRight**
GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Gift cards available this week



Each gift card has \$25 loaded on it. 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 😊.

- Cracker Barrel (1)
- Dick's (1)
- Olive Garden (2)
- Outback (2)
- Panera Bread (1)
- Texas Roadhouse (5)



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

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

July 6, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Kevin Puskarich

Leader: All are welcome here. Whether you are heavy-hearted, wondering if there is power to make you well, or feel weighed down by many demands,

People: The kingdom of God has come near.

Leader: Whether you are burdened by rules others have imposed or you are a keeper and maker of rules,

People: The kingdom of God has come near.

Leader: Whether you feel at home in this place or you long to be accepted,

People: The kingdom of God has come near.

Leader: Come and worship God, the One who writes our names in the book of life and dares us to become new creations in Jesus.

All: The kingdom of God has come near.

Opening Hymn

“O Beautiful for Spacious Skies”

Jody Mullis, pianist

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, for purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain! America! America! God shed full grace on thee, and crown thy good with servanthood from sea to shining sea.

Service of Commissioning

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Rev. Stillwell

Invigorating God, the air is warm, the sky is clear: We can see clearly now, the rain is gone. For the pleasure of summer fun, the long days and long nights, for the fireflies and even the mosquitoes, we give you thanks. Let your Holy Spirit invigorate our step, show us flowers along the way and bring us great gladness.

Peaceful and merciful God, you promise that your Kingdom is within our reach. Yet we are often distracted by disagreements, demands, requirements, and rejections. Have mercy O Lord; be our helper. As we seek to follow Jesus, our rules and offences can separate us. Help us to refrain from deepening our divisions, and empower us to restore one another, fulfilling Christ's command to love.

God of freedom and Source of hope, You have led people to deliverance in every age. Bless those who struggle against cruelty and oppression. Grant them courage and fortitude, safety and strength. May their purpose remain righteous, and their vision focused on peace and justice.

Have mercy, O Lord. You promise us victory over all that threatens to separate us from your presence. Help us forsake earthly power and victory, as we strive for the love your kingdom brings. Have mercy O Lord; be our helper. We ask for your grace to become more like Jesus, letting go of fleeting rewards of earthly status and recognition. Help us seek instead the eternal reward of resting in your loving arms.

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

2 Kings 5:1-14

Von Lacock

Special Music

“Seek Thou, This Soul of Mine”

Trombone Duet – Carson Throckmorton and Jim Cope

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

I used to hate fireworks. When I was very little they scared me, and I cried. My brother tried to get me to stop by saying, that if I kept crying they would stop. This wasn’t a very good tactic because that is just what I wanted them to do.

Of course I have grown to love fireworks. They are bright, colorful, and surprising. You hear them go off but you have no idea what they will look like until they explode in a dazzling display of color and light. Fireworks are many things. They are loud. They are pretty. They are short. I have seen a lot of fireworks, and they are all wonderful, but none of them last for more than a few seconds at most.

Do you know what does last? Stars. Stars are also in the sky, and they are also bright and beautiful, but not nearly as much as fireworks at least to our eyes. Sometimes we take the stars for granted and when fireworks are exploding in the sky we do not even see them, but I wonder, would you want your faith to be more like fireworks or do you want it to be like stars?

I suspect if we answered without thinking we would say fireworks, because they are flashy, and, while stars twinkle, they don’t catch our attention nearly as much as fireworks do, but they are always there. Because of that people have used them for centuries as guidance like the North Star or the constellations. Sometimes they bring hope when people wish upon them.

Fireworks are nice, but if I could choose between fireworks or stars I would pick the stars. Likewise, we don’t want our faith in Jesus to burn bright and beautiful for a moment and then be gone like a firework. We want it to burn steadily and constant like the stars in the sky. Fireworks dazzle and delight for a time, but Jesus remains steady and constant as the northern star and so should our faith in Him.

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 19:16-22

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Why do you ask me about what is good?”

Rev. Chris Stillwell

We have so many questions. Indeed, asking questions is the only way to learn, and what matters the most is to whom do we ask our questions. I once heard someone give advice to teenagers that I thought was pretty good. He said that the problem young people have is that they have many resources for knowledge at their disposal such as, teachers, parents, and grandparents, but as often as not when they want to know something they ask each other.

I think this is the case of young people of any generation, and again it gets to the point that we are only as smart as our questions, and our questions are only as good as to whom we ask them. If I don't know something about my car's engine, and I ask someone who doesn't know more than me then I am fool for following their advice.

In many ways the internet has been a boon and a bane for knowledge. Need to fix something? There is a video for it on YouTube. That is good and a help that I have consulted many times. Conversely, there is just about every opinion you can find on the internet and many people have a hard time determining what is correct and valid. For every bit of good information you can find it seems there is much more bad, false, or outright misinformation out there as well, so choose carefully the questions you ask and to whom you ask them.

Like the rich young man in the gospel of Matthew. His question was the most important question there was, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' He has a good heart that desires the most important thing, and he sees in Jesus one who can help him to which Jesus asks him our question for the day: 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good.'

Jesus asks him a question and does not wait for his response but gives his own, which does not completely answer the question. The complete answer will come at the end, but for now Jesus gives him an answer that I imagine any Rabbi or Pharisee would have given, "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

Which ones the man asks again? There were many after all, and this is ironic because Paul will explain about how Jesus fulfills the law so that the law falls away for followers of Christ by the second generation, but here Jesus is reinforcing the legal code and summarizing it in just a few verses.

He is certainly not the first to do this. Just before Christ was born a great Rabbi named Hillel, was part of a school of rabbis teaching the Torah. Some gentiles wanted to make fun of the Torah, and so one of them came to a Rabbi named Shammai and cried, "Rabbi Shammai, you teach the Torah to me while I stand on one foot." Whoever heard of learning the whole Torah while standing on one foot? The rabbis had spent all their lives in studying the Torah, and even they were not so sure that they knew all of it, so Rabbi Shammai did as we might do, took a stick and shouted, "Go away, you scoffer. Do you think I have time to waste on people who mock our holy Torah?"

Next the gentile went to see what the great Hillel would do. Rabbi Hillel said, "What is the matter, my good man?" The man answered, "Rabbi, teach me the Torah while I stand on one foot." Now, of course, Hillel was as a rabbi, a wise man, and like Shammai he also saw that the heathen was scoffing, mocking the Torah, but calmly and patiently, he said:

You want to learn a great deal quickly, don't you? Very well, I shall teach you the Torah while you stand on one foot. This is our holy Torah. What is hateful to you, do not do unto others.

The gentile stood there on one foot and forgot that he had come only to jeer, and he asked, "Does it mean that the gentiles and the Jews and all of us are brothers? Does it mean that we must be kind to one another

like brothers?" "That is it my son," said, Rabbi Hillel, "That is the meaning of the whole Torah. All the rest is only an explanation of that. Go and study it."

Pointedly the man says that he has kept all of the laws, which to me seems an arrogant thing to say. Who says that he has? Certainly he can say with confidence that he has not murdered, stolen, or born false witness. He can say whether or not he has committed adultery by the basic definition of the time but remember that Jesus will increase the scope of that word. We can even take him at his word that he had honored his mother and father though certainly there are some who would say so, but their parents may disagree. Loving your neighbor as yourself is the part that is hard for any of us to say.

In any event he has gotten his answer and should be content, but something still gnaws at him; some uncertainty that he cannot dismiss, so, wanting to prove himself further, he says, "What do I still lack," and Jesus responds with a command not in the law and one that he cannot do saying, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

It is key that Jesus said if you want to be perfect rather than saved or justified. Who can be perfect? Certainly not this man who went away sad, because he had great wealth. When he departs Jesus turns the lesson to his disciples by giving one of his most well-known teachings when he says:

'Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

This leads to the most important question of all, but this time from the disciples, "Then who can be saved?" Peter will also ask a similar question making it five questions asked of Jesus in this passage alone and to just one that he asks of his followers; "Why do you ask me what is good?"

At this point Jesus was still not declaring himself the Messiah. He often told people who knew who he was to be silent. He knew the expectations that came with that, so when he asks the question he does what he always does and that is point to God by saying, "There is only one who is good." Again after saying how hard it would be for a rich man to enter into heaven he says, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

All of this is to say that no one can get their on their own, only through God and God's mercy and to reassure his nervous disciples he says:

At the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones.

In this moment Jesus answers his own question. Why do you ask me what is good? Because we believe that you are not only good, but greater than any teacher, rabbi or prophet that has gone before. We ask you because we believe that you are perfect and the only one who is.

We ask you because we believe that you are the son of man which is a term used in the Hebrew Scriptures to contrast humans with God, but by using the definite article THE Son of Man not A son of man, we believe you are the bridge between humanity and divinity.

We ask because we believe you are God.

When the rich young man comes to Jesus with his question he expects that he must do something to earn salvation, and when Jesus gives him a task it proves too much for him so he assumes he is damned. This

is the case for us all really. We are not able to be perfect. That is why we find grace to be an amazing thing.

One last thing. Jesus tells his disciples that they will be on thrones judging the nations, and I bet that sounded real enticing to them. Who wouldn't love that? But as always there is more to it than they expected, and he says as much when he says, "many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

That is a comfort and a challenge. If we think we are going to be first we will be last. Another time he will say, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all," and this applies to him as much as it does to us. We ask him what is good therefore, because we know that he uses his power and position to save and serve us when most would expect him to judge and punish us. We dare to ask Jesus what is good because we have found no thing nor person in this world who is better.

Communion Hymn

"My Country, 'Tis of Thee"

Sam Johnson, organist

My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing; land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrims' pride, from every mountainside let freedom ring.

Invitation to Communion

Pastor Gena

It's often hard to find a way to say thank you, especially when someone goes above and beyond to do something extraordinary for you. Like the people who arrange for our loved one to stay right near the hospital so they can spend more time with us, be close-by day or night, and not have to drive back and forth in traffic every day. Like those who visit us nearly every day as we heal in a care facility, bringing us joy and things we need from home. Like people who listen to us when no one else will even come near, who hear our needs and respond as only they can. Like the ones who encourage us to follow through with what will actually help us even when we are too proud to consider it on our own.

In some cases, we can show our thanks by returning the favor – or at least try to do something for the person who helped us. Or we can show our thanks by "paying it forward," sharing the blessing we received with another person who needs it. Sometimes we just aren't able to do any of these things. Maybe we don't have the skill or the money or the physical strength or the mobility. I have learned, through many of our older members in skilled care facilities, that it becomes harder and harder to find meaningful ways to say thank you for all of the help and care others give. It is frustrating and difficult to continue accepting another's generosity of time and energy.

Perhaps we feel this same sense of futility when we come to this table. It is hard to know how to say thank you to Jesus for the gift of his undying love, his willingness to face evil and death with nothing but goodness and life. We certainly can't return the favor. We can try to do something for Jesus by doing what he asked us to do - loving one another by serving, truly seeing the people around us as he does, welcoming strangers to the best seats at the table. We can try to pay it forward by sharing the good news of his love with others. But sometimes these things seem to pale in comparison to the enormity of Jesus' gift. When there is nothing else we can do, we realize that sometimes gifts are just like that. We don't deserve them, we can't pay for them, we can't repay them. But we can remember and marvel at these gifts, as we do here each week, and we can continue giving thanks until our last breath. Some gifts are just that big. Come, you are welcome to this feast of giving thanks.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Linda Reese

Creator God, at this table, we do not need to ask "what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" You freely give to us unmerited grace. The sacrifice of your son, Jesus on the cross gives to us salvation. Bless this bread and cup, the emblems of the sacrifice. As we leave this table, let us remember that it is by faith that we receive these gifts of grace and salvation. Amen

Words of Institution

Pastor Gena

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

Sharing Holy Communion

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

Pastor Gena

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

If you 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

“This Is My Song”

Sam Johnson, organist

This is my song, O God of all the nations, a song of peace for lands afar and mine. This is my home, the country where my heart is; here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine; but other hearts in other lands are beating with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

May the Lord of the harvest, who sent the disciples out as ambassadors for Christ, send you out to proclaim that the kingdom of God has drawn near.



Fairhill Manor extends its sympathy to Cindy Shaw on the death of her mother, Virginia Lee Engle, who passed away June 20. Please keep Cindy and her family in your thoughts and prayers.



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:

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949 Bruce Street
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Jeff Caldwell
Bryan Carter
Wanda Chicone
Ruth Cox
Sue Donaldson
Benjamin Dube
Connie Faust
Gary Ford
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Barb Graff
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Alberta Haught

Aryn Hess
Danni Iams
Ed Jackman
Kari Johnson
Brandon Keenan
Von Lacock
Marylee Lawrence
David Leonard
CJ Martin
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
Dee Ryan
Mike Ryan

John Samida
Gene Sheller
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Sprowls
Wayne Starnes
Cathy Stewart
Beth Teagarden
Jane Teagarden

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.