

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 48
November 26, 2025

- Dartball – December 2, 7pm @ West Washington
- Choir Practice – December 4, 6:30pm

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

November 30

- 5th Sunday Funeral Fund offering
- Memorial Garden new brick dedication
- First Sunday of Advent - **Advent devotionals** are available in the Narthex. If you are unable to pick one up, please contact the church office and we will make arrangements to have one sent to you.

Raise Right Gift Cards

There was such a tremendous response to the **gift card** ordering that Pastor Gena is taking orders again. Order forms will be in the bulletin and in the Narthex. If you need one sent to you, contact the Church Office. Orders and payment need to be turned in by December 1. The gift cards will be ready for pick-up on December 14.

DRIVE-THRU NATIVITY

The **Drive-Thru Nativity** is December 13 & 14, 6-8pm each night.

Scene Set Up

The Trustees are looking for **help** setting up the scenes for the Drive-Thru Nativity. Workday is on Saturday, November 29 at 10am. If you would be able to give a little bit of time they would appreciate it. Please contact Ed Palfreyman or Von Lacock if you can help.

Angel Tree

The Angel Tree tags have all been spoken for!! Please return your gifts, unwrapped, with your tag to the Narthex by Sunday, November 30. If you are unable to bring them to the church by Sunday, contact the Church Office.

**Christmas
Party**

The Bethany Class will hold their **Christmas Party** on Friday, December 19 at noon in the Small Fellowship Hall. RSVP to the Church Office by December 15. Everyone is welcome to join the party for food, fun and fellowship.

POINSETTIA ORDERS

Order your **poinsettias** for our Christmas Eve display in memory of or in honor of a loved one. Order forms can be found in the Narthex, the bulletin and at the end of the Manor Minutes. Orders are due to the Church Office by **November 30**. **If you do not need a specific color poinsettia, please make a note of “no preference” on your order. We will order the color needed to complete the Poinsettia Tree display.**

*thank
you*

Thank you to Carol Daniels and her friend Janet Shriver for purchasing, painting and decorating the new wooden Chrismons on the Sanctuary Christmas tree. Take a moment to look at these beautiful symbols of our faith and then come on Sunday to learn more about the Chrismons during the Children's Message.

Salvation Army Red Kettle Drive

FMCC will be ringing bells for the Salvation Army Kettle Drive at the Washington Giant Eagle (left door) on Wednesday, December 3, from 10am-4pm. There is only 1 time slot left on the sign-up sheet, 11am-noon.



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
Carol Daniels, Cup

November 30, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Connie Sheller

Leader: People of the living God, come to the mountain of God.

People: Prepare the way of the Lord.

Leader: Sisters and brothers in Christ, prepare your hearts to hear the word of God.

People: Prepare the way of the Lord.

Leader: Children of the Holy Spirit, walk in the light of God.

People: Prepare the way of the Lord.

All: Come! Let us worship.

Opening Hymn

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Sam Johnson, organist

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Lighting of the First candle of Advent – Hope

Carol, Bryson and Grayson Daniels

As we begin the Advent season, we light the first candle, the candle of hope.
In the darkness of this world, God’s promise of hope shines bright.

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned” (Isaiah 9:2).

(The first candle is lit.)

All: (read in unison)

***O holy Child of Bethlehem descend to us, we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell. Oh, come to us, abide with us
our Lord Immanuel!***

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

Gracious God, You carry us through our days. You know every word on our tongue, every hair on our head. You know the dreams in our hearts, and the weight of our bones. You also know the weariness we bring with us into the morning and into this space. So, with honesty we come before you, both with hearts full of gratitude and with prayer requests on our lips.

First, holy God, we thank you for the gifts of this life that *give* energy. For birthday candles and sunrises, for handwritten cards and jobs that we are passionate about. For stories that can make us laugh until we cry, and for friends that feel like family. For working together to tell the good news of your birth to our community, for volunteers who give so much time and energy to your church, for gathering to celebrate and make your Sanctuary even more beautiful for the Advent season, for the honesty and joy and energy children share. For all these gifts, thank you.

In addition to these prayers of gratitude, loving God, we also bring you the things that weigh heavy on our hearts. For violence, for family and friends undergoing difficult treatments, for seasons of transition and grief that won't let us go—we ask for your love and care. For illnesses that go on and on without cure, for diseases that wear us down, for worries about not having enough, for bodies that don't work like they used to, for family rifts and difficulties. Take these yokes from us. Relieve some of the burden on our backs, and wrap your arms around places where we feel most tender.

And as we enter into this new Advent season—a season marked with hope, joy, and light—we ask that you would remind us that our full humanity is welcome here. There is room for both joy and grief. There is room for weariness and awe. There is room for faith and doubt, for nothing is too big or too far gone for your love to reach it.

So with hope in our hearts, we unite our voices once more to pray the words your son taught 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:

“Emmanuel, Emmanuel”

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.

God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

First Scripture Lesson

Isaiah 2:1-5

Kevin Puskarich

Anthem

“Advent Kyrie,” by John Parker

Choir

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

This morning we are going to look at the special ornaments on our Christmas tree. These special ornaments are called Chrismons.

What do you notice about these Chrismons?

Chrismons are carefully hand-made from beautiful materials. Chrismons remind us that we can use the things we have and our creativity to honor Jesus.

We use the colors white and gold when we make Chrismons. White is the church’s color for the season of Christmas, when we remember how God became a person in Jesus. White reminds us that Jesus was without sin, so he can show us how much God loves us and he can show us how to live God’s way. Gold reminds us that Jesus is even greater than the greatest king or queen or ruler. We want to live in a world where Jesus puts everything in order!

Chrismons are symbols that tell us something about Jesus. The word Chrismon comes from parts of two words: CHRIST and MONogram. Chrismons are monograms of Christ. Many Chrismons are made from the letters in the name Jesus or Christ in other languages. The letters are combined in interesting ways. Many Chrismons come from symbols used by the earliest Christians to mark where they were meeting or to tell others something about Jesus.

Point to one Chrismon that looks interesting to you, and we will talk about what it means. Now you can add your own Chrismon to our tree.

Dear God, thank you for giving us the ability to make beautiful things to honor you. Thank you for Jesus. Thank you that love is stronger than anything else in this world. Bless these Chrismons as they tell the Good News about your love. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Romans 12:9-21, 13:11-14

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Wake Up! It’s Christmas”

Rev. Chris Stillwell

The apostle Paul spent the last years of his life spreading the good news of Jesus Christ from the road to Damascus where his life of persecution came to an end throughout all of the Mediterranean and even the heart of the Roman empire, Rome. As he went about in his travels he started many churches in towns such as Colossae, Philippi, and Corinth. While he traveled he could not minister directly to most of his followers, and he certainly could not use his cell phone to text them or his computer to email. Instead, Paul wrote letters to each of his churches, and it is these letters that are preserved for us today. It is interesting that we have no idea what Paul said to his followers when he was with them, sharing a meal or worshipping with them.

Instead, we have only the words that he wrote in absentia. Words of comfort and encouragement for a people he dearly missed and who longed for his leadership in difficult times. The letter to the Romans is just such an example. As Christians in the heart of the empire, far from Jerusalem and Israel, they often felt alone in a self-imposed exile. Paul writes in the 12th chapter of his letter a guide for Christian conduct to remind them when they forget, to comfort them when they despair, to challenge them when they become complacent.

Essentially he tells them:

1. Remember love and goodness.
2. Help others
3. Forgive enemies
4. Rejoice
5. Don’t be arrogant
6. Do not seek vengeance
7. Overcome evil with good

These are words that every Christian should take to heart for they underscore the very core of the gospel. Do unto others . . . Love enemies as your neighbor . . . forgive debtors as you are forgiven . . . All of these commandments of Jesus Christ are encapsulated in Paul’s treatise to the Christians in Rome. These words are always true and important, but they are particularly important now for I find that these words make a good guide for living through Advent and the Christmas shopping season, which are both upon us now.

Paul says:

9 Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.

This can be hard to do with someone who got the last item on sale on Black Friday. As we go from store to store will we outdo one another showing honor?

¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

The Christmas season provides many opportunities to do this. Remember those in nursing homes and hospitals, and let us make our homes hospitable for many.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

What about the person who takes the parking space or who cuts you off in the parking lot? It is not exactly persecution, but I met it leads many of us into the temptation to curse.

¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

We will celebrate with family and friends, but for many the Christmas season is hard because it reminds them of those who are not present. Let us be mindful of those for whom the holidays are not completely happy and give permission to ourselves to not always be merry. More than that let us reach out and offer comfort and the present of presence to those who may be grieving.

¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are.

Christmas is about living in harmony but when family get together with one another how many times do they argue about the same old things? What if a gift we gave someone this Christmas is the gift of forgiveness? Perhaps that would also be a gift we give to ourselves.

¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.

For many Christmas means much more work, and often rude customers. Use this as an opportunity to extend grace to those who have no grace. While it will make your life easier it will also be good for your business. Maybe not to the rude person, but to others who see you. Of course we also should be mindful of those who are working and hope that they will know we are Christians by our love and not our rudeness.

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Well, the nuisance and stress of the holiday season is hardly like the evils the Christians in Rome faced, but it is somewhat evil that we can take the least materialistic of holidays, the birth of a poor child in a measly manger, and turn it into the most consumerist of experiences. Do not let shopping overtake the true meaning.

Because he believes that Christ is returning Paul wants his followers to behave and live according to these words. He wants Christians to live as if Christ could appear to them at any moment and so he goes on to tell his followers to wake from their sleep.

11 Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light;

Paul tells them to live honorably and to stop their petty jealousies for these things are distracting them from the great day that is to come, and they may even prevent them from enjoying that day.

The words of Paul also remind me of the words of a song that is appropriate right now. We tell our children that they, “better not shout, better not cry, better not pout, I’m telling you why, Santa Claus is coming to town.” We knew when we were children that if we misbehaved and spent our time in a bad mood we would get nothing for Christmas.

Paul’s warning to the Roman Christians has that familiar ring to it. They would not want to still be behaving that way when Christ returns.

Better not shout better not cry lest they receive coal rather than the kingdom.

These are things that they should always do. They should always be gracious and forgiving. They should always return good for evil, but Paul wants them to make a special effort now since Christ is coming. This is what he means to wake from a restless sleep. They were not as aware of Christ as they should have been. They were not as clear about their belief. Their spiritual lives were in a doze that was occasionally interrupted by moments of lucidity, but now the time had come for them to wake from their restless sleep.

On Christmas children wake from a restless sleep. Never are they so aware of their surroundings. Maybe you are too. Finally, on Christmas morning all is done, and then, and only then, are you able to take it all in or maybe even then there is still too much happening.

Of course we enjoy it. Of course we feel the spirit but too often it seems like an awful lot of work for not very much. After awhile the holidays just don’t seem worth so much effort and we fall back to sleep.

But what would Christmas be like if we did not wait until Christmas morning to wake from our sleep? What if we did not wait to listen to Christmas songs? To notice the change in weather? To appreciate the spirit? To show love and kindness to others?

We can spend so much time getting ready for the one day and then it passes and we miss so much. Every person knows what happens if we wait to the last minute to shop, and so we start the day after Thanksgiving. Some start even earlier.

So, what if we started getting ready now? I do not mean started with decorations. You are probably already started on those. I mean the spirit.

Every year we celebrate Christ’s birth but we are not so much like the Shepherds or Joseph and Mary expecting a child. Rather we are much more like Paul’s followers waiting for Christ to return.

Paul was worried his followers were merely waiting for Christ to return and so they slept expecting Christ to wake them from their restless sleep. Paul worried that if they continued to do this it would be too late and they would miss it.

It is the same for us. We can be surrounded by so much reminding us that it is Christmas, reminding us that Christ has come and will come again, and still forget to live as Christ taught. We can go through the motions this Advent getting all our work done, and all our errands taken care of with the expectation that on Christmas, or Christmas eve, then we will stop for a few moments to remember Christ’s birth. We can invite so many people to our house and be guest and many others, but still wait until Christmas morning, after all the presents are open to invite Christ into our homes. And it is all too easy to forget about Christ by New Year’s Day.

What would the holiday be like if we did not wait for Christmas to wake from our restless sleep? Could it be everything we had always imagined and hoped? Could it be a foretaste of glory divine, a vision of the kingdom? Could it last not just one day but the whole year around? Could we wake never to fall back into deep slumber again?

Perhaps if we can begin now to celebrate Christ's birth, to live Christ's commands, and to prepare for Christ's return, then one day the whole world may wake from its restless sleep and finally bask in the warm glow of Jesus Christ.

Advent is the season of waiting, but do not let the waiting lull you into sleep. Instead wake now and prepare your heart for Christ with as much energy and joy as you prepare your home for Santa. Jesus Christ is coming to town, and salvation is near.

Call to Offering

Charlotte Stillwell

As the offering is received this day, the choice is ours. May our offerings reflect our hopes, not our fears. May we choose abundance over scarcity. May the story we tell of our lives reflect the grace and mercy of God's provision all along the way.

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

We may not know the day or time of your coming, but we know that it is time to wake from sleep and to put on the armor of light. In gratefulness for calling us as your own, we offer you our thanks and praise. Receive the gifts of our hands, and use them to bring light to the darkness and hope to places of despair, through your Son, the Prince of Peace.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

So advent has begun. It is exciting because everything is ahead of us, and while we all can't wait for Christmas to arrive, there is a lot to be said for the anticipation because, as exciting as the 25 is, we all remember that feeling of the 26th.

What I particularly like about Christmas is advent. Other than Easter no holiday has a period of celebration before it like Christmas and advent is way better than Lent

Advent gives us time to prepare which we spend decorating and shopping and getting into the Christmas spirit. It gives us time to reflect so that Christmas doesn't come and go.

It also gives us time to decide what we want. We think about what we want for our Christmas list, but we also get time to think about what it is we want to happen this Christmas. Are we hoping for a family reunion, a new job, someone to turn their life around, the birth of a child, peace on earth and goodwill to all?

The people of Israel were waiting for a Messiah and though they all had different expectations of what he would be like and how he would come, still they weren't just waiting for Santa Claus to bring them a toy. They know that advent is a time to pray for something important.

As we partake in this meal together we are reminded of the importance of that first Christmas gift and we remember again that good things come to those who wait.

As you share in the Lord's supper this morning ask yourself, what are you waiting for this advent?

Communion Hymn

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

Sam Johnson, organist

Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace; streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above. Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, mount of thy redeeming love.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Chuck Riggie

Dear Heavenly Father, we come to you on this post-Thanksgiving Sunday with a deep sense of humility. We are truly thankful for all the blessings we enjoy. We are also extremely thankful for the opportunity to eat this communion bread which represents our son's broken body and to sip from the cup which represents our son's shed blood. As we partake of these symbolic elements, let us be reminded of Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross. May we truly strive to live our lives with thanksgiving and fellowship with others. In his name, 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

"How Great Our Joy!"

Sam Johnson, organist

While by the sheep we watched at night, lo, there appeared an angel bright: How great our joy! Great our joy! Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy! Glory to God who reigns on high! Glory to God who reigns on high!

Dedication of Bricks in the Memorial Garden

insert

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Go forth in faith during this season of Advent and put on the armor of Christ's light. As the days grow short and the sun's light wanes, may you shine for all the world to see. Go forth in love during this time of waiting and embrace the peace that passes all understanding. Wherever you go, go with God.

If you do not need a specific color poinsettia, please make a note of “no preference” on your order. We will order the color needed to complete the Poinsettia Tree Display.



The beautiful poinsettia tree that adorns our sanctuary each Christmas Eve is a tradition that we all look forward to every year. Please fill out this form and return it to the church office by **November 30 with payment**. Indicate the color and number of poinsettias you would like to order. Cost per plant is \$12. Please **make checks payable to “Fairhill Manor” and indicate “Poinsettias” in the memo line**. Plants may be picked up following the Christmas Eve service.

_____ RED Poinsettias

_____ WHITE Poinsettias

_____ Poinsettias (no color preference)

ORDERS are due by November 30

Given by

In Memory/Honor of (circle one)

In Memory/Honor of (circle one)

In Memory/Honor of (circle one)

Additional Comments:

Fairhill Manor expresses our sympathy to Gene and Connie Sheller on the passing of Gene's sister, Jane Teagarden on November 24. Please keep the Shellers and Teagardens 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

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
Chuck Wiseman, Apt 214

Southmont Resident

835 S Main Street
Washington PA 15301

Doris Sorice, Rm 554

Premier Resident

36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd
Washington PA 15301

Carol Brown, Rm 213

Transitions Healthcare Resident

90 Humbert Lane
Washington PA 15301

Doris Haniford, Rm 121

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
Terry Gahagen
Barb Graff
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Aryn Hess
Danni Iams
Ed Jackman
Kari Johnson
Shelly Kubincanek
Marylee Lawrence
David Leonard
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
John Samida
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.