

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 33
August 28, 2026

- Pastor's Cabinet – August 31, 5:30pm
- Disciples Women's Ruth – September 2, 1pm
- Personnel Committee – September 2, 6pm

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



Sunday, September 13
1:04pm

Provided:
Chicken
Hot Dogs
Drinks

There will be BINGO!



Sign up in the Narthex to let us know if you'll be attending and if you're able to help in any way. We need lots of side dishes this year.



We invite children and youth from pre-k to college to bring their backpacks, lunch boxes, tablets and any other school supplies to worship with them this Sunday, August 30. We will bless the items that travel to school with us, so that they in turn may remind us of God's presence with us each day as we learn.



A 5th Sunday of the month offering for the **Funeral Dinner Fund** will be collected Sunday. Envelopes are included in the bulletin, or you can give through Givelify. Please give as you can.

GREAT is your FaiTh

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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor

Elders: Jackie Nelson, Bread
Sheila Harris, Cup

August 30, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Barb Bailey

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord.

People: We call on God's holy name.

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord.

People: We sing to our God with shouts of joy.

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord.

People: We proclaim God's mighty works.

All: Let us give thanks to the Lord as we tell the wonders of God's glory.

Opening Hymn

"This Is the Day"

Jody Mullis, pianist

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made; we will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

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 say a special prayer for 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.

We pray for teachers, staff and administrators. Bless these faithful servants with courage and confidence, knowing you are in their classrooms, lunchrooms, offices and on their buses, with a steady hand on their shoulder. 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 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:

“Spirit of the Living God”

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

First Scripture Lesson

Genesis 45:1-15

Kevin Puskarich

Special Music

“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us”

Vicki Sisson

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

I wonder why we bless our backpacks each year. What do you think? Our backpacks are a symbol of everything we carry to and from school and of our experiences while we are at school. I want to talk about that part this year – how we are while we are at school.

Let’s think about our hands. How do we use our hands at school? How can we use our hands to help ourselves and to love one another?

We pray for our hands, that they will reach out to help welcome and care. Bless our hands with patience and dedication as they grip pencils and type on keyboards, swish paint brushes and clap in song, grip monkey bars and lunch box handles, spin wheelchair tires and basketballs.

What about our mouths?

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

Our minds?

We pray for our minds, that they 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 settle our thought loops in peaceful places.

Our feet?

We pray for our feet. Plant our feet next to those who feel alone, and bless our steps down hallways and sidewalks. We know you are with us wherever our feet go or stay.

Our eyes?

We pray for our eyes, that they may see ourselves and others with compassion. Bless what and how we see, whether we’re looking at a screen, a whiteboard, or the beauty of a person’s face. And help us see with the most important eyes—the eyes of your Spirit within us.

Our ears?

We pray for our ears, that they will 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.

We give thanks for a new school year and pray that these backpack tags will remind us how much we are loved – every single part of us.

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 15:21-28

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Crumbs of Faith”

Rev. Chris Stillwell

Martha is a mother with a sick daughter. She is a single mother who works two jobs to pay her bills, but she is not able to get health insurance from either and together they do not pay nearly enough to cover the medical bills that her daughter incurs. Her life is hectic, jumping each day from job to the next, trying desperately to keep her house clean, spending all her extra time taking care of her daughter, rushing back and forth from doctor to another, Martha doesn't really have any time for herself. She has lost touch with most of her friends not because she does not like talking with them, it is just that she can't seem to find the time to write a letter or pick up the phone. She gets bills every day and she pays the ones that absolutely have to be paid and the rest she puts off until next month.

In the midst of it all she goes to church and hears about all the poor people throughout the world and in her own community and she wants to help them, but she feels like she can barely support herself and her daughter. She would like to do more to help others, but she barely has enough time, money, and energy as it is. She feels like everything she does is for someone else and her life is becoming starved of joy as she subsists on the few morsels of joy she allows herself each day. She would like to be able to give more, but there simply isn't anything left.

It can be this way with us. We can get so many bills that the first ones we pay are the ones that are due now, or last week. We can be so busy with the mundane but important aspects of our lives that we don't talk to friends until they are sick and in the hospital. We can go through life only dealing with something once it becomes a crisis and then demands our attention. The problem with this way of living is that our entire life seems like a crisis, and we find that we cannot give ourselves the spiritual nourishment that will allow us to truly live. Instead, we live on the crumbs that we can glean from a short prayer given in haste, or a religious email that we read at work.

We get so many demands on our time and money that too often charities have little to no chance of getting our attention. When we put together our budget, and it looks like things will be tight there is always that temptation to hold back on what we give to others. At other times something so terrible like the mudslides in Nepal occurs and we cannot ignore the pleas for help, and we give what we can, but that means that there are only crumbs left for equally large problems that do not get our attention. Sometimes the demands from others can be so great that we give in and block out as many as possible only responding to those who scream the loudest.

I imagine that Jesus often felt like this. Everywhere he went everyone had a problem for him to solve. People needed to be fed, others needed to be healed. There were demons to exorcize and questions to be answered. As the Messiah, God's anointed sent to God's chosen people, the nation of Israel offered Jesus more than enough crisis to deal with.

In the story that Matthew writes for us Jesus has just finished a long string of teaching and performing miracles, and he sounds exasperated when he cries to the crowd, “Are you also still without understanding?” After he teaches the crowds that what goes into one's mouth does not defile, but what comes out defiles, he leaves Israel to go to Tyre and Sidon. We do not know why he leaves the nation. At least one biblical scholar suggests that Jesus was overwhelmed by the demands put upon him in Israel and, just as he retreated at the beginning of his ministry when he heard that John the Baptist had been

arrested, he retreated to this land to rest. Maybe he came to this land of Gentiles where no one knew about a Messiah in order to get a break and renew his Spirit which was running dry.

Yet, now, even in the land of the Gentiles who sought for no Messiah a Canaanite woman comes to him. She is in need, and although she was not a Jew, she recognizes him for who he is, and shouts:

“Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, ‘Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.’²⁴ He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’

And still this woman persists. Matthew writes:

She came and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, help me.’²⁶ He answered, ‘It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.’²⁷ She said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.’

Prior to this Jesus spent days teaching the Israelites who still seemed to not grasp his meaning, and now a Canaanite, an ancient enemy of God’s chosen people, someone whom the Israelites would consider not much better than a dog, shows great and unshakable faith in him. How could he refuse a woman whose faith was greater than the Israelites? He could not.

He responds, *“Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.”* And her daughter was healed instantly.” The daughter of the Canaanite woman was healed because of the woman’s faith. It was a faith that manifested itself in perseverance because she would not take no for an answer. She shouted loud enough for Christ to hear her above all the others clamoring for his attention even his disciples, and she would not take no for an answer responding to Christ’s initial refusal with incredible wit and power. Her faith also manifested itself in humility. Christ says, *“It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”* meaning that he is the food that God has sent to God’s children, the Israelites, and giving it to her, a gentile, would be like giving it to the dogs. She does not claim to be a part of the covenant, as the Israelites were, and she does not flinch at the harsh words. She responds strongly, but humbly, *“Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”*

Knowing that she was not an Israelite, and therefore, having no rightful claim on Christ’s mercy, she came hoping for something, and so great was her faith, that she would have been satisfied with even crumbs from Christ, but he did not give her just crumbs. If casting demons out of Mary Magdalene can be considered the full banquet of Christ’s mercy, then giving crumbs to the Canaanite woman might have meant simply making her daughter feel a little better.

Instead, she got the full meal. Her daughter was instantly healed. Many of the Israelites thought that they were guaranteed God’s promise, and they considered the Canaanites to be like dogs because of they were not part of

God’s covenant, but when those who were invited to the meal that God had prepared refused to come or did not understand the invitation, the doors of God’s mercy were thrown open and all, even the Gentiles, were invited in.

This is the mercy of God. He who said, “One cannot live on bread alone,” also will not allow us to live on crumbs alone. This is important to us for we, like the Canaanite woman, are not Israelites. We are not the original inheritors of the promise but God’s grace has come to us all the same. Still there are so many people who are taught that because of who they are the best that they can hope for are the crumbs from God’s table. They are told to beg for God’s forgiveness and maybe, after God is finished rapturing the righteous, then maybe God will throw them a bone.

We must always be wary of those who are so sure of their salvation and so certain of other's damnation, for we who were once aliens to God's grace have not been turned away, but we have been welcomed. The Jesus of the gospels constantly surprises those who think they know better about who receives the mercy of God. If God will hear the prayers of those who were treated like dogs by the self-righteous, who then will God turn away?

All that is required is that we stand up and call on Christ with perseverance and humility just as the Canaanite woman did. There are so many needs in the world. There are so many people in far worse circumstances than any of us, and yet God in Christ still hears our prayers. We may fall into the trap of thinking that God hears only the prayers of the truly holy and saintly or the truly poor and desperate, and all that is left for us are the crumbs from God's table. We may also fear that God operates as we do, only responding to those who shout the loudest leaving us with the scraps of what remains when the assertive have had their fill, but where the grace of God is concerned there is plenty to go around, plenty of seats at the banquet, even enough for us.

If we are feeling spiritually empty it may be because we are only feeding ourselves crumbs even though God offers a meal. Turn to God to find fulfilling sustenance, let God fill your life with love, joy, and compassion till it overflows, and then see how much you have to left to give.

Call to Offering

Isaac Mayen

We give because we are abundantly blessed. We are given more than we need, so we can give to those in need. We give joyfully and humbly, knowing we are simply following the way Jesus gave himself to us.

***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 praise you, O Lord, for your wonderful works. As we bring our offerings before you this day, we rejoice in your saving love with hearts full of song. May our offering be a sign of our pledge to walk faithfully before you, each and every day of our lives. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

I once attended a camp where they tried to teach us a lesson about wasting food, that I think missed the point. At the end of each meal all the leftover food was put into buckets and weighed. Each night at the campfire the amount of food waste was counted, and we were encouraged to reduce the amount of wasted food at every meal. The result of this was kids getting mad at other kids for not eating their food and everyone gorging themselves to win the approval of the camp directors because we had no waste. Ultimately, they wanted us to not take more than we need, but in the end we just made ourselves sick.

The lesson I learned from this is that we live in a world that is hungry--not just physical hunger, but spiritual hunger, too. People all around us long to be fed by things that have meaning and substance. We long to be part of something bigger, to be given direction, to be loved. And some of us are so desperate that we cry out in the street, "Have mercy on me!" Just a crumb, just a scrap will suffice. This all while others are gorging themselves but never being satisfied; never getting enough.

Part of our calling through our baptism, is to listen for those people calling out in pain or hunger or torment, to let them speak to us on their own terms. Sometimes they may seem as strange and foreign as that Canaanite woman. What she has to say to us today may sound as jarring as her words to Jesus. They may even shake our worldlier and challenge our assumptions.

It's no coincidence that after this encounter with the Canaanite woman, the next thing that Jesus does in Matthew's story is to go down to the sea and meet with a crowd of 4,000 hungry people. And he will feed all 4,000 of them from just seven loaves of bread and seven fish.

You see, God has this amazing ability to bring about change in the most astonishing ways, through the most unexpected people. God's work in our lives is always surprising us, always jarring us, always shaking up our world view. God makes abundance out of scarcity. God is constantly taking the scraps from our table, the crumbs that we discard, and turning them into a feast.

The feast is here at this table and to this feast we are all invited. Here there is grace enough for all, and if you find you get more than you need, do not keep it to yourself, but take it with you into your week, and share it with those who need it. The Lord has set a table before us and if our cups overflow, nothing is wasted if we share it.

Communion Hymn

"His Eye Is on the Sparrow"

Sam Johnson, organist

Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come, why should my heart be lonely and long for heaven and home, when Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is he: his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me; his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me. I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free, for his eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Jackie Nelson

Holy God and Father, we come today to worship, praise, give thanks and remember. We have heard the story of Joseph. He was sold to traders by his brothers and let his father Jacob think he was dead. What a terrible thing to do. It is a quite tragic and horrifying story of his life. Yet, when Joseph met his brothers some 20 years later, he was able to forgive and embrace them and say, "God had a purpose in what you did. God has sent me on ahead of you to save you from the famine." Who taught Joseph about You, God? Did he learn as a boy from his father Jacob, and did Joseph remember all those years?

At this table, we remember another purpose, the birth, life, the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, tragic and horrifying as it be. Yet, we are saved because of this. Holy Spirit, please be with us now as we take this bread and cup. Open our eyes and minds to those who have taught us and help us to take time to learn, remember and ponder God's plans in our lives. We ask in Jesus Holy name. Amen.

Words of Institution

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

If you need a community to belong to, if you are thirsty for the word of life and want to live as a disciple of Jesus, join us in his ministry and mission. You are welcome and needed here. If in the work and worship of this congregation you are being nurtured and fed in Christ our Lord, we invite you to join us in his service. There is a place for you in this family of faith.

Closing Hymn

"Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

Sam Johnson, organist

Immortal, invisible, God only wise, in light inaccessible hid from our eyes, most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days, almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

God blesses us with strength for the journey. Christ lifts us up from the raging waters of life. The Spirit guides us with dreams and visions of a glorious tomorrow. Go with the triune God.



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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Macy Caster
Wanda Chicone
Angel Corbett
Jane Correll
Ruth Cox
Mickey Cunningham
Benjamin Dube
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Raymond Fraley
Terry Gahagen
Barb Graff
Judy Hanning
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Aryn Hess

Danni Iams
Dave Kania
Chris Lewis
Charlie McConnell
Pam McCord
Norm McDonough
Barb Moninger
Dick Moninger
Joe Neckerman
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Michelle Oneal
Sandy Petry
Jeannie Riffle
Joan Riffle
Lori Riffle
Perry Riffle
Mike Ryan
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Sprowls
Kristie Sprowls
Wayne Starnes
Cathy Stewart
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.