

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 6
February 7, 2025

- Bethany Class Luncheon – February 11, 12:30pm Eat'n Park
- Operating Deficit Task Force – February 11, 4pm Library
- Dartball – February 11, 7pm @ Glenn Street
- Elders Meeting – February 12, 5:30pm via Zoom
- Choir Practice – February 13 , 6:30pm

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

February 9 – Souperbowl & Cornhole Tournament. Make plans to stay after worship for all of the fun, food and fellowship!! We will be collecting donations for the Community Circle Food Pantry.



March 1, 2pm
Large Fellowship Hall
Sign up in the Narthex



We still have some free shipping to use from Office Max that we don't want to waste. So we are going to collect medicine bottles on **February 9, 16 & 23** to send to Matthew 25: Ministries.



Mardi Gras Concert
First Christian Church
March 4

Remember to:

- Remove label completely leaving no glue or residue
- Wash bottles & lids
- Rinse & dry
- Replace lids on dry, clean bottles.
- The collection container will be in the Narthex.

Thank you!



American Cancer Society Daffodil orders are due **February 16** and can be placed in Karen's mail slot. Thank 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: Connie Sheller, Bread
Gene Sheller, Cup

February 9, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Barb Bailey

Leader: The voice of God is calling: “Whom shall I send?”

People: We are here to answer God’s call.

Leader: The voice of Christ is calling: “Who will be my faithful disciples?”

People: We are here to answer Christ’s call.

Leader: The voice of the Spirit is calling: “Who will be a light to the nations?”

People: We are here. Send us, we pray!

Opening Hymn

“Great Is the Lord”

Jody Mullis, pianist

Great is the Lord, he is holy and just, by his power we trust in his love. Great is the Lord, he is faithful and true, by his mercy he proves, he is love. Great is the Lord and worthy of glory. Great is the Lord and worthy of praise. Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice, now lift up your voice: Great is the Lord, great is the Lord.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

Holy, holy, holy, are you, O Lord; the whole earth is full of your glory. You sit enthroned in majesty, more wonderful and mightier than we could handle were you to appear here among us this morning. And yet in Jesus you did come near, appearing in everyday life, teaching and healing, demonstrating power over nature and evil. Through your Spirit, we sense your presence among us as we worship you – cleansing us, calling us, challenging and comforting us.

As we stand in awe of your glory, O Lord, our mistakes and shortcomings, our collusions with evil and hate, become glaringly obvious. If only we could hide them, pretend they aren’t here, explain them away. But you have asked us to follow you in your ways of life and love, so we try to come to you with openness and honesty, asking for your forgiveness. With just one touch, you cleanse us and make us new. Praise be to you, O Lord, for your mercy and grace.

We thank you for the witness of those who are moving through grief or moving through their own final days with such grace and courage. Continue to bless them with an obvious sense of your presence with them, we pray.

We thank you for those choose to work in traumatic and stressful circumstances, treating the living and the dead with the utmost dignity and respect. Bless them with the peace and healing they need, the

stamina and perseverance to continue, we pray. Give them a sense of how appreciated and admired they are.

Be with us in times of political uncertainty, as leaders come and go. Give those in power the wisdom they need to make decisions for the good of all of your children. In uncertain times, help us to recognize your sovereignty over our lives. You are the King we follow; it is to you we give first our allegiance and obedience.

We thank you for all kinds of relationships – for long, faithful love; for new and exciting attraction; for dependable friendships; for supportive and encouraging work relationships; for understanding family ties that shift and adapt as we grow and change. Give us the courage to reach out and make a new connection this week. Show us how to love even when we don't completely understand.

Bless now those who need your loving care this morning – those we have named aloud, those on our prayer list, those we remember now in the silence of our hearts, and those who are known only to you...

Come and sit in our boat today, O Great Teacher. So fill our eyes, our ears and our hearts with your love that we might be your presence in the world today. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus the Christ, who teaches us to pray this way...

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

Isaiah 6:1-8

Rita Puskarich

Anthem

“For the Beauty of the Earth,” by John Ritter

Choir

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

Do you enjoy fishing? Have you ever caught a fish? Fishing is a great sport, and if you have ever been fishing and have caught a fish, you know that there is a great feeling of excitement when you catch a fish. One of the things that makes fishing such a great sport is that it doesn't matter if you are young or old or if you are a girl or a boy -- you can still be good at fishing.

What does it take to be good at catching fish? First of all, you need to be properly equipped. You can't just get piece of string, put a hook on it, and tie it on the end of a stick and expect to catch very many fish, can you? No! If you are serious about fishing, you will make sure that you have all the right equipment. The next thing you need to know is that you can't sit around talking with your friends about fishing or reading fishing magazines and expect to catch any fish. You have to go where the fish are to catch fish! Finally, if you want to be good at fishing, you must learn patience. Sometimes the fish just aren't biting. I guess that is the main reason I was never very good at fishing. I thought that you should catch a fish the minute your hook hit the water -- and if I ever went fishing and didn't catch anything -- well, that's why I gave up fishing.

One day, Jesus was walking along the seashore when he saw two brothers named Peter and Andrew. Jesus knew that they made their living by fishing, so he called out to them, "Follow me, and I will show you

how to fish for people!" Do you know what they did? They laid down their fishing nets and followed Jesus.

Jesus wants you and me to fish for people too. That means that he wants us to tell others about what he has done for us and what he wants to do for them. What does it take to be a fisher of people?

First, we need to be properly equipped. We need to know what the Bible teaches and learn how to share it with others. Next, we need to remember that we can't just sit around reading the Bible and talking about fishing for people and expect to bring them to Jesus. We have to go out where the people are and tell them about Jesus.

Finally, we must learn patience. Everybody we tell about Jesus isn't going to believe. Some people just won't be interested, but we can't give up. We just have to keep telling people about Jesus and let Jesus take care of the rest. If we will do these things, we can really become fishers of people like Jesus wants us to be. If you think there is a great feeling of excitement in catching a fish, just imagine how exciting it must be to bring someone to Jesus!

Second Scripture Reading

Luke 5:1-11

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Go Fish”

Rev. Stillwell

I grew up in the country so I knew a lot of fishermen, but I never became one of them. I am sure you have seen the bumper stickers people have on their cars that say, “I’d rather be fishing.” I can assure you that none of these cars are my car. I find fishing to be boring and pointless. Now if you are catching the fish to eat I get it, but when I went fishing with my dad and brother we were always a catch and release family, and I did never understand that.

In fact one time I caught a fish and I was insistent on bringing it home for my mom to cook. The fish was small and would have fed me at the most, and it would not have been worth the work of descaling and cooking it. I should also mention that I wasn’t a big fish eater, so for years we had a frozen and dead fish in our freezer.

I do know a fishing story is supposed to be flattering to the fisherman. Fishermen are supposed to talk about the monster fish they hooked but that got away, or they’re supposed to talk about the bait they use to make the fish just jump on your hook. If you like fishing stories then the Bible is for you, for there are many stories about fish and fishing, but Luke tells us today a different kind of fishing story. This story is about fishermen coming up empty after fishing all night and about a man that we don’t know if he has ever gone fishing commandeering a boat and telling the fishermen where the fish are.

If you have ever had the experience of someone who has never done your job telling you how to do your job, you might think these fishermen wouldn’t listen to Jesus, but he had a reputation and crowds had gathered to hear him, so they let him use their boat as a wayside pulpit, and when he was done he told Simon to row out to the deep and let down his nets for a catch. Simon, who would be called Peter said, “Master, we have been fishing all night long but have caught nothing. Yet at your word, I will let down the nets.”

After so many fish are caught that they have to summon nearby boats to contain the catch, a fisherman, Simon, immediately resigns from fishing and starts fishing for people.

I told you it was a different kind of fishing story. If there's anything to learn from this story, it's why some people aren't good at fishing. Some people aren't good at fishing because they refuse to go into deep water. Jesus told Simon, "Leave the shallows and go to the deep."

He says this because everybody knows that the schools of big fish are in the deeper water. The bigger the fish the deeper the water needs to be, and the first rule of fishing is you've got to go where the fish are, but, of course, we aren't really talking about fish.

Jesus was teaching a spiritual principal, so substitute fish for abundance of wisdom, or love, or healing, or peace. All those things we want in abundance. Some people don't catch these things because they simply refuse to go deep. Deep water is where the increase is. Deep water takes faith. Deep water is a risk. Therefore focus of mind and heart are needed, but, more than anything, you need trust.

The visibility in deep black water is next to nothing. You've got to trust the words and directions of others who have passed through deep water to make it there. Jesus is always inviting people to the deeper end of things, but shallow water is pleasant. It cools our feet when we enter without sending shock waves through our body if we had just dove in. You can see all the way to the bottom in shallow water so you know if something that touches your feet is harmless like a minnow or something more sinister.

As a result, staying in shallow water is such a temptation. Shallow water doesn't cost much; it doesn't take a whole lot of courage, but Simon knew the minnows wouldn't be enough to feed him. They were smaller than that fish in my parents' freezer. The minnows weren't the desire of his heart. The deep water of faith is where those things we say we want are swimming around. The shallow is where we begin the adventure, not where we finish.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. There is a time for classes and listening and a time to live what we've learned, a time to receive and a time to give back, a time to worship the Lord in church, and a time to be church and lead the world in the worship of the Lord. There is a time to wade our feet in the cool refreshing pool of shallow water and a time to plunge our whole selves into the deep end, Deep water is where we have to go to get what God has for us.

Some people aren't good at fishing because they don't like to go out into the deep water, but some people aren't good at it because they don't expect to catch fish. When Jesus tells Simon, "Let's go to the deep water," he doesn't stop there. He says, "...let down your nets for a catch." In other words, "Be prepared. The fish will come." What an encouragement.

There is a word here for us who go to church regularly. Week after week we go to the deep water of worship, but do we go preparing for a catch? Do we go believing that a blessing is just waiting for us? Or do we go to appease a spouse or be seen by others or, worse, just out of habit? Expectations count with God. It's all over the Bible.

Expectation is the first-born child of faith, "the substance of things hoped for." No expectation, no real faith. When we say we believe in God, we are not saying I am agreeing with some abstract idea; we're saying we expect the things that God has promised to us. We're saying that I'm a partner with the "giver of every good gift." And among those gifts God has promised us are fruitfulness and fish and forever. I like how Jesus keeps pushing Simon's boundaries. "Leave the shore, Simon. Go into the deep, Simon. Try again Simon." These are easy in comparison to "Expect a blessing, Simon." Jesus was calling Simon to risk being disappointed in God. Us expecting and preparing to be blessed must make God's heart smile in some wide and extraordinary way. God probably says to himself, "They get it; I'm trustworthy, really."

Some people aren't good at fishing because they don't go to the deep water, and some aren't good at fishing because they don't expect to, but some people aren't good at fishing because they think they know more about fish than God.

Simon almost makes this mistake. In effect he tells Jesus in that exasperated tone, "Hey, we've been fishing all night. We know fish. The fish don't run in the day. Aren't you a carpenter moonlighting as a preacher anyway?" Some people think they know more about fish than God. It happens to all of us sometimes. It's not that we actually think we know more than God; it's just that we behave that way. We hear God's instructions: Forgive a 70 x 7 times. Bless those who curse you. Give abundantly. What you do and do not do to the least of these you do and do not do to me. Forget your life and you'll gain eternity. Remember the Sabbath day, it's for worship and family not for catching up on work. We hear them, but we ignore God's invitation to abundance. We say to God by our actions: I know more about marriage, more about healing, more about forgiveness, more about children, more about money than you do, God.

Simon, for just a split second, almost forgot that God is God. Modern culture doesn't really have any use for the word humility. Honestly being humble might be the most counter cultural thing to be in these times. All over social media you will find expert after expert explaining things to anyone who wants to hear and to so many more who don't and when they should perchance run into someone who is actually an expert in the field they very rarely defer to that persons actual experience and knowledge.

Simon, at that crucial intersection we all come to over and over again in life, decided that he didn't know everything, that his present emptiness and frustration had made him ready to learn. Now there's a good definition of humility, a readiness to learn.

You might be tempted to say that the net full of fish is the miracle of this story, but I disagree. The real miracle of this story is that Simon decided that God was God and that he would live that way beginning immediately.

Just look at what Simon says before the miracles begin to happen, "Master... Yet, if you say so...." Simon is a professional. He knows a thing or two about his trade, but he hasn't been successful. It creates the problem of having no food, and no money, but it is also embarrassing. His frustration is real, his pain is real, his emptiness is real, and yet. And, yet, you are God and I am not. He calls him master and he trusts and obeys, and that's when miracles will begin to happen, that's when we will start catching fish, when we decide that God is God, when our lips and our lives agree that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Simon's full net is just a consequence of that fact, of that revelation. What a freedom Simon got that day, what a joy...that "God is the maker of heaven and earth..." and that all by God alone put the fish in the deeps and the sun and moon in the sky. God put the spout in the whale and the gills in the fish and all of the things that the fish need to survive in the deep so that one day, a poor, simple man like Simon could come by and catch one, if God cares enough for us to do all of that, what can God do with you when you're ready to catch fish?

Let's pray together.

Set us free, O God, from the belief that we are all we have and may you use us to as lures and bait to bring men and women and children into the deep waters of your love and grace where the kingdom awaits.
Amen

Call to Offering

Our very lives are a gift from God. What we do with that gift is up to us. Will we choose to embrace the life given? Will we share the blessings we have received with others? The choice is ours. But it is in giving that we receive, and it is in sharing that we taste the fullness of life. With grateful hearts, let us offer back to God our gifts this day, that others may be blessed through our giving.

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

With hearts full of love, may our spirits sing your praise. As we bring our offering before you this day, bless us and our gifts, that we may bring your holy presence where it is needed most in your world. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

Whenever I think of Jesus I often think of fish and vice versa. This is in part because of all the fish stories we read about in the gospel like the one we have heard today, but also because one of the first symbols of the faith, before even the cross was the ichthys. You may know it as the Jesus fish, but it is called ichthys because that is the Greek word for fish. In addition it works as Greek acrostic in which each letter of the word stands for an aspect of Jesus' true nature.

First is Iota which stands for Iesous, which is the Greek form of Jesus

Then Chi which stands for Khristos, which means Christ

Then Theta an abbreviation for Theou, the word for God.

Next is upsilon the first letter in the word uios which means son

Finally, there is sigma short for soter which means savior,

The fish is also a shibboleth in that it was used by Christians at a time when they were often in hiding to let people know where they met to worship.

In this way fish is an essential part of our faith, and whether or not you like to fish or to eat fish, we remember that when Jesus was resurrected he first appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and they recognized him in the breaking of the bread. John tells us of his second appearance to the disciples in which they realized who he was when he told them to let down their nest and they ate fish together.

At this table we try each week to recreate what Jesus did when he fed 5000 people with some bread and a little fish. We gather around this table to share bread and juice, we also share fish in that we share Jesus Christ, the son of God, who came to save us.

Let us always be willing to head out into the deep waters of life and let down our net knowing that if we do we will always find the one who came to catch us for God.

Communion Hymn

"In This Very Room"

Sam Johnson, organist

In this very room there's quite enough love for one like me, and in this very room
there's quite enough joy for one like me; and there's quite enough hope, and quite
enough pow'r to chase away any gloom, for Jesus, Lord Jesus, is in this very room.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Connie Sheller

We are thankful for the example of your Son's life that we can follow. Help us to reflect your love, your forgiveness to all people so that our lives are a reflection of you. As we take this bread and cup, that represents to us Jesus' broken body and his shed blood, may we each resolve to be more like you in our Faith journey. 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

"Here I Am, Lord"

Sam Johnson, organist

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save. I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send? Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Do not fear the turbulent waters of faith. Christ is with us in the boat. Do not avoid the dangers of the deep. God is with us on the journey. Do not doubt your ability to reach the lost. The Spirit blesses us with a bountiful catch.

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER REQUESTS

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
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880 S Main St, Apt 214
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Terry Bailey
Bob Bakaitis
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezny
Bryan Carter
Wanda Chicone
Ruth Cox
Sue Donaldson
Benjamin Dube
Connie Faust
Kim Fleissner
Kathy Moninger-Ford
Jett Fuller
Irma Harper
Sheila Harris
Alberta Haught

Aryn Hess
Ed Jackman
David Leonard
CJ Martin
Norm McDonough
Pam McCord
Dick Moninger
Joe Neckerman
Carmen Oliverio
Peggy Oliverio
Michelle Oneal
Sandy Petry
Dick Pilgun
Bo & Patty Pryor
Rick Rafferty
Betty Riecks
Jeannie Riffle
Lori Riffle

John Samida
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Sprowls
Cathy Stewart
Jane Teagarden
Beth 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.