

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 30
August 7, 2026

- Gathering to Grow – August 10, 6pm
- Elders Meeting – August 12, 5:30pm
- Bible Study with Rev. Chris via Zoom – August 13, 2pm

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



MATTHEW 25:
— MINISTRIES —

M25M.ORG

We were able to send 221 used, empty, and cleaned medicine bottles to the **Matthew 25 Ministries** in Blue Ash, Ohio. Their recycling program helps improve medical care in developing countries while reducing plastic waste in the environment. We took advantage of our shipping perks from Office Max as Business Select Members to mail the bottles. Save your bottles for next year when we'll gather them and send out another shipment.



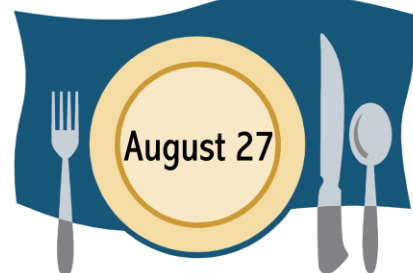
The **Bethany Class** will gather for lunch at Eat'n Park on Tuesday, August 25 at noon. All are invited to join the group for good food and fellowship.



Sunday, September 13
1:04pm

Provided:
Chicken
Hot Dogs
Drinks

Sign up in the Narthex to let us know if you'll be attending and if you're able to help in any way.



Tri-County Men's
Dinner

Mount Lebanon Christian Church

Sign-up sheet in the Narthex

5:30pm Registration, 6pm Dinner

\$15

Chicken, Mac'n Cheese, Cole Slaw, Desserts

RSVP by August 23



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Gary Ford, Bread
Serena Dube, Cup

August 9, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Connie Sheller

Leader: God, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

People: Your glory surrounds and enfolds us.

Leader: Your image resides within us and completes us.

People: You made us but a little lower than the angels.

All: How majestic is your name in all the earth.

Opening Hymn

“Sing Unto the Lord a New Song”

Jody Mullis, pianist

Sing unto the Lord a new song. Sing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord a new song. Sing unto the Lord all the earth. For God is great, and greatly to be praised, God is great, and greatly to be praised.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer

Pastor Gena

Holy One, you sent your Son to walk among us, and you ask us to abide in him as branches connected to a life-giving vine. We give you thanks for your constant presence and unending love.

Life-giving God, we confess that we have not always borne the fruit of compassion and love as you have asked us to. We have turned the other way and ignored brothers and sisters in need. We have remained silent while injustice has roared from the sidelines. We have sometimes thought that we could bear fruit on our own and neglected and ignored the vine from which we stem. Forgive us, O God.

Help us to listen closely for your voice. Give us strength to continue to abide in you—to journey with you, to live out the call to be people working for wholeness.

For all that you have given us, God of life, we give you thanks and praise. For your abiding presence and strength, we give you thanks. For opportunities to serve in your name, we give you praise. For this community of faith in which to grow in you, we give you thanks. For the yearning in us to be connected to you, the source of our life, we praise you.

Abiding God, we ask you to continue to be present with those who need you the most: those who are grieving, those in need of healing, those whose situations may feel overwhelming. We pray now for those who need your loving care ... Show us how to love in your name, O God.

Give us strength to go out into the world and serve our brothers and sisters as you have called us to. May we abide with others as Christ abides with us. May we be instruments of your peace, bearers of your fruit, and lamps that shine your light just a little more brightly.

In the name of the True Vine, Jesus the Christ, we pray as he taught us ...

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

Ezekiel 15

Gary Ford

Special Music

“Listen, God is Calling”

Jim Cope, Sam Johnson, Jody Mullis and Charlotte Stillwell

Children’s Message

Pastor Gena

Any guesses what I’m going to do with this piece of wood? Those are all good ideas, but I’m going to do something even more exciting than what you were thinking. I’m going to plant this in the ground and water it until it grows into a tree! What kind of tree do you think will grow from this? So let me make sure I understand – you’re telling me that this piece of wood won’t ever grow into a tree no matter how much sun it receives or how nutritious the soil is? Oh. Can you tell me why?

I’m glad that you are so smart about trees and branches because you just saved me from a lot of disappointment! This is the very thing that Jesus is talking about in today’s scripture story! In today’s scripture story, we hear Jesus talk about how a branch is supposed to grow and bear fruit for the vine or tree that it belongs to. But, for that branch to grow and bear fruit, it must remain attached to the vine or tree. Because, if the branch was removed from the tree, what would happen? That’s right – the branch wouldn’t be able to receive water and food from the tree and the branch would die. And if the branch was separated from the tree and died, what else wouldn’t it be able to do? It wouldn’t be able to grow or bear fruit or leaves.

One of the reasons Jesus is talking about trees, branches, and fruit is because Jesus wants us to think about how *we* are like branches and that *he* is like a tree. Jesus wants us to remember that when we stay connected to him, like branches on a tree, we are better able to receive (and then share) God’s love, healing, and forgiveness.

But, Jesus is also reminding us that it is possible for us to become separated from him. Unlike this piece of wood, though, if ever we *do* become disconnected from Jesus, that does *not* mean we’re disconnected forever. Instead, we can and are invited to reconnect with Jesus. Then, when we are connected / reconnected with Jesus, we are able to receive all the same gifts that Jesus receives from God. Which also means we can share those same gifts of love, healing, and forgiveness with the people around us. And that is the good news for today. Let’s pray.

Dear God, thank you for Jesus who invites us to connect with him and receive your gifts that we can then share with others. When we are disconnected from you, show us the way to reconnect with your love. Amen.

Adapted from https://rfour.org/childrensmessage_b_23.html

Sermon**“I Am the True Vine”**

Rev. Chris Stillwell

Within the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, there are a lot of stories and a lot of sayings that are repeated so that when you read them through you may begin to have a been there, read that feeling. By the time you get to John, the fourth and final of the gospels, you get some new stories to read and that is good. No one needs to read about how Jesus calmed the storm for the fourth time, that starts to feel like thanksgiving dinners when your uncle tells the same story he always tells. After a while you want a new story.

So John, which is not only the last gospel in the Bible but the last written, draws from a different source of stories to give us the signs of Jesus such as turning water into wine at the Wedding of Cana and the “I am” sayings that we have been looking at this summer such as, “I am the bread of life”, “I am the light of the world”, and the one we have read today, “I am the true vine”.

Not only is this story unique in the gospels, but it also uses a word that does not appear in any other gospel. Not only that but it appears only in this passage of John where Jesus says it 12 times. I think that means that we should probably pay attention to the word, and the word is, abide.

The truth is that I can’t help but pay attention to it because it reminds me of one of my favorite movies, The Big Lebowski, whose main character they call the Dude is a laid-back guy who likes to use the phrase the Dude abides.

Maybe the Dude was influenced by this teaching of Jesus because in the gospel of John we learn that Lord abides and we are called to abide as well, and if you didn’t know what that word meant before you read this passage then you better know now, or you’ll never have a chance of understanding what it means to abide in the Lord as he abides in us. So, let’s take a look. There are many definitions of the word therefore there are many ways for us to abide and they all seem pretty appropriate to what Jesus is telling his disciples.

The first definition for the word Abide means “to remain; continue; stay”. This is a good definition for how Christ abides in us. He remains, he continues, he stays. People thought they had lost him when he was lifted up on the cross, the loss was immeasurable, but when he is lifted up again, to ascend into Heaven so that his followers know that his physical presence will no longer be with them, they are not sad or upset, because he says to them, “Remember, I am with you until the end of the age.”

The disciples trust that Jesus will be with them in all places in all times, they will not have to hunt for him as they did when he went off to pray, and they will not have to fight to be near him for he can be near all of them all the time, because the Lord abides with them.

The second definition is helpful to understand how we can abide in him. It reads, “to continue in a particular condition, attitude, relationship.” We who have taken Jesus to be a lord and will surely call upon him in our last moments, need a little reminder to stay in relationship with him in between. After the fire of conversion begins to die but before the end comes in sight, we need some help in keeping our faith going.

This is important because our lives are up and down and often so is our faith, we’re either on the mountain or in the valley, and we don’t take much time just to be or we do not put much value in being on the plateau. But those can be moments when we really get a chance to know what it is like to rest awhile in Him and abide our days rather just biding our time. The fact is that we spend most of our time doing nothing real special and whether or not we feel Christ’s presence in the humdrum days goes a long way to whether or not we bear good fruit.

That’s how Jesus describes abiding, being rooted. He says to his disciple at the Last Supper:

Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide

Now this is a great metaphor, for as the branch abides in the tree we should abide in the Lord. The branch bears the fruit, but only because of the nourishment it gets from its roots. We love to look at our forsythia bushes in the spring. They are so beautiful and bright and so we cut a few branches and put them in vase in our dining room to have some of that beauty inside. It works for a while, of course, but eventually they wither and die and have to be thrown out. The branches that continue to abide in the bush grow and flourish still.

There are still more meanings which eloquently describe what it means to abide with him and He with us. “To put up with; tolerate; stand:” Clearly this describes Jesus as abiding in us. He puts up with our complaining, he tolerates our shortcomings, he stands with us even when we fall.

Next is “to endure, sustain, or withstand without yielding or submitting”, and again this is the Lord abiding with us. The Lord abides a vigorous onslaught of sin and selfishness. He abides all that we throw at him and yet he will not yield or submit because he wants us to yield and submit our will to him. There is no sin so great that he can’t wash it away with his grace. No prodigal son can go so far away that he won’t be welcomed back when he turns around, repents, and comes home.

The next definition works both ways. It is, “to wait for; await.”

The example sentences the dictionary provides is to abide the coming of the Lord which we must do, or abide the coming of the Kingdom, but Jesus waits for us as well. Christ waits patiently for us to open our hearts, waits for us to turn to him, the Lord abides our conversion.

Then we have “to accept without opposition or question: to abide the verdict of the judges.” That also clearly is for us. Trust and obey as the old hymn sings for there is no other way than to abide in Jesus but to trust and obey. For us to abide in Christ and what he calls us to do is to surrender our will to his trusting that it is infinitely better than our own.

The final definition fits Christ completely as it says “to suffer for”. Of course he suffered on our behalf. God’s love for us was so great that he came into our world in our form, and even without a crucifixion you could imagine the human form with all of its desires and drives, with all of its pains and limitations was suffering for God. Yet nothing was insufferable if it meant helping those who were lost finding their way back home. There was nothing that Lord wouldn’t abide for the sake of the world.

If you didn’t before, I hope that you can see now, why it is that we begin our church year in advent singing in “O Little Town of Bethlehem” with its line so perfectly written, “O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord, Immanuel”, and then conclude the Easter season with Christ assuring us that he abides with us. It is such a good and perfect word. He won’t come and go as he pleases. He won’t come once and never again. The Lord will abide, dwell, live, reside, in our hearts. That is what having the Spirit is like. We teach our children about Jesus living in our hearts because that is the simplest way we can think to explain it, but another way to say it is that the Lord abides with us.

And he calls us to abide in him like a branch attached to a vine from which it draws its substance, energy, life, and ability to bear fruits. When we are in the Spirit, when our hearts are attuned to God, we are not simply biding our time we are abiding our time, making the most of it, enjoying it, recognizing it as a gift, making an ordinary moment a transcendent moment because we are aware of all that is around us and from this will come the fruits of the spirit of which Paul spoke; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

As we move from summer to fall, we celebrate that Christ is with us always we should make it a point to be with him more. The Lord abides with us. I don't know about you, but I take comfort in that.

Call to Offering

Chuck Riggle

The lives we lead are not our own. They are inextricably entwined with the lives of those around us. We give not as payment but as offering—to God, to this community, and to ourselves.

***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

Healing God, when we went astray, you purified us with fire and washed us clean in the waters of our baptism. In gratitude and thanks for your constant care and your many blessings, we return these gifts to you now, that they may bring hope and light to a world in need. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

As the summer heats up, I hope your gardens are beginning to bloom. There are many things that we need for plants to grow and bear fruit. We have had plenty of rain and now we have abundant sunshine, but in many ways it all begins with the dirt. To grow things, it helps to fertilize the soil in order to make it nourishing to the plant.

If we do this then we will grow things in their season; asparagus in the spring, tomatoes in the summer, pumpkins in the fall, but if we want to grow fruits of the spirit, we want to produce them all year round. Therefore, we need to fertilize all year round. That is why we meet as often as we do at this table.

The New Testament writers had a penchant for gardening metaphors. When Jesus said we was the true vine, he meant that like a grape on a vine we will bloom and grow and produce fruit so long as we are rooted in him. Likewise, Paul spoke of the fruits of the spirit with the idea that, just as you can tell the difference between a grapevine and a pumpkin vine by the fruits it produces, you can tell a Christian by whether they produce the fruits of the spirit which he identified as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Coming to this table as often as we can is like watering a plant or fertilizing the soil of our garden. We come so that our lives may bear fruit and bring joy to our world, and we know that we cannot do this on our own. So receive the bread as fertilizer to your soul and the cup as water to your spirit and the Son of God as light that will work to sustain you and produce in you fruits that are worthy of your repentance.

Communion Hymn

"Blessed Assurance"

Sam Johnson, organist

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his Spirit, washed in his blood This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long; this is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Gary Ford

Lord, we come to Your table today to glorify you and deepen our faith. Jesus has given us words to live by and may we not only hear those words but truly live by them. Today, we learned that we are to be vines that bear fruit. May this bread and cup increase our faith and deepen our desire to show that your words live in each of us every day. 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

"Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore"

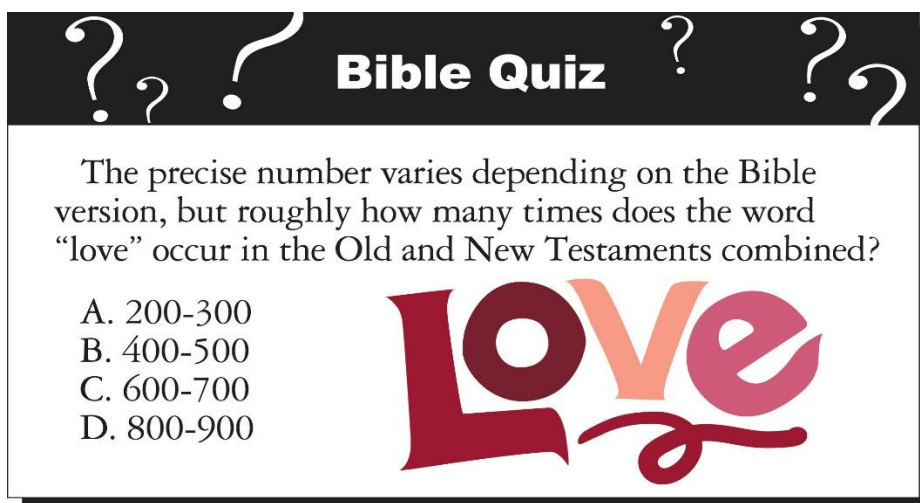
Sam Johnson, organist

Lord, you have come to the lakeshore looking neither for wealthy nor wise ones; you only asked me to follow humbly. O Lord, with your eyes you have searched me, and while smiling have spoken my name; now my boat's left on the shoreline behind me; by your side I will seek other seas.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Abide in God's blessings and make known the image of God that resides within you, and Jesus the true vine, will bear good fruit in you.



Answer: C



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

Patty Pryor, Apt 102

Evergreen Personal Care

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Washington PA 15301

Donna Bakaitis, Room 224

Premier Resident

36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd
Washington PA 15301

Carol Brown, Room 213

Transitions Healthcare Resident

90 Humbert Lane
Washington PA 15301

Doris Haniford, Room 121

Mary Allison
Barb Bailey
Terry Bailey
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezney
Jacquie Best
Gary Blackhurst
Jeff Caldwell
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
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.