

Manor Minutes
Volume 16 Issue 3
January 17, 2025

- Dartball – January 21, 7pm @ Home
- Choir Practice – January 23, 6:30pm

Pastor Gena will be on vacation January 20 – 26.

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

January 19 – Congregational Meeting following worship to review and approve 2024 Annual Report and vote on Board amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws.

February 9 – SouperBowl Lunch & Cornhole Tournament. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Please add your name to the list if you are attending and what kind of soup you are bringing. You do **NOT** have to bring a soup to attend. There is a second sign-up sheet for cornhole tournament teams.

The BLESSING BOX offering totaled \$583.17 for Church World Service. This money is used to support women's ministries around the world. Thank you to everyone who contributed. Please continue to use your box to celebrate your daily blessings. If you need a box, ask Connie Sheller.

**BLESSING
BOX**
OFFERING TOTAL



Karen Thomas will be taking orders for daffodils and tulips for the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days 2025. Spring is right around the corner and what better way to celebrate than with a bouquet of fresh flowers. Order forms are in the Narthex or you can call the Church Office (724) 225-8610 to order. All paid orders are due by February 16 and the flowers will be delivered to the church during the week of March 17.

Bunch of Daffodils:	\$15
Bunch of Tulips:	\$15
Mini-Potted Daffodils:	\$20
Gift of Hope:	\$25

A "Gift of Hope" is a bouquet of flowers that are delivered to a local cancer center/hospital/nursing home facility in our community.

Thank you for your support of the American Cancer Society.



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

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

January 19, 2025 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson

Welcome

Pastor Gena

Call to Worship

Gene Sheller

Leader: God's faithful love welcomes us here.

People: Thank God for this glorious gift!

Leader: God's faithful love redeems our lives.

People: Thank God for our many blessings!

Leader: God's faithful love is ours to share.

People: We will offer this gift to God's world.

Opening Hymn

"I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy"

Jody Mullis, pianist

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart (where?), down in my heart, down in my heart. I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart (where?), down in my heart to stay.

Vs. 2: I've got the peace that passes understanding

Vs. 3: I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Pastor Gena

O God, you exist beyond our mistakes and our unhealthy ways of thinking; you are greater than our fears and prejudices, so we can come to you for true help and wise guidance. We praise you, for on your love we can depend. You are faithful from beginning to end, from the deepest depths to the greatest heights. You are always good, always right, always just.

In you we find refuge, tucked under your wings and shielded for a moment from the harshness of life and the unrelenting pressure of decisions and dilemmas, worry and stress. In you we find all we need – unconditional love, continual forgiveness, constant invitations to turn toward you and live in your ways, deep peace that is beyond what we can understand, joy even in the midst of difficulty, signs of your presence in our everyday lives, light enough to see our next step.

We give you thanks for the gifts and talents you have given us. Keep us from the trap of flattering ourselves or others. Instead, lead us to stand in amazement of what is possible in us as your creations. May our accomplishments always point back to you, always give you glory.

We fear you, O God, as we stand in awe of you, as we worship you, as we obey what you have taught us. May our words be truthful and our actions guided by love and integrity. Give us wisdom as we live our days, for now is always a good time to do good. Teach us to be open about our mistakes, confessing them to you, not hiding them deep inside and living in fear that they will be discovered. Give us the wisdom to

discern between good and evil, even as they co-exist within ourselves. Turn us toward the good, always rejecting the evil. Surprise us again with the abundance of your love, we pray.

We thank you for those who have spoken up and stood up at great cost to expose and decry injustice, evil and hatred. Give us eyes to see what is still unjust and unfair in our communities. Move us to act in ways that build up those who pushed down, to include those who are pushed out. Give us courage to sacrifice our time, our money, our comfort to stand with and lift up those who are treated unfairly, those who don't have support systems and safety nets, those who need an advocate. Give us vision to look beyond charity to lasting change so that charity is no longer needed.

We give you thanks for the times, big and small, when we thought all was lost and yet a way opened for us that we could not have imagined or planned. Thank you for the brief moments, even in the face of great difficulty, in which you make yourself known to us, in which we know that we are not alone. Thank you for times when you surprise us with unlikely friendships, with courage beyond what we thought possible, with grace when our privilege has led us to make assumptions about others.

We celebrate with those who are celebrating today. For those who are struggling in mind, body or spirit, we pray for your will to be done in their lives. We lift into your sure hands those on our prayer list, those we have named aloud, and those whose names we speak to you in the quietness of this moment...

We pray all of this together in the name of your Son who is still revealing himself to us as Savior and Lord, Jesus the Christ, who 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:

“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

Psalm 36:5-10

Linda Reese

Anthem

Choir

Children's Message

Pastor Gena

Excerpts from *I am Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Brad Meltzer, illustrated by Christopher Eliopoulos, part of the “Ordinary People Change the World” series, Rocky Pond Books, 2016.

Second Scripture Reading

John 2:1-11

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

“Joy to the World”

Rev. Stillwell

January is not exactly wedding season. There are very few weddings this time of year, because you cannot count on the weather, and no one wants to have their wedding plans disrupted by a snow storm. Anyone who has ever been anywhere near a wedding knows, it takes many months of hard work to get to that one day. So much goes into a wedding that a bride and a groom can be driven to madness trying to coordinate it all and keep on top of the details, so no one wants to make all those plans and then have to go to plan b.

Do you remember the “runaway bride” in Georgia from a few years ago who was so stressed out from her pending nuptials that she just ran, and ran, and made up a ridiculous story about being kidnaped just to cover it up. Well, her fiancée married someone else and she sold the media rights to her story for half a million dollars so all’s well that ends well I guess.

It’s a shame that there is so much stress and worry over what should be the happiest day of a person’s life, and I believe it is largely caused by the desire to have “the perfect wedding.” Every person who gets married envisions that day as going exactly as planned. Everyone accepts the invitation. Everyone gets there on time. Everyone knows their places, the weather is clear and cool, and nothing rips, tears, or comes up missing.

A perfect wedding is the dream, but in this world perfection is unattainable. It is alright to set your sights on it as a goal, but if you settle for nothing less than you will be disappointed. This desire for the perfect wedding is made worse by the wedding industry, which is always trying to come up with some new detail that you need for your wedding to be “perfect.” You need expensive dresses, limousines, tuxes, an extravagant cake, flowers, and on and on.

I recently saw a show in which a woman wanted to have the “perfect wedding” Her father was quoted as saying that it costs \$80,000, but said, “in order for it to be done right, you can’t have a budget.” the reception was held at a glamorous and exclusive New York City nightclub where a wedding coordinator waited on the bride for everything, but, within a few minutes of their arrival something was amiss. I was never sure what it was, and the bride spent the first hour of her \$80,000 wedding fuming and cursing. Strange how, in all the planning for everything to be perfect, the only detail that was overlooked was to have fun.

The best advice I ever got on my wedding I got from my best man who said that something always goes wrong at a wedding so don’t get too bent out of shape when it does. It was such good advice that it is the last piece of advice I give to couples I counsel before they get married.

The wedding that Jesus attended in Cana could have used some of this advice. Weddings in Israel at that time were extravagant affairs even by our standards. They may not have had stretch limos or horse drawn carriages, but what they lacked in style they more than made up for in longevity. For you see the traditional wedding celebration often lasted a week in Israel with relatives coming from all over and arriving at different times.

A wedding reception this long, therefore, required a lot of wine and often the guests would bring some with them. Apparently they did not bring enough, however, for they began to run out. In a story only recorded in the gospel of John we read, “When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’”

Of all the things that could go wrong this was one of the worst. Who knows what would have happened if Jesus had not been there, but he was, and his mother sees this as the opportunity to showcase his ability. She pushes her reluctant son into the spotlight and he saves the day not only by making the water wine, but making it very good wine, and the celebration continued.

It is a nice story. It is a story of the first sign Jesus performs in John’s gospel. It gives just a small hint of what Jesus can do and leads us to wanting more. It is a nice glimpse into the early days of his ministry before things became complicated, before they became dangerous. If that is all that this story is it would still be worth the reading, but as we will see, it is so much more.

This story, placed at the beginning of the Gospel of John, is a synopsis of the entire gospel. Jesus is invited to come into people's lives. There he does wondrous things that astound others and gladdens their spirits. The miracles he performs make things sweeter and better for all present. By specifically turning water to wine, he foreshadows his role as the host of the Last Supper. His greatness is manifest on the third day, which causes his disciples to believe in him just as he will be resurrected on the third day. Mary commands the stewards to do as Jesus says, just as the readers of the gospel are also commanded to do. Finally, he stays for a while and then departs.

So this short story opens the gospel, but John, perhaps the most literarily gifted of the gospel writers, also packs several important lessons in this first chapter. The first lesson here, to put it simply, is Jesus was not above having fun. Certainly you have met some genuine but somber Christian somewhere who thinks that emulating Christ means to be as Christ was on the cross. And not just for three days, but for all of life. To be a Christian is always serious work, none of us would deny that, but some would say that means we should be always serious. No one could doubt the faith of these doleful disciples, but it doesn't encourage many to follow suit. Over the years, many have so focused upon Christ's suffering that they take all joy out of worship, prayer, and life. Their lives are all water, and no wine.

There are times when following Christ will be hard, and these times call for sober, serious faces. But always, the Christian life is a life of joy. It may be a life of joy and pain, a life of joy and sadness, or a life of joy and confusion at various times, but at all times there should be joy. Even as Christ thought of his mission and what lay ahead of him when he said to his mother, "My hour has not yet come." he still finds the time to celebrate the joys of life, and any Christian worthy of the name should do so as well.

The second lesson here is that Jesus is the life of the party. Not only did he have fun, but he brought joy and cheer to others. The purpose of his mission was to open wide the doors to God's Kingdom, which he accomplished through resurrection. He could have just done that and be done with it, but, instead, he showered love and joy along the way through healing, feeding, teaching, and drinking with others. The same could be said for us today. Christ has already done enough for us by reconciling us to God, but, in addition he comforts us, strengthens us, and encourages us, and we must do the same for others.

To state the lesson more seriously, Jesus is not only the life of the party, he is also the wine of life. He is the one who quenches our thirst when nothing else will satisfy. He is the one who sweetens our days when all has become sour. He is the one who causes us to celebrate when other joys have faded.

These words sound like the vows that couples exchange at weddings, so perhaps our worship should be more like we are at a wedding. I'm not talking about tossing garters and bouquets or doing the Chicken Dance, but I am talking about celebrating each Sunday with the joy that we have found that person with whom we know we will spend the rest of our lives.

The third lesson from this passage is that it provides us with a glimpse into God's Kingdom. With the words of the steward who says:

Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.

We see then that, in Christ, the best is yet to come. You thought it was good before, but just wait. Just when you think the fun is over and everything is ending, here comes the real joy. Or, if things are bad for you now, know that there are better days ahead. Even if Christ only promised joy in this life, it would still be an attractive invitation, but he offers overwhelming joy in the next life so come, drink until you have had your fill, and then share your cup with another.

At the Wedding of Cana Jesus makes himself manifest for the first time and he does so not in an act of anger, like overturning the tables, nor in an act of healing lepers or feeding 5,000, nor in an act of glorification as with the transfiguration, but in a common act of celebration and joy. One that we have all experienced and can identify with.

That should be the most important lesson of all. No matter how well planned, how well organized, or how well financed, no wedding can ever be the “perfect wedding.” So many things can go wrong when it comes to planning something so complex that at least one thing is bound to go wrong, but, of all the things that can go wrong, all is forgiven if the day is filled with joy, and those moments when things did not go as planned become afterthoughts, or maybe even funny memories that add more joy when they are recounted.

This is the grace of a wedding. It is a grace that is borne out of the love that is rooted not in one another’s perfection, but in the fact that, no matter what the faults of either person, each one will love the other because of the joy the other inspires in them.

This is the grace that God bestows upon us. Many times we fail to live up to our calling as Christians. Often we fall short of perfection when it comes to following Christ teachings. Sometimes we have difficulty knowing how to go about sharing our cup of joy with others. We want to be the “perfect” disciples but too often something goes wrong. The good news is that so many of our failings and mistakes can be overcome as long as we have the joy that comes from following the one who is the source of all joy.

We need to realize that receiving joy and giving joy are what life is all about. It's not about possessions, power, wealth, and position for us or for the church. No, it is about joy. May the joy of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you always.

Call to Offering

Donna Stenski

As we offer our material gifts in this time of offering, let’s also reflect and rejoice in the time, talents, and spiritual gifts with which we are blessed. Let us share abundantly from every aspect of our lives.

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

God of steadfast love and faithfulness, thank you for the gift of your love and the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Thank you for the gifts we return to you, this day and every day. Help us share as generously with others as you have shared with us, that your love might be known throughout all the world. Amen

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

At a wedding it is common to quote Jesus Christ when he said, “No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost” As two have come to forge a new life together each puts away the old wineskins of their past selves. This does not mean that a person puts away their own personal tastes, personality traits that make them who they are. Rather it means that the old way of life in which someone thought about himself first is like an old wineskin, and the new married life where each one must think of each other first is the new.

In the same way here at this table we put away our old selves. Our interests and knowledge we keep, but our sins, our guilt, and our sadness we leave behind as we become one with Jesus Christ and our old wineskins are patched with God’s grace. The joy that you experience is the new wine that you make

together with Jesus Christ. Be sure and pour it into the vessel of your life so that others may experience it as well.

In fact you can think of joy as standing for Jesus, others, yourself. So many people have no joy because they have the order wrong, but when we come to this table we remember that we are in communion with Christ and each other. When we find the right order, then we find the God's joy down in our heart.

Communion Hymn

"Fill My Cup, Lord"

Sam Johnson

Like the woman at the well I was seeking for things that could not satisfy; and then I heard my Savior speaking: "Draw from my well that never shall run dry." Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me 'til I want no more— fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Jackie Nelson

Holy, almighty and loving God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we give you thanks and praise for this day, Your day. We are hungry Lord. We have food and drink for the body but are hungry for You. Feed us, Lord. We have heard Your Word and this holy table has been lovingly set and we are all invited. At this sacred hour we do what Our Lord and Savior asked. These simple elements of bread and wine are given to stir our bodies, hearts and minds to remember Jesus. By partaking together we declare "Christ came for us, He suffered and died for us and He will come again for us! We remember dear Jesus and thank you. Holy Spirit, speak, we are listening. 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

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

Sam Johnson

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love; hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive our fear and doubt away; giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Be people of joy. Let joy live in your heart and share the joy of Christ with all you meet. Share joy by seeing the good in each other. Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come. Share joy by praying for our world.



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
949 Bruce Street
Washington PA 15301

Chuck and Mary Wiseman
880 S Main St, Apt 214
Washington PA 15301

Elinor Newman (Southmont)
835 S Main St, Rm 513
Washington PA 15301

Alice Cokeley
900 N Cass Lake Rd, Apt 324
Waterford MI 48328

Carol Brown
36 Old Hickory Ridge Rd, Rm 213
Washington PA 15301

Doris Sorice
880 S Main St, Apt 336
Washington PA 15301

Terry Bailey
Bob Bakaitis
Donna Bakaitis
Todd Barnhart
Vanessa & John Berezney
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
Heather Powelson
Bo & Patty Pryor
Rick Rafferty
Betty Riecks
Jeannie Riffle
Lori Riffle

John Samida
Valerie Shetler
Doug Smith
Darci Spowls
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.