

Manor Minutes
Volume 17 Issue 29
July 31, 2026

- Stewardship/Finance Ministry – August 3, 5:15pm
- Disciples Women's Ruth Group – August 5, 1pm
- Disciples Women's Tabitha Group – August 5, 6pm
- Bible Study with Rev. Chris via Zoom – August 6, 2pm

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

• Apostle Peter
• Bible Study
• Thursday @ 2pm

Via Zoom – Zoom invitation will be emailed to the Manor Minutes list on Thursday. If you do not receive the Manor Minutes or you know someone that would like to receive this invitation and they are not on the Manor Minutes list, please contact Karen in the Church Office.



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.



Children Worship & Wonder begins August 23
Rev. Chris vacation August 20, 21, 22, & 23
Blessing of the Back Packs August 30

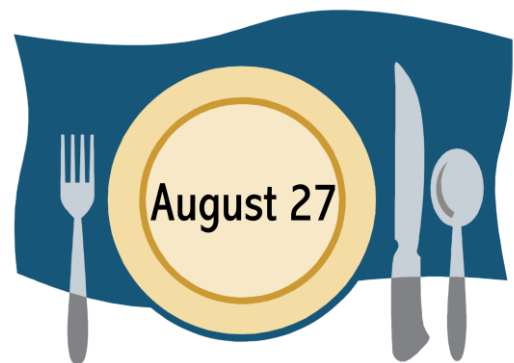
September 13

Sunday School Safe Conduct Orientation, 9am
Hymn Sing
Church Picnic, 1:04pm

Spaghetti Dinner October 3

Trunk or Treat October 25

Drive-Thru Nativity December 12 & 13



Tri-County Men's
Dinner

Mount Lebanon Christian Church

Sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Details about the time, meal, and cost will be shared soon.



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

Rev. Chris Stillwell, Senior Minister
Rev. Gena Sheller, Associate Pastor
Elders: Chuck Riggle, Bread
Diana Crowe, Cup

August 2, 2026 – 10:15am

Prelude

Sam Johnson, organist

Welcome

Rev. Stillwell

Call to Worship

Gary Ford

Leader: Called to be one,

People: We are here.

Leader: Called to be strong,

People: We are here.

Leader: Called in devotion to God,

People: We gather to worship and pray.

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

Rev. Stillwell

Holy Spirit, descend upon us this day. Gather us into your presence, that we may be devoted to prayer and strengthened in unity and love.

Protector of orphans, defender of widows, come to our aid this day, for we are your children. Help us hear your fatherly advice and trust your motherly support. Reveal your presence to us in the glory of your word this day.

Awesome and challenging God, hold us close for this moment, so that with your support we might look deep within and let your healing light purify our darkness. Only in your grasp can we face our struggles - our frantic pursuit of busyness; the ease with which we tolerate the troubles and inequities of our divided society; the acceptance of bottom-line thinking as the final word; the fear of differences that keeps us from receiving gifts of others; our reluctance to get involved.

Steadfast God of faith and grace, show us the way of truth and the way to life.

Carry us out of our fears and doubts into the glorious message of your saving love and constant presence. Walk with us, O God, as we renew our faith, discern your call in our lives, and journey forth as disciples of Christ.

And now rouse us with your grace and mercy, O God. Scatter the fears within our hearts. Drive away our doubt and our sin. Melt our insecurities and anxieties. Banish our divisions and disagreements, that we may be one with you through the grace of Christ Jesus, and one with each other through the power of your Holy Spirit as we pray together

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

Psalm 46

Kevin Puskarich

Special Music

“This is My Father’s World”

Jim Cope

Children’s Message

Rev. Stillwell

My daughter returned to band camp this week and the Steelers began training camp already. Why would they do this when the season won’t start for another month? It’s because they need to practice. We need to practice too, and I have just the right exercise for you. It’s called Jesus Says.

You guys did a great job playing Jesus Says. Now let’s play it the opposite way. Jesus says, “don’t clap your hands.” (Kids should clap their hands because they’re doing the opposite thing.)

“Jesus says, ‘Stand up.’ ” (Kids will sit.) “Stand up.” (Kids should not move.)

“Jesus says, ‘Sit down.’ ” (Kids will stand up.)

“Jesus says, ‘Don’t pat your head.’ ” (Kids will pat their head.)

“Jesus says, ‘Don’t stop patting your head.’ ” (Kids will stop.)

“Pat your stomach.” (Kids should not move.)

“Jesus says, ‘Don’t practice what you preach.’ ”

What does that mean? I think it means that if you tell someone to do something, you need to do it, too. Practice what you preach means don’t do the opposite thing that you say. Instead do what you say others should do.

In our Bible lesson today Jesus tells his followers he is the way, the truth, and the life so if you want to get to where Jesus is you should live as he did. In his time there were teachers of the law and the Pharisees in the synagogue and Jesus said that everything that they did was done so that others would see them and think how great they were, but they didn’t do what they told other people to do. In fact, they did the opposite!

What did Jesus tell us to do about teachers like these?

You might think Jesus would say, "Don't listen to them! You don't have to do what they say." But He didn't. Jesus said, "Obey these teachers and do everything they say. But do not do what they do, because they do not practice what they preach." When it comes to living the Christian life, we need to make sure we do what we say.

Here's a little poem that would be good to remember.

You can know a lot of Scripture
And have the gift to teach,
But what is more important --
Is to practice what you preach!

Second Scripture Reading

John 14:1-12

Rev. Stillwell

Sermon

"I Am The Way, The Truth, and The Life"

Rev. Chris Stillwell

If you have ever played the game follow the leader, you know that it involved doing everything the leader does and following every move, but you also know that ultimately you don't go anywhere. That is not the mark of a leader. A leader is the one who gets people to do something they haven't done before or go somewhere they never imagined they would go.

There are many leaders that we have in our life, our parents, our teachers, our bosses, maybe you played sports or served in the military, all of these people are leaders and they all use different methods to lead. Often times the best leaders are the ones who do not lead by force or coercion but who lead by example. This style reminds me of my minister growing up Rev. John Grove, who was not a strict disciplinarian nor a fire and brimstone preacher, but a quiet, strong, and joyful man, who taught me the faith as much by the way he interacted with us kids as by the things he taught.

I particularly remember sitting in his membership class when I was getting ready to be baptized at the age of twelve and in that class he taught us the story of the leader of our denomination and church movement, Alexander Campbell, who also led in a similar fashion.

It is the legend of Alexander Campbell and the token, and I do not know how accurate it is, but the story has been passed down. In this story Alexander stood at the back of a Presbyterian church wrestling with God. Not physically wrestling of course like Jacob had done, but internally and spiritually as he tried to decide whether or not to sign the Westminster confession. This was a creed developed by the Reformed church in London in 1643 in an attempt to establish orthodox belief throughout this newly established church. All who sought to receive the church's communion were expected to sign this creed.

Alexander had come to the belief that creeds were unscriptural and attempted to elevate the word of humans above the word of God. Unbeknownst to him, his father, Thomas, whom he had not seen since he had departed to be a Presbyterian minister in the new world a year earlier, had reached the same conclusion and seceded from the Presbytery.

The story continues by saying that Alexander walked up to the pulpit where the leaders sat awaiting his signature. He rolled the communion token that he had received and that he needed to have to show that he was worthy of receiving God's free gift of grace in his hand. When he reached the front, he reached out his hand and, instead of taking the pen and signing the paper, he placed his token on the table, and defiantly walked out of the church door, never to return again.

Alexander was not the only one who had a problem with the confession, for around that same time, in Kentucky, there was a Presbyterian minister by the name of Barton Stone who also found himself at odds with it. While preaching at Cane Ridge formal charges were filed against his partner Richard McNemar for violating the confession and church doctrine. Together they separated from the church and, eventually, Stone and Campbell found one another, and our church was born.

Out of this shared experience came the disciples slogan, "No Creed but Christ", which underscored their belief that the church should not be divided by human things such as creeds, and that they should ask only

one thing of their followers that they believe in Jesus Christ. As you can see they were a bunch of trouble makers.

Alexander Campbell wanted to restore the church based upon the model presented in the New Testament. Of all the books in the NT he found Hebrews to be particularly influential. In it the writer of Hebrews speaks of mediators and priests. In Judaism priests were mediators of God. They came from the line of Aaron, Moses' brother, and were in charge of the sacrifices, the holiness code, the law, and the temple. In essence they controlled access to God and determined the purity of the community. An extraordinary burden was placed upon their shoulders as they were responsible for the keeping right relations with God for the whole community.

In the early church priests played a very similar role. They controlled access to God and salvation through the observance of ritual and mass, and by keeping tight control over the reigns of orthodoxy. By excommunicating someone they would keep an unorthodox person outside of the church, and, therefore, outside of God's grace. As a result, the priests mediated for the people. The people had no direct contact with God, but went through the church in the form of the priest.

This is what the church was like from the time of the emperor Constantine 300 years after the birth of Christ to the time of the Reformation some 1200 years later. With the reformation things changed. For Martin Luther believed that no human being could mediate between humans and God. Instead, each individual person was to have a relationship with God because as he called it, the church was to be made of a priesthood of all believers. In other words, each person should have access to the scriptures, and God's grace could not be dispensed or withheld by any human being.

After all any priest, no matter how good, how faithful or how holy, was still a human being suffering from weakness of the body, mind, and spirit, participating in sin, and limited in his abilities. Having a human being intercede on behalf of others would be like the blind leading the blind.

As a result, the role of the minister changed. No longer was a priest, a minister, or whatever the clergy was called in the denominations that arose from the Reformation to mediate on behalf of the people for now the people could read the scriptures themselves. Now they could make a choice as to what church to belong. And since there were several churches excommunication did not have the sting it once did.

Now the role of the clergy was to teach, to encourage, to counsel and any number of other human tasks. But the dispensing of God's grace was to be for God alone. At least this was how it was supposed to be in theory, but the human drive to control something that is powerful, especially something as powerful as religion is great so people tried to mediate God's grace through Christ by using Creed's and disciplines. After all, what chaos would there be if people believed anything? What if people really were allowed to make up their own mind based upon their interpretation of scripture? Is this really what we want?

So, much as the church had done before the Reformation, creeds were drawn up defining orthodox beliefs, and people who did not adhere to them were excommunicated. One such creed was the Westminster Confession drawn up by the Calvinist wing of the Reformation and used by the Presbyterian church to ensure that only right beliefs could take communion. It states that a church's purity lies in its doctrine and ritual and not in its actions or morality. In other words, there was a right way to believe in Christ, a right way to think about Christ, and a right way to worship Christ, and all of these were more important than a sincere faith and moral actions based upon this faith.

Campbell rejected this and although he found much to agree with in the confession and much that was biblical, he also found much that was not. Instead, he turned to his favorite biblical book, Hebrews, in particular 4:14 which has its own confession where it states, "Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession." What is our confession? We confess that Christ and only Christ is the high priest. Only Christ can mediate our sins

to God. This is why our confession is, "No creed but Christ." For a confession made by humans is tantamount to trying to control God and what we can believe about God.

We do not have to agree on every particulars about Christ. There is room for discussion and disagreement, and for diversity of views. In this way we grow in our faith by learning from one another, and we are given a dose of humility by hearing beliefs from others that might teach us something that we did not know. In this way we are less likely to commit the idolatry of confusing our beliefs with the gospel truth. In this way also the minister of our church is a different kind of leader.

The minister does not lead by coercion, threats of damnation, or the high and mighty power of his or her office. Rather the minister of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) leads only by the way in which they get others to follow the true leader Jesus Christ.

In the end God has the last word, not us. To enforce a strict belief system is to say that the church and its ministers know all that we need to know about God. Therefore, we would all be best to place the care of our spiritual lives into the ministers' hand and let the church tell us what to believe. This is like the blind leading the blind. This is like playing follow the leader with someone who leads us nowhere.

Instead, by holding fast to our confession of "No creed but Christ," we recognize that we need Christ and not men or women to lead us so that we too may see, and isn't that the point?

God did not come into the world so that human beings could take the same old religious system that had so displeased God that had been the inspiration for a thousand prophet's screeds and simply reorder it in Christ's name. Rather God came in the form of a human so that we who were lost and whose religious rules and rituals had often been the reason for us getting lost and found us.

We are lost but Christ is found. We are blind but Christ can see. He is our leader and he knows the way as he told his disciples:

In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.' ⁵Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' ⁶Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

Only Christ is the way and the truth and the life, not the confessions, creeds, or sacraments of the church. We do not exactly get the way that Christ leads us. We do not know exactly how Christ's saves us. We only need believe that he does, and can, and will, and he will show us the way. Anyone who lets Jesus Christ be the leader of their life is welcome in the church and at the table because this is not my church or your church, but Christ's and Christ's alone.

Communion Hymn

"Fill My Cup, Lord"

Sam Johnson, organist

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!

Invitation to Communion

Rev. Stillwell

When Christ says "I am the way, the truth, and the life", he is not just speaking of himself. There is an invitation here to the believer as well. The one who follows Jesus will follow in his paths of love and compassion, grace and hope. The one who follows Jesus will do as he did as best as they can. The picture Jesus draws here is not just about a future place of welcome or a heavenly home ready to welcome us when we die. Instead, he imagines a home that welcomes us both now and then.

The communion table is a powerful reminder that the resurrection is not just a promissory note for some future reality but a daily experience for the follower of Christ. Resurrection is not just something we anticipate but something in which we can participate now, even as death encroaches upon us.

If we defer God's gift of this heavenly home to some indistinct yet certain future day of judgment, we neglect to see how that gift just might take root in our midst today. That heavenly home is not just an antidote for our current malaise, a sedative to keep us moving through a dreary world. It's a vision intended to spur us into action right here and right now because God is already moving amongst us.

If God has prepared a home for us, ought we not prepare a home for our neighbor? If God has prepared a home for us, perhaps God is building some today even as we try to erect fences around our own. If God has invited us and welcomed us, we should incite and welcome others on the way.

As we share in this meal let us remember that the way Christ has shown us is the way of mercy and forgiveness and that way is harder than most, but its rewards are infinitely greater.

Prayer for the Bread & Cup

Chuck Riggle

Most Gracious Heavenly Father, we come to you on this beautiful first Sunday of August as your humble servants. Psalm 46 tells us to "Be still and know that you are our God and that you are our secure refuge and our fortress". The Book of John states that we should ask Jesus to comfort us as he comforted his disciples. Significantly, John relates that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through him. Now, let us be reminded of these words and, once again, of your Son's ultimate sacrifice. As we partake of these communion elements, we ask for your blessing on them as well as on all who faithfully serve you. May we be encouraged to act as meaningful Christians in every aspect of our lives. In Jesus' name we pray, 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

All are invited to share in this meal. Please come forward down the center aisle, as you are able, take a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, and partake. Place your offering in the trays as you return to your seats by the outside aisles. If you are unable to come forward, the meal will be brought to you. Gluten-free wafers & individual servings 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

"O, How I Love Jesus"

Sam Johnson, organist

There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth; it sounds like music in my ear, the sweetest name on earth. O, how I love Jesus, O, how I love Jesus, O, how I love Jesus, because he first loved me!

Benediction

Rev. Stillwell

Called to be one, go forth in unity and love. Called to be strong, go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Called in devotion to God, go forth in ministry and witness to the 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

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Carol Brown, Room 213

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Barb Bailey
Terry Bailey
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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
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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.