

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

April 2026 NEWSLETTER



The Mission of Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to provide a place of fellowship where a community of believers comes together to be spiritually renewed and enabled to effectively witness for Christ through service to others.

PASTOR JOHN'S THOUGHTS

On March 15, the Choir presented "I Believe in a Hill Called Mount Calvary" (by Bill and Gloria Gaither and Dale Oldham) in our worship service. It had been going around my mind and heart for weeks, and still is. One particular verse of three. And one word in that verse, the very last one: "Friend." Here are parts of verses 1 and 2 that set the stage: "I believe in a hill called Mount Calvary...when time has surrendered and earth is no more I'll still cling to the old rugged cross...I believe that the Christ who was slain on the cross has the power to change lives today...a new life is mine and that is why by the cross I will stay." Now verse 3 in full: "Oh, I believe that this life with its great mysteries surely someday will come to an end. Oh, but faith will conquer the darkness and death and will lead at last to my Friend."

The word "Friend", with a capital "F", hits me powerfully for two reasons. One, who doesn't want or need a friend. Friends don't have to love you, like a family member does. A friend is a pure volunteer. I wouldn't want to go through life without friends, and without being a friend. I wouldn't want to test the other side of the old saying, "A friend in need is a friend indeed." We all need help, and we are created to give help.

The other reason "Friend" struck me was the Biblical reference to John 15:13, "No one has greater love than the one who lays down his life for his friends." Jesus is our Friend. He considers us his friends. We are his friends because he has taken our sins in his body on the cross and lifted the crushing burden of our guilt. He has risen from the dead and ascended to heaven where he prepares a place for us, so that, as the third verse of the song says, when this life comes to an end, faith will lead at last to our Friend. This is what Easter is all about. We have so much to celebrate in this life and in the life to come. I am so thankful to be pastor of a church that is rock solid on the Holy Scriptures and the Savior. Happy Easter to all!

A STEP BACK IN TIME – Rose Griest

I was curious about the age of our current pews, so I looked in the Faith & Works book written by Madison McElwain to see if I could find any information. A lot of the writings are rather "dry" to me, but I did find some information that I thought was interesting.

"In 1881 the old shingle roof upon the church was replaced by a slate roof, inside of church and pews repainted, new organ and new chandeliers purchased; in 1882 farm house built at a cost of about \$1300; in 1907 a new cemetery established north of Valley Road. " These were not the current pews.

"On January 30, 1913, acting upon the suggestion of one of its members, Mr. Jacob N. Townsend, the Board of Trustees decided to erect a bell tower and vestibule, put in a hot air heating system and **new pews**, raise the floor in the rear of the church so that it will incline toward the pulpit, put in new windows and repaint the interior of the church. Later it was decided to have the outside walls of the old building cleared of cement and plaster and repointed. The total cost when completed was about \$5300.

The rededicatory services were held on July 30, 1914. At that service the sum of \$ 891.86 was contributed toward the building expenses. The bulk of the funds, however, had been secured beforehand by making a thorough canvass of the congregation and by gifts from its friends. The last item of indebtedness was disposed of on Sunday, March 28, 1915, by taking a popular subscription at the close of the regular morning service, when the sum of \$237.50 was received.

A gift much appreciated was the stone of which the new vestibule and bell tower have been built, contributed by Mr. Robert S McClure, a member of our neighboring church."

So our pews were purchased in 1913 which makes them 114 years old. And I think they look beautiful since they've been refurbished!!

CHURCH LIFE

CHOIR - We are at the end of our Easter preparations. Included in the preparations were three extra songs that we prepared to sing as a joint choir at the Tennebrae Service held at Little Britain Church. So now we are just practicing to wind down our choir season at the end of May. We will have a special song prepared for Memorial Day. We do have faithful choir members that attend nearly every practice and Boni that prepares the accompaniment. Middle Octorara is blessed.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION - Vacation Bible School will be held June 22nd – 26th. The theme is "Snowball Mountain Challenge". We hope to have a lot of children and help to increase our Youth Relaunch! Invite any children that you know so they can plan now to come!

DEACONS - When Jesus died on the cross, he placed the needs of all humanity ahead of his own. Three times in the Garden of Gethsemane he had prayed, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but your will, be done." The cross was the only way to secure our release from sin and death, and our Lord courageously left the Garden and presented himself to those who were determined to crucify him. It was the greatest act of service there will ever be. Our Savior asks us to follow him by taking up our crosses daily, laying down our lives, concerning ourselves with the needs of others for his sake. He says when we do that, we will gain our very souls. We will discover our best selves and become the kind of people he created us to be. We are all to live as servants. Our faithful Deacons point the way. A big thank you to all who serve at MO, both formally and informally!

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN - What a great program we had for the tea!! And the tables were lovely. The tea and treats were delicious and the helpers were attentive. It was well-attended and the donations were over \$400.

We donated \$250 to Lightshine Ministries for Kristine Hileman's mission work in Alaska. We also donated \$500 to Solanco Neighborhood Ministries to go towards Easter Meals.

There is another sandwich sale in April. Orders should be in by April 16th with sandwiches arriving April 23rd. This is one of our fundraisers so that we can do mission work. We appreciate your support.

SILVER SISTERS - We had a great turnout for our last lunch. Sixteen ladies seemed to enjoy each other's company and the meal at Dienners. We set the date for the next lunch to be tax day, April 15th at 11:30 at Village Gap Diner. It is located along route 41 where Friendly's used to be. We really do have fun. All widows are welcome. Just let Rose Griest know if you would like to join us.

TRUSTEES – The Board of Trustees try to keep things operating satisfactorily around the church. Including when doorknobs or locks don't work, toilets get clogged, lightbulbs need changed, keys need made, salt needs spread on sidewalks, Christmas decorations need removed from the cemetery, etc. There are many hours spent at the church during some weeks meeting vendors doing work. I hope you will thank them when you see something special done or anytime. And if you notice something needing attention, let one of the Trustees know.

Work Day is scheduled for April 25 beginning around 8 AM. We expect to be picking up sticks in the church yard, leveling graves in the cemetery, among other jobs. Lots of help needed!! Bring your shovels, work gloves, carts, tarps, etc. There will be brunch served. Ladies that can't work outside could come and work in the kitchen or storage room straightening things up. We can find jobs for any willing hands.

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

MUSEUM UPDATE

The Museum will be open on Sunday, April 19 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Work continues on the honor wall where photos and plaques detail the dedication and contributions of individuals who made it possible to maintain and restore the Covenanter Church and attached schoolroom: Rev. George H. Shea, D.D., Fred Williams, Madison McElwain, Hiram Troop, Sr., Abram Rhoads, and Rev. Robert Tanguy. Soon to be added, Amy Fields and Margaret (Margie) Young.

A new exhibit is being prepared and will be on display by fall. Dorothy Graham was a member of the Bart High School class of 1941 where she played on the baseball and basketball teams. She married Clarence "Dick" Rineer and later was Bart postmaster for 25 years. The exhibit will include photos of the Bart Post Office façade and sign, and of Postmaster Dorothy (Dot) Rineer. There will also be information on the class of 1941 – roster, graduation, etc. Please note that the Schoolroom Museum has records of all the Bart High School classes – 1903-1927 at the Covenanter Church schoolroom, and 1927 – 1947 at Green Tree.

The Museum will be expanding its hours during the good weather months, and closing during winter months. It is also open for individual research by appointment – Barry Girvin at 717-471-8668 or at jbgseg60@comcast.net

MISSION MUSINGS

I have been thinking about all the wonderful ministries we here at M. O. have been blessed to be involved in. Our January Monthly Mission Focus is Solanco Neighborhood Ministries and with that we donate to both the Food Bank as well as the Fuel Fund. Boni and I volunteer some at the Food Bank and get to see first hand how wonderful this ministry is. It is sad, joyful and humbling all at the same time to have the opportunity to meet the clients and hopefully help them make ends meet. The Fuel Fund helps folks with heating expenses throughout the winter and also blesses many individuals and families. The best part of this ministry is everything is faith based and the staff is very willing to help with clients spiritual needs with local pastors assisting with prayer and mentoring.

The February Monthly Mission Focus is Orphans Assistance Foundation. This ministry is helping children and families in the Ukraine offering a variety of services. Our contact with this ministry is Audrey Santiago who along with her children attended M. O. several years ago. Some of you will recall Audrey spoke of this ministry in the past at our worship service. Boni and I had the opportunity to host Audrey and her husband Jesus at that time. It was easy to recognize the heart they have for this ministry and for the people in Ukraine. There are so many wonderful ministries in the world to support but I believe it is extra special when we have a direct connection to someone in that particular ministry.

The March Monthly Mission Focus was LightShine Ministries. Boni and I had the privilege to travel with folks from this ministry when we went to Alaska to help with the World Eskimo and Indian Olympics in July of 2016. These games are held yearly in Fairbanks, Alaska and draw contestants from all over Alaska and even some from other countries. There are a multitude of unique competitions that are based on the skills their ancestors would have needed just to survive in the extreme conditions of the remote parts of Alaska. LightShine Ministries also has built churches and other facilities in other parts of Alaska. They also help organize and lead Bible Schools in several villages in Alaska. They have been ministering to the native Alaskan people for over 25 years. They now have a base camp in Palmer Alaska where the LightShine volunteer teams can stay before departing to and then returning from their mission assignments. LightShine has 19 teams going to help in Alaska this year!!!

A side note is Douglas, Kristine and Martin Hileman are scheduled to go to Alaska with LightShine this summer to work on projects at the base camp. I hope to have them come to M. O. sometime to tell us about their experience. These are just four of the amazing ministries we support through your giving to our Session Fund. Because of your giving we are making a difference in many lives in the wonderful name of Jesus.

Luke 21: 1-4
Blessings,
Dan Henry

Middle Octorara Presbyterian
Church
Income and Expense Statement
GENERAL FUND 01, March 2026

BEGINNING BALANCE, March 1, 2026		20,632.76
INCOME		
Offerings	\$10,749.60	
Per Capita	39.00	
Manse Rent	1,408.95	
Account Interest	0.37	
Chapel Rent	200.00	
Benevolence	1,045.00	
One Great Hour of Sharing	385.00	
TOTAL INCOME	13,827.92	
TOTAL CASH & INCOME		34,460.68
EXPENSES		
Pastoral Salary	\$6,082.54	
Pastoral Mileage	519.83	
Pastoral Pension	3,271.91	
Pastoral Technology	50.00	
Secretary-Treasurer	900.00	
Payroll Taxes	483.69	
Advertising	95.52	
Office Supplies	99.98	
Church Supplies	93.26	
Copier Lease	120.32	
Electricity	501.17	
Propane Gas	1,033.92	
Insurance	3,641.23	
Burner Repairs/maint.	142.00	
Misc. Repairs/Mainten.	148.65	
Telephone/internet	118.53	
Cleaning Service	292.50	
Snow Removal	585.00	
Per Capita Payment	39.00	
1 Grt.Hr.Shr.Payment	385.00	
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund	1,045.00	
Misc. Repairs-Manse	20.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES	19,669.05	
ENDING BALANCE, March 31, 2026		14,791.63

TREASURER'S REPORT

GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES - March 2026

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

March 1 -	General Fund	2,997.00	Benevolence	395.00
March 8 -	General Fund	1,449.00	Benevolence	130.00
March 15 -	General Fund	1,954.00	Benevolence	75.00
March 22 -	General Fund	1,974.00	Benevolence	230.00
March 29 -	General Fund	1,749.00	Benevolence	80.00

An additional \$2,659.92 General Fund money and \$135.00 Benevolence money was received by mail etc.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	19,217.00	49,964.20	12,782.92	38,698.06	50,098.27
Benevolence	1,192.30	3,099.98	1,045.00	2,835.00	



BIRTHDAY'S

- 6 – Brandon Pfeiffer
- 8 – JoAnn Irwin
- 9 – Dale Phillips
- 10 – Gene Graver
- 14 – Stephanie (Herr) Bance
- 18 – Amanda Lefever, Dave & John Garver
Faye & Todd Reinhart
- 23 – Boni Henry, Cheryl Girvin
- 26 – Lindsey
- 29 – Amanda Evans

ANNIVERSARIES

- 24 – James & Theresa Williams

Name: _____

Date: _____

Find the words listed. Words may appear forward, backward, up, down or diagonal. Words may overlap and cross each other. When you have found a word, be sure to circle it and cross it off the list.



APRIL

Word Search



- APRIL
- ARBOR DAY
- BLOOM
- BLOSSOM
- BUNNY
- BUTTERFLY
- CATERPILLAR
- CHICK
- DAFFODIL
- EARTHWORM
- EASTER
- FLOWERS
- GARDEN
- GRASS
- HATCHING
- KITE
- MUD
- PICNIC
- POND
- PUDDLE
- RAIN
- RAINBOW

H	T	J	N	I	B	O	R	K	F	C	K	K	K	M	M	L
L	E	A	S	T	E	R	Y	X	I	J	S	C	M	K	S	L
R	D	P	E	R	S	A	E	N	R	P	R	R	I	E	T	I
V	L	C	J	N	D	R	C	T	R	H	O	L	E	H	L	D
L	T	D	N	R	I	I	E	I	I	W	D	D	Z	R	C	O
P	H	T	O	H	P	H	N	W	H	K	L	M	A	G	J	F
K	U	B	Q	X	F	G	S	T	O	I	R	I	R	B	P	F
L	R	D	K	F	N	L	R	N	N	H	N	A	U	I	V	A
A	M	G	D	J	B	A	O	G	U	B	S	T	L	R	Q	D
W	X	A	L	L	E	L	S	W	O	S	T	U	Q	L	R	A
K	V	R	I	W	E	B	O	W	E	E	T	P	O	N	D	L
T	K	D	R	V	L	U	T	S	R	R	B	L	O	O	M	L
U	M	E	P	B	M	N	J	F	S	H	S	Z	M	D	Y	E
O	R	N	A	L	X	N	L	K	M	O	M	V	N	U	R	R
R	A	L	K	Z	P	Y	D	M	K	R	M	L	V	M	N	B
P	I	M	B	R	A	L	L	I	P	R	E	T	A	C	C	M
S	N	G	H	G	H	D	R	G	N	I	H	C	T	A	H	U



- ROBIN
- SEEDLINGS
- SHOWERS
- SPRING
- SPROUT
- SUNSHINE
- TULIP
- UMBRELLA



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 5	April 6.	April 7 Session Mtg. 6:40 p.m	April 8 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7 p.m.	April 9	April 10 Forged in Fire 6:30 p.m.	April 11
April 12	April 13	April 14 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	April 15 ROMEO Club 9 a.m. Silver Sisters 11:30 Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7 p.m.	April 16	April 17 Forged in Fire 6:30 p.m.	April 18 Yard Sale 7:00 – 1:00
April 19	April 20	April 21	April 22 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7 p.m.	April 23	April 24 Forged in Fire 6:30 p.m.	April 25 Church cleanup 8:00 a.m.
April 26	April 27	April 28	April 29 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7 p.m.	April 30	May 1 Forged in Fire 6:30 p.m.	May 2 Outdoor Yard sale rain date

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REV. JOHN BARLOW

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Cellphone: 717-377-4570

Email: barlowjohn604@gmail.com

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 68, Bart, PA 17503

Physical/Shipping Address: 1199 Valley Road, Quarryville, PA 17566

Phone: 717-786-3402 or 717-786-8284

Email: mopc_sec@comcast.net

Website: middleoctorara.org

Facebook: middle octorara

Church Secretary/Treasurer Debbie Hoover

Phone: 717-786-8284

Email: thehoovers@comcast.net or mopc_sec@comcast.net

Address: 2115 Mine Road, Paradise, PA 17562

Youth Ministry Leaders

Alie Armstrong - aparmstrong527@gmail.com

Cayla Sallander - Caylamiller96@gmail.com

Senior Choir Director Rose Griest

Accompanists Boni Henry, Shirley Girvin, Sue Herr

Technology Team Leader Mike Hoover

Email: mopc_av@comcast.net

Superintendent of Cemeteries James Williams

Phone: 717-517-6968

Personnel Committee:

2024-2026- J. Barry Girvin

2025-2027- Sue Ressel

2026-2029 – Brenda Roark

CHURCH BOARDS

Session

Clerk of Session: Dan Henry

Phone: 717-381-9947

Email: danhenny55@aol.com

2024-2026-Shirley Girvin, Richard Keene, Jonathan Welch

2025-2027-Vivian Caldwell, Dan Henry, Jerry Garver

2026-2028-Stephanie Miller, Sue Ressel, Brenda Roark

Deacons

Administrator: Pastor John Barlow

Phone: 717-377-4570

mail: barlowjohn604@gmail.com

2024-2026-Kim Barlow, Dixie Clark, Linda Farmer, Sue Herr

2025-2027-Koryn Barrett, Andy Keene, Val Keene, Elaine Ressel

2026-2028-Nancy Cox, Annie Frackman, Kathy Harvey, Cathy Miller

Trustees

President: Jeff Frackman

Phone: 717-989-6896

2024-2026-Jeff Frackman, Herb Girvin, Nancy Minchoff

2025-2027-Bob Mowery, Dale Phillips, Rick Ressel

2026-2028-Boni Henry, Jim Miller, Sam Reinhart