

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

August 2025 NEWSLETTER

MIDDLE OCTORARA CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



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

I think you all know by now that C. S. Lewis is one of my favorite people and authors. He was born on 29 November 1898 in Belfast in Ulster, Ireland. He died on 22 November 1963 in his bedroom at his home on the outskirts of Oxford, England. He was sixty-four and had been in poor health for the previous three years. What had he accomplished in his forty odd years of adulthood? He had served his country in the trenches of France in World War 1. He had helped to sustain England in World War 2 by giving a series of talks on the BBC, which were later published as his book, Mere Christianity. He was Fellow and Tutor in English Literature at Magdalen College, Oxford University, followed by Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University. Both positions involved countless hours of tutoring and lecturing. He researched and wrote English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, one Volume of the Oxford History of English Literature. This monumental task involved doing pains-taking literary criticism of every piece of literature either written or translated into English in the 1500s. He wrote books explaining and defending Christian faith, such as The Problem of Pain, The Screwtape Letters, The Four Loves, and Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer. He wrote seven fantasy novels, The Chronicles of Narnia, and three science fiction novels, The Space Trilogy. These ten works of fiction are my personal favorites among Lewis's writings. I read them over and over again and always find great encouragement and inspiration. In addition to his teaching, and writing, Lewis kept up an extensive correspondence. Thousands of his readers wrote letters to him, many of them children. He did his best to answer each of them personally, in long hand. Speaking of children, did I mention that he took in children evacuated from London during the Blitz? He would have been a high net worth individual from the royalties of his best-selling books, but he gave it all away to Christian charities. He lived simply, and appeared to devote his every waking moment to others. Part of what enabled Lewis to achieve what he did academically was his possession of an all but photographic memory. What strikes me about this is that he used the ability God had given him for contribution, not personal gain. He was a good steward of the time, abilities, and opportunities God gave him. I am surrounded by good stewards of God's gifts at MO. Keep up the good work – or should I say works (Ephesians 2:10). You're a great church, and I am privileged to be your thirteenth installed pastor in nearly three hundred years.

CHURCH LIFE

DEACONS - We can never repay our gracious Lord and Savior for all he has done for each of us. But we can express our gratitude by the love we pass along to others as he leads us. In 2 Corinthians 1:4, Paul says that "we comfort others with the comfort we have received from God." And Jesus says in Matthew 25:40 that "what we do for the least of his and our brothers and sisters we do for him." Our Deacons do a fine job setting the example of self-giving service. But what is needed is for us all to do our part. As Paul says in Ephesians 4:16, "the body of Christ grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Thank you, dedicated Deacons, for setting a worthy example. And thank you, church family, for participating, along with them, in the bond of Christian love and fellowship. We are all blessed with such a strong and caring church.

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN - We are planning and inviting you to the 5th annual Peach Fest that will be held Saturday August 9th from 4 to 5:30. Please call Shirley Miller if you would like to bring a peach dessert or other peach food. Come and bring your friends to sample different peach dishes.

SESSION - Here are the results from our Congregation meeting on July 27th.

Option #1 - Repair existing pews only	0 votes
Option #2 - New carpet only	0 votes
Option #3 - Repair existing pews and new carpet	29 votes
Option #4 - No changes to pews or carpet	6 votes

A thank you to the Trustees who spent many hours and much effort gathering the information to present these options for today's meeting.

Also thank you to Deb who prepared the helpful financial report for the meeting.
The plan is for the work approved today to begin in early 2026.

SILVER SISTERS - I'm sad to report that one of our Silver Sisters has passed away. We surely will miss Shelba Eberly. She attended mostly all of our luncheons.

In July nine of us had a delicious lunch at Perkins Family Restaurant. And our August lunch will be at Hometown Kitchen on Wednesday August 13 at 11:30. Afterwards we will come to the church to play games which we haven't done for some time. All widows are welcome!!

SUMMER MUSIC

August 3	Grace Notes Quartet
August 10	Kenton Green Sing/trumpet
August 17	Richard Keene
August 24	Koryn Barrett
August 31	Kira Roark cello
Sept. 7	Grove family

TRUSTEES - There are going to be changes when looking up at the cemetery. We have tried several options when it comes to the bushes that spell MIDDLE OCTORARA above the cemetery wall. Thinking cutting them way back would make an improvement. But they were too old and many of them did not grow back as we had hoped, and the weeds seem to have taken over. The same thing with the shrubs forming the cross that originally had a macadam sidewalk in the middle. In spite of all the work the Trustees have done by mulching with wood chips, the weeds prevail. We are not young people that can keep up with it all anymore. So we decided to have the bushes pulled out and have the ground leveled off with grass seed spread over top.

We have been pricing and getting information about new carpet and repair of pews. Many hours have been spent in discussion and research. We are prepared for the congregation to vote on the choices of carpet only, new carpet and pew repairs, only pew repairs, or do neither.

The congregation voted and chose the option of getting new carpet and having the pews repaired. Now we contact the Presbytery to get permission. And put in our order. We thank the congregation for their input and discussions about this project. We don't all agree, but majority rules and there was a large majority.

YOUTH

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATE & OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

As we continue to rebuild and grow our youth ministry, we are guided by our mission to create a Christ-centered community where children and youth are known, loved, and encouraged to grow in their faith.

We need your help! Please take a moment to fill out the *Youth Ministry Survey*—either by completing the paper version (return it to the mailbox for Alie Armstrong and Cayla Sallander – labeled YOUTH) or by filling it out online here: tinyurl.com/MOyouth2025. Surveys are due by Tuesday, August 13.

We're especially hoping to hear from those interested in teaching Sunday School this year!

We also invite you to support our presence at the Solanco Fair:

- Sign up to volunteer at our fair booth: tinyurl.com/MOslcfair
- Order a Youth Ministry T-shirt to wear at events: tinyurl.com/MOOctShirt
- Donate items from our wish list to support the booth: tinyurl.com/MOYGfairlist

Please spread the word! Share this opportunity with family, friends, neighbors, and former members—*whether they attend Middle Octorara or not*. If they have children or teens who might be interested in getting involved, we'd love to connect with them.

Thank you for being a church that invests in the faith and future of our youth. Your involvement makes a lasting difference!

Secretary notes: If you are not computer savvy, I will help anyone with the above computer links. Also, if you would rather give a donation to the church towards the supplies, make a check payable to the church but do not include with your regular offerings.

MISSION MUSINGS

This month my Mission Musings is about Joe Mason because when I woke up from a nap one evening this week Joe came to mind and I felt led to write about him. Many of you remember Joe.

I was first introduced to Joe when I was laid off from Walter and Jackson in 2009 and I decided to volunteer to drive for the America Cancer Society. I received a call from them asking if I could take a fellow from New Providence to the Health Campus on the Harrisburg Pike. I said sure and that's when I met Jim Bauer. Many of you remember Jim as well and Joe was Jim's step father. As I began to take Jim back and forth to the Health Campus we became friends and I took him on other errands as well. When I first invited Jim to church he said I don't think your church people would appreciate me coming to church. I said Jim please just give us a chance and see and he did. Of course M. O. welcomed Jim and that's how I and M. O. got to know Joe. As I talked with Joe, his wife Donna and her grown children Tammy, Bobbie and Paul I would invite them to church also. Joe worked as a cook at a nursing home in Lancaster and worked every Sunday so he would always say, when I don't have to work on Sunday I will come to your church. I'm not sure he really meant it then as I will talk about later. Joe would say, Jim says very good things about the people at your church. Well as God would have it, a few years later as Joe's health continued to decline he could not work full time and he got a part time job at QPRC and didn't have to work on Sunday. I began to bring Joe to church and he became a regular as his health permitted. I recall Dale Phillips saying, "some Sundays I think I might just stay home today and then I think of Joe and how he can hardly walk and is in constant pain yet he comes almost every week".

I remember Joe sitting in the pew after the service until Boni or Shirley were finished with the whole postlude. Joe said to me why do people walk out while they are still playing I think that is rude 😏. I said that is the postlude and it is meant to be played as people are leaving the service. Well Joe wasn't leaving till the music was done and then he would clap for Boni or Shirley. I think we would all say and Joe would agree he was a little rough around the edges but he had a compassionate heart. I think a turning point for Joe was when Boni and I went to visit he and Donna at Christmas one year while he was still working. Joe told us about his early life growing up in the Catholic church and school.

Unfortunately Joe did not have good experiences and it soured his outlook on church for most of his life. He worked for years on off shore oil rigs and the oil fields of Alaska and told of his experiences with drinking and drugs. I believe he thought he was too far gone for God to love him. We, especially Boni and Joe got into an intense back and forth on religion and God and by the end of the discussion Joe said I will come to your church with you and check it out. After Joe starting coming I was pleased to say to him with a tear of joy, Joe you always says to Boni and I, your church but now it's your church also.

As Joe's health deteriorated and he could not make it to church anymore he would tell me I'm reading my Bible and talking to JC every day. He would often call Jesus JC and I always thought I bet Jesus is fine with that because another sinner has come home. As I often told Joe, I'm no better than you Joe, we are all sinners saved by grace. As Joe's pain got worse and worse he would tell me, I keep asking JC to take me home today. It was difficult to hear but seeing him in pain I could understand. Then one day right before Christmas Donna called and said they have taken Joe to Hospice. I went to see him that evening and even with pain medication he was in terrible pain. He said to me, why doesn't JC take me home now? All I could say was He will in His timing and although I knew that was true it was so difficult to see Joe suffering. As I walked out of his room and down the hall I prayed with tears in my eyes, oh Jesus please take Joe home tonight. Many of you have been through this with loved ones also and as you can imagine I have tears in my eyes as I write this tonight, but they are tears of joy because I know Joe is with Jesus right now and I will see them both someday. On Christmas Eve day Donna called and said Joe has passed away. I said thank you Jesus for Joe will spend Christmas Day in his savior's presence. Joe used to say I drank way too much beer in my life but now I just drink two a day and I drink them with JC. Well Joe as you know I don't drink beer but I'll lift a ginger ale right now and say see you in heaven. I know this is getting long but at 7 pm every evening my phone sings Allelula and a scripture shows up. Right now as I finish this Mission Musings it happens and the scripture is Psalm 71:8. How appropriate. Go look it up. 🙏.

John 14:2

Blessings

Dan Henry

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

When is a Church Not a Church?

The answer to that question – before 1783 when the Revolutionary War ended. Dorothy Beyer made the point in her “Minutes for History” written during the 250th anniversary celebration in 1977.

The word Church was not allowed to be used by any religious group in America until after the Revolutionary War. So our group was Middle Octorara Society – not Church; and the building was referred to as Middle Octorara Meeting House – not Church. That word could be used only to refer to the Established Church of England. After the colonies had won their Independence, the word Church was adopted instead of Society or Meeting House.

It's interesting how historians have ignored this reality and have used the word, church, as if it was in common usage by Presbyterians, before and during the Revolutionary War. Madison McElwain in Faith and Works at Middle Octorara Since 1727 did not fall into this trap. On page XXXIV, he referred to the location of our first “Meeting House.” However, he did use information from other sources that used the word, church, before 1783. This made sense. If he wrote a footnote every time church was used instead of meeting house, he would have needed hundreds of footnotes.

A View from the pew! - There are worse things than getting a call from a wrong number at 3 A.M.

TREASURERS REPORT

GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES - July 2025

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

July 6 -	General Fund	2,863.00	Benevolence	570.00
July 13 -	General Fund	3,508.00	Benevolence	125.00
July 20 -	General Fund	1,206.00	Benevolence	125.00
July 27 -	General Fund	2,658.00	Benevolence	270.00

An additional \$2,062.45 General Fund money was received by mail etc.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	14,531.36	108,985.20	12,297.45	105,948.30	110,789.69
Benevolence	953.84	7,153.80	1,090.00	7,288.00	

Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church
Income and Expense Statement
GENERAL FUND 01, July 2025

BEGINNING BALANCE, July 1, 2025		7,117.54
INCOME		
Offerings	\$10,585.00	
Manse Rent	1,362.45	
Chapel Rent	350.00	
Benevolence	1,090.00	
TOTAL INCOME	<u>13,387.45</u>	
 TOTAL CASH & INCOME		20,504.99
EXPENSES		
Pastoral Salary	\$6,026.73	
Pastoral Mileage	428.40	
Pastoral Pension	2,507.73	
Pastoral Technology	50.00	
Secretary-Treasurer	819.50	
Clerical/Treasurer Mileage	188.30	
Accountant Fees	90.00	
Payroll Taxes	191.69	
Office Supplies	156.27	
Copier Lease	120.32	
Electricity	392.78	
Telephone/internet	104.53	
Cleaning Service	412.50	
Upkeep of Grounds	1,979.01	
Special Music Payments	120.00	
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund	1,090.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>14,677.76</u>	
 ENDING BALANCE, July 31, 2025		5,827.23

Middle Octorara Presbyterian
Church
Income and Expense Statement
GENERAL FUND 01,
January 2025 - June 2025

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BEGINNING BALANCE, January 1, 2025		10,668.62
INCOME		
Offerings	\$65,620.01	
Per Capita	3,122.00	
Initial Offering	230.00	
Manse Rent	8,174.70	
Account Interest	0.42	
Chapel Rent	1,310.00	
CD Cashed	10,677.22	
M.O.Cemetery Fund-Mowing	4,000.00	
Benevolence	6,198.00	
One Great Hour of Sharing	516.50	
TOTAL INCOME	<u>99,848.85</u>	
 TOTAL CASH & INCOME		 110,517.47
EXPENSES		
Pastoral Salary	\$36,160.38	
Pastoral Mileage	2,239.97	
Pastoral Pension	15,046.38	
Pastoral Technology	300.00	
Secretary-Treasurer	4,658.50	
Clerical/Treasurer Mileage	328.70	
Accountant Fees	635.00	
Payroll Taxes	551.09	
Technology	87.00	
Safety/Security	720.00	
Advertising	206.96	
Office Supplies	1,280.60	
Church Supplies	513.19	
Printing Exp/Supplies	125.28	
Copier Lease	721.92	
Choir Music- Senior	208.35	
Electricity	2,040.86	
Propane Gas	4,502.65	
Insurance	6,420.50	
Burner Repairs/maint.	1,778.00	
Plumbing Repairs/Maint.	504.23	
Misc. Repairs/Mainten.	626.38	
Telephone/internet	626.94	
Cleaning Service	2,632.50	
Upkeep of Grounds	5,937.03	
Snow Removal	2,000.00	
Pest Control	177.38	
Trash Removal	516.04	

Guest Minister/Speaker	992.40
Per Capita Payment	3,122.00
1 Grt.Hr.Shr.Payment	516.50
Special Music Payments	150.00
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund	6,198.00
Burner Repairs-Manse	229.00
Property Taxes-Manse	646.20
TOTAL EXPENSES	103,399.93

ENDING BALANCE, June 30, 2025

7,117.54



August birthday's

3 – Kristine Hileman
 4 – Nanci Caskey
 11 – Koryn Barrett
 15 – Chris Pfeiffer, Martin Hileman
 18 – Katelyn Keene
 24 – Jani Hileman

August anniversaries

28 – Ray & Valeria Wessner

September birthday's through the 7th

4 – Carol Girvin

Name: _____ Date: _____

ADVENTURE
AMUSEMENT PARK
AUGUST
BACK TO SCHOOL
BACKYARD
BICYCLE
CAMPFIRE
CAMPING
CORN ON THE COB
FARMERS MARKET
FIREFLY
FLOWERS
FRUIT
FUN
GRILLING
HOT
HUMID
LAKE
PLAYGROUND
POPSICLE
RELAXATION
ROAD TRIP
SAILBOAT
STATE FAIR
SUMMER
SUNFLOWER
SUNNY



WORD SEARCH DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

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



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 3	Aug. 4	Aug. 5 Session Mtg. 6:45 p.m.	Aug. 6 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m.	Aug. 7	Aug. 8	Aug. 9 Peach Fest 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
Aug. 10	Aug. 11	Aug. 12 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Aug. 13 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Silver Sisters 11:30 a.m.	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16
Aug. 17	Aug. 18	Aug. 19	Aug. 20 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m.	Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23
Aug. 24	Aug. 25	Aug. 26	Aug. 27 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m.	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30 Yard Sale 7:00 – 1:00
Aug. 31	Sept. 1	Sept. 2	Sept. 3 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m.	Sept. 4	Sept. 5	Sept. 6

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REV. JOHN BARLOW

Address: 433 W. Lincoln Ave
Myerstown, PA 17067

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

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:
2023-2025- Brenda Roark
2024-2026- J Barry Girvin
2025-2027- Sue Ressel

CHURCH BOARDS

Session

Clerk of Session: Dan Henry
Phone: 717-381-9947
Email: danhenny55@aol.com
2023-2025-Joan Probst, Sue Ressel, Brenda Roark
2024-2026-Shirley Girvin, Richard Keene, Jonathan Welch
2025-2027-Vivian Caldwell, Dan Henry, Jerry Garver

Deacons

Administrator: Pastor John Barlow
Phone: 717-377-4570
mail: barlowjohn604@gmail.com
2023-2025-Annie Frackman, Dottie Garver, Kathy Harvey, Cathy Miller
2024-2026-Kim Barlow, Dixie Clark, Linda Farmer, Sue Herr
2025-2027-Koryn Barrett, Andy Keene, Val Keene, Elaine Ressel

Trustees

President: Jeff Frackman
Phone: 717-989-6896
2023-2025-Rose Griest, Boni Henry, Sam Reinhart
2024-2026-Jeff Frackman, Herb Girvin, Nancy Minchoff
2025-2027-Bob Mowery, Dale Phillips, Rick Ressel