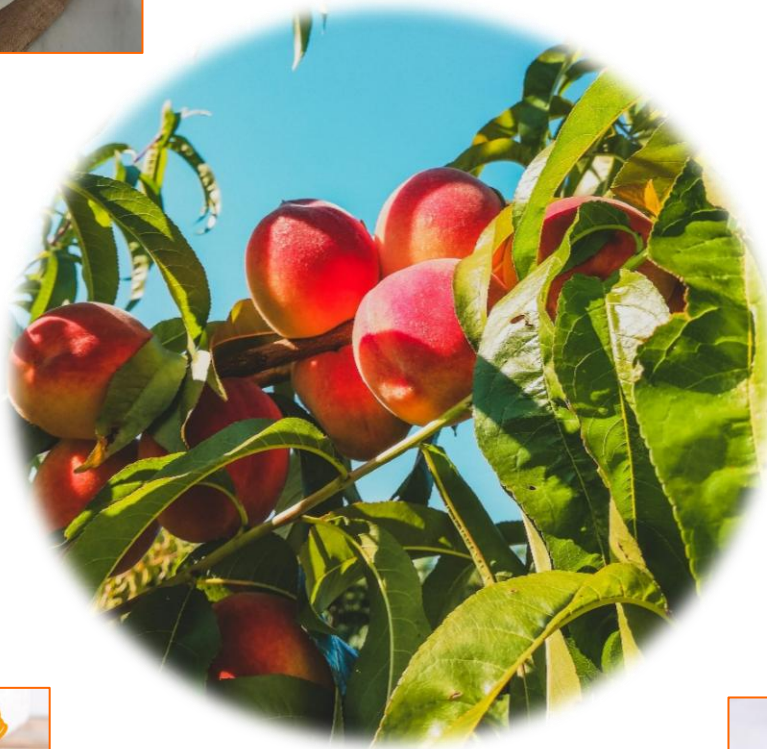


MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

August 2026 NEWSLETTER



**MIDDLE OCTORARA
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
6TH ANNUAL PEACH FEST
SAT., AUGUST 15TH 4:00 P.M.**



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

Jesus' parable of the soils paints a vivid picture of how the seed of the gospel fares in four different kinds of soil. There is soil that is hard-packed, shallow, thorny, and good. I'm interested in the third soil sample. Jesus says of it, "Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants." In his explanation, Jesus defines the thorns in this way: "What was sown among the thorns is the person who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful." The thorns seem to be divided into two categories which are polar opposites: hardship, on the one hand, and a surplus of resources, on the other. I can understand how both of these circumstances can pull a person away from the Christian life. Hardship raises the question, "why isn't my Father in heaven helping me to have enough?" A surplus opens the door to a wealth of other options. Sadly, I have seen both of these thorns hamper people's Christian experience. Maybe you have too.

If only there was something the community of Christ could do to improve the thorny soil. And there is. We can share resources with those who are struggling. And, at one and the same time, we can use the surplus God provides to some of us, in that very process. So that, in the end, we become the caring, sharing family God intends for us to be. As Paul writes in Galatians 6:10, "as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

I can't think of a local church that does this more effectively than you good people at Middle Octorara. The general mission side of our giving envelopes reminds me of what the early church did in Acts 4:34-35, "There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he or she had need." In our case, it is the Session, through the Session fund, that carefully, prayerfully, applies what God's people give to many persons and needs. This practice helps all of us to avoid the thorns and be the kind of soil that produces an abundant crop from the gospel seed. I am so blessed to be the pastor of such a mission-minded fellowship.

A STEP BACK IN TIME

PEACH PUFFS – Mrs. Charles Lantz

1 cup flour
2 tsp. butter
2 T sugar

1 pinch salt
½ cup milk
peach halves

1 tsp. baking powder

Place a little of the batter in a muffin pan, then put in a half of peach, then put more batter on top. Bake until done in a moderate oven.

(From the Middle Octorara Cook Book No. 2 – 1951)

CHURCH LIFE

DEACONS - Is there anything worse than going through a down and difficult time? Yes, going through such a time alone. That is much worse. Thank God, he places us in community, so that we can lift each other up in time of need. Our amazing Deacons set the bar high for this kind of care. What a comfort to know that we will not be alone in whatever struggles we may encounter.

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN – We will be serving a meal for the Bart Twp. Fire Co. first responders at their station on Monday, August 10th at 6:30 p.m.

Bi-monthly sandwich sale in August. Order forms and more information will be in the bulletin.

SUMMER MUSIC

August 9- Koryn Barrett and John Girvin

August 16 - Paisley Dalmas (piano)

August 23- Brandon LeFevre and Rose Griest

August 30- Emily Irwin (cello)

September 6- Jen Daily

SILVER SISTERS - We had a great time at Olive Garden for lunch. There were 18 of us enjoying the company and the food! Our next lunch will be Wednesday, August 19 @ 11:30 at B J's Restaurant and Brewhouse near Park City. All widows are welcome!





TRUSTEES - One of the empty Sunday School rooms downstairs is being prepared for the Cub Scouts. It needed to be painted and have the carpet replaced. It should be ready when the Scouts return in September.

We have been looking into getting an LED digital sign to replace the one that's broken that needs to be changed at the sign. The digital sign gets changed with a laptop and no one needs to open the sign to change it. We would be relieving Dan Henry of that job. We got three bids and the first two were too costly. So we looked at a sign at another church and got the contact info. Rose met with the owner of the company and he sent us a quote that seemed more acceptable and brought it before the Board. The real selling point was that Deb talked to two donors that are willing to cover the cost. We will pay for the permit that may be needed from the township. They will use the posts that we already have and fit the sign into the space. It was approved by the Board after reviewing the information.

YOUTH RELAUNCH – We will be in the Solanco Fair Parade and also have a stand at the fair again this year. See the sign up sheet for staffing the stand on the table in the Welcome Center and if you would like to be in the parade talk to Cayla or Alie.

Fall Fest is October 11th from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Help is also needed for this event. See the signup sheet on the table in the Welcome Center.

MISSION MUSINGS

Since my brother Dave and his Peru Crew just got home from the Amazon I have been thinking about our mission there a lot lately. I also get photo reminders on my phone this time of year from when Boni and I were in the Amazon for a week each summer for 12 years. So many great memories and we made many friends in Tamshiyacu and Iquitos. This year Dave and the crew completed some construction projects, led Bible School and continued to reach out to people with the love of Jesus and share His gospel message. A very exciting development on their trip was that Dr. Ann Corinne Beaver a general surgeon from Boone and Dave visited the hospital in Iquitos to investigate the possibility of doctors from the states volunteering to work at the hospital. The hospital director was very receptive to the idea so please pray for God's guidance and direction for this to happen in the near future. Dave first went to Iquitos in 1998 at the invitation of one of his church members and as I look back at the last 28 years of the mission work there I am amazed at all that has been accomplished with God leading every step of the way. I know God has many more exciting plans for the future of this mission and I'm thankful that our M. O. family has been and I trust will continue to be a part of His work in the Amazon.

1st Peter 4:10,11

Blessings,
Dan Henry

The Mission Focus for August is PERU

Funds will be sent from the Bueche Fund and our MO Session Fund for use by Margarita and others who are coordinating the Mission efforts in Tamshiyacu. We are happy that we continue to support our Peru friends throughout the year in these ways: Profit received from Nuts 'n Bolts Sale; Alternative Giving at Christmas time; and the April Yard Sale. Many thanks to all for your hard work as you support this mission.

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

Rev. Alexander Craighead – Always A Man Before His Time, and When His Time Arrived

As I stated in my essay, “Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church and the Revolution”, why were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians some of the first to advocate the overthrow of British rule in America? To answer this question one can look to Middle Octorara during the pastorate of Rev. Alexander Craighead (1735-1741) as a case in point.

Reverend Alexander Craighead was the son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers who had suffered under English laws. He was either born in the New World or came here at a very early age. He had little cause to love the Royal Government since his ancestors had moved first from Scotland to Ireland and then to America to escape religious persecution. A dissenter by birth and training, he did not hesitate to express his views, enforce them on his contemporaries and take the consequences.

The result of Craighead forcing his views on the Congregation was his suspension by Presbytery in 1741. His harshness with those who opposed his New Side views, his support of Covenanters, and his role as an early dissenter; were all part of his downfall. The focus of this writing is on his role as a dissenter long before the war for independence occurred.

Craighead entered the political arena in 1743 writing his views on civil liberty. Twenty years before it became an accepted idea in the Colonies, he preached that religious tyranny would occur if British rule continued. He warned that Anglicans (Episcopalians in the Colonies), who thought the King was the head of the Church, would send an Archbishop to oversee the Church in the Colonies. Thomas Cookson, one of the King’s magistrates in Lancaster County, appeared before the Synod of Philadelphia and asked their views on Craighead’s pamphlet. The Synod repudiated the pamphlet saying it was “full of treason and sedition”.

On November 11, 1743, Craighead was the leader of what was to become known as the Octorara Declaration. He and a group of Covenanters, meeting on land belonging to Middle Octorara that would later be the location of the Covenanter Church, denounced George II as an unfit King. According to Madison McElwain, Faith and Works, they then swore with uplifted swords to “keep their bodies, property and consciences against all attacks; to defend Christ’s gospel and the purity of the Church; to submit to no ruler who would not submit to Christ, and to defend their liberty from fears without and within.” This declaration immediately disturbed the political as well as the religious waters. Governor Morris, in his message to the Assembly, denounced these people for their “aspirations and machinations to obtain independency”.

Craighead roamed the frontier for several years, a revivalist bringing the word of God to hungry souls. In 1749, he moved to Windy Coce on Cow Pasture River, Augusta County, Virginia.

...He tarrying a while in Virginia and moving on to North Carolina where he spent the remaining days of his life, and where he was destined to exert an influence upon the thinking of the citizens of Mecklenburgh County, which bore fruits in the famous Mecklenburgh Declaration of Independence, May 20, 1775. Although he did not live to take part personally in this action, he is given credit for being the apostle of Freedom and Independence to the pioneers of North Carolina.

Reverend Alexander Craighead’s time had come.



ORPHAN
ASSISTANCE
FOUNDATION
www.transitionsoaf.org

July 19, 2026

Dear Friends,

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, all of our summer camps are fully funded and in full swing. Three camps were held in June, two so far in July, and more will continue through July and August. The very first camp was postponed due to strong rain, but it has been rescheduled so that no one will be left out. Our camps are being held in the Odesa Region of Ukraine, in villages surrounding the Village of Pishana. They are largely accessed by dirt roads which flood and mud and become impassable in heavy rain. The camps themselves are held outside in fields, playgrounds, and yards and are highly subjective to the weather. Fortunately, we have been blessed with fair weather on most of the camp days.

Months of preparation have gone into these camps, and a lot of energy is expended in each one. Travel days are long and exhausting as the roads leading to these villages are extremely narrow and bumpy, and traversing them is painfully slow. It is easy to understand why visitors rarely make the trek, and consequently, why the villagers so look forward to these events. The very exuberant children waiting at the end of the road require our teammates to be "on and tuned in" to them for the entire time. However, it is not only a joyous time for the children and the villagers. Our team is blessed by these trips also. While a seemingly endless black cloud of war hangs over the entire country, spending these hours with excited, laughing children and grateful families is a distraction from the darkness and a reward in itself. This illustrates perfectly what it means to be blessed to be a blessing.

And now, a close up look at some of our campers:



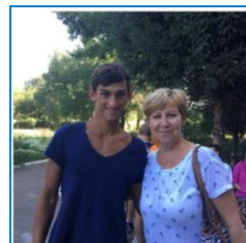
Another note, and a sad reality of war, is the news that Sasha, an orphan graduate that I met at the Pishana Orphanage many years ago, recently passed away. He was 25 years old.

Sasha was orphaned at birth and spent his life in orphanage after orphanage. He was kind and helpful, and what I remember most, and will always remember about him, was the almost constant smile he wore on his face. He had been drafted into the army last fall, and was seriously injured on the front lines several months ago. Sasha kept in touch with one of our teammates, Oksana, who was like a mother to him. They spoke frequently when he was in the army and when he was wounded and in the hospital. It seemed that he was recovering and looking forward to being transferred to a hospital in Odesa where Oksana could visit him. Suddenly, his communications stopped. News followed that Sasha had passed away.

Me with Sasha
(R) at Pishana



Sasha with
Oksana



Because he was an orphan and had no next of kin, we may never know what happened. We do know that when he was laid to rest in the village, our teammates gathered there along with many of the villagers who knew him. I feel certain that Sasha knew that, despite not having his biological family, he was well-loved by us and, through your thoughts and prayers, by you.

Across the years, I have had the privilege of watching young orphans grow, mature and succeed in life against daunting odds. I've also experienced the sadness of learning that some of them, too many of them, have died needlessly along the way of disease, drugs, exposure, and suicide. Now, war is taking its toll on young lives, even the lives of those we love and hold dear. My hope is that all of those with whom I have crossed paths will understand that they have worth and that they are loved. I thank all of you who make this happen on a much larger scale than I could ever do on my own. May we all feel blessed to be a blessing to our orphans and vulnerable families in Ukraine.

With gratitude and love,
Audrey

Donation Information

Checks may be written to:

Transitions Orphan Assistance Foundation, Inc.

541 Evening Sky Drive or- 3530 Diamond Leaf Lane

Oviedo, FL 32765 Oviedo, FL 32765

Online options to donate can be found on our website: www.transitionsoaf.org



August birthdays

7 – Nancy Harnish
9 – Chad Ressel
11 – Koryn Barrett
12 – Sara Kauffman
15 – Chris Pfeiffer, Martin Hileman
16 – Lily Keene
18 – Katelyn Keene
24 – Jani Hileman
27 – Pastor John Barlow

August Anniversaries

28 – Ray & Val Wessner
Pastor John & Kim

September birthdays thru the 6th

4 – Carol Girvin, Melissa Keene

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

07/30/2026 10:29 AM

ENDING BALANCE, July 1, 2026 **14,475.71**

INCOME

Offerings	\$8,725.25
Manse Rent	1,408.95
Chapel Rent	200.00
M.O.Cemetery Fund-Mowing	4,000.00
Benevolence	940.00
TOTAL INCOME	15,274.20

TOTAL CASH & INCOME **29,749.91**

EXPENSES

Pastoral Salary	\$6,082.54
Pastoral Mileage	674.54
Pastoral Pension	3,010.42
Pastoral Technology	50.00
Secretary-Treasurer	930.00
Clerical/Treasurer Mileage	167.48
Payroll Taxes	52.45
Advertising	31.84
Office Supplies	211.84
Church Supplies	98.43
Copier Lease	120.32
Electricity	503.55
Telephone/internet	118.40
Cleaning Service	375.00
Upkeep of Grounds	1,979.01
Guest Minister/Speaker	660.00
Special Music Payments	90.00
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund	940.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	16,095.82

ENDING BALANCE, July 31, 2026 **13,654.09**

GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES - July 2026

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

July 5-	General Fund	3,613.00	Benevolence	570.00
July 12 -	General Fund	2,286.00	Benevolence	65.00
July 19 -	General Fund	1,005.25	Benevolence	90.00
July 26 -	General Fund	742.00	Benevolence	80.00

An additional \$6,687.95 General Fund money and \$135.00 Benevolence money was received by mail etc.

I requested a partial payment from the Cemetery Fund of \$4,000.00 towards the yearly mowing expense which helped this month.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	15,373.60	115,302.00	14,334.20	100,943.40	113,481.15
Benevolence	953.84	7,153.80	940.00	6,580.00	

*This includes an \$11,268.58 C/D





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

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