

**MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**December 2024 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

*All through the calendar year the saints of MOPC faithfully engage in mission, personally, and with financial support. Then comes Christmastime and it goes to a whole new level. Christmas is a time to give to our nearest and dearest. It is right that we should do that. I always enjoy watching our grands open their gifts from Kim and me. I'm as excited as they are to see what "we" gave them. Kim does such a good job. I would never want to interfere/help.*

*Back to MO. It is truly amazing to see the outpouring of love and generosity to our community and world from our congregation. It is all out of proportion in a good - no, a great way. It tells me that we are clued into the true meaning of Christmas. On the first Christmas day, God the Father gave us his perfect Son to be our Savior. Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, gave his life to purchase for all of us eternal salvation. It's all about giving, and now we give to others in the Name of our Lord, expressing his love for all. There is no better way to make the most of Christmas than to be touched again by God's great love for us, and to participate in that love as we extend it to others. Thank you for the opportunity to be your pastor. I'm enjoying every minute of it.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## CHURCH LIFE

### CEMETERY

The Board of Trustees has voted to increase the prices for cemetery plots which hasn't been done for a number of years. They will increase on January 1, 2025. If you are interested in purchasing plots before the increase, contact James Williams at 717-517-6968.

### DEACONS

We have just come through the election of new Trustees, Deacons, and Elders in our church. I want to thank those who are finishing terms of service, those who are beginning or continuing to serve, and the Nominating Committee for its thoughtful, prayerful work. I continue to be amazed at MO's ability to fill out three Boards with such high quality servant leaders every year. Also in the passage of new operating and mission budgets, we note the faithfulness of God and the strong stewardship of our congregation. May we continue to be a lighthouse for the Gospel and a point of origin for the mission God entrusts to us.

### SANCTUARY CARPET

The Trustees are planning on having the carpet in the church replaced. The current carpet is at least 50 years old. We have not scheduled it yet but want to start collecting donations to help with the cost. If you would like to make a donation towards it, on the envelope or check memo write carpet. We do want to have it installed before the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration begins. Thank you in advance. We have received donations of \$700.00 so far.

## SILVER SISTERS

We had 18 ladies that went to the American Music Theatre to see "Joy To The World". The program was fantastic and the company was really special. Most of us then went out to lunch to continue the fun.

We have two events scheduled for December. This week on Wednesday (December 4) at 11:30, we will be going to Conestoga Wagon Restaurant for lunch. All widows are welcome.

Also on Friday December 20 at 11:30, we are meeting here at the church for our Christmas party. We are each bringing a white elephant item all wrapped up without a name on it, to play, "now you have it and now you don't". It can be a gag gift or something useful. This is always a fun event. Rose is bringing lunch and each lady is asked to donate \$5 towards it.



**Secret Sisters at American Music Theater**

## TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees would like to thank those that helped on workday. Many hands make light work.

There were several Trustees that helped spread wood chips around the shrubs that are in the shape of the cross in the center of the cemetery a few weeks ago. We are hoping it cuts down on the weeds that grow.

There is a new single door at the top of the vinyl ramp. It is handicap accessible and should be more energy efficient as well.

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas!! And thank you for donating to the Building Fund this year!!

## **A STEP BACK IN TIME**

November 1999, I became the new church secretary taking over the position from my sister-in-law Cathy Frackman. After training with her in October my first day was to be Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. However, my Grammy Frackman died after a short illness on October 30<sup>th</sup>, so Cathy continued for one more week. The treasurer part of my job was added 2 years later in March 2002.

25 years later I thank you for giving me the opportunity to have this very flexible job. It enabled me to contribute to our family income and also be a stay home mother to Travis. When he became older, my parents' health declined, they needed care and I was able to help them.

So again, thank you! Debbie Hoover

## **MISSION MUSINGS**

As we prepare for Advent we are celebrating the first coming of Jesus as the baby in the manger as well as the second coming when He will return as the conquering warrior.

December will be a busy month at Middle Octorara. We will hold 5 Sunday morning worship services starting on the 1st with communion.

December 7 at 4 pm. we will host a Community Meal with a variety of soups and breads as well as desserts and drinks. It is free but donations will be accepted and go to Solanco Strong a ministry which helps Solanco students in a variety of ways.

On December 8 at 3 pm the Covenanter Board will hold an Advent service with musical talent from Solanco High School, Christmas Carols, Scripture readings etc to help prepare you for this wonderful Christmas season.

The week of December 9 the social hall will look like Santa's workshop as on the 13th we will host the Southern End Gift Drive. Last year 346 children in the Solanco area received gifts from this outpouring of generosity from our community. We are grateful and blessed for this opportunity to open our doors and partner with this amazing outreach to our community.

This year our annual Christmas Caroling will be on December 22 starting at 2 pm. We will visit several of our home bound members as well as visit Newport Meadows and QPRC to sing to our M. O. members as well as any resident within earshot of our singing. We look forward to having several children join us again this year for this adventure. We will then return to church to enjoy a delicious meal provided by Shirley Miller and her elves. This is always an enjoyable time for both the carolers as well as our shut ins and retirement community members.

Then on Christmas Eve at 7 pm we will celebrate Christmas with our annual candlelight service which is always a joyful worship service.

All of these worship services and events are part of our mission of helping others and sharing the love and gospel message of Jesus Christ, the baby in the manger who is our Lord and risen Savior. Please plan to join us this Christmas season for some or all of these opportunities to reach out to others in love and grow in the faith and wisdom of our awesome God.

Isaiah 9:6,7

Merry Christmas  
Blessings,  
Dan Henry

# REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

## *St. Giles' Cathedral or the Story of Three Hats*

At this writing I am feeling poorly, a term my mother-in-law, Edith Welk, used to describe ill health. Shirley and I had a great trip to Scotland, but we both caught colds toward the end of the trip and got much worse after returning home. Shirley is feeling better, but I feel poorly. The doctor prescribed prednisone for my chest congestion, but I had an allergic reaction to it and am now on an antibiotic.

One of the highlights of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh was St. Giles' Cathedral. Originally a Catholic Church, during the Reformation it became John Knox's parish church, and it is considered the mother church of Presbyterianism in Scotland. See photos of the Cathedral, John Knox and me, also Shirley and me on the battlefield at Culloden Moor where Bonnie Prince Charlie was defeated. The final photo is me on High Street in Glasgow with the cemetery, Necropolis, in the background. Shirley and I will be offering a full trip report in Sunday School – stay tuned.

In the photos I wore three hats. With John Knox I wore a hat that Wes bought me for Christmas about 45 years ago. I lost it in Edinburgh. On the battlefield I wore my Phillies hat, and in Glasgow I wore my new hat that Shirley bought me.





**December birthdays**

- 2 – John Caskey, Jr.
- 5 – Tiffany Trout
- 10 – Linda Caskey
- 13 – Clint Frackman
- 14 – Vivian Caldwell
- 15 – Cathy Miller
- 17 – Erick Walden
- 18 – Curtis Frackman
- 23 – Helen Rasmussen
- 25 – Dan Keene
- 28 – Dick Keene
- 29 – Cory Barrett
- 30 – Brenda Roark

**January through 5<sup>th</sup>**

- 2 – Virgil Roark
- 5 – Annetta Frackman

**December anniversaries**

- 24 – Lloyd & Cathy Miller

Middle Octorara Presbyterian  
Church  
**Income and Expense Statement**  
**GENERAL FUND 01,**  
**November 2024**

BEGINNING BALANCE, November 1, 2024	<b>15,281.55</b>
INCOME	
Offerings	\$11,527.00
Per Capita	80.00
Manse Rent	1,362.45
Benevolence	810.00
TOTAL INCOME	<u>13,779.45</u>
TOTAL CASH & INCOME	<b>29,061.00</b>
EXPENSES	
Pastoral Salary	\$5,851.21
Pastoral Mileage	558.78
Pastoral Pension	2,214.79
Pastoral Technology	50.00
Secretary-Treasurer	630.00
Accountant Fees	90.00
Payroll Taxes	26.06
Website	329.00
Advertising	39.80
Office Supplies	299.80
Church Supplies	239.40
Printing Exp/Supplies	120.13
Copier Lease	120.32
Church Envelopes	276.45
Electricity	226.70
Propane Gas	726.77
Electrical Repairs/Maint.	130.00
Telephone/internet	104.41
Cleaning Service	270.00
Upkeep of Grounds	1,854.10
Guest Minister/Speaker	174.12
Per Capita Payment	80.00
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund	810.00
Donations (2024 Bart Twp. Fire Co Fund Drive)	500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>15,721.84</u>
ENDING BALANCE, November 30, 2024	<b>13,339.16</b>

***A VIEW FROM THE PEW - "If God had a refrigerator, would your picture be on it?"***

## GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES November 2024

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

November 3 -	General Fund	3,368.00	Benevolence	180.00
November 10 -	General Fund	2,607.00	Benevolence	380.00
November 17 -	General Fund	3,576.00	Benevolence	105.00
November 24 -	General Fund	1,956.00	Benevolence	145.00

An additional \$1,462.45 General Fund Money was received by mail etc.

## YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD <b>Expenses</b>
General Fund	13,910.32	163,446.26	12,969.45	157,891.80	175,558.11
Benevolence	953.84	11,207.62	810.00	10,445.00	



O HOLY NIGHT

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

ANGEL	GIFTS	MYRRH
ANIMALS	GOLD	PEACE
BABY	JESUS	SAVIOR
BETHLEHEM	JOSEPH	SHEPHERD
DONKEY	MANGER	STAR
FRANKINCENSE	MARY	WISE MEN







ORPHAN  
ASSISTANCE  
FOUNDATION

[www.transitionsoaf.org](http://www.transitionsoaf.org)

November 17, 2024

Dear Friends,

The sights and sounds of Odesa welcome me home every time I go back: the golden onion domes of the churches, the train station, the tall steeple of the cathedral, the opera house, the Potemkin Staircase overlooking the port on the Black Sea, my little marketplace, the City Garden – all familiar sights among many others, accompanied by the beeping of horns, the clickety-clack of the trams on their tracks and the screeching of the brakes on the marshrutkas. Now, however, there are some new sounds added to the mix – air raid sirens, which are often followed by explosions.

We heard the sirens as we were getting ready for bed shortly after our arrival in Odesa, and they quickly became a regular part of our daily lives. The explosions were a bit more disconcerting, but as the days of our trip counted down, the explosions thankfully became fewer and fewer. We experienced a day without electricity, and another without water. We felt the weather become cooler and then downright chilly to this cold-sensitive Floridian. The city had not yet turned the heat on, prompting me to pile on layers of clothing in the house and even more layers outside, giving me flashbacks of my first winter in Odesa when I had no heat in my apartment.

Despite these reminders that there was a war going on around us, we had places to go and people to see, and we didn't let anything get in our way. Every day was busy with planning, preparing, meeting, shopping, and visiting with our teammates and families. There was so much to accomplish in so little time together. We met with each team member individually to listen, share, and problem-solve. We managed one big dinner together. Nearly three years of war have definitely taken a toll on our folks. We could see that they are simply exhausted from the stress and strain, yet they remain faithful to our mission of caring for orphans and vulnerable families and willingly pitch in to do whatever needs to be done.

Planning for Christmas was a main goal of this trip. Our Christmas Project this year will again benefit the orphans and vulnerable children and families in the village of Pishana and the surrounding villages. This fall, after a renovation of the orphanage's bomb shelter, the orphanage was given permission to have all the children return to the orphanage to live and to attend school classes there. While it may seem strange to be rejoicing to see children return to an orphanage, this is truly a blessing for these children. The previous four and a half years (two years of covid and two and a half years of war) sent the children back to the villages to live in less than ideal living conditions and meant little to no educational opportunity for the children. A return to the orphanage gives them the structure and schooling that they so need. Please read on for a summary of our Christmas Project and opportunities for you to join in and help.

## **Christmas Project 2024 – Odesa, Ukraine**

### Christmas Packages (30 families/100 children)

Our team in Odesa will be purchasing and preparing everything needed for these packages and will mail them to the families in the villages prior to December 25 so that the families can enjoy them during the holidays. There are three parts to these packages:

1. **Food** staples and some special Christmas treats and food items will be given to each family. Each bag of food will cost about \$125.
2. **Warm clothing** for the children – a warm sweatshirt, pants, shoes, a hat and gloves will be provided for each of the children. This will cost \$50-\$75 per child.
3. **Heavy duty, rechargeable flashlights** will be purchased for each family, as well. Since Ukraine's electric grids have been heavily damaged, electricity is often absent for hours, and even days, at a time, and we anticipate this to continue throughout the winter. Flashlights are estimated to be about \$50 each.

### Christmas Mini Camps

After the New Year, when all of the children will be on break from school and home with relatives, we will provide Christmas camps in each village where our children live. The camps will include a Christmas story skit, Christmas carols,

crafts, games, snacks and small gifts. We will include neighborhood kids, and we've learned that some of the parents and grandparents like to join in the fun, too. We are planning 12 camps and estimate that each one will cost \$200 to cover gas, supplies, and gifts.

\*Any donations we receive above and beyond the needs for these projects will be used as:

Christmas bonuses for our faithful staff, without whom these projects could not happen.

Food bags for the Pishana Orphanage staff who kindly work with us to allow us the opportunity to work with the children.

Ongoing support of our transition homes and continuing projects.

### **How to Donate to the Christmas Project**

*Checks may be written to:*

#### **Transitions Orphan Assistance Foundation, Inc.**

541 Evening Sky Drive  
Oviedo, FL 32765

-or-

3530 Diamond Leaf Lane  
Oviedo, FL 32765

Online options to donate can be found on our website: [www.transitionsoaf.org](http://www.transitionsoaf.org)

In a few short weeks we will be celebrating the season of giving. But first, before we jump into the Christmas festivities, I want to take time to count my blessings: my family, my friends, my homes (both in America and in Ukraine), and for the opportunity to continue serving orphans and vulnerable families in Ukraine. And, of course, I count you among my blessings too, for your continuing love and support of all these good things that we do together. I give thanks with a grateful heart.

*Happy Thanksgiving!*

With gratitude and love,  
Audrey



Michelle and I, ready for a meeting



Team Dinner

**I FELL ASLEEP IN  
CHURCH, THEN I HEARD  
"STAND UP" SO I  
STOOD UP AND PEOPLE  
CLAPPED, THE PASTOR  
SAID WHO ELSE WILL  
GIVE \$2000**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec. 1 Communion 10:30 a.m.	Dec. 2	Dec. 3 Session Mtg. 6:45 p.m.	Dec. 4 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Silver Sisters 11:30 Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 5	Dec. 6	Dec. 7 Community meal 4:00 p.m.
Dec. 8 Advent svc. 3:00 p.m.	Dec. 9	Dec. 10 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 11 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 12	Dec. 13	Dec. 14 Southern End Gift Drive
Dec. 15	Dec. 16	Dec. 17	Dec. 18 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 19	Dec. 20 Silver Sisters 11:30 a.m. Christmas Party	Dec. 21
Dec. 22 Caroling 2:00	Dec. 23	Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Svc. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 25 	Dec. 26	Dec. 27	Dec. 28
Dec. 29	Dec. 30	Dec. 31	Jan. 1 	Jan. 2	Jan. 3	Jan. 4

## **CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REV. JOHN BARLOW**

Address: 433 W. Lincoln Ave  
Myerstown, PA 17067

Cellphone: 717-377-4570  
Email: [barlowjohn604@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:mopc_sec@comcast.net)  
**Website:** [middleoctorara.org](http://middleoctorara.org)  
**Facebook:** middle octorara

**Church Secretary/Treasurer** Debbie Hoover  
**Phone:** 717-786-8284  
**Email:** [thehoovers@comcast.net](mailto:thehoovers@comcast.net) or [mopc\\_sec@comcast.net](mailto: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](mailto:mopc_av@comcast.net)

**Superintendent of Cemeteries** James Williams  
**Phone:** 717-517-6968

### **CHURCH BOARDS**

#### **Session**

***Clerk of Session:*** Dan Henry  
**Phone:** 717-381-9947  
**Email:** [danhenny55@aol.com](mailto:danhenny55@aol.com)  
2022-2024-J. Barry Girvin, Dan Henry, Vivian Caldwell  
2023-2025-Joan Probst, Sue Ressel, Brenda Roark  
2024-2026-Shirley Girvin, Richard Keene, Jonathan Welch

#### **Deacons**

***Administrator:*** Pastor John Barlow  
**Phone:** 717-377-4570  
**mail:** [barlowjohn604@gmail.com](mailto:barlowjohn604@gmail.com)  
2022-2024-Nancy Cox, Andy Keene, Sandra Shenk, Val Keene  
2023-2025-Annie Frackman, Dottie Garver, Kathy Harvey, Cathy Miller  
2024-2026-Kim Barlow, Dixie Clark, Linda Farmer, Sue Herr

#### **Trustees**

***President:*** Jeff Frackman  
**Phone:** 717-989-6896  
2022-2024-Doug Henry, Lloyd Miller, Dale Phillips  
2023-2025-Rose Griest, Boni Henry, Sam Reinhart  
2024-2026-Jeff Frackman, Herb Girvin, Nancy Minchoff