

OUR PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

Merry Christmas,

Christmas is not simply a remembrance of something that happened long ago and far away. Christmas doesn't just celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ 2000 some years ago. Christmas celebrates the coming of Jesus Christ all those years ago AND Christ's continuing presence with us today through the Holy Spirit. It's so good to know the whole story of how God tells us that he loves us and wants us to love him in return!

Immanuel means "God with us", NOT "God was with us". God sent his Son to be with us in the person of Jesus Christ, and through him, we know that our sins are forgiven and our broken relationship with God our heavenly Father has been repaired and that we have been given eternal life in God's very presence. Wow, such amazing and wonderful gifts!

This Christmas may each of us be reminded that in Jesus Christ we are given the opportunity to become part of God's family. This Christmas as we celebrate our family traditions, let us thank God for his unique and wonderful gift of new life.

The years at Middle Octorara have brought a lot to our family: as a family of faith, we have laughed and cried together, we have played and prayed together, and we have sought to grow in faith and truly experience "the wonders of His love."

A very merry Christmas to our church family and friends,

Rev. Douglas M. Hileman, Pastor



CHURCH HAPPENINGS

CHOIR

Christmas Eve is really special this year. Because it falls on a Sunday, we have morning and evening services. In the morning at our 10 AM service, the choir will sing two numbers. And in the evening at 7 PM, we will present a cantata titled "Beautiful Star". And we've had several folks joining us for practice for this presentation, so it should be nearly a full choir. It will be a great way to hear about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

VBS - there is lots of interest in doing Bible School next summer. We are forming a committee of folks who will be interested in helping to lead VBS the week of June 18, 2018. Please notify Boni Henry by December 17 of your interest. We look forward to the excitement of working with the children whom God will bring our way.

DEACONS

At November's meeting the Deacon's prepared 12 thinking of you cards. Next meeting is December 5th. Pizza at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:00 p.m. Merry Christmas!

MEMBER ADDRESS CHANGES

Kevin Frackman – 2071 Mine Road, Paradise, PA 17562
John & Casie Garver – 23 Harrison Drive, Quarryville, PA 17566

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Ware Presbyterian Village Every year MOPW 'adopts' a number of residents at Ware Presbyterian Village. This year we have been given 6 men as our Christmas project. Gifts, sweaters and lap robes are among the items we provide for them. We pray they will receive a special blessing from these gifts.

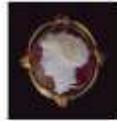
Upcoming Events SOUP/SUB SALE – MOPW will be sponsoring our annual soup/sub sale in February, 2018. Date and time will be announced in upcoming bulletins and newsletters.

TRUSTEES

On work day, it was cold, and the leaves were falling nearly as fast as they would have been raked. So we decided to postpone that part of the job until spring. We did attend to some other projects, such as cleaning out the old garden, cleaning out most of the flowerbed, clearing out the area to the basement doors that go under the church, and a few other things. But hopefully in the spring, we will have more help, and better weather, and we will plan to work until lunchtime.

We will have some new Trustees for 2018. They are Dixie Clark, Virgil Roark, and Shirley Miller. We welcome them and thank them for serving.

MISSIONS



JANUARY 13, 2018 7 AM TO 1 PM NUTS 'N BOLTS CONSIGNMENT SALE

**FOUR MILES EAST OF QUARRYVILLE
RT 372 @ MIDDLE OCTORARA CHURCH
1199 VALLEY RD, QUARRYVILLE, 17566**

For sale will be Tools, Nuts 'n Bolts type stuff, Fishing and Hunting Gear, Building Supplies, Construction Materials, Handmade Crafts and Pine Furniture, Landscaping Equipment, Vintage Jewelry and Décor, Antiques, Etc

**SPONSORED BY MISSION TEAM AT
MIDDLE OCTORARA CHURCH**

1199 Valley Rd., Quarryville, PA 17566

www.middleoctorara.org

January 13, 2017, 7 AM to 1 PM

This is an opportunity for you who wish to sell some of the stuff you find in your garages, basements, shops, sheds, attics.

You will receive 80% of the Sale price. Please arrive Friday evening between 5 and 8 PM on Jan 12 to set up. Consigners do not have to be at their table during the sale.

**Call now to reserve your table
717-808-4534 or
717-381-9947**

Free Coffee and Snacks available

MISSION MUSINGS

A huge thank you to everyone who participated in our OCC shoebox collection this year. Our M.O. family donated 157 boxes. Our Drop Off Center collected 2,264 boxes from 18 individuals, 17 churches and 1 Retirement Village!!! These boxes filled with love, toys, hygiene items and other gifts will bring joy to many children. More importantly each child who receives a box will also receive a gospel booklet called The Greatest Journey. They will then have the opportunity to participate in a program to learn about Jesus from the local Pastor and leaders in their village. Only God knows how many children and adults will come to our Savior through Operation Christmas Child.

Mom, Doug, Boni and I just returned from a trip to Boone N.C. to visit family. The main reason we went was to witness Catie Grace Hutlemyer be baptized. She is Mom's great granddaughter and Doug, Boni and I's great niece. My brother Dave, Catie Grace's grandfather baptized her. The service was at First Presbyterian Church of Boone. Pastor Jeff of 1st Pres. Boone gave the charge to the congregation. He challenged each member to instruct, direct, care for and love Catie Grace.

Isn't that what Jesus calls every child of His to do? He calls us to live in unity with family members, coworkers, our church family and all we meet in our daily lives. We do not need to go on a mission trip to instruct, direct, care for and love others. We can and should be doing that every day. May we seek to be kind, gracious, forgiving and loving to everyone, even when we find it difficult to do so. It is a small price to pay especially when Jesus does that and so much more for us. He gave His life on that cross, a far greater price than we will ever pay.

1st Peter 3:8 says, Finally all of you be like minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Col. 3:13,14

Dan Henry

Mission Committee Chair

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

Fidelis Moves Forward

Last Sunday I led a discussion of our relationship to the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Presbytery of Donegal. Preparation and presentation were stressful because of all the hot button issues that are involved. So hot that Session has never surveyed the Congregation to see how members feel about literal Biblical interpretations, homosexuality, gay marriage, ordination of openly gay clergy, abortion, etc.

Middle Octorara is much more conservative than our General Assembly, yet not as conservative as other presbyteries that are available to us. We are kind of “classic” Presbyterians as in “classic” country music. We supported the liberation of women allowing them to serve as elders, civil rights for Blacks and other minorities, relaxed dress for church standards, and have become a beacon of light for doing good in the community. But, we have not continued to move to the left.

We have generally ignored General Assembly proclamations on ordination and other issues because they were not mandatory-as in ordination of openly gay clergy, approval of gay marriage, etc. In fact, local congregations are free to develop their own policies and by-laws.

Regarding marriage, Session has decided on guidelines to be part of our church manual soon to be printed.

MARRIAGE – GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At the PCUSA’s General Assembly in mid-2014, delegates voted to give the minister and session of each congregation the responsibility to decide whether or not to marry same-sex couples. At the time, such marriages could only happen in states that have attained marriage equality by legalizing same-sex marriage. A year later, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage everywhere in the U.S. except for American Samoa. The delegates also approved an amendment to the denomination’s definition of marriage in their Book of Order. It recognized marriage by both same-sex and opposite-sex couples. The change was sent to the individual presbyteries for ratification. By 2015-MAR, the majority of presbyteries had approved of the amendment.

MARRIAGE – MIDDLE OCTORARA

MOPC is part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Denomination. As such, MOPC is a private organization; we are not like a bakery or florist that is open for public business. We have the right to accept or deny any couple’s request to have a wedding at MOPC. Our Session will consider the request of all heterosexual couples asking to have a wedding at MOPC, as well as the day and time of the requested wedding. We reserve the right to accept or reject any and all requests.

We believe that homosexual, lesbian, polygamy, polyandry, cohabitation, clandestine union, casual encounters, temporary liaisons, adultery, and many divorces all miss God’s revealed intention for marriage in terms of heterosexual monogamy of one man and one woman.

We will not specifically single out individuals for special public condemnation.

Beyond this issue, little has been done. As Calvin Coolidge said, "If you just don't do anything, things tend to work out."

Why haven't we left the Presbyterian Church (USA)?

1. Too risky financially – at the very least we would have a lot of legal fees, at worst, we could end up meeting at the fire hall.
2. Freedoms allowed to local congregations – referred to earlier.
3. Alternative presbyteries not suitable – back to male dominated – no female ordination, etc.

That is about as well as I can do on the topic. Feel free to contact me about handouts and future discussions.

FUTURE PRESENTATIONS

December 3 – Rev. Hileman – Christmas – Why December 25?

December 10 – Boni Henry – Martin Luther

December 17 – Barry Girvin – Middle Octorara Initiatives for 2018

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL on December 24 and December 31 – CHURCH at 10:00 AM

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

December birthdays

- 3 – Ethel Caskey
- 10 – Linda Caskey
- 13 – Ben Keene, Clint Frackman
- 14 – Vivian Caldwell
- 15 – Cathy Miller
- 18 – Curtis Frackman
- 21 – Emma Garver
- 23 – Helen Rasmussen
- 25 – Dan Keene
- 28 – Susan Kauffman, Dick Keene
- 29 – Jill Garver, Kay Bueche, Kory Barrett
- 30 – Brenda Roark

December anniversaries

- 24 – Lloyd & Cathy Miller

January birthdays through the 5th

- 2 – Virgil Roark
- 4 – Sandra Rineer
- 5 – Annie Frackman



THIS- N-THAT

Christmas Tree Facts

- Approximately 30 million real Christmas trees are sold in North America every year, totally over \$1.2 billion in sales. About 78% of these are pre-cut trees and 22% cut-your-own.
- There are more than 350 million trees growing on Christmas tree farms in the U.S. alone.
- The top selling Christmas trees nationwide are Balsam Fir, Douglas Fir, Fraser Fir, Noble Fir, Scotch Pine, Virginia Pine and White Pine.
- One acre of Christmas trees produces the daily oxygen requirement for 18 people.
- It can take as many as 15 years to grow a tree of average retail sale height (6 feet), but the average growing time is 7 years.
- North-American real Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states and Canada. Most artificial trees are manufactured in China, Taiwan or Hong Kong.
- For every real Christmas tree harvested, two to three seedlings are planted in its place the following spring.
- There are more than 400 Ohio Christmas tree producers; more than 15,000 U.S. producers; and more than 100,000 people employed by the real Christmas tree farming industry.
- In 1510 the first known decorated Christmas tree appeared in Riga, Latvia. Paper, fruits and sweets adorned early Christmas trees. The first retail Christmas tree lot was in Germany in 1531.
- President Pierce took the first Christmas tree into the White House in 1856. In 1923 President Coolidge started the National Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony, which is now celebrated every year.



TREASURER'S REPORT

YEAR TO DATE GENERAL FUND AND BENEVOLENCE FINANCES November 30, 2017

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	11,178.28	134,139.36	16,241.36	130,834.51	128,704.86
Benevolence	492.32	6,400.16	498.00	7,102.00	

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

Nov. 5	General Fund	1,828.00		Benevolence	111.00
Nov. 12-	General Fund	2,251.00		Benevolence	102.00
Nov. 19	General Fund	1,572.00		Benevolence	101.00
Nov. 26 -	General Fund	1,491.00		Benevolence	164.00

An additional \$9,099.36 General Fund money, including manse rental and Irwin Fund transfer and \$20.00 Benevolence money was received.

The beginning of November I transferred \$5,000.00 from the Irwin Fund to help cover General Fund expenses. I also received the remainder of October and all of the November manse rent.

Hopefully December will be a good month and if there is a big enough ending balance, I can always transfer some of it back to the Irwin Fund.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec. 3 Communion 10:30 a.m.	Dec. 4	Dec. 5 ROMEIO club 9:00 a.m. Deacon Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 6	Dec. 7	Dec. 8	Dec. 9 Assemble Fruit Baskets Decorate chuch
Dec. 10 Caroling 5:00 p.m.	Dec 11	Dec .12 ROMEIO club 9:00 a.m. Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 13	Dec. 14 Session Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 15	Dec. 16
Dec. 17	Dec. 18	Dec. 19 ROMEIO club 9:00 a.m.	Dec. 20	Dec. 21	Dec. 22	Dec. 23
Dec. 24 No SS. Church 10:00 a.m. Christmas Eve 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 25 	Dec. 26 ROMEIO club 9:00 a.m.	Dec. 27	Dec. 28	Dec. 29	Dec. 30
Dec. 31 No S.S. Church 10:00 a.m.	Jan. 1 	Jan. 2 ROMEIO club 9:00 a.m.	Jan. 2	Jan. 3	Jan. 4	Jan. 5