

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

February 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

I have always enjoyed the music of Fernando Ortega, born March 2, 1957, contemporary Christian singer-songwriter. He has a remarkable flair for arranging and performing other artist's compositions like "Give Me Jesus" and a long list of old standards. I came upon a cd of his entitled simply "Fernando Ortega" at a thrift store and began to listen to it in the car this week. One track has Fernando's song "Mildred Madalyn Johnson" and it has grabbed my heart. Here are the lyrics: Mildred Madalyn Johnson, born in the autumn of nineteen hundred sixteen, a shy, pretty girl from East Texas, religious and restless, humble and kind as a person could be. She loved to sing in the choir, loud and inspired, her head tilted down keeping time, or tell stories with friends after supper, ignoring the hour, a calico cat fast asleep at her side. And she loved to drive her big red car, though she couldn't see over the hood very far. She'd back out the driveway and point that thing down the road. We'd say, "Look-there she goes." Her hair was silver and messy. She walked in a hurry, worried about wasting the day. Some nights she sat at her dresser, composing long letters, falling asleep with a pen in her hand. And she loved to drive her big red car, a scarf 'round her shoulders, her foot to the floor. Down to the grocery, she waved goodbye and we'd pray "Lord, bring her back safe." And she loved to drive her big red car, though she couldn't see over the hood very far. She'd back out the driveway and point that thing down the road. We'd say, "Look-there she goes." Mildred Madalyn Johnson, marvelous woman, I was so lucky to call her my friend.

You really have to hear the music to get the full effect, but the words are enough to remind us of what is important in the Christian life. It's not so much the big things, the great achievements and awards and accolades, but the everyday things, the ordinary things all lined up one after another, that embody and express love and caring, fellowship and fun, service and sweetness, to all whom the Lord and Savior of all causes to cross our path and be in our orbit, especially those of the household of faith and our own special households. Every day, wherever we are, we each have the opportunity to live to the full the life God has gifted and called us to live. What an extraordinary gift from God. MO Friends, I am so thankful to be among people who are living that way. It is my pleasure and privilege to be your pastor.

CHURCH LIFE

CHOIR - We've already missed 2 Sundays this winter. I, for one, just don't feel complete if I don't get to church to worship my Lord. I did listen to another church service on the radio, but it just wasn't the same as being with my church family. Hopefully we will get there for the rest of the winter. And our music will be on schedule!! Ash Wednesday is on February 18th. We will start doing Lenten and Easter music. We have been practicing!!

DEACONS - The Apostle John has much to say about love in our New Testament. In the third chapter of his first Letter, verse 18, he says, "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." Our faithful Deacons are love in action. They welcome all visitors and attenders on Sunday mornings. They run the microphone that helps us to be connected through information sharing and prayer. They reach out to everyone with birthday and anniversary cards and give special attention to all in need through holiday, get well, sympathy and thinking of you expressions. They visit and give practical help to those who otherwise might feel neglected and forgotten. 24/7 we are blessed through this strong servant ministry.

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN - We haven't been able to have a meeting lately, so there isn't a lot to report. There was a sandwich sale the last week in January, so I have no numbers on that yet. And we are having a Lenten Tea on Saturday March 14 at 2 PM. The program will be a comical, singing speaker named Sue Duffield. She was at our church many years ago. Invite your lady friends and their daughters. Hoping to have a good turnout. Donations will be received. More info will be forthcoming. And I know we will need cookies for this event. So if you like baking small cookies, we would love having them to serve.

Blankets Please bring the blankets you have been making for the Linus Project next Sunday, February 8. Rose will be delivering them soon.

MISSIONS - NUTS 'N BOLTS SALE

Once again, we are pleased to announce that Middle Octorara hosted another very successful Nuts 'N Bolts sale on January 10. There were 19 vendors who displayed their products. And, those who worked the check-out counter reported there were definitely more buyers than ever.

Vendors who sold products, kept 80% of their sales, with 20% retained for the MO fund raiser. Also, there was food available for those who needed a snack during the event. After all the tallying was over, we are so happy that a whopping \$1,100 was raised. These funds are being sent to Peru to be used as needed there.

Many thanks to all who helped set up, help the day of, and take down when the sale was over. A number of the vendors are planning to attend our Yard Sale which is planned for April 18.

PERU MISSION (Correspondence between Dan Henry, Dave Henry and Todd Garrett regarding financial needs for our Peru Mission)

*Todd/Dave,
We collected \$850.00 through our alternate giving this Christmas season. It is earmarked for medical supplies. We could send it anytime Marquita would be able to purchase more items.*

We also have \$1100.00 we raised at our January fundraiser. Would you have suggestions for any most urgent needs at this time? Blessings, Dan Henry

Dan and friends at Middle Octorara.

This is great news! Many thanks to those who contributed to the Alternative Giving so that our friends in Iquitos can be blessed with additional medical/healing care. Thanks also to all those who participated in the recent fundraiser. \$1100 is an amazing and generous amount. Todd may have other ideas, but since you, Boni, Virgil and others know and have worked with Villa and his family throughout the years, and there is still a balance to be paid on their home in Iquitos, may I suggest that the \$1100 be used for that purpose. I am still planning to lead a group to Iquitos in July - July 10-25 and would love to have folks from Middle Octorara join us.

Blessings, Dave Henry

Dan and Todd,

I know that Margarita has a list of things she would love to get for the hospital. The folks at First Presbyterian in Jefferson City usually send the funds and ask Margarita to research and purchase the things most needed. She always documents what she buys and sends pictures when the items arrive at the hospital.

Blessings,
Dave

The \$850.00, that we collected through Alternative Giving at Christmas time, should be used for any type of medical supplies. Whatever you folks think is best.

Dave, that would be wonderful if the \$1100 would go towards the Villa house. Medical Mission paid \$30k+ for the house, and if the \$1100 goes towards that, then we will only need to raise an additional \$3,300 to completely pay it off. I had to look back at my notes to confirm all that's been donated. Dan, thank you and your church so very much. That's wonderful news. For \$850, how would you want it used?

Thank you,

Todd P. Garrett,

SILVER SISTERS - It seemed like a long time since our last get-together, so we were glad to see each other when we went to Hometown Kitchen for lunch. Lots of great conversations among the twelve ladies. Then eight of us came back to the church to play Sequence. Fun times.

We set the date for our next lunch. It will be Wednesday February 11 at 11:30 at Millers' Smorgasbord. This is the time of the year that we have coupons for a reduced cost. All widows are welcome. Let Rose Griest know if you are going to join us. 610-636-5378

TRUSTEES - Exciting things are happening at Middle Octorara!! By now the new carpeting has been installed, and things are getting put back in order. It's amazing how much dirt and dust gets all over everything when carpet gets removed and replaced. So lots of cleaning and dusting is being done, the flags are being dry-cleaned, a new drapery is being made for in front of the choir loft. The railings were removed and need to be re-installed. The keyboards were all removed and need to be brought back in. All before its even time for the pews to come back. Thank you to everyone that was involved in this process. When the pews do come back, the book holders will be slightly larger since it was a little tight getting the books back in them.

MISSION MUSINGS

As I write this I am inside looking out at the beautiful snow and thanking God I don't have to go out and brave the elements today. I worked outside on days like this for several years on the farm and at the feed mill/coal yard. The animals always need fed and taken care of and people always needed coal to stay warm. It makes me stop and pray for those working in this weather today and be thankful.

I can't remember the last time we had to cancel church two Sundays in a row but it is best to be cautious in weather like this. We were blessed to hold worship the first two Sundays of the month and have a wonderful time together thanking, praising and worshiping God. The first Sunday we held communion and the second Sunday we installed our church officers for the upcoming three years. We are blessed to have many dedicated and talented people serving M. O. and God.

This morning I came across Psalms 139 on my phone. What a beautiful and comforting scripture passage. It tells how God created us and we are fearfully and wonderfully made. He knows everything about us and He is always with us through our good times and through our difficult times. No matter where we are physically, mentally or spiritually God is always right beside us and all we need to do is ask for His help. Things I may have taken for granted in my younger years I am so thankful for now. I am so grateful that I grew up in this church family of M. O. Besides my own family I was nurtured by many here at M. O. Some still here today and many who are now rejoicing with Jesus in the church triumphant. I encourage you to take a moment and read Psalms 139 and take comfort and joy knowing you were fearfully and wonderfully made by our loving God and He will always be with you here on earth as well as in heaven throughout all eternity. There is no greater gift.

Romans 8:38,39

Blessings

Dan Henry

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

2026

We have a committee and two sub-committees working on plans for our anniversary in 2027. What about 2026?

Our nation is 250 years old, and we plan to honor that heritage in at least two ways. One, there will be several Minutes for History read during church services, focusing on Bart Township during 1776. Sources for these Minutes will include McElwain's Faith and Works at Middle Octorara Since 1727, "Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church and the Revolution" – written by Barry Girvin for the 1977 anniversary celebration, and information from the Shrine Church's application for inclusion in the National Registry of Historical Places – written by Millersville University student Anna Shoemaker, Barry Girvin, and Rob McCullough. The McElwain (Faith and Works), and Girvin (Middle Octorara/Revolution) can be found in our church library.

Two, on Sunday, May 24, the day before Memorial Day, we are planning to honor veterans with opening ceremonies in the Old Cemetery including comments by church leaders and a color guard. The church service will feature speeches by local veterans and special patriotic music.

Another note of interest, videos from the 275th anniversary (2002) will be shown in the adult Sunday School class. Included will be the plays "Little Tree" and "The Surprising Christmas Pageant", the Memorial Day Veterans Service, and the program on the anniversary day. To borrow copies of these events, see Barry. What copy you get will depend on the type of receiver you have.

				Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church	
				Income and Expense Statement	
01/30/2026 07:50 AM				GENERAL FUND 01, January 2026	
BEGINNING BALANCE, January 1, 2026					26,191.84
INCOME					
Offerings				\$7,544.00	
Per Capita				1,149.00	
Initial Offering				190.00	
Manse Rent				1,408.95	
Chapel Rent				200.00	
Benevolence				670.00	
TOTAL INCOME				11,161.95	
TOTAL CASH & INCOME					37,353.79
EXPENSES					
Pastoral Salary				\$6,207.54	
Pastoral Mileage				464.10	
Pastoral Pension				2,579.96	
Pastoral Technology				50.00	
Secretary-Treasurer				966.00	
Clerical/Treasurer Mileag				151.90	
Payroll Taxes				-372.13	
Advertising				39.80	
Office Supplies				225.11	
Copier Lease				120.32	
Electricity				485.70	
Propane Gas				1,775.38	
Insurance				43.00	
Misc. Repairs/Mainten.				54.64	
Telephone/internet				118.65	
Cleaning Service				352.50	
Snow Removal				1,345.00	
Benevolence Fund-Presby				1,149.00	
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund				670.00	
Plumbing Repairs-Manse				12.80	
TOTAL EXPENSES				16,439.27	
ENDING BALANCE, January 31, 2026					20,914.52

GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES - January 2026

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

January 4 -	General Fund	5,178.00	Benevolence	445.00
January 11 -	General Fund	2,499.00	Benevolence	75.00
January 18 -	Church cancelled			
January 25 -	Church cancelled			

An additional \$2,814.95 General Fund money and \$150.00 Benevolence money was received by mail etc.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	15,373.60	15,373.60	10,491.95	10,491.95	15,769.27
Benevolence	953.84	953.84	670.00	670.00	

With church being cancelled 2 Sunday's because of weather, obviously the offering was substantially affected but the expenses continued. This should correct itself in February as people make up their missed offerings. The important part is that there was enough of a cushion in the General Fund to pay the bills.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

February birthdays

12 – Mike Herr
13 - Sam Reinhart
20 – William Messick
21 – Sue Ressel
22 – Brian Kauffman

Anniversaries

14 – Ethel & Erick Walden
James & Robin Hammond
Richard & Nanci Caskey



The following pages are fun activities to do while you are housebound
with the snow and frigid temperatures.

Have fun, exercise your brain and enjoy!

Name: _____ Date: _____

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

It's Snow Time

Word Search

BLIZZARD
COLD
DRIFT
FLURRY
FROSTY
FROZEN
ICE CRYSTAL
ICE SKATE
ICEBERG

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

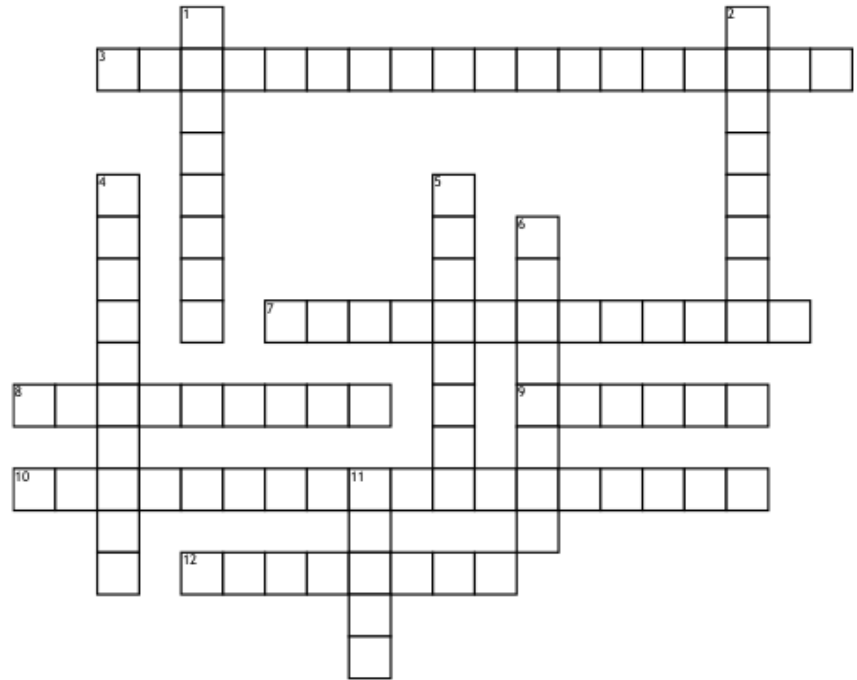


ICICLE	SLIPPERY
IGLOO	SNOW FORT
MELT	SNOWBALL
PACK	SNOWBANK
PLOW	SNOWBOARD
POWDER	SNOWMAN
SHOVEL	STICKY
SKI	SUB-ZERO
SLED	WHITE

Presidents Day

Across

- 3. War from 1775 to 1783
- 7. Third Monday in February
- 8. Nickname for President Lincoln
- 9. President who ended World War II
- 10. Nickname for George Washington



- 12. One president who also signed the Declaration of Independence

Down

- 1. State where Lincoln was born
- 2. State where George Washington was born

- 4. State named after a president

- 5. A war between people in the same country

- 6. How a president is selected in the U.S.

- 11. First African American President



VALENTINE'S DAY WORD SCRAMBLE

LOAHCCETO

LWRSEFO

OELY

YNACD

URFYREAB

TVIAELENN

TSHAER

DCIPU

DRFEIN

ELDUCD

SISK

SREOS

EWESRTSEHA

GHU

WROAR


WLEYJRE

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 1 Prayer & Praise 4:00 p.m.	Feb. 2	Feb. 3 Session Mtg. 6:45 p.m.	Feb. 4 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 5	Feb. 6	Feb. 7 Community Meal 4:00 p.m.
Feb. 8 Souper Bowl Congregation Mtg.	Feb. 9	Feb. 10 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 11 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Silver Sisters 11:30 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 12	Feb. 13	Feb. 14 
Feb. 15 MOPW Mtg. After church	Feb. 16	Feb. 17	Feb. 18 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 19	Feb. 20	Feb. 21
Feb. 22	Feb. 23	Feb. 24	Feb. 25 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 26	Feb. 27	Feb. 28

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

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: danlhenry55@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