

OUR PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

I would like to remind us about basics of our Christian Faith.

I think that's the most appropriate message I can give us as my final Pastor's Page.

God has revealed God's Self to people in the Bible, which is God's Word to us. It tells the true story of people loving God, turning away from God, and God's plan of salvation.

Folks, we aren't alive just by chance. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Yes, God is The Creator, and God made you and me.

God loves us and God wants us to love God in return (Gen. 1:26-31, Jn. 3:16-17).

Satan, an angel, who rebelled against God, was thrown out of heaven (Rev. 12:7-9). Since then, Satan has been waging a spiritual battle against God and God's creation. Satan tries to tempt people and lead people away from God. This turning away from God is called "sin". We see physical results of this battle in the brokenness of the world.

Satan tempted Eve and she gave in by turning away from God. And Adam went right along with her (Gen. 3:1-6). They both decided not to listen to God and to do what they thought was better rather than what God asked of them.

The results include a broken relationship with God our Heavenly Father (we are separated from fellowship with God), and our earthly death (Gen. 3:8-19).

How quickly our sinful nature developed (Gen. 4:1-10). Every person since then has inherited this sinful tendency toward disobeying God.

Satan hasn't stopped trying to tempt people to sin, to lead people away from God. Satan has a hold, an influence, on everyone. Satan's goal is our choosing to separate ourselves from God which results in our perishing, and the destruction of everything God has created (Jn. 3:18-20, Rev. 12:13, 17, 13:7).

Folks there's no in between ... we either belong to God or we belong to Satan.

So how can we be saved from Satan and how can we belong to God again? We can accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and our Savior (Gen. 3:14-15, Jn. 3:16-17).

Why Jesus? What's so special about him? At Christmas time we remember and celebrate Jesus'

birth. Jesus is both divine and human at the same time (Mt. 1:18-24, Lk. 1:26-38). So Jesus isn't sinful, as we humans are, and therefore Satan has no hold on him, as Satan has on us.

At Easter we remember Jesus' crucifixion and celebrate his resurrection (Mt. 27, 28, Mk. 15, 16, Lk. 23, 24, Jn. 19, 20). Jesus was able to die on the cross in our

place as a sacrifice and to take our punishment of death and separation from God for us. Jesus rose from the dead victorious over death. So again, Jesus wasn't sinful, as we humans are, and therefore Satan had no hold on him, as Satan has on us.

God accepts what Jesus did for us and through Jesus our sin is forgiven, and we have a repaired relationship with God, and we are given resurrected eternal life to be lived in God's fully established Kingdom (Rev. 21).

All we have to do is accept this gift that God offers to us, even though we don't deserve it. If we do this, Satan loses his grip on us and we become God's again. (If we don't accept what God has done for us, then we in essence choose to remain with Satan and separate ourselves from God.) So choose Jesus! Only Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life and also the beginning and the end (Jn. 14:6, Rev. 1:8).

Satan will be utterly defeated (Rev. 20:7-10) and God's Kingdom will be fully established (Rev. 21, 22).

The time of Jesus' return is closer today than it was yesterday. When our Lord does return, may we be found to be doing our Lord's work (Mt. 9:35-39).

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor. 13:14).

Blessings,
Rev. Douglas Hileman, Pastor

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

DEACONS

We would like to thank Dixie Clark, Faye Mimm, Ken Bradford, Jr. and Dale Phillips for all your hard work and serving as Deacons! We would like to welcome Val Keene, Jonathan Welch and Lloyd Miller as the newest Deacons! Marlene Fromm accepted her second term as a Deacon. Welcome and thank you!

At the January meeting, we prepared 12 thinking of you cards. Next Deacon meeting is Feb. 4th right after church. There will be pizza for lunch!

LIBRARY

The church librarian will be making some changes in the near future. There are VHS tapes that can no longer be watched unless you still have an old VHS player and other items that are no longer useful in our library. Other items will be relocated to other areas in the church that are not really part of the library.

MEMBER ADDRESS CHANGES – Please update your church membership roll.

Patsy Hassler - 527 Park Ave., Apt. S509, delete QPH and McElwain.

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

February Meeting – Our winter MOPW meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 18, immediately following the Worship Service. All ladies are invited to attend as we make decisions about allocating our funds and planning for 2018.

Funeral Luncheons - As many of our church and community members have left this earth on to their final home during the past few months, the 'church ladies' have been putting in many hours preparing and service the luncheons. Thank you so much, ladies for your time. Your efforts are very much appreciated.

Soup/Sub Sale

Our annual February soup/sub sale is planned for Thursday-Friday, February 22-23. The subs will be made on Thursday, the 22nd. You may pick up your order Thursday or Friday. Order forms are available in the Welcome Center and Narthex. Deadline for placing your order is Sunday, February 18. Please call Shirley Miller with any questions: 717-786-3690

Lenten Tea

MOPW is happy to host our annual Lenten Tea on Saturday, March 10, 2018. The program will be provided by the Paloma School of Irish Dancers from Lancaster. We expect a large attendance for this event. Please reserve your seat by contacting Boni Henry by Sunday, March 4. Email: bohphen@outlook.com or phone: 717-808-4534

SESSION

Audit Committee: During the Congregation meeting on January 28, 2018, the following were elected to serve on the Auditing Committee for 2018: Rose Griest, Jim Bueche and Sue Herr.

Nominating Committee: Also, during the same meeting the Nominating Committee were elected. The principles are: Rose Griest, Dale Phillips, Shirley Girvin, Valeria Keene, Sue Ressel, and Doug Henry. Alternates are: Virgil Roark, Dottie Garver and Sam Reinhart.

Bucket Offering: The special offering that was collected during our Third Sunday services in 2017 will be given to a local need(s). This will be discussed and decided at the next Session meeting.

Blanket Prayer: The challenge has been issued to the whole congregation to participate in the Blanket Prayer initiative. The concept of this idea is to 'cover' Middle Octorara in a blanket of prayer 24 hours a day x 7 days a week x 52 weeks in the year. The Prayer Warriors in the church have been called upon over the years to send out prayers for many folks in physical need. At this time and always, we recognize the great need for prayer for the spiritual needs of the church. If you would like to participate and be part of our Prayer Warriors, please complete the slip of paper which can be found in the 'Prayer Blanket' basket in the Narthex. All you need to do is write down the day(s) of each week and times you pledge to pray. A record will be kept and the congregation will be notified of our progress in filling all the time slots. If you have questions, please contact Boni Henry.

YOUTH GROUP

By the time of next month's newsletter printing, chocolate peanut butter and coconut cream Easter eggs will be in full production at the Miller household. Yum, Yum! Let's see if we can top last year's total of 22,000!

MISSION MUSINGS

By the time you read this most of you will know that on Sunday January 28 the Middle Octorara congregation voted to approve Rev Hileman's request to dissolve his pastoral relationship with Middle Octorara.

As I look back over the past 20 plus years I reflect on some of the mission opportunities we have become involved in. Flowing Oil Cafe, clothing give away, missionaries Glover's and Columbo's, Reach Workcamps, Operation Christmas Child, sister church in Tamshiyacu, Peru just to name a few.

As we move forward with the life of this church family I am sure we will continue to bless others with our giving. I say this with confidence because of the compassionate and generous attitude of the folks of this congregation. This of course is the way it should be for we serve a loving, risen Savior who gave His all for each of us.

President Kennedy said "Ask not what your country can do for you ask what you can do for your country".

We each must ask what can we do for Christ, our church and others. When Jesus was asked what is the most important commandment He said "And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength". The second is equally important" Love your neighbor as yourself".

This is the command and the mission Jesus challenges us with as His hands and feet in this world. May we continue to be loving, caring and generous people as we spread His message of love and salvation locally, nationally and worldwide.

Acts 20:35

Daniel L Henry
Mission Committee Chair

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

Death Overcome by Life

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.
Thanatopsis – William Cullen Bryant

He who is afraid to die is not fit to live, and he who shrinks from the duties and responsibilities of life is not fit to die. Life and death are all part of the same great experience.
Theodore Roosevelt

Jesus' reply to a question about water from Jacob's well – John 4:13-14.
Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again.
But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again.
It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.

Shakespeare wrote that life "... is but a poor player who struts and frets his time upon the stage and is heard no more." I say that same applies to death. The recent passing of several of our elderly members took my mind back down the road to many memories of their lives and times. There was interviewing Hazel Woerth about her time as a student at Bart High School at the Shrine Church schoolroom, remembering Ernie Reynolds as a young Elder back when they were revered as if they were the "nine holy men," and living neighbors to Julia and Pete Mowrer. Many who have passed on will live in my memory as long as I live.
To people who do not believe in Christ's promise of eternal life, those memories are all there is. As Christians, we wrap the drapery of our couch about us, and lie down to pleasant dreams. Death does not have a chance.

THIS- N-THAT



National Pizza Day is observed annually on February 9th. Whether it is thin crust, Chicago-style, deep dish or anything in between, pizza is an American favorite. Here are some interesting facts about pizza:

**Approximately three billion pizzas are sold in the United States every year, plus an additional one billion frozen pizzas.*

**Pizza is a \$30 billion industry in the United States.*

**Pizzerias represent 17 percent of all U.S. restaurants.*

**Ninety-three percent of Americans eat pizza at least once a month.*

**Women are twice as likely as men to order vegetarian toppings on their pizza.*

**About 36 percent of all pizzas contain pepperoni, making it the most popular topping in the United States.*

**More pizza is consumed during the week of the Super Bowl than any other time of the year.*

**On average, each person in the United States eats around 23 pounds of pizza every year.*

**The first pizzeria in the United States was opened by Gennaro Lombardi in 1895 in New York City.*

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

February birthdays

13 – Sam Reinhart
18 – Brad Phipps
20 – William Messick
21 – Sue Ressel
22 – Brian Kaufman
26 – Cori Hess

February anniversaries

14 – Jim & Robin Hammond, Richard & Nancy Caskey



TREASURER'S REPORT

GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE INCOME *January 2018*

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

Jan. 7-	General Fund	1,650.12	Benevolence	136.00
Jan. 14-	General Fund	3,236.02	Benevolence	156.00
Jan. 21 -	General Fund	2,395.90	Benevolence	211.00
Jan. 28 -	General Fund	1,956.78	Benevolence	106.00

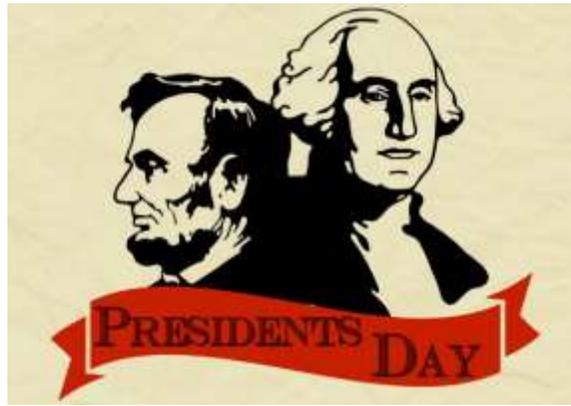
An additional \$2,376.89 General Fund money, including manse rental and \$20.00 Benevolence money was received.

January ended with a comfortable balance to start February. Please remember to “catch up” with your offerings when you miss a Sunday. Copies of the 2017 Church Financial Report of all accounts of our church are on the table near the sanctuary. Questions may be directed to the treasurer listed at the end of each fund.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	11,050.28	11,050.28	11,615.71	11,615.71	12,077.06
Benevolence	615.40	615.40	629.00	629.00	

Debbie Hoover, Secretary-Treasurer



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 4 Deacon Mtg. after church	Feb. 5	Feb. 6	Feb. 7	Feb. 8 Session Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 9	Feb. 10
Feb. 11	Feb. 12	Feb. 13 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.		Feb. 15	Feb. 16	Feb. 17
Feb. 18	Feb. 19 Presidents Day	Feb. 20	Feb. 21	Feb. 22 Soup/Sub Sale	Feb. 23	Feb. 24
Feb. 25	Feb. 26	Feb. 27	Feb. 28	March 1	March 2	March 3