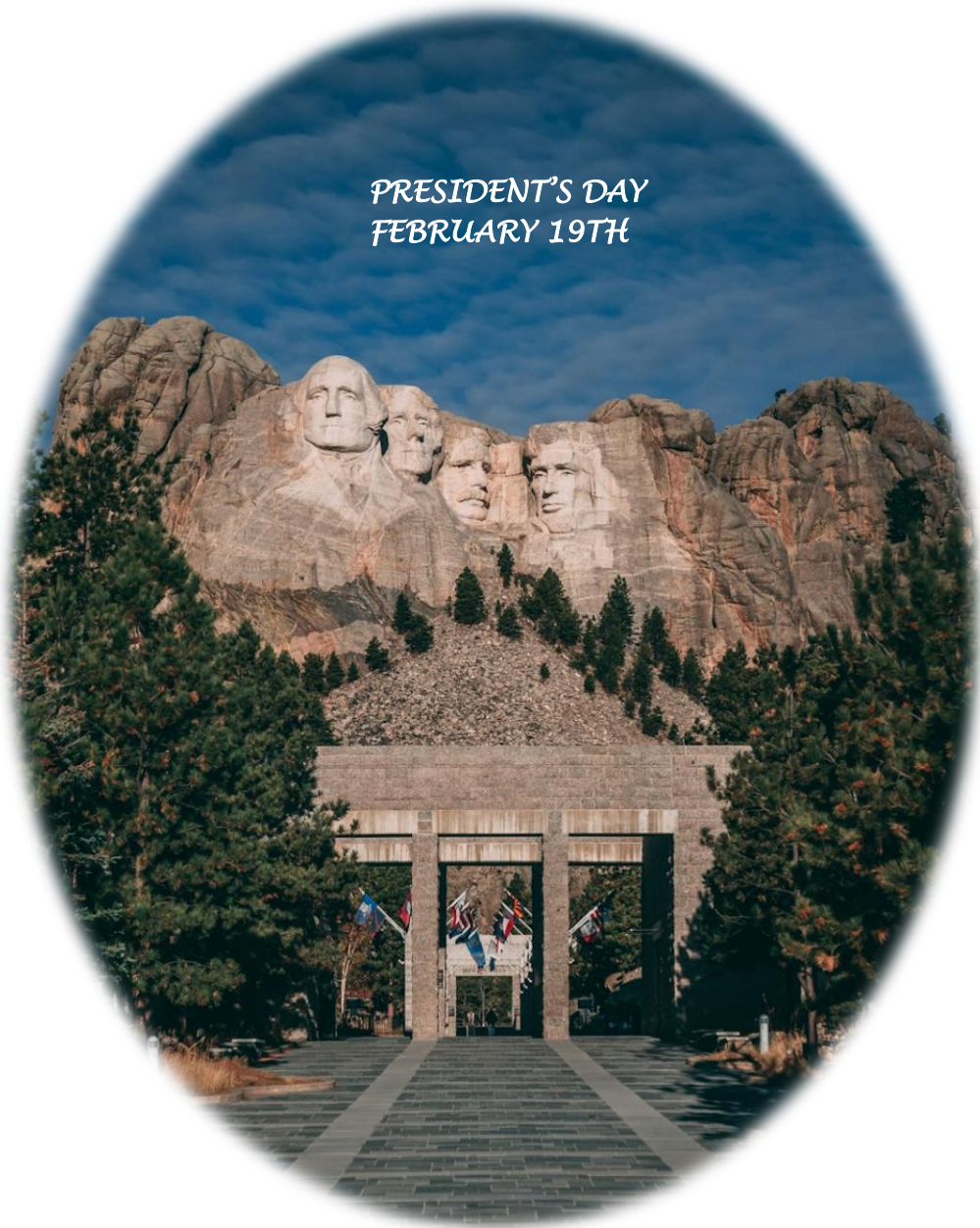


MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

February 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

We will soon be entering Lent, the Christian season of spiritual preparation leading up to Easter. Lent, a shortened form of the Old English word lencten, lengthen, refers to springtime, when the days are lengthening, resulting in all manner of new life. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and runs through forty days to Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. This year that's February 14 through March 30, with Easter falling on March 31. The forty-day observance follows the example of Jesus in his forty days of fasting and testing in the desert prior to the beginning of his active ministry, leading to his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Not all Christians observe Lent, but those who do use it as a concentrated time of prayer, fasting, repentance, abstinence, study, and reflection, designed to draw closer to God. Lenten practices can and should be employed all through the year, not just in the spring for forty days. They are beneficial for our Christian growth whenever they are used.

John Calvin (1509-1564), French theologian, pastor, and reformer, said, "Faith is like an empty, open hand stretched out toward God, with nothing to offer and everything to receive." It reminds me of Jesus' answer to the devil in his first temptation at the end of his forty days in the wilderness, when he quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." Lenten disciplines are one effective way to empty our hands of everything else, and extend them to God for what he, in his mercy, would place there. Our amazing God and Savior cannot pour himself into a vessel that is already full of everything else. But he is eager to pour out his Spirit on anyone who has room for his saving presence. What does the Scripture say in Jeremiah 29:13? "You will seek me and you will find me, when you seek me with all of your heart." I think that qualifier, "with all of your heart", indicates that we must come to God, as Dr. Calvin suggests, with empty hands, completely empty, not even partially filled ones. If we will come empty, God will surprise us with all that he can do in us, for us, and through us. MO Friends, let's observe Lent before February 14, after March 30, and during the official forty days. You all do this so very well! You make it a pleasure for me to be your pastor.

CHURCH LIFE

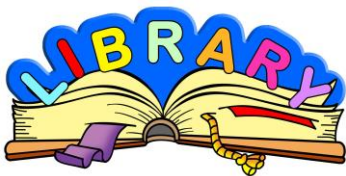
CHOIR

We have been working on music for Lent and Easter. I am blessed with faithful choir members that seldom miss practice. And also blessed to have Shirley Girvin stand in when Boni is busy. Thank you Lord for the members and accompanists to learn and present the music for the congregation. And we hope the congregation receives the message that we try to convey.

DEACONS

William Temple (1881-1944), Archbishop of Canterbury, said, "the greatest medicine is a true friend." I think that rings true! Life is more than our individual, physical experience. Our bodies can benefit from prescribed medicines and procedures. But they can also benefit tremendously from the warmth of personal interactions. Who of us doesn't appreciate a medical professional who combines technical expertise with a good bedside manner, who expresses care for his or her patients?

Loneliness, isolation, can be as devastating as any physical ailment. How many people in our world have no one? I am so thankful for the ministry of our Deacons, and others in our church family, who are constantly looking for ways to connect and to care for those who are most in need of it, within and without the congregation. Keep up the good work(s), flock of God!



In the next few months our church library will be going through an update and renovation. New books will be added, old ones will be donated to other ministries and the overall look will change to make our library a more inviting experience. We already have a new desk, donated by Barry Girvin's granddaughter. Along with new books, look for a section of jigsaw puzzles that may be borrowed for those who enjoy putting them together.

For the month of February, we will highlight President's Day with a special section devoted to books by or about some of our country's presidents.

We also hope to attract interest from those visiting our church during community events.

SILVER SISTERS

Our January lunch was held at Dutchway Restaurant. I think there were 10 of us present. It was a bitter cold day with snow still on some of the roads which deterred some of the folks. After lunch, 6 of us returned to the church to play Sequence. It's always a good time.

Our February lunch will be on Friday February 16 at 11:30 at Diener's Country Restaurant, 2855 Lincoln Highway E Ronks. All widows are welcome!!

TRUSTEES

Because of snow, we didn't have our monthly meeting. We did approve a couple of things by text messaging. The bushes that form the cross in the cemetery are going to be trimmed back to 18 inches. They will grow back out. There is a sidewalk in the middle of them that can't be used because the bushes obscured it.

Lloyd Miller completed and installed new posts and hand-rails on both sides of the pulpit. They are beautifully made. we now have something to hold on to when going up and down those steps.

Trustees approved using the long Sunday School room to store yard sale items just until the April yard sale. If you have any contributions for the yard sale, you can put them in that room.

*Thank you to my Secret Sister for my Christmas gift in the picture. So far it has had 8 blooms and 2 more are starting!!
And the directions say no water is needed and the bulb is covered in wax. It has been a blessing to me!!
Rose Griest*



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

February birthday's

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

February anniversaries

14 – Jim & Robin Hammond
Richard & Nanci Caskey

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

Playing With Our Minds

I was going to write about the efforts of Satan, Madison Avenue, and the media to destroy my ability to think for myself. However, you are fellow sufferers as we try to separate facts from fiction, and detect the slight of hand and devious methods of controlling our thinking. Thus, *Our Minds*, in the title.

Let's start with the war between God and Satan for our eternal souls. C.S. Lewis' "Screwtape Letters", were supposedly written by a senior demon named Screwtape. The letters are written

to his nephew, Wormwood, a younger and less experienced demon. Wormwood is advised on how to guide a man named "The Patient" toward Our Father Below (Satan) and away from the Enemy (God). Playing on "The Patient's" weaknesses and insecurities, Wormwood endeavors to fill the void with mind games full of doubt regarding God's love for his creation. We fight this battle every day with our doubts and fears, but with the Apostle Paul we say, I believe, help my unbelief.

In 1951, Eric Hoffer wrote The True Believer, a book which illustrates how people with low self-esteem can be converted to a cause which brings meaning and purpose to their lives. It does not matter how ridiculous or hard to believe the cause is, the harder it is to believe, the greater the devotion of its believers. This approach was used by the Aryan Nation, an extension of the KKK, which recruited high school and college students in the U.S. during the latter half of the 20th century. One must wonder if today we don't have more of the empty lives than ever before. As our society has moved from "Sunday learning" to a more secular approach, does anyone take responsibility for giving youth belief systems which cannot be challenged by false teachings and outright lies?

As far as the media is concerned, the big emphasis is on money. The more viewers or prescribers, the better. Thus, Fox News and MSNBC have their approaches almost like a religion. They have their code words, creeds, heroes, and they detest free thought. You either follow their way of thinking or you are stupid or evil, probably both. So, if you listen only to them, I suggest at least considering alternative points of view – think for yourself. Read and listen to a wide range of sources.

Lets turn now to Madison Avenue and the many ideas used every day to get you to buy a product. Medicare, part C, is a good place to start. It is a real minefield filled with every conceivable way to deceive you.

One propaganda method is to implant in your mind an image that is odd, shocking, or repulsive. Geisinger Gold wins the award in this category. From the grandfather with a moustache that protrudes into his mouth trying to hug his grandchildren as they resist, to a couple who look like death warned over, to a man with a reconstructed nose, one tends to remember the commercial.

Geisinger and many other Medicare Advantage plans want you to buy their product. Beware of the celebrity giving the pitch, and the ads that say they will compare plans if you call. Your call will go to a spokesperson for a particular plan. Within their "network" you will get a lot of goodies. Make sure you know what network means. Your doctor or favorite hospital may not be in the network. Also, for plans that give you a card, where will it be honored? Are any of these plans better than the Medicare supplements offered by the retirees' former employer? My dad retired from Ford-New Holland, my brother Herb from Penn Dot, and I retired from the public school system. All offer supplemental plans better than anything I have seen advertised. Bottom line – you need to supplement Medicare, but do not be bamboozled by false claims.

Next let's consider advertisements for drugs. This is classic advertising. The ads are all the same. First they detail the disease with words you are unable to understand, with an implication that you are a little slow on the draw if you don't understand. This is followed by a list of side effects which could be fatal. However, while the side effects are detailed they show wholesome scenes like walking in the woods, parties, hiking, riding bike, or celebrating a birthday. It keeps one from thinking about an injection in the eye or reactions to drugs that could kill you.

Last but not least, what about the insults to our brains brought on by volume and emotion. Commercials are always louder than the show you are watching. Worst of all are the talking heads that offer sports commentary. Whether it be on ESPN or the Philadelphia Best Show Ever, the host has to throw a fit of emotion just to make sure you are paying attention.

Well, that about does it for today. All I can stand!

MISSION MUSINGS

As I write this tonight we are already almost one month into the year 2024. It made me think again how fast time flies by. It was in February 2006, eighteen years ago that my niece Emily called to say I'm going to Peru with daddy this summer and I think you should go along. I did and as they say the rest is history. Because of Middle Octorara's involvement along with 1st Presbyterian Church of Jefferson City and God's blessings much has been accomplished in that region of the Amazon jungle. One huge difference is there is a nice church building in the village of Tamshiyacu, one of the nicest buildings in the village. Virgil Roark was the wind behind the sails of that project as Middle Octorara supplied the funds to build the church building. The former building collapsed earlier in the year of 2008 before our mission team arrived that June to dig footers for the new building and within 7 months the folks in Tamshiyacu had a beautiful building to gather together in to worship God. Because of the generous support of the folks from Middle Octorara and Jefferson City there has been many improvements for the church families as well as the children and families of the Special Needs School which is attached to the church building and the Pastors residence. We have supplied mosquito nets, Bibles, a water tank with clean water, playground equipment as well as financial support for the Pastor and more for folks of the village. We have taught and shared God's word with many children through Bible School.

I thought about this during Pastor John's message this morning when he said God has a purpose for us that we can only understand and experience when we trust Him and follow Him. I believe we have done that very well in the Amazon as well as right here in the Solanco area by supporting many local ministries that help those in need of both materials and spiritual blessings.

Let's promise to continue to spread the gospel and the love of Jesus in the days ahead knowing God will use our gifts of time, talents and treasures to bless others and bring them to Him.

Hebrews 7:7

Blessings

Dan Henry

Below is a report to Todd Garrett, President of Medical Missions, about our Peru Crew's week in Iquitos and Tamshiyacu. The other five members of the Crew are safely back in the US and I will remain until Friday.

Todd,

Our Team had a good week here in Iquitos and Tamshiyacu. The last of our five person team left last night (Sunday) and are all safely back in the US. It was a good experience for all of them and I am hopeful that some of them will return for another trip in the future.

In Tamshiyacu we tore out the old sidewalk in front of the church which was broken and dangerous and replaced it. It gives a better and more appealing appearance to the front of the church. We found out that the sidewalk actually belongs to the town of Tamshiyacu and they appreciated what we did, asked for pictures of our Team and said they would put them in their town newsletter.

We also sanded the doors and window frames on the church sanctuary and Sunday School rooms, bought varnish and brushes and completed most of the varnishing. Jhony and church member Lester will complete the work with the varnish we left, and if there is leftover varnish they will use it on the pastor's house.

The church, pastor house and school look good. Jhony, Vivianne and Kelly are taking good care of the property. The grass in the play area behind the school and all the area between the buildings and riverbank were "mowed" and looked good. The bathrooms were working in all three buildings. As mentioned before, the electricity is not working in the church, sanctuary but is working in the Sunday School rooms, pastor's house and school. A few places where there is a need for repainting and the fallen rain gutter were the only other obvious building issues.

The playground equipment behind the school has deteriorated again (groups I led from First Presbyterian Church, Jefferson City, MO and Middle Octorara Presbyterian, Quarryville, PA, built a wooden play set in 2010 and then again a few years later. Kelly would like it to be replaced again, but if a group I lead took that on as a project - bearing the cost and doing the labor - I would insist that it be built with a material other than wood so that it would last more than a few years.

The keyboard in the church which a member of one of the groups from Jefferson City bought around 10 years ago and which Jhony used to lead the singing is gone, he said that it was no longer working. Our Team talked about possibly purchasing a new one but decided that Jhony was doing fine leading the singing with guitar and drum.

We held a Bible School for the children on Monday through Friday afternoons with Villa's daughter Patricia leading the Bible story - and doing very well - and Kelly leading the singing. These two ladies work well together, spent time each morning planning the lesson, including little skits with the children participating. and kept the attention of the children for nearly an hour each afternoon and then divided them into age groups and our Team worked with them on crafts. We grew from around 20 on Monday afternoon to over 50 on Friday afternoon.

Patricia also helped our Team as translator and each day a young man Antony whom I have known for many years went with us to help with the sidewalk and varnishing, and with translation. We paid these two for their services.

On Thursday Margarita and her son Jules went with us and we took the antiparasitic medicine and vitamins purchased by Margarita from funds provided by the two churches mentioned above. Over 530 women, men and children received the medicine and vitamins. We ran out of adult medicine with a few adults still waiting in line, but we were able to treat all the children with a few bottles of vitamins remaining that Kelly will distribute to the children in the school who were not able to come to the church for the clinic. Margarita, Kelly, Vivianne, Patricia and our team worked well together and although the church sanctuary was packed before we arrived at 9:00, everything went smoothly and we finished around noon. Margarita will repeat the clinic, probably in June, and will purchase more adult medicine if funds are available to do so.

Here at El Jardin everything looks good. The grounds are well kept, the two dogs are healthy and the buildings are in good condition. Our group enjoyed staying here, and especially loved the wonderful meals prepared by Chelita. Villa was attentive to all our needs and continues to be a joy to work with and his wife Francisca did a wonderful job in keeping our rooms and other areas of El Jardin clean. Margarita was available whenever we needed to call on her and shared several meals with us. She invited Dr. Carlos, Director the Hospital de Iquitos where she works, to dinner with us on Sunday night and he talked about the hospital and how much they appreciate the gifts of medical equipment and supplies provided through funds donated by First Presbyterian Church, Jefferson City and Middle Octorara and others over the years. On Thursday afternoon, upon our return from Tamshiyacu, we went to the hospital for a tour (they are

still in their cramped, old building while the new hospital is being built next door. The new hospital is not yet completed after several years due to lack of funding by the government and a completion date is not in sight). Dr. Carlos joined us for much of the tour, which was very eye-opening for our whole team, especially our two General Practice doctors. At the request of the Mission Teams of the two churches, Dr. Carlos noted some current needs including an incubator for newborns, hospital transport beds (we saw the one being used now with rust and no side rails) and wheelchairs.

I will travel to Nauta tomorrow (Tuesday) with Margarita to talk with the staff there, see the new well that was put in after my visit last January, and see the progress being made on the fence around the Medical Missions property there. I will report again following that visit.

If you have any questions, or if there are things you would like me to do while I am here, please let me know.

Bendiciones,
Dave Henry

This is the view approaching the School for Children with Special Needs in Nauta. The building in the center top is the original building built by MMI (I believe in 2006 or 2007) with classrooms and bathrooms. The building in the lower left is a second building built later with more classrooms and a kitchen. The school (currently on summer vacation) has 58 students and when the new school year begins in March they will receive more students with more severe disabilities, placed there by the Peruvian government which has acknowledged the work being done with the students by the teachers and staff. The new fence is about 1/2 completed around the property which is about an acre. It is about 7 feet high, sturdy woven wire, with four strands of barbed wire on the top. It is necessary because of the encroachment of squatters, who, once in place cannot be removed without a long legal process and for the protection of the children as currently motokars pass right through the property making it unsafe for the children to play outside. More pictures to come. Dave



				Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church		
				Income and Expense Statement		
				GENERAL FUND 01, January 2024		
BEGINNING BALANCE, January 1, 2024						31,005.47
INCOME						
Offerings					\$9,448.00	
Per Capita					2,158.00	
Initial Offering					166.00	
Manse Rent					1,269.45	
Account Interest					0.22	
Benevolence					929.00	
TOTAL INCOME					13,970.67	
TOTAL CASH & INCOME						44,976.14
EXPENSES						
Pastoral Salary					\$5,851.21	
Pastoral Mileage					539.35	
Pastoral Pension					2,189.93	
Pastoral Technology					50.00	
Secretary-Treasurer					645.00	
Clerical/Treasurer Mileage					161.47	
Accountant Fees					170.00	
Payroll Taxes					161.46	
Copier Lease					120.32	
Choir Music- Senior					123.59	
Electricity					403.86	
Propane Gas					744.18	
Misc. Repairs/Mainten.					196.32	
Telephone/internet					93.92	
Cleaning Service					352.50	
Snow Removal					1,398.75	
C/D Purchase					10,000.00	
Per Capita Payment					2,158.00	
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund					929.00	
Misc. Repairs-Manse					269.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES					26,557.86	
ENDING BALANCE, January 31, 2024						18,418.28

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

January 7 -	General Fund	2,249.00	Benevolence	175.00
January 14 -	General Fund	3,157.00	Benevolence	215.00
January 21-	General Fund	2,133.00	Benevolence	135.00
January 28 -	General Fund	2,585.00	Benevolence	304.00

An additional \$2,917.67 General Fund money and \$100.00 Benevolence money was received by mail etc.

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	13,910.32	13,910.32	13,041.67	13,041.67	25,628.86
Benevolence	953.84	953.84	929.00	929.00	

Leap Year Word Search



Twenty Nine

Four Years

Leap Year

Leap Day

February

Calendar

Seasons

Tropical

Rotate

Spring

Julian

Lunar

Orbit

Earth

Frog

Sun

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



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 4	Feb. 5	Feb. 6 Session Mtg. 6:45 p.m.	Feb. 7 ROMEO 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 8	Feb. 9	Feb. 10
Feb. 11 Congregation Mtg. and luncheon	Feb. 12	Feb. 13 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 14 ROMEO 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 15 Sandwich orders due	Feb. 16 Silver Sisters 11:30 a.m.	Feb. 17
Feb. 18	Feb. 19	Feb. 20	Feb. 21 ROMEO 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 22 Sandwich pickup	Feb. 23	Feb. 24
Feb. 25	Feb. 26	Feb. 27	Feb. 28 ROMEO 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 p.m. Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Feb. 29	March 1	March 2 Bart Mud Sale Parking

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REV. JOHN BARLOW

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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

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

CHURCH BOARDS

Session

Clerk of Session: Dan Henry
Phone: 717-381-9947
Email: danhenny55@aol.com
2021-2023-Jerry Garver, Dick Keene, Dale Phillips
2022-2024-J. Barry Girvin, Dan Henry, Vivian Caldwell
2023-2025-Joan Probst, Sue Ressel, Brenda Roark

Deacons

Administrator: Pastor John Barlow
Phone: 717-377-4570
mail: barlowjohn604@gmail.com
2021-2023-Kim Barlow, Dixie Clark, Sue Herr, Jonathan Welch
2022-2024-Nancy Cox, Andy Keene, Sandra Shenk, Val Keene
2023-2025-Annie Frackman, Dottie Garver, Kathy Harvey, Cathy Miller

Trustees

President: Nancy Minchoff
Phone: 717-786-3810
2021-2023-Nancy Minchoff, Shirley Miller, Virgil Roark
2022-2024-Lloyd Miller
2023-2025-Rose Griest, Boni Henry, Sam Reinhart