

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

May 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

As I climbed aboard my riding mower a couple of weeks ago and started my first cutting of the year, I had a feeling of happy satisfaction, and the phrase "simple pleasures" came to my mind. I looked up simple pleasures on the web and found the following anonymous definition, which I think is pretty good: "Simple pleasures are small, everyday experiences that bring joy, contentment, and a sense of well-being, without requiring much effort or expense." They are simple because they don't require a lot of effort or expense. They are pleasures because they bring, joy, contentment, and peaceful, positive feelings. Some examples could include experiences with nature, preparation and enjoyment of food, play, relaxation and recreation, entertainment media, hobbies, and social connections. The list will be as individual as we are.

Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, "I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and do good while they live. That every person may eat and drink and find satisfaction in their toil – this is the gift of God." The author of Hebrews says in Hebrews 13:5, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' (Deuteronomy 31:6)." Happiness, satisfaction, and contentment, all from God who created us, and all things besides, for our use and enjoyment. We honor God and we express our gratitude to him when we take note of and receive the simple pleasures he sends our way. How good and gracious our God is. Let's all open our hearts wide to the amazing love he is sending our way every day in the form of simple pleasures.

CHURCH LIFE

CHOIR - We are finishing our "season" at the end of the month. We have a special song for the Memorial service on May 24th. It should be a special service with three veterans as our speakers.

DEACONS - Psychological studies going back as far as the 1960s suggest that body language accounts for a significant portion of communication. Up to 93% of communication is nonverbal, with 55% tagged to body language (facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact, and proximity), 38% to tone of voice, and only 7% to actual words. Think how this relates to our wonderful Deacons, checking all the boxes in their warm greetings to all arrivals to our worship service. The only thing that would be more effective would be written communication. Oh right, as in the Deacons' greeting card ministry. The other two forms of communication, after verbal and nonverbal, are written (words) and visual (images). Not only do cards convey written and visual content on a first reading, but they can be displayed, and re-read as often as the recipient wishes. I can tell you that when I visit our homebound folk, they thank me for the cards they have received, and they are often on display. Thank you, faithful Deacons, for your powerful and effective ministry!

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN - Another sandwich sale is in the books with good results. 110 subs were sold and 41 pretzel sandwiches which should give us a good profit. Before Easter we donated \$500 to Solanco Neighborhood Ministries for Easter Meals. And we prepared food for 3 funerals.

SILVER SISTERS - Silver Sisters enjoying lunch at Village Gap Diner.



Our next lunch is scheduled for Wednesday May 13 at 11:30 at Conestoga Wagon Restaurant in Conestoga. All widows are welcome.

SUMMER MUSIC - I am working on our summer music schedule. The worst part is waiting for folks to respond to confirm a date. Or to call or text me back to answer me. But the first two Sundays in June are confirmed. 6/7 is Rick Rineer who plays keyboards. 6/13 is Ben Tozzo who plays a number of different instruments and sings.

TRUSTEES - Work Day was held with a handful of workers. But many of the needed tasks had been done by individuals during the previous weeks. There are more tasks to be completed when the necessary equipment is available. More graves need leveled off in the future. But we thank those that were there and the "snack folks".



May birthday's

- 4 – Linda Farmer, Jay Kulish
- 5 – Robin Hammond
- 6 – Rick Ressel
- 7 – Wes Girvin
- 9 – Sharon Wallace, Emma Evans
- 10 – Andrew Dalmas
- 14 – Everly Neiss
- 15 – Duke Heidinger
- 17 – Cathy Snyder
- 25 – Barry Girvin
- 27 – Rose Griest, Alyssa Armstrong
- 30 – Ernest Girvin, Christy Heidinger

May Anniversaries

- 5 – Mike & Deb Hoover, Kim (Reinhart) & Dan Smyth
- 10 – Herb & Carol Girvin
- 21 – Mike & Sue Herr

June birthday's through the 6th

- 4 – Lloyd Miller

FACEBOOK

I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles.

Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom.

I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch and doing what anybody and everybody does every day.

I also listen to their conversations, give them the "thumbs up" and tell them I like them.

And it works just like Facebook! I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist!

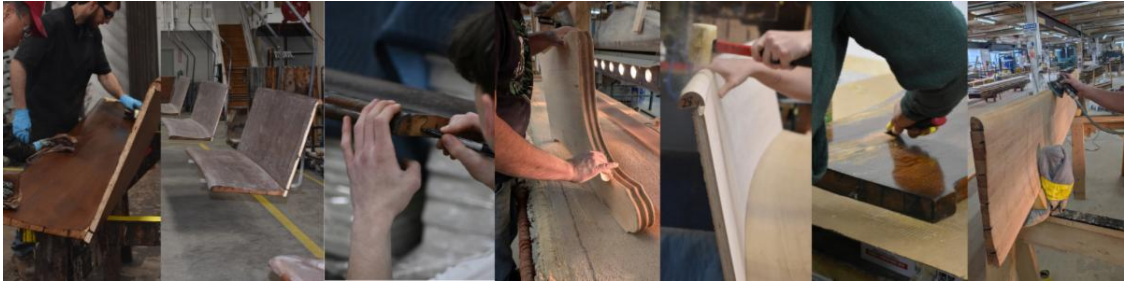


Project Spotlight: Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church | Quarryville, PA
Some pews just need to come home for a while.

When Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church reached out to us, their pews told a story decades in the making. Years of faithful use had taken their toll. Finishes were worn down, surfaces were scuffed, and some pews had broken components that made them unsafe and unsightly. The sanctuary still had good bones, but the seating no longer reflected the care and intention the congregation brought to their worship.



Rather than replace what could be saved, we got to work. Our team came on-site, assessed every pew, and carefully disassembled each one. The pews made the trip back to our facility in New Holland, Pennsylvania, where our craftsmen went to work. We meticulously restored each pew, replacing the irreparable pew backs with new, structurally sound radius backs while repairing other original components. After sanding, the pews were fully refinished, bringing the wood to life with a seamless, cohesive finish between the old and new elements.



When the work was done, the pews were returned to the church where our team reinstalled them and returned the sanctuary to a condition that honored both the history of the space and the congregation's future in it.



The result was a worship space transformed, not by starting over, but by honoring what was already there.



MISSION MUSINGS

So far this year I have attended 5 funerals and I plan to attend another one on May 2nd. Thankfully each one was for a believer and as difficult as funerals can be it is so much easier when you know the deceased is now in the presence of Jesus and we will see them again and spend eternity with them.

Yesterday's was for my brother Dave's mother in law Jean Rentz. She was 96 years old and had lived a wonderful life. I knew her of course but not real well and I learned a lot more about her yesterday. She and her husband had been at Garden Spot Village Retirement Village for approximately 10 years before he past away and she has been there nearly 15 years since his passing. One thing I heard several times yesterday was how she welcomed everyone around her and especially the newest residents. One lady said she was quite apprehensive about coming to Garden Spot and as soon as she met Jean she knew this was the place for her. What will people say at our funeral ? What do people say about us now. I once heard about the man who said I want to go to heaven and I want to take as many people with me as possible. Sounds like a great goal for all of us.

This made me think, do I make people feel welcome with my words and deeds ? Do we at M. O. make people feel welcome here whenever they come whether it's for worship, a funeral, a community meal, yard sale or anything they may attend at M. O. ? I think and I sure hope we do but it did make me think, could I be better at welcoming people no matter where I am ?

I have told people this story before but I thought about it again today as I write this musings. When I was encouraging Joe Mason to attend M. O. with me, he said " I'm not sure the people at your church would like me to attend". I said I'm sure you will be welcome just come and see. After a couple of weeks of coming to M. O. Joe said the people at your church are very friendly. I said Joe it was never MY church it is always the church of Jesus Christ but for sure it is now your church and our church and we are so grateful that you are a part of it.

As we reach out to others may we always do so sharing the love of Jesus and His gospel message. Along with Paul may we always say, I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of salvation to everyone who believes. As we live our lives for Jesus may others look at us and say I want what they have, giving us that opportunity to share the love and the message of Jesus with them.

Romans 1:16 Blessings, Dan

2026 SPRING YARD SALE HIGHLIGHTS

By Co-Chair Deb Hoover

This year's Spring Yard Sale profited approximately \$3,500.00!! and will benefit our mission in Tamshiyacu, Peru. Last year we decided that at 1:00 p.m. we would offer most items free to whoever wanted them. Another local church does this, and it really eliminates the cleanup work when the sale is over. I would also like to highlight ways the sale will benefit other missions/organizations.

- Kristine Hileman picked up items for the following Saturday when Pine Grove and Hopewell Church in York County had a benefit yard sale for the mission trip that Kristine, Douglas and Martin Hileman are going on to Alaska with Lightshine Ministries in June. Lightshine Ministries is one of our Monthly Missions.
- Peggy Gordon, representing Quarryville Library, picked items which will be for their fall yard sale that benefits that community organization. Unsold books were also given to the library.
- Members of the community took a lot of items.
- Clothing and toys were donated to Goodwill.

The remaining items were taken up to the end of our driveway, and a big FREE sign was put up. We are always amazed at how soon people will stop and eventually all but a few minor items were picked up.

Co-chair Dan Henry takes care of the many outside vendors, reserving spaces weeks ahead of time, marking the spaces for them, and directing them to their spot. A no rain day helped make that a big success this year. And last but not least, a big THANK YOU to anyone who helped in any way. It is a lot of work but also a lot of fun and the fellowship with each other is a priceless blessing.

REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

A Local Connection

Many folks have seen the film “A Great Awakening,” which tells the story of evangelist George Whitefield. Even if you haven’t seen it, a look at our local connection, Rev. Alexander Craighead, helps explain how a serious split in our congregation occurred.

Historians refer to the evangelical surge of the 1730s as the First Great Awakening, and the same movement a hundred years later as the Second Great Awakening. In both cases it was a rejection of “Old Side” style worship. “Old Side” practices included reading sermons and rejecting the revival approach, and a paid and educated clergy. “New Side” believers supported revival services, sermons with no notes relying on the Holy Spirit and emotion to bring people to Christ – Born Again. “New Sides” maintained that most of the paid clergy were not saved. Also, it was believed that one did not need an education to preach – just the Holy Spirit.

In 1735, Rev. Alexander Craighead was installed as pastor at Middle Octorara. Madison McElwain described Craighead as ...“a man so outspoken and impetuous as to remind one at times of the disciple Peter, - naturally he ran into difficulties and opposition.” Craighead was “New Side” and rode with Whitefield on crusades throughout the area. Church records of the time have been lost, but information from other sources including Webster’s Dictionary are available.

The controversy at Middle Octorara got the attention of Donegal Presbytery, and it met in December of 1740 at Middle Octorara to adjudicate the case between the pastor and the people.

Webster’s dictionary offers the following account of the proceedings after Rev. Craighead delivered a sermon in which he described Presbytery as “... blind leaders of the blind.” “The people were invited at the close to repair to the tent and hear his defence... The Presbytery, though summoned to hear it, remained in the house and were proceeding to business, when the people rose in tumult, and, with railing, compelled them to withdraw.”

There were obviously New Siders who “...rose in tumult “since Old Siders would have been happy to see Craighead suspended. After the trial, Rev. Craighead was suspended from Presbytery and relieved of his duties as pastor at Middle Octorara. His defiant stand against Presbytery, his controversial views, and his withholding of Communion from any who opposed him all contributed to his downfall. The split in the Congregation was so severe that Middle Octorara was not able to hire another regular pastor for 40 years. Meanwhile, Craighead moved south and played an important part in the development of ideas that would become part of the Declaration of Independence. Baptists and Methodists with their revival ways were winning souls on the frontier.

Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church

**Income and Expense Statement
GENERAL FUND 01, April 2026**

BEGINNING BALANCE, April 1, 2026		14,791.63
INCOME		
Offerings	\$8,579.00	
Manse Rent	1,408.95	
Account Interest	0.21	
Chapel Rent	200.00	
CD Cashed	11,268.58	
Benevolence	815.00	
One Great Hour of Sharing	396.50	
TOTAL INCOME	<u>22,668.24</u>	
TOTAL CASH & INCOME		37,459.87
EXPENSES		
Pastoral Salary	\$6,082.54	
Pastoral Mileage	775.75	
Pastoral Pension	3,271.91	
Pastoral Technology	50.00	
Secretary-Treasurer	828.00	
Clerical/Treasurer Mileage	141.38	
Payroll Taxes	182.34	
Office Supplies	509.75	
Church Supplies	397.67	
Copier Lease	120.32	
Electricity	393.82	
Misc. Repairs/Mainten. (fire extinguishers, fire suppression system)	455.73	
Telephone/internet	118.53	
Cleaning Service	247.50	
Upkeep of Grounds	1,979.01	
Trash Removal (yearly)	516.04	
1 Grt.Hr.Shr.Payment	396.50	
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund	815.00	
Property Taxes-Manse	694.13	
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>17,975.92</u>	
ENDING BALANCE, April 30, 2026		19,483.95

CD Cashed to help with expenses

GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES - April 2026

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

April 5 -	General Fund	2,505.00	Benevolence	145.00
April 12 -	General Fund	2,035.00	Benevolence	85.00
April 19 -	General Fund	1,505.00	Benevolence	385.00
April 26 -	General Fund	1,934.00	Benevolence	200.00

An additional \$13,874.24 General Fund money was received by mail, cashed C/D etc.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	Monthly Received	YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	15,373.60	65,337.80	21,853.24	60,551.30	67,259.19
Benevolence	953.84	4,053.82	815.00	3,650.00	
This includes a \$11,268.58 C/D					

The past two months have been a challenge. I cashed a C/D this month to help with the shortage, but this is a temporary solution as the expenses were significantly more than income again this month.



April 26, 2026

Dear Friends,

Another long, cold, dark winter in Ukraine has passed, and spring is receiving a hearty welcome across Ukraine. Mid-spring days in Odesa are still cold by my Florida standards, but for the most part, freezing temperatures are gone. Daylight is also increasing with each passing day, bringing some relief to war-weary Ukrainians. Sadly, there has been no relief from nightly terror in the skies and attacks on the ground to apartment buildings, homes, hospitals, schools, playgrounds, historic sites, and power grids and more. In reality, the attacks on Odesa have only become more frequent and worse than ever before.

The children in our transition homes, as well as those all over Ukraine, have only about one month of study left in this school year. Educating Ukraine's children in wartime has become a challenge at best. Many children have been able to go to physical school. Some of those are able to attend every day, while others attend on a staggered schedule, alternating days with other students, according to the size and capacity of each school's bomb shelter. Studies are disrupted when air raid sirens sound and all of the students must proceed to the shelter for the duration of the alarm (which can be from a few minutes to hours). This happens often, even daily, and many hours of precious learning time have been sacrificed to war. Other children study online, but that only works when the electricity works. . . . It seems that war causes unending challenges.

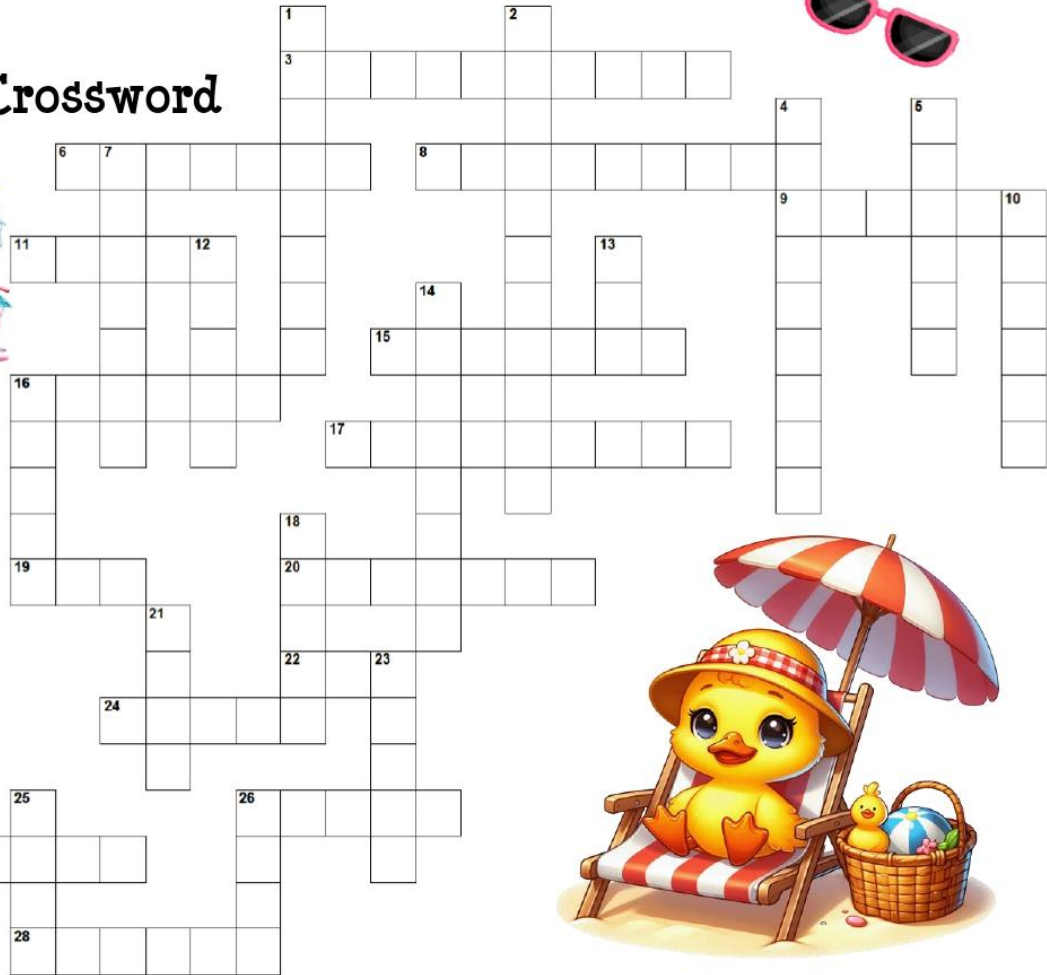
By now, everyone is looking forward to summer. I once heard someone say that no one does summer camps like Ukrainians. I smiled, thinking how true that is. Typically, in the past, orphans in Ukraine spent September to May in their boarding school, and when summer arrived, they packed up and moved to a summer camp for June, July, and August. Camp was a second home to them. Days at camp were filled with all manner of fun: sports, games, crafts, swimming, snacks, music, and dancing. Summer camp in Odesa is nostalgic for me, too. In the summer of 2008, I met my first little group of orphans from Orphanage #4 at Camp Victoria, situated along the Black Sea in the south of Odesa. I took the hour-long marshrutka (mini bus) ride to the camp several times each week that summer and several subsequent summers to do English lessons and/or crafts with my little group. My heart and my mind hold very fond memories of summer days at Camp Victoria.

Name: _____

Date: _____

May

Crossword

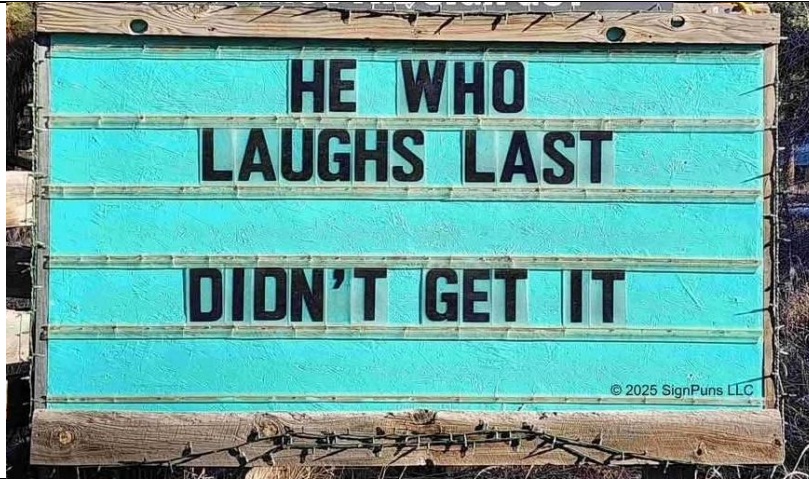


Across

- 3. May holiday to honor mothers
- 6. April showers bring May _____
- 8. Famous ship sunk in May 1915
- 9. One of May's astrological sign
- 11. These go up into the sky, often with a string
- 15. Type of outdoor trip in a tent
- 16. Common activity on Memorial Day
- 17. Brightly colored flying insect
- 19. Big yellow star in the sky
- 20. Birthstone of May
- 22. Yellow and black insect that makes honey
- 24. Hops around and likes carrots
- 26. Celebration with balloons & cake
- 27. Sound of bees
- 28. Type of shoe for the beach

Down

- 1. Rain protection item
- 2. Insect that jumps & has long legs
- 4. Young bird that just hatched
- 5. Popular outdoor activity in May
- 7. Green leafy plants in gardens
- 10. When kids get a break from school
- 12. Creepy crawly garden pest
- 13. Watering tool for gardens
- 14. May's birth flower
- 16. Small bodies of water in gardens
- 18. Famous horse race in May
- 21. Color of the sky on a sunny day
- 23. May's zodiac sign element
- 25. Symbol of growth often seen in May
- 26. Where you might go swimming



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 3	May 4	May 5 Session Mtg. 6:45 p.m.	May 6 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:30 p.m.	May 7	May 8	May 9
May 10 	May 11	May 12 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m.	May 13 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Silver Sisters 11:30 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:30 p.m.	May 14	May 15	May 16
May 17	May 18	May 19	May 20 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:30 p.m.	May 21	May 22	May 23
May 24 Memorial Svc./Meal 10:00 a.m.	May 25 	May 26	May 27 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:30 p.m.	May 28	May 29	May 30
May 31	June 1	June 2	June 3 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4 p.m. Choir practice 7:30 p.m.	June 4	June 5	June 6

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR REV. JOHN BARLOW

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Cellphone: 717-377-4570

Email: barlowjohn604@gmail.com

CHURCH CONTACT INFORMATION

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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: danhenny55@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