

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

November 2025 NEWSLETTER



Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Collection-2020

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

There are a number of fine Thanksgiving-themed hymns that we like to sing at this time of the calendar year. They typically thank God for the current harvest, and thank him more generally for meeting all of our needs in love throughout the year. All around us we see the harvest taking place. My favorite sight is the large rectangular bales of corn stalks, after the grain has been taken away. If I were an artist, I would paint that.

"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" is one such hymn. The words were penned in 1844 by Henry Alford. He was a Minister in the Church of England, as were his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, before him. Born on October 10, 1810, he was the author of 48 hymns. At the age of 47 he was appointed Dean of Canterbury, a position he held until his death on January 12, 1871. George Elvey (March 27, 1816 - December 9, 1893) wrote the music for Alford's hymn. He served as organist of the Royal Chapel at Windsor Castle for 47 years. In 1871 he was knighted by Queen Victoria.

The first verse of Alford's hymn thanks God for the physical harvest: "All is safely gathered in ere the winter storms begin." The second verse is based on Jesus' Parable of the Weeds in Matthew 13:24-30. Here harvest and what leads up to it is used to describe our experience as Christians in this life: "All the world is God's own field, fruit unto his praise to yield, wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown. Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and pure may be." Verse three speaks of the end of our earthly journey in final judgment: "For the Lord our God shall come and shall take his harvest home, give his angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast, but the fruitful ears to store in his garner evermore." Verse four serves as a prayer for the second coming of Jesus: "Even so, Lord, quickly come, gather all your people in, free from sorrow, free from sin, there, forever purified, in your presence to abide."

"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" is a wonderful hymn that reminds us of the saving grace of our awesome and loving God, of the amazing future he promises us in heaven, and of our present purpose to bear fruit for him, growing in our relationship with him and impacting as many people as we possibly can with the life-changing gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am so pleased and thankful to be pastor of a church that is all about that mission. Good on you, MO Friends!

CHURCH LIFE

CHOIR - We are back!! And enjoying singing together again!! It's great having a couple more chairs filled also. We try to convey God's love through music and I try to pick different types of songs to tell the story. Please let choir members know when you like what they do. I appreciate each one of them!! And considering that most churches no longer have choirs. it makes me appreciate willing singers and Boni and sometimes Shirley for the accompaniment. We are blessed!!

DEACONS - I think our Deacons, past and present, at MO, are among the finest people I know. Servant hearts, willingness to work, positive attitudes, kind words, practical caring, a generous spirit – I could go on. I just like being around them. I know that visitors and regular attenders alike are going to receive a warm welcome. Everyone in our church family will have strong support in time of need. And we will all be well connected, one to another, in the unbreakable bonds of love. Praise God for our Deacons!

MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN - Shirley Miller is always helping do something for the Women's Association. When there is a sandwich sale, Shirley always has something made to go along with the sandwiches. It could be soup or baked goods or candy. And she provides food for funeral luncheons. As well as calling people to get cakes and jello salads. She has set an example for her daughters, who often help with events. And even the grandchildren and great- grandchildren. We should all be so eager to help!! Thank you, Shirley for all you do!! And for all the knitting and crocheting too. She never has idle hands!! A good lesson for us all!!

MOPW donated \$1500.00 recently. Part of that went to Solanco Neighborhood Ministries for the food bank and fuel fund. The last sandwich sale resulted in a profit of \$560.00 thus far.

MISSIONS

SOLANCO TOY DRIVE - Annually the Solanco Toy Drive partners with Solanco Neighborhood Ministries to provide gifts for families in need at Christmas time. Middle Octorara is hosting this event again this year on December 12. Last year more than 300 youth in the Solanco area were blessed with gifts. Each of the students are vetted through the school district

OAKS MINISTRY - The Oaks Ministry's mission is to provide hope, healing, and restoration in a residential environment for women in need. As a faith-based organization, their purpose is to provide both transitional housing and Christian-based support services for the women that come to them. The Oaks Ministry is in the process of purchasing the Parkesburg Arms Hotel. This project requires much renovation before the ministry can be operational there. If you are **interested in helping The Oaks Ministry achieve their goal, learn more at: <https://oxfordoaksministry.com>.**

SILVER SISTERS - About a dozen of the Silver Sisters met for lunch at Bespoke Brewing near Strasburg. We enjoyed our meals and conversations. And we decided that the next lunch will be on Wednesday November 5th at 11:30 at the Brass Eagle Restaurant along route 30 east of Gap. All widows are welcome. If you have questions, call Rose Griest at 610-636-5378.

TRUSTEES - Please remember church work day on November 15, with a rain date of November 22 starting around 8 AM. We have some graves that need leveled off in the upper cemetery. So we need folks to shovel, rake and move some dirt. Bring wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels. We can always find indoor jobs if that is what you would rather do. We could use some folks to level off the rubber mulch in the playground too, and cut off the perennials in the flowerbeds and pull out the annuals. So we need hedge trimmers and little shovels and trash cans. There will be a brunch around 10 AM. If you only have time to help for an hour, that saves time for someone else. It takes a village to keep things looking good!!

REFLECTIONS

by Shirley Girvin

"Reminiscing With The Golden Girls!"

August of this year four "young" high school gals wanted to get together and reminisce now that they have time to do it. Shirley (Reese) Miller graciously volunteered to make her home available for a get together. The other three women were Sandra (O'Donnell) Wissler, Marian (McClure) Gehman, and Shirley (Welk) Girvin. Those of you who remember the TV show – "The Golden Girls" will understand the connections. The show featuring Bea Arthur (who attended Lyndon Hall in Lititz) and portrayed Dorothy Zbornak, Estelle Getty as Sophia Petrillo (Dorothy's mother), Betty White who was married to Allen Ludden (Password game show host) as Rose Nylund, and Rue McClanahan (whose main interest was men) as Blanche Deveraux.

Sandy and I discussed food (seriously if you are getting together then food has to be part of it)! We agreed that Sandy would bring pizza, Marian would provide dessert and I would bring a salad. Shirley Miller provided the meeting place.

We enjoyed talking about our parents, growing up, church connections, school, work experiences, and life as it has evolved. If I shared information from each of us my article would be very lengthy and except for Shirley and myself you may not know much about Marian and Sandy. Suffice it to say – The Golden Girls of Solanco have many fond memories.

Perhaps you are thinking so how does this relate to the "Golden Girls " of TV fame! When we were ready to say our goodbyes – we decided that we should set a date and get together in October. Jodie Mylin, Shirley's daughter, stopped in as we were talking about setting our next meeting date. She offered to get the October calendar and provided us with dates. We selected a date and Jodie said OK – let's call you the "Golden Girls!" As we chuckled at Jodie's suggestion we decided that would be perfect for us! At our October meeting we set a tentative date for January (depending on the weather).

I know that Sandy and Marian will agree with me that Shirley Miller has a welcome mat by her front door that is always open to anyone. I have been in homes where I look around and ask myself – " Who lives here?" When you walk into Shirley's home it is evident that a loving and caring person resides here – so warm and inviting! Shirley's family convey the same feelings to anyone who visits.



BIRTHDAY'S

11 – Travis Hoover, Troyanna Miller
14 – Mitch Phipps, Dan Henry,
Kathy Harvey
16 – Stephanie Miller
18 – Jodie Mylin
19 – Ken Garver
20 – Gertie Rineer
23 – Melissa Cannon
26 – Barry Wallace
28 – Kay Trout

ANNIVERSARIES

8 – Rick & Elaine Ressel,
Dan & Boni Henry
14 – Wayne & Beth Messick

MISSION MUSINGS

Tonight I am thinking about and preparing for the Operation Christmas Child Collection week. We will once again be a Drop Off Center to collect shoeboxes filled with gifts for children all over the world. It's hard to believe but this will be our 17th year of participating in this ministry. I still recall receiving the phone call from the area OCC coordinator asking if we would consider being a Drop Off Center.

Each year we receive shoeboxes filled with gifts from individuals, churches, retirement villages and several local Amish schools and families.

Operation Christmas Child is a part of Samaritan's Purse whose leader is Franklin Graham, a son of the great evangelist Billy Graham. It is awesome that shoeboxes filled with gifts for children are sent all over the world. The even greater thing is with every shoebox the child also receives a gospel booklet called The Greatest Journey. Then local Pastors and church leaders lead the children through the 12 step discipleship program. Thousands of children and adults have been led to Jesus because of this booklet. Last year over 11 million shoeboxes were packed and then shipped to over 100 countries throughout the world. What a wonderful ministry and we here at M. O. have the privilege to be a part of this ministry.

In addition to collecting shoeboxes, we have for several years had folks go to the Baltimore Processing Center to help process the boxes and send them on their way. If you would like to help just contact me.

You may pack a box or boxes. You may help pack boxes on November 16th from 9 am till 10 am. You may help during Collection Week or go along to Baltimore on December 8th to help at the Processing Center.

However you feel called to participate I am sure you will be glad you said yes to helping with this ministry.

1st Chronicles 29:14, Blessings, Dan Henry



Veterans Day was originally called **Armistice Day** in the United States, commemorating the signing of the agreement that ended World War I at 11:00 A.M., November 11, 1918. President Woodrow Wilson celebrated the first Armistice Day in 1919.

In 1938, November 11 became a legal holiday by an act of Congress.

In 1954, this federal holiday was changed from "Armistice" to "Veterans" Day.

Although this holiday initially honored those who perished in service to their country, when the holiday's name was changed to Veterans Day, it became a day to honor all the men and women who have served in the armed forces of the United States.

Each year, special ceremonies are held at [Arlington National Cemetery](#) in Virginia.



THANKSGIVING WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to solve the puzzle!



1. SATFE _____
2. ERINSRAERBC _____
3. TKCRSIDMU _____
4. YRGVA _____
5. EDRAB _____
6. CONR _____
7. YSAM _____
8. LBGBEO _____
9. YTDRHAUS _____
10. ERKUYT _____
11. IFFUSGNT _____
12. LRSLO _____
13. PNUKPIM _____
14. RTSDEES _____
15. ADIINSN _____
16. NIERDN _____



Middle Octorara Presbyterian
Church
**Income and Expense
Statement**
**GENERAL FUND 01, October
2025**

11/01/2025 07:44 AM

BEGINNING BALANCE, October 1, 2025		5,555.69
INCOME		
Offerings	\$10,077.00	
Manse Rent	1,362.45	
Account Interest	0.13	
Chapel Rent	150.00	
CD Cashed	5,602.43	
Shrine church Insur. Pmt (2024-2026)	961.79	
Benevolence	2,240.00	
Ameritas Withdrawal	25,000.00	
TOTAL INCOME	45,393.80	
TOTAL CASH & INCOME		50,949.49
EXPENSES		
Pastoral Salary	\$6,026.73	
Pastoral Mileage	490.00	
Pastoral Pension	2,507.73	
Pastoral Technology	50.00	
Secretary-Treasurer	1,155.00	
Clerical/Treasurer Mileage (3rd qtr)	158.90	
Accountant Fees	90.00	
Payroll Taxes	210.11	
Advertising	91.84	
Office Supplies	339.76	
Church Supplies	27.99	
Printing Exp/Supplies	293.80	
Copier Lease	120.32	
Electricity	317.30	
Misc. Repairs/Mainten.	182.23	
Telephone/internet	118.19	
Cleaning Service	487.50	
Upkeep of Grounds	1,979.01	
Pest Control	199.14	
Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund	2,240.00	
Donations (BTFC fund drive)	500.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES	17,585.55	
ENDING BALANCE, October 31, 2025		33,363.94

***CD Cashed** \$2,794.18 was already used this month
Ameritas Fund withdrawal gives me an extra buffer for several months.
 No C/D's available to cash until March 2026 to help with expenses

See newsletter treasurer report for more detailed explanation

TREASURER REPORT

GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES - October 2025

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

October 5 -	General Fund	3,841.00	Benevolence	1,630.00
October 12 -	General Fund	1,906.00	Benevolence	120.00
October 19 -	General Fund	1,411.00	Benevolence	40.00
October 26 -	General Fund	2,339.00	Benevolence	330.00

An additional \$33,656.80 General Fund money and \$120.00 Benevolence money was received by mail etc.

YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

	Monthly Budget	YTD Budget	*Monthly Received	**YTD Received	YTD Expenses
General Fund	14,531.36	156,212.12	43,153.80	181,946.53	159,251.21
Benevolence	953.84	10,253.78	2,240.00	12,048.00	

***This includes CD cashed \$5,602.43 and Ameritas withdrawal \$25,000.00=\$30,602.43**

****This includes three C/D's cashed this year of \$10,677.22, \$5,037.34, \$5,602.43 and \$25,000.00 Ameritas Fund withdrawal=\$46,316.99**

We continue to not meet our monthly expenses with the offerings/misc. income. This is mainly a 3 part reason. The deaths of members, life altering changes of other members, and expenses increasing.



Girl Shoebox Gift Suggestions

A gift-filled shoebox can be the first present a child ever receives, so it is important to uniquely pack each gift and make it **FUN, FULL, and PERSONALIZED**—praying for the child and adding a photo and personal note.

A "WOW" ITEM

- Small backpack or purse
- Doll
- Soccer ball and pump
- Stuffed animal
- Jewelry making or hobby kit
- Large toy



PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Toothbrush
- Washcloth
- Comb and brush
- Nail clipper and file
- Water bottle
- Flashlight



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- Pencils, sharpener, and erasers
- Pencil container
- Pens
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Notebooks
- Index cards
- Calculator
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Glue stick
- Small adhesive tape
- Drawstring bag



CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

- Flip-flops or shoes
- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Wristwatch
- Costume jewelry
- Hair accessories
- Clothing and undergarments
- Winter cap, scarf, and mittens



GAMES & ACTIVITIES

- Puzzles
- Coloring books or pads
- Dry watercolor set
- Binoculars and compass
- Musical instruments
- Chalkboard and chalk
- Jump rope
- Stickers
- Games



TOYS

- Small ball
- Building blocks or LEGO® sets
- Slinky® or yo-yo
- Plastic animals
- Magnets
- Finger puppets
- Interactive toys
- Other small toys and figures



DO NOT INCLUDE

- Soap
- Food, candy, or gum
- Toothpaste
- Used or damaged items
- Scary or war-related items
- Wearable traditional camouflage
- Seeds or organic matter
- Liquids
- Medication
- Money
- Breakable items
- Matches, fire starters, or aerosols
- Knives, saws, or razor blades

Wondering if an item will fit in an Operation Christmas Child preprinted shoebox?

Cardboard dimensions: 12 x 7 x 4.38 inches
Plastic dimensions: 13 x 7.5 x 4.7 inches



Boy Shoebox Gift Suggestions

A gift-filled shoebox can be the first present a child ever receives, so it is important to uniquely pack each gift and make it **FUN, FULL, and PERSONALIZED**—praying for the child and adding a photo and personal note.

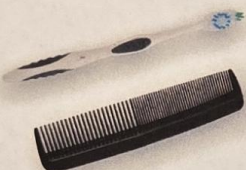
A "WOW" ITEM

- Small backpack
- Soccer ball and pump
- Stuffed animal
- Hobby kit
- Large toy truck or car
- Other large toy



PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

- Toothbrush
- Washcloth
- Comb and brush
- Nail clipper and file
- Water bottle
- Flashlight



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

- Pencils, sharpener, and erasers
- Pencil container
- Pens
- Crayons
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Notebooks
- Index cards
- Calculator
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Glue stick
- Small adhesive tape
- Drawstring bag



CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

- Flip-flops or shoes
- Sunglasses
- Hat
- Wristwatch
- Clothing and undergarments
- Winter cap, scarf, and mittens



GAMES & ACTIVITIES

- Puzzles
- Coloring books or pads
- Dry watercolor set
- Binoculars and compass
- Musical instruments
- Chalkboard and chalk
- Jump rope
- Stickers
- Games



TOYS

- Small ball
- Building blocks or LEGO® sets
- Slinky® or yo-yo
- Toy cars
- Plastic animals
- Magnets
- Interactive toys
- Other small toys and figures



DO NOT INCLUDE

- Soap
- Food, candy, or gum
- Toothpaste
- Used or damaged items
- Scary or war-related items
- Wearable traditional camouflage
- Seeds or organic matter
- Liquids
- Medication
- Money
- Breakable items
- Matches, fire starters, or aerosols
- Knives, saws, or razor blades

Wondering if an item will fit in an Operation Christmas Child preprinted shoebox?

Cardboard dimensions: 12 x 7 x 4.38 inches
Plastic dimensions: 13 x 7.5 x 4.7 inches



"I know you're in bed with the flu,
but I need the keys to
the filing cabinet."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov. 2 Praise & Prayer 5:00 p.m.	Nov. 3	Nov. 4 Session Mtg. 6:45 p.m.	Nov. 5 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Silver Sisters 11:30 Prayer 4:00 Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Nov. 6	Nov. 7	Nov. 8
Nov. 9	Nov. 10	Nov. 11 Trustee Mtg. 7:00 p.m. 	Nov. 12 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Nov. 13	Nov. 14	Nov. 15 Work Day
Nov. 16 Pack OCC boxes Congregation Mtg.	Nov. 17	Nov. 18	Nov. 19 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Nov. 20	Nov. 21	Nov. 22 Community Meal 4-5:30 p.m.
Nov. 23	Nov. 24	Nov. 25	Nov. 26 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Nov. 27 	Nov. 28	Nov. 29
Nov. 30	Dec. 1	Dec. 2	Dec. 3 ROMEO Club 9:00 a.m. Prayer 4:00 Choir practice 7:00 p.m.	Dec. 4	Dec. 5	Dec. 6

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

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:
2023-2025- Brenda Roark
2024-2026- J Barry Girvin
2025-2027- Sue Ressel

CHURCH BOARDS

Session

Clerk of Session: Dan Henry
Phone: 717-381-9947
Email: danhenny55@aol.com
2023-2025-Joan Probst, Sue Ressel, Brenda Roark
2024-2026-Shirley Girvin, Richard Keene, Jonathan Welch
2025-2027-Vivian Caldwell, Dan Henry, Jerry Garver

Deacons

Administrator: Pastor John Barlow
Phone: 717-377-4570
mail: barlowjohn604@gmail.com
2023-2025-Annie Frackman, Dottie Garver, Kathy Harvey, Cathy Miller
2024-2026-Kim Barlow, Dixie Clark, Linda Farmer, Sue Herr
2025-2027-Koryn Barrett, Andy Keene, Val Keene, Elaine Ressel

Trustees

President: Jeff Frackman
Phone: 717-989-6896
2023-2025-Rose Griest, Boni Henry, Sam Reinhart
2024-2026-Jeff Frackman, Herb Girvin, Nancy Minchoff
2025-2027-Bob Mowery, Dale Phillips, Rick Ressel