

# **MIDDLE OCTORARA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

## **October 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've been thinking about the benefits of private worship lately, and the hymn, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" popped into my head. Just the refrain appears in our main hymnal, but there are three verses which are very meaningful. The song was composed by Helen Howarth Lemmel, who was born November 14, 1863 in Wardle, England, and died November 1, 1961 in Seattle, WA. The daughter of a Methodist minister, she came to America with her family when she was twelve. A gifted singer, in middle age she studied music in Germany for four years, and later taught at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus" was first published in 1918.*

*The refrain goes as follows: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in his wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of his glory and grace." The message in the verses is that this world is not all there is. Jesus is with us, reassuring us, supporting and loving us through every problem, and reminding us that our suffering will not go on forever, but that he will take us to heaven to be with him for all eternity. Here are the three verses: 1. "O Soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see? There's light for a look at the Savior, And life more abundant and free." 2. "Thro' death into life everlasting, He passed, and we follow Him there; O'er us sin no more hath dominion – For more than conqu'rors we are!" and 3. "His Word shall not fail you – He promised; Believe Him, and all will be well: Then go to a world that is dying, His perfect salvation to tell!"*

*We are not without hope and help in this sin-sick and dying world. We are vitally connected to Jesus by faith. And we can renew and strengthen that lifeline through personal worship, through being in his presence, through turning our eyes upon Jesus.*

## CHURCH LIFE

**CHOIR** - We are back to begin the season of choir music. It's always nice to have a break, but also feels good to get back together. We started practicing last week and have a variety of songs chosen to start the season. I pray that the songs are meaningful to you as well.

**DEACONS** - There are T shirts and mugs and little signs that say, "Warning: anything you say or do could be used in a sermon" and "Be careful – I have a pulpit and I'm not afraid to use it." You're safe with me. I've never been one to personalize a sermon with parishioners. But if I did want to get personal about any of our Deacons, there would be nothing negative to recount, only good, with high praise. Thank you, faithful Deacons for the positive difference you make in our church life every week!

**MIDDLE OCTOPARA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN** - Recently, we have provided a basket for the New Hope Auction, held a successful sandwich sale, and prepared and served a funeral lunch. We are always glad when folks offer to help with any events that happen and are willing to provide cakes, jello salads, and also those that buy sandwiches.

Some of us are also working on making blankets for Project Linus which will be collected next February. They can be knitted, crocheted, or sewn. The smallest they want is 36" X 36" when knitted or crocheted, or 40" X 40" when quilted. Or any size bigger. They go to children from birth to age 18.

**SILVER SISTERS** - We had a wonderful lunch at Hershey Farms with 12 ladies attending. They were pleased with the food selections and the beauty of the place. Many of them had not been there since the place re-opened. Of course, the company was a plus too! They love getting together. Our next get-together is Wednesday October 14 at 11:30, at Diener's Restaurant along Route 30. All widows are welcome.

**TRUSTEES** - By the time this is distributed, we should have a new sign! I'm sure our sign guy, Dan, is glad he no longer has to go out in all weather to change the old sign. It now gets done by using a laptop. The sign company is out of York County and they will do any maintenance needed.

There has been a room downstairs updated for use by cub scouts. Their troop has gotten bigger and needed more room. We are happy to provide that for them.

Work day is November 7 with a rain date of November 14. This is for all people of the church. The MOPW is planning on scrubbing the chairs and tables on the same day. So we need lots of help to get everything done. There will be things to do inside and outside.

**YOUTH RELAUNCH** - September was a busy month with our Youth Relaunch team. On the following page are our Solanco Fair Parade participants. Thank you to everyone who donated candy/candy money for them to hand out in addition to postcards with information on our upcoming Fall Fest, Moms Connect and contact information for Alie and Cayla.



They also had a fair stand again to reach out to the community with fun and games and the information on our Youth Relaunch, Fall Fest and Moms Connect. Again, thank you to everyone who helped with the stand.



## MISSION MUSINGS

There is exciting news about our Peru mission in the last few weeks. My brother Dave is working with Rumple Memorial Presbyterian Church in Blowing Rock NC now part time. That church is now also involved in the Peru Mission. Several of their members went to the Amazon with Dave in July. One lady is a doctor in Boone and while in Iquitos she and Dave and Margarita met with the administrators at the hospital in Iquitos. They have gotten permission for doctors from the states to go and help at the hospital in January. This is an exciting news development in our mission work in Iquitos. We have also hired a young man who has experience in youth ministry to work part time helping to further our ministry in the Amazon. Rumple Memorial has committed to fund this addition to our mission. We also plan to distribute vitamins monthly in Tamshiyacu and Santa Clare as well as semi annual medicine to combat parasites. The US doctors and the Peruvian doctors all feel this will be very beneficial to the overall health of the folks in these villages. This is obviously a very expensive undertaking but 1st Pres. Jeff City and M. O. have each committed \$8,000.00 to support the efforts for the first year. We are blessed to have these funds available because of our Nuts n Bolts sales, yard sales, alternative Christmas giving and other donations in recent years.

We know God has blessed us so we can bless others and these new ministries efforts are all a part of helping others and spreading the love and life saving gospel message of Jesus Christ in the Amazon. Dave will also be leading a group of folks to the Amazon next summer and there is an opportunity to go along for anyone interested. He will be firming up dates and plans soon and I will keep everyone updated in case anyone from M. O. or anyone you know is interested in joining in on this trip.

I was just thinking it had been 20 years already since I went to Peru for the first time and I know a lot of great things have happened in those years. I also firmly believe God is blessing this ministry and even greater things will happen in the coming years.

We know we cannot out give God and as we continue to support this mission He will continue to bless our brothers and sisters in the Amazon. We thank each of you for your support in the past and greatly appreciate your support and prayers for the future of this mission.

Also our Mission Focus Ministries for October are Operation Christmas Child and Joyfully Made Fellowship. Please keep these ministries in your prayers.

Proverbs 19:17

Blessings, Dan Henry



### **October birthdays**

3 – James Phipps  
6 – Mike Hoover  
10 – Hunter Musser  
11 – Paul Trout  
12 – Sue Herr  
14 – Herb Girvin  
15 – Brandon LeFevre  
19 – Jerry Garver  
24 – Josh Keene  
28 – Shirley Miller  
30 – Ethel Walden

### **October anniversaries**

12 – Jeff & Annie Frackman  
24 – Andy & Joan Keene

# REFLECTIONS

by Barry Girvin

## *Notes of Interest*

After my presentation on General John Steele, Jim Miller pointed out the following. There was more than one John Steele involved in the Steeleville history. That is correct. According to Wikipedia, a man named John Steele settled on land near the Octorara Creek in 1807. The village developed there was known as Alma and later Georgetown, and finally Steeles' Mill. However, Madison McElwain (*Faith and Works*, p. 143, ChatGPT, and Wikipedia all say that Steeleville was named after General John Steele. So, Napoleon had it right when he defined history as "...the myth agreed upon."

As part of my research on the Revolutionary War era, I found something that made me think once again about the sadness and hope expressed on the tombstones in the Old Cemetery. I found the grave of Col. James Thompson and his wife, Lydia Bailey Thompson (another daughter of Robert Bailey). The slab and the sign that shows what was on the slab tell the story.

In memory of  
COLONEL JAMES THOMPSON  
Who served in the Revolutionary War  
Born Feb. 1745      Died Oct. 3, 1807  
LYDIA BAILEY THOMPSON  
Wife of Col. James Thompson  
Born July, 1750      Died Dec. 1, 1806  
And their children  
Elizabeth, William, Robert,  
Andrew, Francis, James, James,  
William, and Jacob  
We have sinned  
We have repented  
We have trusted  
We have loved  
We sleep  
We shall arise and live in Christ,  
Through him, though unworthy, we shall reign.

Using *Faith and Works*, I corrected a couple of mistakes on the plaque.  
Later, I will write a Reflection on the many children buried in the Old Cemetery.

QUESTION – Where can you find the following information?

Biography of Jesus Christ

Reprint of the "History of Middle Octorara" by J. E. McElwain (Madison's father)

The why, how, and where of *Faith and Works at Middle Octorara Since 1727* by  
Madison McElwain

The Historical Setting – 1727

Biographies and events during 12 pastorates – Rev. Adam Boyd to Rev. George H. Shea,  
D.D.

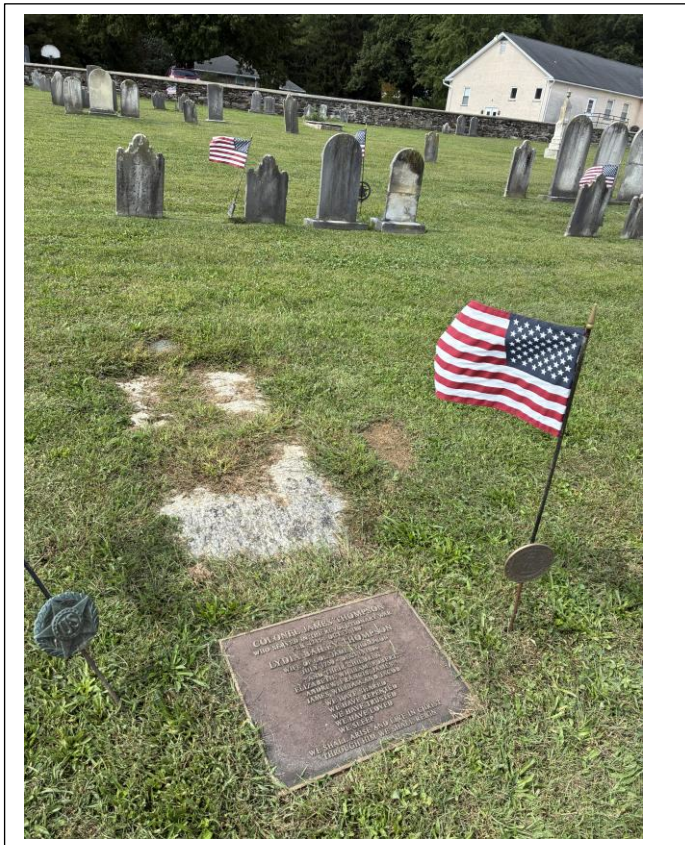
Approximately 170 history photos

Membership lists, Church officers with photos and details of service

Sons and Daughters of Middle Octorara who went into the ministry or to other Christian  
Service

Histories of the Sunday School, Women's and Men's organizations, Christian Endeavor, and the Choir  
 Details of activities at Middle Octorara during our country's wars including Rev. Shea's correspondence with soldiers  
 Histories of Upper Octorara (Our Mother Church) and other Presbyterian Churches on the frontier, the Octorara Covenanter (Shrine) Church, and the Free Presbyterian Church at Andrews Bridge (Underground Railroad activity)  
 Biographical sketch of Rev. John Cuthbertson  
 Memorial Sermon by Rev. William Easton, Covenanter pastor  
 Several Rev. William Cairnes sermons  
 Short histories of Nickel Mines Episcopal Church, Bart Friends Meeting, Georgetown and Mt. Pleasant Methodist Churches, Colerain Baptist Church, and Mt. Eden Lutheran Church  
 History of the Church Farm – with photos  
 Histories of all anniversary celebrations – with photos  
 Coverage of all three cemeteries up to the early 1950s – includes all that appeared on the tombstones

ANSWER - In Faith and Works at Middle Octorara Since 1727 by Madison McElwain



|                                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|----------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
|                                                             |  |  |  |  | Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church    |             |                  |
|                                                             |  |  |  |  | <b>Income and Expense Statement</b>    |             |                  |
| 10/01/2026 04:14 PM                                         |  |  |  |  | <b>GENERAL FUND 01, September 2026</b> |             |                  |
|                                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
| BEGINNING BALANCE, September 1, 2026                        |  |  |  |  |                                        |             | <b>10,404.19</b> |
|                                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
| INCOME                                                      |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
| Offerings                                                   |  |  |  |  |                                        | \$10,641.35 |                  |
| Manse Rent                                                  |  |  |  |  |                                        | 1,408.95    |                  |
| Account Interest                                            |  |  |  |  |                                        | 0.12        |                  |
| M.O.Cemetery Fund-Mowing                                    |  |  |  |  |                                        | 3,916.00    |                  |
| Benevolence                                                 |  |  |  |  |                                        | 1,050.00    |                  |
| TOTAL INCOME                                                |  |  |  |  |                                        | 17,016.42   |                  |
|                                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
| TOTAL CASH & INCOME                                         |  |  |  |  |                                        |             | <b>27,420.61</b> |
|                                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
| EXPENSES                                                    |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
| Pastoral Salary                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        | \$6,082.54  |                  |
| Pastoral Mileage                                            |  |  |  |  |                                        | 450.68      |                  |
| Pastoral Pension                                            |  |  |  |  |                                        | 2,403.58    |                  |
| Pastoral Technology                                         |  |  |  |  |                                        | 50.00       |                  |
| Secretary-Treasurer                                         |  |  |  |  |                                        | 726.00      |                  |
| Payroll Taxes                                               |  |  |  |  |                                        | 22.22       |                  |
| Advertising                                                 |  |  |  |  |                                        | 31.84       |                  |
| Office Supplies                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        | 40.55       |                  |
| Church Supplies                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        | 218.21      |                  |
| Copier Lease                                                |  |  |  |  |                                        | 120.32      |                  |
| Miscellaneous (Scottish Fest Supplies-reimbursed)           |  |  |  |  |                                        | 152.16      |                  |
| Electricity                                                 |  |  |  |  |                                        | 449.59      |                  |
| Insurance                                                   |  |  |  |  |                                        | 3,335.75    |                  |
| Misc. Repairs/Mainten. (Wishing Well-reimbursed by members) |  |  |  |  |                                        | 275.00      |                  |
| Telephone/internet                                          |  |  |  |  |                                        | 118.80      |                  |
| Cleaning Service                                            |  |  |  |  |                                        | 390.00      |                  |
| Upkeep of Grounds                                           |  |  |  |  |                                        | 1,979.01    |                  |
| Special Music Payments                                      |  |  |  |  |                                        | 120.00      |                  |
| Tsfr. Session Benev. Fund                                   |  |  |  |  |                                        | 1,050.00    |                  |
| TOTAL EXPENSES                                              |  |  |  |  |                                        | 18,016.25   |                  |
|                                                             |  |  |  |  |                                        |             |                  |
| ENDING BALANCE, September 30, 2026                          |  |  |  |  |                                        |             | <b>9,404.36</b>  |

### YTD GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES

|              | Monthly Budget | YTD Budget | Monthly Received | YTD Received      | YTD Expenses |
|--------------|----------------|------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| General Fund | 15,373.60      | 149,892.60 | 15,966.42        | <b>131,453.02</b> | 148,240.50   |
| Benevolence  | 953.84         | 9,299.94   | 1,050.00         | 8,685.00          |              |

**\*This includes an \$11,268.58 C/D**

# TREASURER'S REPORT

## GENERAL FUND & BENEVOLENCE FINANCES - September 2026

The following is the individual weekly breakdown of offerings:

|                             |          |             |        |
|-----------------------------|----------|-------------|--------|
| September 6 - General Fund  | 4,877.00 | Benevolence | 405.00 |
| September 13 - General Fund | 2,060.00 | Benevolence | 375.00 |
| September 20 - General Fund | 2,003.00 | Benevolence | 200.00 |
| September 27 - General Fund | 1,082.00 | Benevolence | 70.00  |

An additional \$5,944.42 General Fund money was received by mail etc.

**OUR EXPENSES CONTINUE TO BE MORE EACH MONTH THAN OUR INCOME. WE WILL PROBABLY NEED TO CASH A C/D SOMETIME THIS MONTH.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

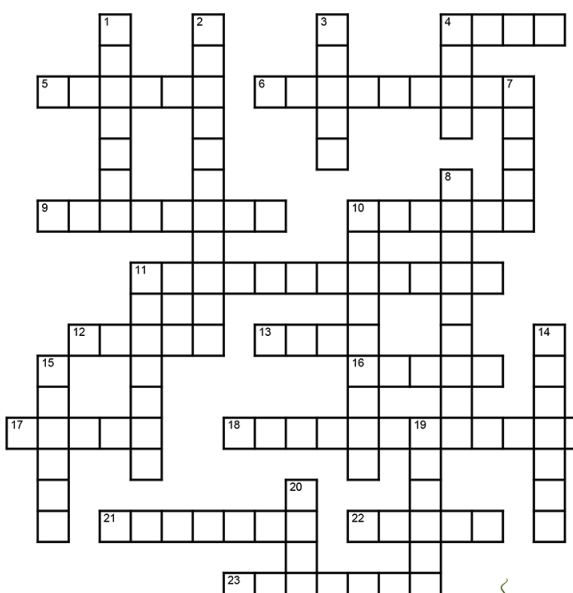
## Pumpkin Patch

**Across**

4. Season between summer and winter
5. Color of ripe pumpkins
6. Educational outing away from school
9. Agricultural attraction with winding paths
10. Versatile autumn vegetable
11. Sweet treat on a stick
12. Dried stalks used for bedding or mulch
13. Plant with long, trailing stems
16. Pressed apple beverage
17. Four-wheeled vehicle for hauling
18. Carved pumpkin with a light inside
21. Gathering of ripe crops
22. Hard-shelled fruit in the cucurbit family
23. Large, round orange squash

**Down**

1. Farm vehicle for pulling equipment
2. Single-wheeled garden cart
3. Plant embryos encased in protective coverings
4. Land used for growing crops or raising animals
7. Small area of planted vegetables
8. October 31st holiday
10. Straw-filled figure to deter birds
11. Activity of cutting designs into pumpkins
14. Recreational ride on a wagon filled with hay
15. Foliage that changes color in autumn
19. Another name for the fall season
20. Part of a plant connecting leaf to branch



|               |                 |             |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Autumn        | Hayride         | Stem        |
| Caramel Apple | Jack-o'-Lantern | Straw       |
| Carving       | Leaves          | Tractor     |
| Cider         | Orange          | Vine        |
| Cornmaze      | Patch           | Wagon       |
| Fall          | Pumpkin         | Wheelbarrow |
| Farm          | Scarecrow       |             |
| Field Trip    | Seeds           |             |
| Gourd         | Squash          |             |
| Halloween     |                 |             |
| Harvest       |                 |             |



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ORPHAN  
ASSISTANCE  
FOUNDATION  
[www.transitionsoaf.org](http://www.transitionsoaf.org)

September 20, 2026

Dear Friends,

In Odesa, it is always hard to say goodbye to summer days that are filled with warmth and light, compliments of Mother Nature. Summer camps were all a huge success and are now but a happy memory for the orphans and village families who were blessed to participate in them. First Bells have already rung (on September 1) in Odesa and all across Ukraine, beginning a new school year with all of the traditional song, dance, flowers, and recitations. I remember it all so well, and can easily conjure memories of First Bells in the past. However, it is my understanding that this idyllic scene was interrupted this year by air-raid sirens that sent children and their teachers to the bomb shelters.

Russian attacks on Odesa continued at full force for most of the summer, a notable difference being that while the attacks previously happened primarily at night, this summer, daytime attacks became typical. Attacks continue on civilian targets of apartment buildings, schools, hospitals, and stores. Indeed, I learned that the big department store (think IKEA-style) where we purchased all the furnishings for our transition houses was struck and burned to the ground. I hear murmurings of attacks on the big supermarkets and food warehouses which are intended to compromise the food supply in Ukraine.



An Odesa apartment building



Epicenter department



One by one, our young men have been drafted or have enlisted in the army. They are all now serving in various locations across Ukraine. Some of them leave wives and children at home to carry on without them. Sometimes I wonder which is harder: to be the one who must go or to be the one who is left behind. Neither is enviable, for sure. But, somehow, life goes on. Our Pishana team is back to visiting the orphanage regularly, and our foster families are settling back into the school routine. We are hoping to welcome some new residents to the girls' home soon. So far, we have been able to continue to provide food and necessities to those in need, although some products are becoming scarce and empty shelves in grocery stores are not uncommon.

War or no war, the golden season of autumn has arrived in Odesa with a chilly nip in the air in the mornings and evenings, while the days remain warm and sunny. The trees will soon be dressed in yellow, and the leaves will fall like little, yellow snowflakes. Daylight will recede sooner, and nights will gradually become longer. I can't help but think of the words in Ecclesiastes: *To everything there is a season.* . . . Autumn is a lovely season in Odesa. If only it was not the harbinger of another long, cold winter that will be complicated by the cruel hands of an aggressor on the doorstep.

I recently attended a performance of The Kyiv Orchestra and Choir at a local church. Only the women members made the trip as Ukrainian men are forbidden to leave the country. The music was lovely, and it was comforting to hear the Ukrainian language in song. It made me realize anew what a huge place Ukraine holds in my heart and how much I miss being there on a long term basis. Please continue to pray for Ukraine, for our orphans, our foster families and at-risk families, for the widows and pensioners that we support, and for our young men on the battlefield. Thank you so much for all you do. Your support means more than you may ever know.

With gratitude and love, Audrey

#### Donation Information

Checks may be written to: **Transitions Orphan Assistance Foundation, Inc.**

541 Evening Sky Drive -or- 3530 Diamond Leaf Lane

Oviedo, FL 32765 Oviedo, FL 32765

Online options to donate can be found on our website: [www.transitionsoaf.org](http://www.transitionsoaf.org)



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(Subject to change)

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday                                           | Wednesday                                                                                                          | Thursday | Friday                                 | Saturday                                                                                         |
|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oct. 4  | Oct. 5  | Oct. 6<br>Session Mtg.<br>6:30 p.m.               | Oct. 7<br>ROMEO Club<br>9:00 a.m.<br>Prayer 4 p.m.<br>Choir practice<br>7:00 p.m.                                  | Oct. 8   | Oct. 9<br>Forged in<br>Fire 6:30 p.m.  | Oct. 10                                                                                          |
| Oct. 11 | Oct. 12 | Oct. 13<br>Trustee Mtg.<br>7:00 p.m.              | Oct. 14<br>ROMEO Club<br>9:00 a.m.<br>Silver Sisters<br>11:30 a.m.<br>Prayer 4 p.m.<br>Choir practice<br>7:00 p.m. | Oct. 15  | Oct. 16<br>Forged in<br>Fire 6:30 p.m. | Oct. 17<br>CROP Walk                                                                             |
| Oct. 18 | Oct. 19 | Oct. 20<br>Moms<br>Connect<br>6:30 – 8:00<br>p.m. | Oct. 21<br>ROMEO Club<br>9:00 a.m.<br>Prayer 4 p.m.<br>Choir practice<br>7:00 p.m.                                 | Oct. 22  | Oct. 23<br>Forged in<br>Fire 6:30 p.m. | Oct. 24                                                                                          |
| Oct. 25 | Oct. 26 | Oct. 27                                           | Oct. 28<br>ROMEO Club<br>9:00 a.m.<br>Prayer 4 p.m.<br>Choir practice<br>7:00 p.m.                                 | Oct. 29  | Oct. 30<br>Forged in<br>Fire 6:30 p.m. | Oct. 31<br> |