



There are so many things that are common place that we do not really think about what they mean or why we do or say them. Traditions are passed down, and after enough time passes the original reason or meaning is lost, while the practice remains. The other day as I was walking into a store with my son Luke a man sitting by a propane fire dressed as Santa Claus while ringing a red bell said Merry Christmas. I gave Luke a dollar to put in the red kettle and we said Merry Christmas in return. But then I started thinking, what does the phrase “Merry Christmas” actually mean and when did people start saying that we wish each other a Merry Christmas?

According to AI, the earliest written record of someone wishing another Merry Christmas came in a letter from Bishop John Fisher to Thomas Cromwell in 1534. Though it didn’t become a popular saying until later. In the same century an English Folk Tune gained popularity as carolers would go house to house singing the tune we now know as “We wish you a Merry Christmas”. Apparently it was common place for these carolers to be rewarded for their song at each house with “Figgy Pudding” and beer. As the carolers would sing the request of “now bring us some figgy pudding”, a verse still found in the modern version of the song. I will say, that tradition of feeding the carolers with tasty snacks and drinks would certainly help our recruitment of Christmas Carolers each year!

But back to wishing another person Merry Christmas. As far as I can tell it is a colloquial phrase hoping the person has a jovial or pleasant Christmas celebration. It is a reference to the lively Christmas gatherings that were and are a staple of our celebrations each year. Today it is more of a seasonal greeting; but still I find myself hoping the person I wish Merry Christmas to is filled with happiness and merry during their celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

That’s really kind of the point. It isn’t a season’s greeting, it is a reminder of the birth of our Lord. It isn’t about someone being merry or happy or filled with joy; it is about them celebrating the coming of the Savior. It is an exchange between two believers of Jesus where the one wishes joy to come through the others celebration of Christ’s arrival.

Of course not everyone is a believer in Jesus Christ which is why it is becoming more common place to wish others a happy holiday. And while I know that phrase upsets many who long for the traditional language, it may be helpful to remember that the greeting of Merry Christmas is intended to be between believers.

Regardless of how we feel about the phrases Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays I thought this Advent season I would offer to you another greeting. One much older than the phrase Merry Christmas and more hopeful than happy holidays; and that is the greeting Paul offers to the gentiles who had recently converted to faith in Jesus Christ. (It can be found in Romans 15:13) It too is a message from a believer to other believers. Paul says, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” This is my prayer for all of you this Christmas season and every season! That you be filled with joy and peace in the knowledge you have of Jesus Christ. That hope abounds in your life and that your life is filled with hope that comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. Joy, peace, and hope through faith, that is my wish for all of you. I won’t speak for society or for history, but that’s what I mean when I wish you a Merry Christmas.

MERRY
Christmas
everybody!

From Pastor Brian and family



Christmas Flower Orders

Poinsettias are a beautiful enhancement to the church during Christmas and a wonderful way to honor or remember that special person in your life or the life of the church.

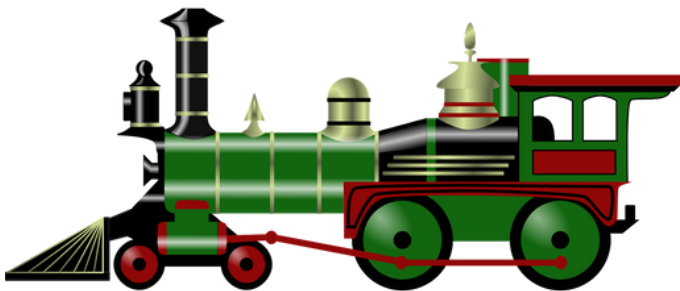
Poinsettias are available in 6" pots for \$9.50.
Available colors are - Red, Pink, and White



Orders must be placed by December 7, 2025.
Forms are available in Tarry & Talk or contact the church office to place your order.

You may take your flowers with you following worship on Christmas Eve.

My School Preschool Presents:
The Polar Express
Dec. 6th -7th



for information and tickets,
please click link
[My School Preschool](#)

**St. John Lutheran Church &
Mars United Presbyterian
Joint Youth Group/Kids Club**

Mars Area Youth Group &

**Kids
CLUB**

Dec. 7 -
Meeting (dinner at St.
John) 4-5:30 pm

Dec. 14 - Combined
Christmas Caroling at St.
John Senior Care Center
4-5:30 pm

reverse *Advent*

Each day ADD an item to a box or bag. Bring to worship on Christmas Eve! The collection of food will then be donated.

You can add it all in one day, we'll be okay with that



- December 1 - box of cereal
 - December 2 - peanut butter
 - December 3 - stuffing mix
 - December 4 - boxed potatoes
 - December 5 - macaroni and cheese
 - December 6 - canned fruit
 - December 7 - canned tomatoes
 - December 8 - canned tuna
 - December 9 - dessert mix
 - December 10 - jar of applesauce
 - December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
 - December 12 - cranberry sauce
 - December 13 - canned beans
 - December 14 - box of crackers
 - December 15 - package of rice
 - December 16 - package of oatmeal
 - December 17 - package of pasta
 - December 18 - spaghetti sauce
 - December 19 - chicken noodle soup
 - December 20 - tomato soup
 - December 21 - can of corn
 - December 22 - can of mixed vegetables
 - December 23 - can of carrots
 - December 24 - can of green beans
- Approximate cost - about \$40



Life Together

Hebrews 10:24-28

24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Welcome
new
members!



**Thank
you Brian**
(for ALL
you do)



Dinner Thank you, an email conversation -

- Thanks to everyone for helping with today's dinner! Plenty of food and it turned into a nice meal for the family. MUP is lucky to have so many caring people!
- It's nice to work with a group that pitches in and does what needs to be done and with a smile and hug when needed.

Life Together cont.

Toy Swap



Turkey Bash



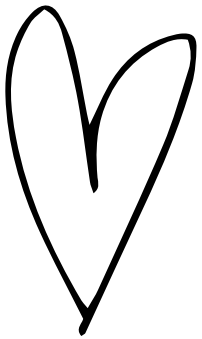
Youth led Worship Service



Life Together cont.



Hanging
of the
Greens



Living
Nativity
Preparations



Christmas Tree Ornaments

During the “Hanging of the Greens” when the ornaments were being hung on the Christmas trees, people were curious about the decorations, where we got them, what they are etc.

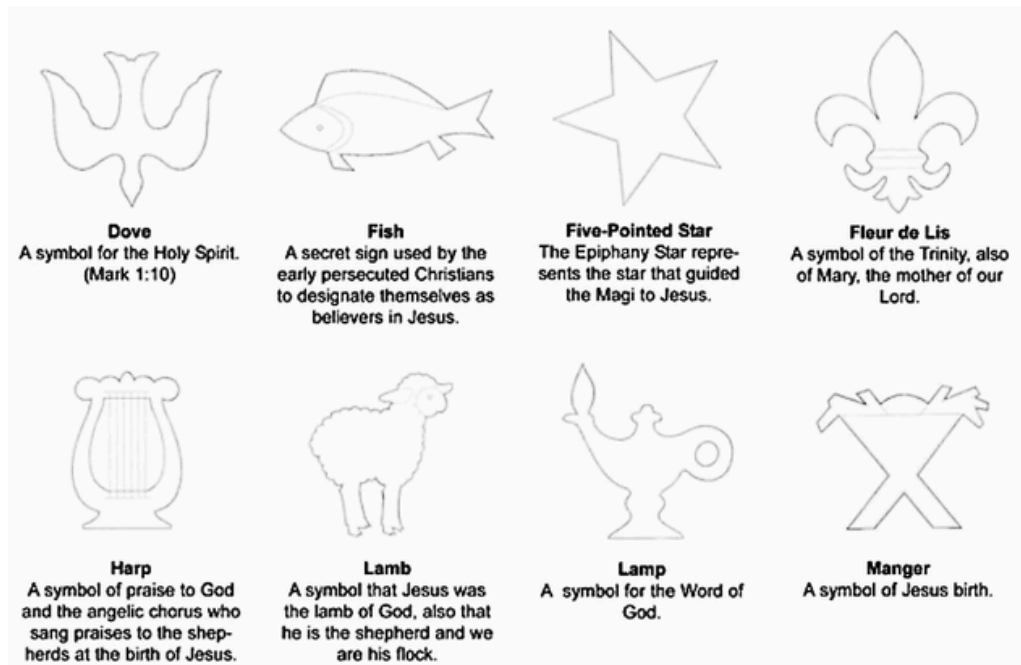
It is believed that the ornaments, known as Chrismons, that are used on the trees were made by a Sunday School class of MUP.

Some background on Chrismons:

Chrismons, meaning "Christ monograms," traditionally are white and gold designs made from Christian symbols that signify Christ. Often displayed on an evergreen tree during the Christmas season, symbols such as stars, crosses, fish, crowns, and the alpha and omega remind us of Christ's identity, his story, and of the Holy Trinity.

Chrismons were first developed in 1957 by Frances Spencer and the women of the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, VA.

Below is a chart of a few examples of Chrismons typically used to decorate Christmas trees. The pictures to the right are a couple of the Chrismons on the trees in the sanctuary.



Thank you Carol Kopar for suggesting this article.

**Happy
New Year**

**As 2026
approaches,
here are some
inspiring
resolutions to
reflect on**
(collected from various Christian
websites)

**Find A
Bible Reading
Plan**

Don't Do It Alone

Thomas Fuller, well-known preacher from England, understood how to be successful in our resolve. In the mid 1600's Fuller made this statement:

Seek Him and His wonderful plan for your life. The two of you will make a great team —united in your determination to fulfill your destiny. A strong will, a settled purpose, an invincible determination can accomplish almost anything. — Thomas Fuller

Give Your Time & Attitude to the Lord

Let's resolve to give our attitudes to the Lord. Commit to making a difference at home, in the workplace, the marketplace, on the roads, and even at church.

Memorize Scripture

Be Open To New Ideas

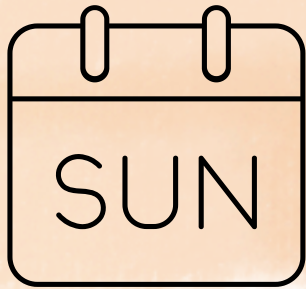
The Bible says, "The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out" (Proverbs 18:15 NIV). Another version reads, "Intelligent people are always open to new ideas. In fact, they look for them." Your new year doesn't have to be the same as last year. Break the mold and consider a new way of doing things, new ministries, new ways to serve. Seek God for new.

Pray More

Pray About It

Become a Praying Person

Annual Congregational Meeting



DECEMBER 7

Dates for your Calendar

Date	Event	Time
December 7	Congregational Meeting	11 am
December 7	Youth Group & Kids Club	4 pm
December 6 & 7	Polar Express	
December 12	Live Nativity	6-8
December 16	Cranberry Men's Chorus	7 pm
December 21	Blue Christmas Service	7 pm
December 24	Kids Christmas Eve Service	2 pm
December 24	Traditional Christmas Eve	7 pm
December 25	MERRY CHRISTMAS	
December 31	New Year's Eve	
January 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR	



DATES TO KNOW

- December 7 - Annual Meeting
- December 6&7 - Polar Express
- December 12 - Living Nativity
- December 16 - Cranberry Men's Chorus
- December 21 - Blue Christmas
- December 24 - Christmas Eve
- Visit our website for a full color newsletter

DECEMBER



Contact Us

Stop by the office, email or give us a call for more information.

Mars UP Church

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PO Box 805
Mars, PA 16046
(724) 625-1365
marsup@mars-up.org

Visit us on the web at
www.mars-up.org

We're also on Facebook!!

Join us for Worship
Sunday's at 10:00am

Prayer Chain:
pastor@mars-up.org

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