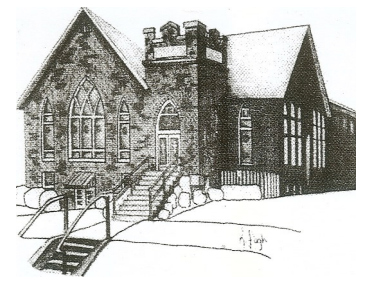


# MARS UP CHURCH



We are your hometown church: Faithful to Tradition, Loving in Fellowship & Reaching for Tomorrow!

APRIL 2024

## Blooming

My father was an active gardener for most of his adult life. He kept a vegetable garden, planted fruit trees, grew spices, and had flower gardens and pots littered around the property. But of all the things he grew, his favorite was definitely the daffodil. He planted daffodils everywhere! Yellow or white it didn't matter. The front yard, around trees, along the road, down in the woods, they can be found all over my parents property. Every spring dad would go around and count the buds before they flowered and it was common for the number to be in the thousands. He would plant them, and then when he thought they were becoming overcrowded he would dig them up and spread them around. Had he lived another twenty years I think the property would have been a white and yellow desert of daffodils in early spring.

Easter is the time when I think of flowers. The bright colors of spring are part of how Easter should be, with Easter lilies and tulips filling our sanctuary and homes with their fragrance and beauty. These flowers and the natural progressions of spring encourage Christians to follow the theme of new life and new growth. As Christians we talk a lot about new plantings and new life. **New life in Christ:** "anyone who is in Christ is a new creation..." (2 Corinthians 5:17). **New growth in Christ:** Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) **New birth in Christ:** "In his mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead". (1 Peter 1:3)

As focused as we get around Easter on new life and new opportunities with Jesus Christ, I wonder if sometimes we become too extreme in our understanding of "new" life. Easter and the message of new life does not mean that we have to do everything in a "new" or different way. Newness of life in Christ is not about change for the sake of change, it isn't about keeping up with the latest and staying ahead of the curve. Instead the new life we are called to is about being renewed, it is about achieving a goodness within and about producing a worthy yield of ministry. It is about growing as disciples and growing closer, ever closer to our Lord!

So I return to the daffodils. Daffodils come back year after year. For much of the year they disappear, whether from the summer exhaustion or the winter storms they seem to vanish from our sight. But every spring, their green shoots rise from the soil, and they bloom into beautiful flowers. They aren't "new" each year, they grow exactly where they have always been. Likewise, Easter calls us to bloom in our faith right where we are planted. Not by trying to make everything we do "new" but by being renewed in the Spirit and grace of God so that we can keep growing. Sometimes things need updated or replaced or we truly need a new way of living; but other times we just need to allow the flower within us to bloom in the hope of the resurrection. I pray your faith blooms this Easter season, and that God's garden fills with all of our bright and beautiful colors! Happy Easter Friends! HE IS RISEN!!

Blessings  
Pastor Brian

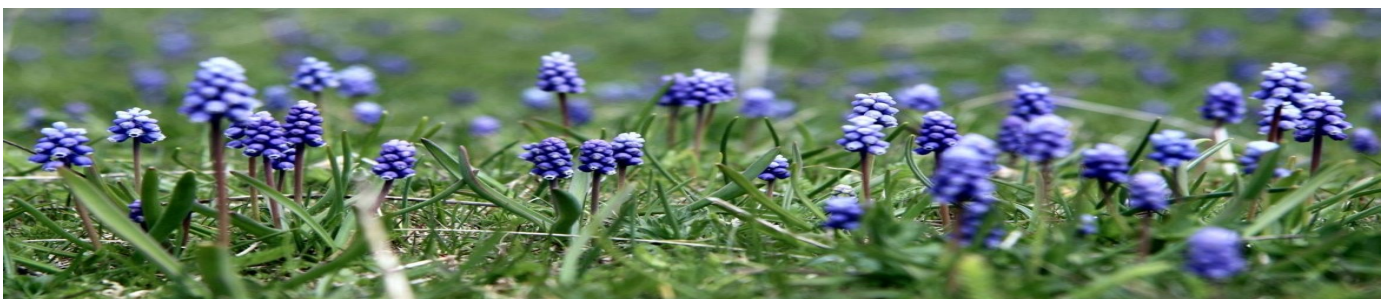
# MARCH SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

1. Church sign agreement needs wording changed regarding use- of sign and what is placed on the sign
2. Pastor's report
  - MSP** to approve Youth lock in Maundy Thursday -Good Friday March 24, 2024. Palm Sunday youth bell choir will play
  - Easter Egg hunt after church March 24
  - Maundy Thursday 7:00pm meal in Fellowship Hall, communion
  - Good Friday – Noon service
  - 6:30 Easter Sunrise Service at Adams Township Park
  - Easter Service 10:00 am
  - Holy Humor Sunday April 7<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am
  - Gavin preaching on April 14<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am
  - VBS July 14-17<sup>th</sup> St. John, Valencia UP and MUP
3. Interviewed 4 candidates. **MSP** to hire Cherie Loomis-start date April 9.
4. **MSP** for special collection for John Clark Family on Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday
5. Flat Bell Tower Roof is leading. Ireland Contracting to complete work within 30 days.
6. New Utility Tub installed in Janitors closet
7. Continue to update prayer chain
8. Gave one month mortgage assistance to individual in need
9. Lenten Lunches going well, Good Friday Service and Luncheon at MUP

## Upcoming on April 14th

On Sunday, April 14th we will have a guest speaker, Gavin Miller at the pulpit. Gavin is a Senior at Grove City College who plans to go into the ministry after college.

Also, on Sunday will be a meet and greet for the new Church Office Administrator, Cherie Loomis.  
More Details to Follow





Mars UP will be doing a special collection this Sunday (**EASTER SUNDAY**) to support the John Clark family. John is in the local cub scout troop that utilizes our building and is a second grader in the Mars School district. Donations that come in will be matched by the church up to a certain amount. Learn more about John, what he is going through, and his family below.

Meet John, an incredibly brave and optimistic 8-year-old boy who is fighting a battle that no child should ever have to face.

Prior to November 2023, John was a healthy, active boy. A routine dental procedure caused bacteria to travel to John's heart. After a few days of worsening illness, John was life flighted to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh where he underwent lifesaving open heart surgery. During surgery John suffered a massive stroke. He never fully recovered from the heart surgery and in December 2023, John went into cardiac arrest, and during life saving measures, John's heart was damaged beyond repair. For 20 long days, John was in a medically induced paralysis. Not knowing how John would or if he would wake up, his family prayed and prayed for the best possible outcome.

Their prayers were heard, and John woke up.

Due to the cardiac arrest John's body shut down certain functions to protect his brain and this resulted in the amputation of his left leg. His rehabilitation has been long and complicated. Despite facing countless medical procedures and complications, John has remained full of spirit and hope. When asked about how he felt about losing his leg and needing a heart, he simply replied "normal."

Doctors have determined that he urgently needs a heart transplant to survive. As John waits for a new heart, his family is facing mounting medical bills, travel expenses for consultations with specialists, and the emotional toll of watching their beloved son endure so much pain.

Despite the challenges he faces, John continues to amaze everyone with his infectious smile and unwavering determination. He dreams of being able to run and play like other kids his age, and a new heart and prosthesis would give him the chance to live a full and healthy life. But the road is long and will not always be easy. The average lifespan of a recipient heart is not infinite, so John will likely need multiple transplant surgeries in the future.

Please consider donating to John's fundraising campaign today and sharing his story with your friends and family. With your help, we can give this courageous young boy the gift of a new heart and a brighter future ahead. Thank you for your kindness and compassion.

To know the Clark's is to love them. The whole family radiates positivity and goodness. Their kids are courageous and kind. I know through determination and prayer John will make a full recovery.

But his family can't do this alone. They need our help to cover the overwhelming costs associated with his medical care, the transplant procedure, and prosthetics. Every dollar donated will go directly towards supporting John's medical expenses, ensuring that he receives the treatments he desperately needs.

Your generosity and support will not only give John a second chance at life but will also provide hope and comfort to his family during this difficult time. Together, we can make a difference in John's life and help him beat the odds.

Please consider donating to John's fundraising campaign today and sharing his story with your friends and family. With your help, we can give this courageous young boy the gift of a new heart and a brighter future ahead. Thank you for your kindness and compassion.

Please make checks out to Mars United Presbyterian Church and in the Memo Line put "John Clark Family". We will be collecting donations until Sunday, April 7th.

## **MISSION TRIPS**

### **Volunteers Needed!!!!**

**Are you willing to share your gifts and talents to share God's love to a community? We have the opportunity for you to attend a mission trip. Upcoming Richmond, West Virginia and Savannah, Georgia mission trips may be what you are looking for!!**

**When and Where: YOUTH MISSION TRIP**

**Savannah, Georgia June 23-28, 2024**

**ADULT MISSION TRIP**

**Richmond, West Virginia July 21-26, 2024**

**PLEASE SEE PASTOR BRIAN FOR MORE INFORMATION AND IF YOU ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN EITHER OF THESE TRIPS!**



**SAVE THE DATE**



Combined Sunday with St. John's Lutheran  
Church

April 28TH at 10:00 am

Service at Mars UP Church

More Details to Follow!!



**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**VBS-JULY 14TH THRU  
JULY 18TH**

Join us on Sunday April 7th as we continue to celebrate the joy of the resurrection with Holy Humor Sunday. Jokes and funny anecdotes will be shared throughout the service. Appropriate jokes may be shared by the congregation. It is sure to be a fun and uplifting service in celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

All are welcome!

### Save the Date:

April 7th—Holy Humor Sunday

April 14th— Guest Speaker/ Gavin Miller

April 14th— Meet and Greet Event

April 28th— Joint Sunday with St. John Lutheran Church

May 5th—Communion

## Contact Us

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

### Mars UP Church

232 Crowe Ave  
PO Box 805  
Mars, PA 16046

(724) 625-1365  
marsup@mars-up.org

Visit us on the web at  
[www.mars-up.org](http://www.mars-up.org)

We're also on Facebook!!

Join us for Worship  
10:00 am

Prayer Chain:  
pastor@mars-up.org



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