

# MARS UP CHURCH



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

JANUARY 2024

For the past few weeks I have had ‘mission’ on my brain. I knew that Mars UP would close on twenty twenty-three in a strong way and would be set up well at the start of this year. With the parking lot project completed the church has an opportunity to set her eyes on new goals and for me that goal is mission. The church has done exceptional mission the past several years, with missional giving going up every year, but somehow I know we can do more. With the full weight and power of Mars UP behind it, there is no telling how much mission this church can do in the coming year! The dreaming and thought of the missional work this body of Christ is capable of has been filling me with excitement these past few weeks. But today I hit a snag. What mission should we do? What should be our focus in 2024? Should it be on the sick? The elderly? The impoverished? The outcast? The stranger? The addicted? Where should our focus be as it pertains to mission for this new year?

I didn’t have an answer to that question and what’s more, I’m not sure it’s my question to answer. Never the less I set out to try and answer it. Our Church Mission statement as found on our website is good and thought provoking, but did not provide me with the clear answer as to what our missional focus should be on. So like any good pastor I turned to the scriptures to try to find some guidance as to what our church’s missional focus should be this year. Did you know that the word mission does not appear in the bible! If we define mission as ‘an important task we are sent to do’ then the scriptures have a lot to say about that, but to narrow all of the possibilities down to one focus is a mind-blowing task. Should we focus on feeding the hungry or on clothing the naked? Should we focus on those in prison or those in hospitals? Should we focus on our neighbors next door or our sisters and brothers across the world? There are too many options, and all of a sudden my desire to make this year about mission was beginning to wane.

This is when I turned to an unlikely source of wisdom. I looked to see what the Book of Order (The constitution for the Presbyterian Church USA) said about the mission of the church. And wouldn’t you know it: Chapter One of the Book of Order is titled “The Mission of the Church”. The first paragraphs come under the heading “God’s Mission”. In this section I found these words:

“In Christ, the Church participates in God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God’s love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ.”

And it hit me! I was focused on the ways we carry out mission not on the mission itself. The mission, our mission as the church, hasn’t changed. Participate in the transformation of the world by proclaiming the Good News of God’s love, offer grace, and invite all people into discipleship in Christ. That’s the mission!

Friends, whether we do this by donating food to the food pantry, or sending kids to camp, or providing funds so that refugees can have a roof over their head, or pack clean-up buckets for the next disaster, or some combination of all of those; we do those things to share God’s love and to make disciples! That is our focus this year! This is what we are going to do! Over the remaining weeks and months of this year, you will hear me pushing the need to expand our missional outreach. What that specifically looks like I do not know, but I do know that we have a lot of love to share, and some really good news to tell, and people from all stripes to make disciples. I hope you will join me in this mission, the mission of the church, to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15) and make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20).

Blessings, Pastor Brian

## December, 2023 Session Highlights

1. Candy Making completed. Made 340 lbs this year. There may be a few bags left to purchase.
2. Youth Group went Caroling around Mars the Sunday before Christmas Eve.
3. Choir, along with Christopher Wu, violinist, plus volunteers went caroling where several shut-in members reside – Bob Danner and Nancy Govan.
4. Installation of Deacons and Elders will be Sunday January 14, 2024
5. Annual Congregational Meeting to review Annual Reports will be January 28, 2024 following Service.
6. Deacons allocated \$2500 to various local organizations in the Mars Community to help local families this Holiday Season.
7. Polar Express fund raiser for MySchool Preschool was very successful
8. Living Nativity and Preschool program were very successful.
9. Financials through November income to expenses shows a deficit. By year's end we hope to have equivalent funds as to when we entered 2023.
10. Ceiling at bottom of steps leading to Nursery School/Youth room to be replaced over Christmas break.

### \*\*\* 2024 A NEW YEAR!



Consider sponsoring sanctuary flowers for Sunday Morning church worship services. A new sign up list available in Tarry N Talk. Sponsoring flowers for worship is a great way to recognize a person, significant occasion and honor the memory of a loved one.



Welcome and Thank  
You

The new officers who begin serving in January are:

Session/Elders: Mike Bocheff, Steve Mc Donald & Keith Nichols

Deacons: Ruth Wilson & Jenny Ivory

# *In Memoriam*

Remembering those we lost.



**Carol Cooney**

January 22, 1930—February 10, 2023

**Patricia Jackson**

January 7, 1943—June 9, 2023

**Sue Ann Morris**

April 29, 1943—July 4, 2023

**John B. Grau**

April 2, 1932—December 7, 2023

# *Happy* NEW YEAR

*You crown the year with Your goodness,  
And Your paths drip with abundance.*

PSALM 65:11



# Per Capita—What is it & Why Do it???

Many have asked questions about per capita, What is it? What does it support?

The Per Capita is an important aspect of how we do church. Presbyterians are proud of how our convictions inform our church function and organizational structure. As Presbyterians, we believe in “the priesthood of all believers” and acknowledge that all are called to bring their gifts and talents to God (1 Peter 2:9). And so, we champion this idea “call” throughout all levels of our denomination. On the local church level, church members are called to serve as Elders, Deacons, and pastors. Elders

and pastors of churches in geographical groupings gather as Presbyteries.

There will be a Per Capita envelope in February’s envelope mailing. [The cost per member is \\$44.20](#) In a small but significant way, consider Per Capita as one way YOU and MARS UP CHURCH might be able to respond along with other Christians and churches across the nation, proclaiming the Gospel message that sin, separation and disunity will not have the final answer for us, our church, our denomination OR our world. The final answer is fully in the sovereign hands of God. Indeed, God is greater and more powerful than our broken and foolish ways of sin.

This is Jesus’ prayer and petition for us: “I have told you (plural) these things, so that in me you (plural) may have peace. In this world you (plural) will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

## *Installation of Officers*

**Installation of Elders and Deacons will be held during the worship hour on Sunday, January 14, 2024**

Those being installed are: **ELDERS**, Mike Bocheff, Steve McDonald & Keith Nichols

**DEACONS**, Ruth Wilson & Jenny Ivory

## **Glade Run Food Bank Collection**

**On January 7th we are asking everyone that is able to bring a non perishable item to church on Sunday.**

**With the start of the New Year we would like to take a large donation to the food bank.**

**Thank you for your Help!!**

## **THANK YOU ELDERS AND DEACONS**

*THANK YOU* to **ELDERS**: Lisa Barbour, Don Lewis, MaryAnn Croop, Herb Wellman

**DEACONS**: Sharon Gibbs, Carol Kopar & Alice Leonberg

*Having fulfilled your term of service, our church thanks you for answering the call, honoring your commitment and for your efforts to help proclaim the love of God! We are better because of YOU!*

# A Living Nativity



# MSPS Christmas Program



Pre-K  
Class



4-Year  
Class

# MSPS Christmas Program



3 year class

Thank you to everyone who has helped us complete our Capital Campaign in record time!! The new parking lot is finished, paid in full and looks great!  
Check out the Photos below!!



## MUP Ski Retreat

It's that time again! It's time for Mars UP Church to take to the slopes for an exciting day of fun and fellowship together at Peak n Peak Ski Resort! The date of the ski retreat will be Saturday, February 3rd.

This is a ONE DAY EVENT

We will leave the church at 7:00 am and ski/snowboard for the day.

Watch for More information and sign up sheets in Tarry N Talk soon.



# CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**There will be a Congregational meeting on January 28, 2024 after worship to discuss the annual report from 2023.**

**Please try to attend!**



Secret Sister is a wonderful way to encourage one another, to get to know each other, and to become more involved at Mars United Presbyterian Church. Secret Sister is for those who wish to participate and will be given a name to support, pray for and will send secret gifts/cards throughout the year. At the end of the year there will be a reveal party to see who everyone's secret sister was throughout the year.

Sign up sheets are in Tarry N Talk!

Any questions? Please see Ashley Hauser



## SAVE THE DATE!

- ◆ January 1st— HAPPY NEW YEAR
- ◆ January 7th—Communion
- ◆ January 14th—Installation of Officers
- ◆ January 28th—Congregational Meeting



THANK YOU HERB FOR ALL YOUR YEARS AS JANITOR AT MARS UP CHURCH

## 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](mailto: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  
Sunday's at 10:00 am

Prayer Chain:  
[marsup@mars-up.org](mailto:marsup@mars-up.org)

Mars UP Church  
232 Crowe Ave  
PO Box 805  
Mars, PA 16046