

SPECIAL MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

JOHN & MELANIE BIRKENBINE
THE NAVIGATORS AT MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY



Looking Back

Thank you for your ongoing support and prayers for the Navigator Ministry at Millersville!

This year marks our 10th year on staff with the Navigators, and our 6th year leading the ministry at Millersville University. Over the years, God has been faithful to multiply our efforts to hundreds of students. He led us through the 2020-2021 shut down school year. When other campus ministries were struggling, God was pleased to grow our Millersville ministry. Over the last 6 years, we have seen a number of students graduate and invest their lives in full-time ministry, and countless others enter the conventional workplace with a passion to "Know Christ, make him known and help others do the same".

As I think about the next 10 years, I am drawn to God's call to the Israelites in Jeremiah 29:4-7:

"This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

I am more convinced than I was 6 years ago that Millersville is the place God is calling us to settle down, raise our children, and seek the welfare of this small borough!

Flip over for information on a ministry house

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Home Buying

As our family seeks to follow God's leading, an opportunity has arose for us to plant roots and buy the home we have been living in for the last 6 years. The house, on Mary Street, is literally on the property line of Millersville University. We watch students walk in front of our house every day on their way to campus. In my opinion, there is no more strategic property to live in and do ministry on Millersville's campus. In addition to the home we are living in, there is a 1-bedroom apartment attached, which we will be able to rent to students and/or staff. This will allow us to continue life on life ministry with a select few in a unique way! Last spring, two guys from the Millersville University wrestling team lived in the apartment and it was a joy to share our lives and home with them.

Over the last 12.5 years of marriage, Melanie and I have worked very hard to be debt free and save for this moment. We have been able to do that and are able to put a 20% down payment on the house. However, doing this will completely deplete the savings God has gifted us with and make normal home maintenance and upfront costs and repairs that come with buying a house quite challenging.




In response to this unique situation, our church (Millersville Bible Church) has generously offered to open a special fund for anyone interested in contributing to the initial purchase and care of the home. Our prayer is that God might provide at least \$10,000, which would help with the initial updates and cost associated with buying the house. **Would you prayerfully consider joining us to make home ownership a reality and place long-term roots in Millersville?**

If you are led to give, we have included a card and envelope which can be mailed back to Millersville Bible Church. We tentatively plan to settle on the house at the end of January or early February. With that timeframe in mind, **we are asking if you would make your decision by February 28th** so we can plan well for our first couple months of home ownership.

Thank you very much for considering this and we look forward to what God intends to do in and through OUR ministry in Millersville.

in Christ,


John & Melanie Birkenbine

Momma's Reflections:

As I (Melanie) reflect on our last 5.5 years of living in this house on Mary Street, I can't help but feel a bit sentimental. We moved into this home when Caleb was only 2 weeks old! We jumped into being first time-parents at the same time that we jumped into leading the Navigator ministry at Millersville! My experience as a parent, and of ministering at Millersville, is so intertwined with this home and this neighborhood. During our time here at Millersville, my involvement on campus and with students has looked vastly different from John's. I have primarily been at home as "Mom". My interactions with our staff and students have fit with the seasons of our family. Sometimes it looked like meeting regularly with a handful of women. Sometimes it meant hosting student leader meetings in our home. Over the last 2 years, it has included hosting our staff team for dinner each Tuesday. It's been a joy to have the opportunity for these students and staff to be able to come and go from our home and build relationships with me and with our boys.

This home and neighborhood have become such a central part of our family and ministry. If we take walks, ride bikes, or walk the dog, we head to campus. Millersville's campus feels like an extension of our own backyard. I love this! The boys have made their mark in our yard...digging in the dirt, swinging, playing football, and riding bikes in the driveway. John walks to and from work. Students know where we live and find us accessible to them. We have shared tools, our lawnmower, our washing machine, food, and a great many other things with them. The students, in turn, have abundantly blessed us with babysitting, family photos, baked goods, and a great many other things over the years. As we move towards owning this home as our own, I look forward to continuing this special blend of life and ministry.