

# THE NAVIGATORS AT MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY



(L) Mackenzie Joy, born January 4th, 2022. R) We have become home owners!

Read more about both on the back page of this newsletter!

## EXCUSE THE MESS... OUR CHILDREN ARE MAKING MEMORIES

*It's 9:02pm, Ian (3) has fallen asleep in the car after a long play date with some old friends and Mackenzie (8 months) is starting to cry because she's ready to eat and go to bed. Caleb (6) is quick to tell us how excited he is to see his friend again. He probably won't see that friend for a while. Her daddy serves in the Air Force and they are preparing to move to Texas this month. Back at the house, the toys and mess of the day still aren't cleaned up; the boys go to bed without a bath and it will take a few days to get Mackenzie back on schedule.*

*The hustle and bustle of a young family, a thriving ministry and becoming new home owners can be exhausting. Melanie and I often find ourselves with more to do than time to accomplish it and tired, frustrated attitudes. We desire to love one another and foster a "mutually enjoyable, God honoring" marriage... but it's hard. We desire for our children to grow like Jesus grew in Luke 2:52, "... in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man"... but we don't know if we're doing it "right". We want our home to be a place of refuge and comfort for our neighbors and those the Lord brings our way... but it often feels like a burden. I also know we aren't alone in this! Here are some verses I often try to remind myself of during this season:*

- Psalm 127:3 – "Children are a gift from the Lord..."
- Romans 8:18 – "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."
- Ephesians 5:25 – "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."
- Philippians 1:6 - "Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

*May God grant you peace today as you seek to be faithful to what he has entrusted to you!*

# NAVIGATOR MID-ATLANTIC FALL CONFERENCE 2022



What do you call it when 250+ students from Millersville University, the University of Virginia, Penn State, Bowie State (MD), Rowan University (NJ) and a handful of other smaller campuses get together for a weekend conference? The Mid-Atlantic Fall Conference! 2022 was the first time in over 4 years that all of our Mid-Atlantic campuses could come together for this event. It was fantastic!

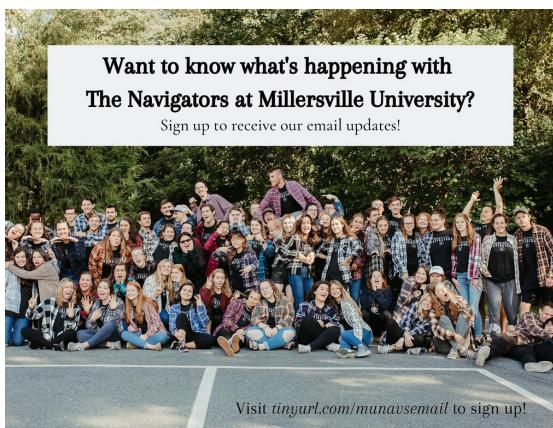
Every year the fall retreat is the crescendo of our fall recruiting efforts. A common quote every year from new students is "*I didn't really know anyone, now they are my best friends!*". From a staff perspective, if we can get new students to go on our fall trip, the likelihood of them sticking around is astronomically higher. There is something very special about taking 48 hours out of your life and focusing in on your relationship with God and His people. This year, 47 students from Millersville went to the conference!

## Would you pray for 3 students in particular?

**Student 1** received the Lord this weekend as her Savior! We pray that she would be rooted and established in her faith and for protection from the enemy who would desire to convince her that the Gospel is too good to be true.

**Student 2** asked for prayer for his future. He is a senior and wants to trust the Lord with his future, but is scared to entrust his plans to Jesus. Pray that he would embrace the goodness and trustworthiness of God, his heavenly father.

**Student 3** has been hanging around our Navigator crew for a few weeks. He went with us this weekend and has lots of things going through his head. Pray that he would surrender his life to the King of kings, that this year would be a turning point in his relationship with Jesus.



*There's a lot happening in the lives of The Navigators at Millersville University! We want you to be kept up to date on it all! Every month we send out a prayer email, with updates on what's happening on campus and ways you can pray with us for our students! Make sure to check your spam folder around the 5th of each month if you haven't been getting the emails, or check out the link below to sign up to receive them!*

**[tinyurl.com/munavsemail](http://tinyurl.com/munavsemail)**

# HOUSE OF JOY

If you are reading this newsletter, thinking to yourself: "When was the last time we got a letter from John and Melanie?" Your feelings are valid. A lot has happened over the last few months! Here are two of the biggest!

\*\* Side note: If you don't get our monthly Millersville Navigators prayer emails, you need to... \*\*

\*\* Follow the instructions on the previous page! ([tinyurl.com/munavsemail](http://tinyurl.com/munavsemail)) \*\*

## WE HAD A BABY!

On January 4th, God glorified himself through the birth of our daughter, Mackenzie Joy! Many of you may know about our journey through infertility. When we found out that Melanie was pregnant in April 2021, without the aid of doctors, it became the only time it had happened in our 12 years of marriage. Under the most improbable circumstances (us) + the wildest medical situation (ask us sometime), God saw fit to bring our little girl into the world. She is a ball of smiles and is quickly stealing John's daddy/daughter soft spot.

A few weeks after Mackenzie was born, Ian turned 3 and finished potty training. He is a fearless bug picker upper and our sweetest snuggler. Caleb turned 6 over the summer and started kindergarten in the fall. He has become a Pokémon master and loves to climb everything (trees, ropes and doorways to name a few).



## WE BOUGHT A HOUSE!

One month after Mackenzie was born, on February 4th, we settled on our first home. Becoming home owners was always something we desired to do and, again, the Lord made a way for this to happen. Through the generosity of many of you (THANK YOU!!!) we were able to do this and have some money set aside for ongoing maintenance and repair projects. We were blessed to have new siding put on the house and the doors painted this past spring!

We haven't actually moved though! Over the last 6 years, we had been renting the house right off campus that our church owned. The Lord opened the way for us to purchase that house! We are very excited to see how God chooses to use our home and family for his purposes.

*John + Melanie Birkenbine*