the journey

The Brownsville Church of God Newsletter **January - March 2021**

WE EXIST for the purpose of Worshipping God, Loving all people, making disciples for Christ.

Our Vision: We envision a community of faith where: People are coming to Christ, finding love, acceptance, forgiveness, and experiencing Christian growth.

Regularly Held Services

(All classes are suspended until further notice.)

SUNDAY
Worship Service - On-site
9:30 AM and 11:00 AM

Worship Service - Online (Facebook)

WEDNESDAY
Youth (PreK - 5th grade) Class
6:00 PM. - Online (Zoom)

Bible Study - Online (Facebook)
7:00 PM

THURSDAY
Bible Study - On-site
7:00 PM

Brownsville Church of God
6390 Lincoln Way East
Fayetteville, PA 17222
717-352-9535
www.brownsvillecog.com

Churches of God
General Conference

A Message from the Pastor:

MORE LIKE CHRIST IN 2021

In 2020, we experienced many devastating happenings: a deadly pandemic, racial tensions and division, political division, deadly wildfires erupting from California to Washington State. Without a doubt we have come through a very trying and challenging year.

As we have entered the new year, 2021, many people have made or are making new year resolutions. Some are choosing to try to become a better person by trying to live a healthier life, improving their career, or through self-improvement. For the believer in Christ, God is not looking for a resolution; He is looking for a *surrendered* life. His desire is that we *be more like Christ in 2021*.

If we are born again, we BELONG TO GOD. *1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (KJV), What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

The new birth is about giving up personal self-ownership and declaring that God and Jesus are the rightful Owners of our lives.

Our initial change comes through a personal relationship with God, and then ongoing change occurs through our growth in the knowledge of Christ. We all draw our style of operation for daily living from our emotions, our thoughts, past experiences, beliefs, and values. The unfortunate thing about this is that some of our daily thinking is rooted in selfishness and untruthfulness. Our thoughts and actions need to change over time.

Romans 12:2 (NLT) Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Pray that 2021 will be a year of closer intimacy for you with Christ. *John 15:5 says, "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."* This is done by staying connected with God through confession of sin, prayer, bible study, fellowship and daily service which should be a part of our everyday life.

If we are not becoming more like Christ, we lack strong faith and spiritual growth; we need to examine ourselves.

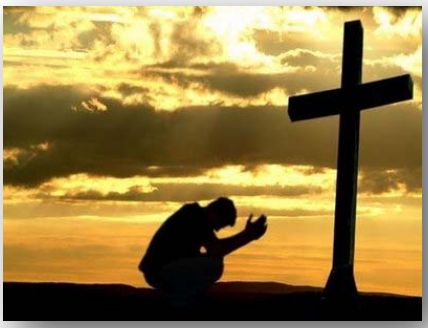
Continued on next page

Continued...A Message from the Pastor

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT) Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.

Some hindrances to surrendering to God:

- The desire to be in control
- Self-will vs. Christ's will
- The lack of trust in God



The God who created the world by the power of His Words and holds the universe together by the word of His power is completely able to control your life.

Paul's Complete Surrender. The apostle Paul said in Galatians *1:13 (ESV) "For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.*" But one day, Paul met a man named Jesus. He saved his soul, and his life was never the same.

Galatians *2:20 (ESV), I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Total surrender to God is to stop resisting His will, to stop fighting Him, to stop defending self-control and selfishness. It means to submit to Him in all areas of your life. What areas of your life do you find difficult to surrender to God? God is awaiting your response.

Brownsville Church of God Advent Countdown

Sister Dorethea Jenkins and Maryann Stoner spearheaded the 1st Advent Donations this year. The women of BCOG used the list of food from the Advent Countdown Calendar Sheet to add food items in a box from December 1 through December 24. The food was donated to a food bank on Christmas eve. The women also read and studied Luke chapters 1-24 during the month of December.

On December 23, 2020 volunteers came out to load and deliver 25 boxes to NETwork Ministries in downtown Chambersburg. Our own Kiara Oquendo works as Kids Club Coordinator at NETwork Ministries. Sis. Dorethea and Maryann would like to thank all who participated in this project and the volunteers who came out to deliver the boxes of food.

All glory and praises are given to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God Bless You All!

Brownsville Church of God Partnered with Other Chambersburg Community Churches in Free USDA Grocery Giveaway to Needy Families.

Workers from the various churches and organizations.

John Wesley AME Zion Church hosted and partnered with Brownsville Church of God and several other churches and community organizations in a free USDA grocery giveaway in front of John Wesley AME Zion church on Thursday, November 19, 2020. Ministry partners arrived at 9 am to unload the truck filled with approximately 40,000 lbs. of food divided into 1,000 boxes. Each box contained yogurt, fruit, milk, eggs, cucumbers, precooked meats, and other vegetables.

While adhering to COVID-19 safety procedures, volunteers from John Wesley AME Zion Church, Brownsville Church of God Unity in Christ Church, Central Presbyterian Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, Maranatha Ministries, St. James AME Church, Blessings of Hope and the Marine Corp. League unloaded and distributed 1,000 boxes of groceries to families and ministries serving families from 9:00am - 2:30pm.

We praise God for allowing BCOG to be involved in this important community partnership to provide free USDA Food Boxes to local families in need.

Brownsville Church of God Offers Fifth Multiethnic Conversations Small Group Study Cohort

Members and co-facilitators of Multiethnic Conversations Small Group Study Cohort #5: Left to right: James Boyd, Sherie Boyd, Charlene Augustine, Bob Hewitt (Facilitator), Trish Corbert, John Copeland, Nicole Hewitt (Alternate Facilitator), Lisa Copeland, Mort Niyi, Mindy Niyi, Ryan Gaither, Joseph Dennis (Not in photo: Amy Hawkins, Facilitator)

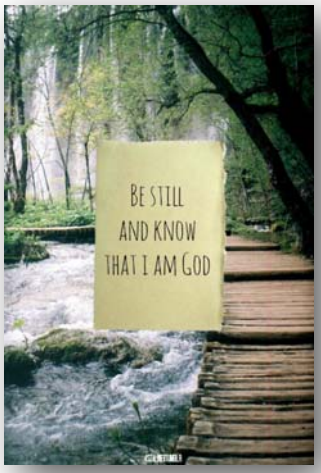
At a time in our world, country, communities and even some churches where the pandemic, societal/political divisiveness, social inequities, and social unrest have caused many to doubt, to question, to be angry, hostile and to pull away from one another, Brownsville Church of God (BCOG) continues to seek to come together as one in Christ. Truly, what better time to seek harmony and peace than "**such a time as this"** by having multiethnic conversations, depending on God's unchanging hand and putting into action our belief that He is still in control? Trusting in God's faithfulness, BCOG's Multiethnic Conversations Small Group Study Cohort #5 commenced on October 5, 2020 and concluded on December 7, 2020.

The ten members of Cohort #5 were outstanding in their efforts to have courageous conversations, and in doing so grew on many different levels. They came together weekly for over two months for meaningful discussion & exploration. They grew in their understanding of the biblical mandate for the multiethnic church. They gained practical insight for doing life together with people "beyond the distinctions of this world" that so often divide us. They had the opportunity to engage in daily readings & reflection for personal growth. In doing this work, they have developed a platform that now allows them to continue their individual journey as multiethnic Christian worshipers and members of BCOG. They are also equipped to assist BCOG to grow and develop as a healthy multiethnic church. For more information contact bobandnicolehewitt@gmail.com.

Trusting Jesus to Calm the Storm

by Sis. Michelle Tasker

Are you feeling exhausted? Have you been experiencing headaches, difficulty concentrating or irritability? Are you finding that you need more sleep (or that you are not sleeping well)? Chest pain and/or rapid heart rate? Digestive symptoms or changes in appetite? All of these are symptoms of chronic stress & if this is you, you are not alone. More than three-fourths of Americans reported experiencing these symptoms on a regular basis - and this was BEFORE 2020!



A little stress can be a healthy thing: It can help us get the focus we need to get a project done (or even write an article for a newsletter!). But chronic stress (stress that continues past the pressing event or deadline, that goes on & on with little to no relief) causes inflammation which has been found to be the root cause of most (if not all) chronic disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease & even a weakened immune system which lowers our ability to fight off viruses.

Stress is often described as the "fight, flight or freeze" part of our nervous system. Besides causing us discomfort in our body & soul, it can keep us from doing all we can to serve God & others.

Our focus this year is "Be More like Christ; Do More for Christ." As I thought about this focus over the past week, the story of Jesus and the disciples on a boat during the storm came to mind (Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41 Luke 8:22-25).

We too are in a storm, especially this past year. But are we calm and sleeping soundly like Jesus was during this storm? Sleep is one of the most important things we can do to build resilience from the negative effects of stress.

I agree with a quote I read a few months ago that says "We are all in the same storm but we are not all in the same boat." This is very true. But as Christians we are not alone in whatever boat we are in! Christ in us means that HE is in the boat with us! Just like the disciples, we know that Jesus is with us but when the storms come, we still often feel afraid. It's human nature.

So, what can we do when the storms of life come at us & seem so much bigger than we can bear? Like the disciples, our first step is to remember that Jesus is in the boat with us & that He has the power to calm the storm, or at least fill our hearts with peace in the midst of the storm.

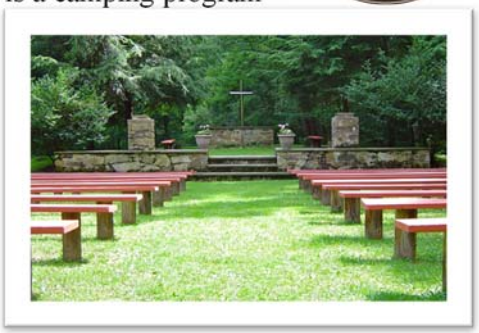
Something else we can do is to pause, breathe deeply & rest in Him. There are many different breathing techniques, but my favorite is the 4-7-8 breath which goes like this: 1) Exhale completely, 2) Breathe in slowly for 4 counts, 3) Hold for 7 counts, 4) Slowly exhale for 8 counts. While exhaling you can meditate on a favorite scripture, my favorite for this exercise is "Be still & know that I am God." 5) Pause and repeat this breathing exercise 5-6 times as needed throughout the day.

It is normal for us to experience fear, worry, anxiety & stress when storms come. But we do not have to stay in this emotional state. We can pause, breathe & remember that Jesus is in the boat with us & He has the power to calm the storm within & without. Our part is to trust Him!

BCOG Youth News

THINK SUMMER!

Looking for something fun to do with your family this summer? Consider Family Camp! Family Camp will be held June 20-26, 2021 at Camp Yolijwa. Camp Yolijwa (Youth Living Jesus' Way) is a camping program that is part of the Eastern Regional Conference of Churches of God. Camp Yolijwa is located in the beautiful mountains of Doubling Gap, Pennsylvania, not too far from home. Camp Yolijwa has been leading children and youth to Christ since 1934.



Besides attending a camp, there are many opportunities to get involved with the Camp Yolijwa program. Camp Yolijwa is currently accepting applications for its paid summer positions. All positions include room, board and salary. Contact the camp for current openings. Offered positions are: ●Activity ● Music ● Craft ● Nature ● Lifeguard ● Kitchen ● Technology ● Maintenance

Visit the Camp Yolijwa website for a full list of available camps and activities at www.campyolijwa.org.

Save the Date!

Vacation Bible School

July 26-30, 2021

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF)

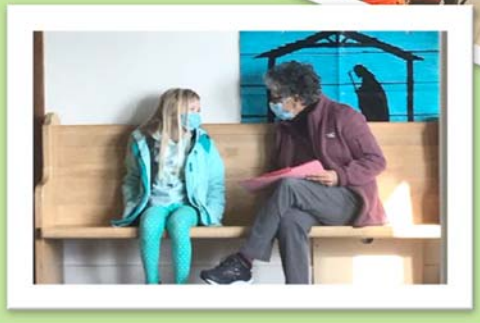
From Dan Russell, Director, Franklin/Fulton Counties

Praise the Lord for our School Good News Clubs!

Currently we have 8 Good News Clubs in Franklin County - 4 in the Waynesboro School District and 4 in the Tuscarora School District. We also have 2 Fulton County Good News Clubs located in McConnellsburg and Needmore. Between all 10, every day of the week there is a club in a local school where boys and girls can hear about Jesus.

In these pictures you can see children singing, praying, and answering questions. Our lesson series have used the colors of the Wordless Book to share the Gospel. These stories focus on the life of Jesus and emphasize our need of a Savior. For many children, a Good News Club is the only time someone talks to them about God.

We are following all the safety guidelines of the districts, and if any other schools allow children to leave, we will start clubs in those areas. CEF also has online, church, and daycare ministries that follow the same format. We appreciate your prayers for us and would be happy to talk if you would like more specific information.



final thoughts...

We thank the Lord for being able to hold the Pre-Thanksgiving Concert on November 21 and for the many people who attended.

The Congregational meeting scheduled for December 13 was postponed until the first quarter of 2021.

We were also able to hold our Christmas Eve service having a good turnout. The New Year's Eve (Watch Night) service was not held this year.

Baptism scheduled for January 10 has been postponed until this summer.

On Sunday, January 17th, we received George Ferguson as a new member. We are grateful to add him to our family here at Brownsville Church of God.

Services & Classes Update –
Sunday onsite services continue at 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. with online sermons.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study continues online at 7:00 p.m. with onsite Bible Study on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.

Youth classes are held Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom for youth in PreK-5th grade. Classes via Zoom are being planned for the Middle School and High School students. There are still no onsite adult or youth Sunday School classes or youth bible study classes.

Nursery is now available for the 11:00 a.m. service only.

Again, masks are required along with social distancing; temperatures are also taken upon attendees' arrival and hand sanitizer is used. These actions will continue for services until further notice.

Upcoming Events

Parade of Tables
March 20 - Time TBD

Good Friday Service
April 2 - 6:30 p.m.

Sunrise Service
April 4 - 6:30 a.m.

Editor, Valenceia Prather
Layout/Design by Priscilla Shirley

Newsletter article submissions may be sent anytime to the Editor at vbpra123@gmail.com. Articles for the next newsletter are due March 15th.