The Journey

The Brownsville Church of God Quarterly Newsletter **January - March 2024**

A Message from the Pastor

Pastor Victor Johnson

Greetings and blessings to each of you. All Glory, Honor and Praise be to God who has continued to bless us at Brownsville Church of God.

We continue to thank God for all that He is doing at Brownsville Church of God. I truly believe that God ***"Waste Nothing"***. If we truly believe that God is Sovereign God who has control of all things and works all things according to the counsel of His will, then we must believe that *things don't just happen.* We continue to see God's handiwork and all that He is doing.

Romans 8:28 – NKJV, [28] ***And we know that all things work together*** *for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

As we move into the New Year, 2024, again, we give thanks to God for each of you. We are so blessed to have so many volunteers at the church. God has truly blessed the church with saints that have a servant's heart. I thank God for the love that I see among the members of the body for each other and for the ministry.

Thank God for new small group ministries. We have recently started three new small group ministries for women. Ladies, we invite you to attend, to learn, to grow and to enjoy fellowship with other women.

The groups are as follows:

1) Mothering Group – The 3rd Saturday of each month at 9 AM. All mothers are invited to attend. Childcare is provided.
2) Ladies Night – The 1st Friday of each month at 7 PM.
3) Women's Fellowship – The 4th Saturday of each month at 9 AM.

I believe this year to be a time of harvest. Join me in praying for lost souls. Be a witness of the gospel of Christ at every opportunity that God gives to you.

Matthew 28:19-20 NIV, ***[19] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***

Praying for you,
Pastor Vic

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

SUNDAY
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service - 10:30 a.m.
Nursery provided for all the above.

WEDNESDAY
Bible Study - 7:00 PM

Betty Spoonhour Rideout Scholarship Committee Essay Contest

The Betty Spoonhour Rideout Scholarship Committee recently completed the 3rd quarter essay contest for 3rd through 8th grade youth. The contest was broken into 2 divisions; 3rd through 5th grades and 6th thru 8th grades.

Theme for the contest was "Why is it important to accept others? Winners of the contest were Aiden Greer for the 3rd thru 5th grade division and Braylen Davis for the 6th thru 8th grade division. Both participants stressed the importance of accepting others because Christ accepts us with all our imperfections. Braylen shared; " **As Christians we strive to walk like Jesus. One of the things he did was accept everyone for who they are."** Aiden shared Romans 15:7; **"Accept one another, then, just as Christ has accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."**

Great job to both Braylen and Aiden. Thanks for sharing your thoughts on the importance of accepting others and helping us to understand the importance of accepting others.

Glory Thank You

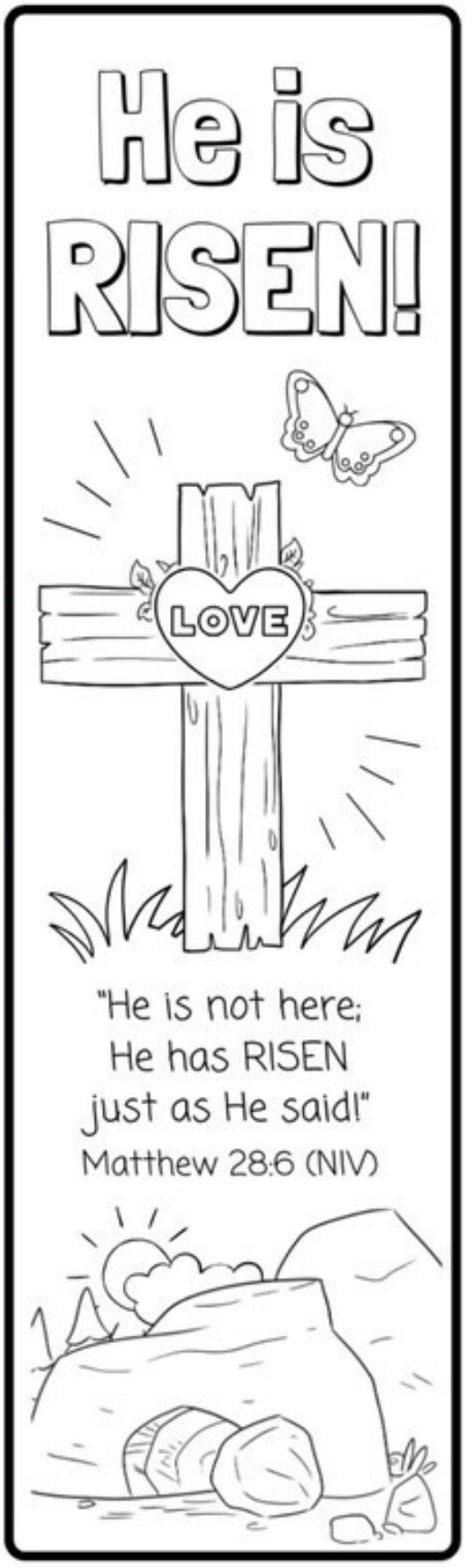
Thank you for attending our 2023 GLORY event featuring Jackie Hill Perry! Your participation and support means a great deal to the kingdom building. We hope that you enjoyed the event and found it valuable in your growth. If you have any images from the weekend, please share them on social media and in chats with family and friends. The Grace Committee appreciates your time and hopes to see you at future events.

"We would like to express our sincere gratitude for attending this event. Your presence and engagement helped to make it a success. If you found it informative and enjoyable, please leave a review on the church website or speaking with one of leadership. Thank you for being a part of it!". #2024

Grace Committee Members: Sarah Davis, Jocelynn Davis, Tyson Davis, Annie Merritt, Michelle McNew, Michelle Tasker

Media Support: Ralphiel Davis, Tanisha Johnson

Bookmarker Activity

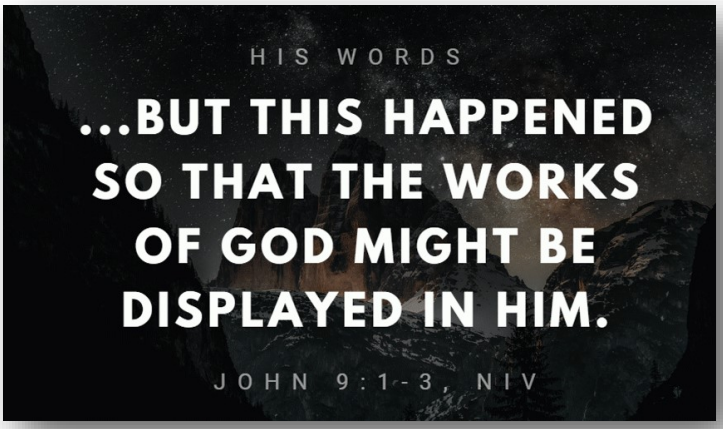


My Testimony

By Noah Garcia

My name is Noah. I am 20 years old. I've had what some may call a rough life from the beginning. I may not look like it from what you see on the outside, but much of my story lies beneath the surface.

I was born with VACTERL syndrome, which is a rare genetic disorder that causes a series of birth defects. My life shortly after birth was spent in the ICU, with doctors and nurses working around the clock connecting tubes and oxygen to my body to keep me alive. For much of my early life, it was a struggle to keep myself nourished, so I had to have a feeding tube to give myself formula with the nutrients I needed. Due to this, I had to start school a year later than what my graduating class would've been. I went to a normal, public-school setting from kindergarten to 3rd grade. In first or second grade, I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. Fingersticks and insulin injections were not fun to say the least. Due to other medical issues, I transferred to online schooling in the second half of my 3rd grade year. Online schooling is a blessing for those who can't attend a public-school setting, but it made me feel so sheltered from the world. It closed me away from normal interactions with the friends I once had. At times I felt like an outcast and felt left out from important social interactions. It wasn't a total hell though. I met one of my best friends through online school, and other friends through online interactions. Playing video games with them made it a great escape from the issues I dealt with.



As part of my birth defects, I was born with one kidney. Somewhere along all this time, I was diagnosed with Chronic Kidney Disease. At some point, I had reached Stage 4. Then, in November 2018 I received news that hit me harder than I could ever imagine. On the day, I went to get my normal round of blood work, and then I went home. A few hours later, my mother received a call from my nephrologist that I was confirmed to be in Stage 5 kidney failure. I remember that I immediately started crying. I remember screaming out to God and asking him "Why me, God?" A lot of what happened after that is a blur, but I remember we called Pastor Vic to pray with us, and then we immediately drove to Hershey Medical Center to get the process of dialysis started.

Dialysis was undoubtedly a dark period in my life where I felt much pain, anger, sadness, worry, and fear. Being completely honest, I even felt suicidal at many points during that time. But what I didn't realize then that I know now, is that God was with me through every step of the way. Every step at every point in my life. After only 5 months on dialysis (to which I could've waited 5-7 years to get a deceased donor's kidney), my brother's coworker Aaliyah Paxson donated her kidney to me on May 21, 2019. She was the very first person to get testing done for the process and passed all tests. After transplant, I returned to public high school for 9th grade. Throughout my high school years, they came with many highs and lows. I tend to be an introverted person, so making friends didn't always come easy. These years showed me who my true people are, and they showed me now that I don't need to go with the crowd.

I always considered myself a Christian because I grew up with it, but I never really started walking in the Christian life until last year. One of my friends that I knew well since elementary school, passed away due to suicide in 2022. From that point, it made me realize that life is too short. It made me want to turn my life around and truly live for God. I've truly been learning to dive deeper into God's word, fill my life with Godly influences, live in repentance, and live like Jesus.

Though it was a gradual process, I realized that everything that had happened in my life up to this point, is a part of God's purpose. This thought really clicked in my head when I started reading chapter 9 in the book of John. Verses 1-3 say: *"As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.* [2] *"Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"* [3] *"It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him."* Verse 3 gives me a renewed hope. God didn't merely give me these problems (not that these should be considered problems or that God caused me these problems) to punish me or the sins of my family, he gave these to me to show how Great and Awesome he really is. God made me a living, breathing, and walking testimony of his power. Now walking in this revelation, I can put my hope and trust in the God who created me, lovingly tests my faith, and who gave his life through Jesus on the cross for us to be saved from our sinful imperfections. Jesus gives me hope, peace, and joy beyond understanding, no matter the circumstances I experience. I want others to experience this joy along with me.

Christmas Caroling & Ministering at Paramount: Where God's Love Spilled Over By Sis. Nicole Hewitt

On December 15th youth & adults traveled to Paramount Senior Living Facility to minister. We sang Christmas carols in hallways & then spread into residents' rooms in small groups to talk, share the Christmas story & pray together. What happened was quite extraordinary, for the residents, staff & all of us from BCOG! I found myself in awe of the Lord's presence & how profusely His love spilled out all over the place: not just TO the residents but FROM them. The best way to tell the story is through some of the "God moments" people experienced!

The first "God moment" was walking into church that night and seeing the group of children and adults willing to go and share love with residents at Paramount. Once at Paramount our group met and talked with a resident named Vickie. We took turns sharing the Christmas story with her. As we continued to talk, she told us about her husband John. We discovered that her husband had worked for Pastor Vic! Sis Katherine was in my group, and she introduced herself as Vic's wife. Vickie was elated with joy! She was so excited, grinning from ear to ear. Pastor Vic came over, and they began reminiscing. Pastor, along with the group, prayed for Vickie. That "God moment" was delightful for all of us to share with Vickie. It was a divine connection!
(Sis Tammy Bayer)

In the first room we went into, a lady named Wanda sang us part of a hymn. As she was looking up at us singing (with a smile on her face) I could see the love of God in her eyes. As a tingling sensation went through my body I could feel the presence of God. It was truly a "God moment." I'm still overjoyed when I think about the experience & how God blessed us.
(Sis Judy Camel)

My "God moment" was in two separate but related parts. The first was when I walked into the church, and I witnessed boys, girls and adults of all different colors, ages and mobilities all preparing to "Go Tell It On the Mountain" – it was an amazing sight! My second "God moment" was when we entered a resident's room. Something told me: "I know this woman's face from somewhere." We sang to her, told the Christmas story, shared what Jesus means to each of us and prayed over her. She thanked us for coming and as we began to leave, something (I believe it was the Holy Spirit) said "Ask her." I turned around & asked her if she had ever worked in the area? She paused and quickly said that she worked for a local doctor's office for many years. She mentioned one of the doctor's names & I instantly knew her because she was the receptionist in OUR family's doctor's office! It all came rushing back to me and I told her all the wonderful things that I remembered and appreciated about how she served me and the other patients who came in for medical appointments. Her face lit up like a Christmas tree. There was joy all over her face and mine as well. As we turned to leave, she thanked us again, looked me and said: "I just always tried to treat people the way I would want to be treated." Then with a big smile she said, "Thank you for remembering me…"
(Bro Bob Hewitt)

I felt God's presence and His power uplifting me while listening, loving on, and holding residents' hands! I heard God telling me I was in the presence of older saints and that was inspiring to me. I felt it was pleasing to God for me to be there…just seeing the smiles on residents' faces and praying for them!
(Sis Karen Baugher)

After giving a hug to one of the residents and wishing them a Merry Christmas, I was told "It doesn't matter what we look like, we are to love one another!" I said, "He made us in His image!" The resident said, "That's right!" We smiled and hugged again before departing. What a blessing this was to me! To God be the glory!
(Sis Mary Dennis)

My "God Moment" was because of a man named Tom. He is a marine vet & Purple Heart recipient. As we visited, he told his story & began to cry, saying God was his Savior & he was so blessed. After visiting we hugged & said goodbye & then moved into a common area to continue caroling. When I looked down the hall, I saw Tom working his wheelchair to come toward the singing. I was moved. He said he wanted to sing along. As he began to sing, he raised his good arm to the heavens & tears flowed freely down his cheeks. I was filled with so much love. To connect with him and feel his love & faith was amazing.
(Sis Lynn Small)

If you are someone who typically does NOT take part in ministry outreaches, I pray these "God Moments" have inspired you! No degree or special training is required: only a willingness to go out in His Name and do what Jesus did: love people, serve people, and make His Father known. Be on the "look out" in 2024 for ways YOU can participate in outreaches to share Jesus Christ!

BCOG Youth News

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF)

From Dan Russell, Director, Franklin/Fulton Counties

Dear Brownsville Church of God Family,

This is the last article that I will write for the newsletter. Normally, I am sharing about the status of Good News Camp, Good News Clubs, or some other CEF outreach with you. This time, I wanted to give you a personal update.

In January, 2024, Michelle and I are moving to Lynchburg, VA for her to finish her PhD work at Liberty University. The house at Good News Camp will become the home for Matt & Tiffanie Robinson who are taking our place at CEF.

Michelle has been doing research into "Followership" in ministry. Often "Leadership" is the focus, especially when ministries go through a major change. However, more often it is the reaction of the followers that determine the success.

Moving to Lynchburg will allow Michelle to have the time to finish and defend her dissertation which is the last part of PhD studies. The plan is for her to complete everything by May when she will participate in graduation ceremonies.

Michelle and I have not made any final plans for life after graduation. We believe that God will show us His plan at the right time; the same way His timing was perfect to bring in Matt & Tiffanie to be the new directors at CEF.

I am sure our paths will cross again, but I do not want to end without thanking you. I remember the first time I came to your church and the sweet way I was treated. It has only become better the more I have been with you.

I know that God has you in a place to be a strategic part of His Kingdom, and my heart is blessed by the impact you are having on behalf of the many children who have been touched by your generosity, Thank You!

Dan & Michelle Russell

2024 Camp Yolijwa Schedule

YOUTH CAMPS	RECOMMENDED WEEK FOR THOSE ENTERING	ALTERNATE WEEK FOR THOSE ENTERING	DATE
Youth	10th - 12th	---	June 9-15
9th Grade	9th	10th	June 16-22
8th Grade	8th	9th	June 30-July 6
7th Grade	7th	8th	July 7-13
6th Grade	6th	7th	July 14-20
5th Grade	5th	6th	July 21-27
4th Grade	4th	5th	July 28-August 1
3rd Grade	3rd	4th	August 2-4
Mother/Daughter	K-2nd	---	August 4-5
Father/Son	K-2nd	---	August 10-11

WILDERNESS CABIN CAMPS	RECOMMENDED WEEK FOR THOSE ENTERING	ALTERNATE WEEK FOR THOSE ENTERING	
Wilderness Adventure	10th - 12th	---	June 30-July 6
Sr. High Wilderness	10th - 12th	---	July 7-13
9th Grade Wilderness	9th	10th	July 14-20
8th Grade Wilderness	8th	9th	July 21-27
7th Grade Wilderness	7th	8th	July 28-August 3

For more information including online registration, visit www.campyolijwa.org

Kids Corner

Come and join us as our kids experience God's presence through His Word.

Children going into kindergarten through 2nd Grade are invited to come to ***Kids Corner*** every Sunday during Worship Service. An area is reserved in the back of the sanctuary for kids going to Kids Corner. Parents are welcome to sit with their children until they leave. We will leave the Sanctuary after the offering song.

We are also looking for those interested in serving as teachers or helpers. Sign up sheets are available in the lobby.

BCOG Youth News

Brownsville Church of God Youth Outreach Ministry
3rd Annual Harvest Fest 2023

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

Matthews 9:37, 38 *The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest,...*

We are so grateful for all the laborers of love that helped to make our BCOG 3rd Annual Harvest Fest of 2023 a success! To God be the glory!

This year Sister Tyson Davis suggested we help our Community Cold Weather Shelter. She contacted them about how our youth, congregation and community can help with their needs. Our youth, families and congregation took part in sharing the gospel of Jesus along with our mission to serve our community. We passed out paper bags with the needs attached for the collection of items needed for the Cold Weather Shelter. This was an excellent idea by Sister Nicole Hewitt to share the Gospel with those who do not know who Jesus is and also sharing with anyone who does not have a church home.

We cannot thank you enough for all of you who donated toward this cause. We collected paper products, personal hygiene and plastic containers, which was much appreciated by the staff at the Cold Weather Shelter.

Our BCOG men, led by Elder Granville Washington, helped load and unload the donations at the Cold Weather Shelter. Some of the men at the shelter pitched in to help unload the donations. Our youth created Arts and Crafts led by Sister Sarah Davis and Sister Esther Ricker. Goody bags were designed by each child who attended. Once the men arrived back at church, we all enjoyed our lunch led by Sister Nancy Hodge and her crew. The walking tacos were a hit! If you don't know what they are, ask any child. The fellowship was such a blessing!

This year we had a special guest, "Barb and Friends Puppet Ministry" of Stateline, PA. The puppets interacted with the audience sharing the gospel through the word of God and songs...also sharing the love of Jesus! *Barb and Friends Puppet Ministry* travels all over to share the gospel as far away as Haiti!

If you would like to be a part of our BCOG Youth Outreach Ministry to experience the joy, love and blessing to others, reach out to Sister Nicole Hewitt Youth Ministry Coordinator. We also welcome anyone who would like to chat with any of our teachers...feel free to reach out!

When we think we are blessing those in need, we actually get blessed by them! That's how God works!

Love and Blessings,

Sister Mary Dennis
3rd- 5th Grade Teacher

Letter from the
EDITOR

Keeping It Simple in 2024!

by Michaela Tasker

Dear Brownsville Church of God family,

I always get excited about starting a new year. I enjoy reflecting on what I've learned & accomplished in the past year & making goals for the upcoming year; however, making goals is one thing, but sticking to them is another.

I tend to give up on my goals, then become disappointed when I don't reach them. However, something changed my perspective:

This year, I attended the Glory simulcast from Jackie Hill Perry. In it, Perry did a question-and-answer session with Dr. Sarita Lyons. One of the questions asked of Dr. Lyons was about how to know God's specific will for your life. Lyon's response was simple but powerful; essentially, she said that God's will for all believers is the same: to glorify Him & lead others to Him. Therefore, if you're unsure of what that specific thing is, then for now simply do whatever small, good, God-glorifying thing is in your path right now.

Some people tend to act when God says to stand still, but other people (like me) tend to stand still when God has given us good things to achieve. Dr. Lyon's answer was comforting for someone like me. We don't need to overthink God's will for our lives. Personally, this year, rather than making a bunch of specific goals that I might not achieve, I have only made a few. My one goal this year is to act on the things that I already know: to pursue God & love others. These are the only two things that determine whether you've lived a successful life – a successful year (Matt. 22:36-40). Everything else falls into one of those two categories.

If you tend to overthink your new year's goals, remember this: Even if you're already behind on that 30-day challenge, or aren't following the morning routine you made...if all you do this year is two things --love God and others -- then you've had a successful year.

When the apostle Paul describes the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, he says, "against such things there is no law." In other words, if you're exemplifying these virtues through God's grace, then you are not doing anything wrong. You are fulfilling God's will. If God has something specific for you to do, He will tell you. In the meanwhile, do a kind gesture. Pray for that person. Read that chapter of the Bible.

Start that conversation with that hurting person. If it helps you to love God & others, then do it. Don't let perfectionism sabotage any ability to move forward into the small, everyday things.

If your goals feel more heavy than inspiring, remember this: **Just do one good thing at a time.**

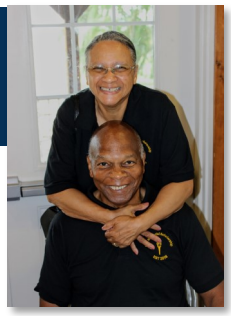
Walking with you,
Michaela Grace Tasker
Editor of the BCOG The Journey

Women's Fellowship is held once a month at BCOG at 9 a.m. Join us to connect with other women spiritually, emotionally, and socially as we grow in Christ. It is a potluck fellowship so bring your favorite dish and a friend.

Upcoming Dates: March 23rd &April 27th

For more information contact Robin Tasker at yardknome52911@gmail.com or (717) 321-3469.

Final thoughts



Pastor Victor & Sis. Katherine Johnson

Multiethnic Conversation Classes were held in October through November. Certificates of completion were given out in January 2024.

Pastor Appreciation was held the full month of October. Containers were put out in the lobby where cards of appreciation could be put. Pastor Johnson and Pastor Jenkins value the expressions of love and appreciation.

The annual Betty Spoonhour Rideout Scholarship Envelope Campaign kickoff was held on November 5th. We praise God for the many donors who participated. If you have not participated with a donation, your support is still welcome.

We were blessed by the Brownsville Church of God Worship Team as attendees joined them in singing praises to our God at our Annual Pre-Thanksgiving Gospel Concert on November 18.

Christmas Eve Service was held on December 24 with youth participating in songs and a skit.

The Brownsville Church of Worship Team participated in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration held at the Gettysburg College on January 15.

Coming Up

Ladies' Night takes place on the first Friday of every month at the church. See Vanessa Davis for more information.

Mothering Group will meet every third Saturday morning of the month at the church. See Kristen Hockenberry for more information.

Women's Fellowship will be held every fourth Saturday at the church. See the flyer included in this newsletter.

Our first Vacation Bible School informational meeting is scheduled to be held after service on Sunday, March 17, 2024.

Upcoming Events at Brownsville Church of God

Men's Breakfast /Bible Study
Every 2nd Saturday at 10:00 AM

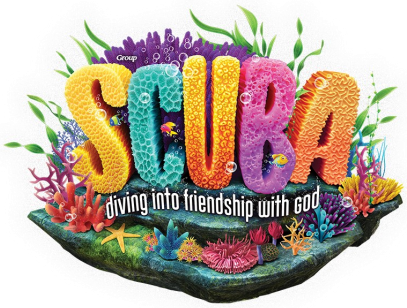
Women's Fellowship
Saturday, March 23rd at 9:00 a.m.

Ladies' Night
Friday, March 1st at 7:00 p.m.

Mothering Group
Saturday, March 16th at 9:00 a.m.

Good Friday Service
March 29th at 6:30 p.m.

Sunrise Service
Sunday, March 31st at 6:30 a.m.



VBS 2024

Newsletter submissions should be emailed to Michaela Tasker at mgtask13@gmail.com by March 24th.

Layout/Design by Priscilla Shirley

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

Brownsville Church of God

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