

Brownson Bells May 2026

90 Years
ANNIVERSARY

*Remembering with Gratitude,
Moving Forward in Faith*

BROWNSON

MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
A missional community called to love and live in Christ



Dear Brownson Church Family,

That we might be one.

Lately, I find myself returning again and again to Jesus’ prayer in John 17. On the night before the cross, with everything before him, Jesus prays—not for success, not for comfort—but for unity:

“Holy Father...protect them...so that they may be one, as we are one.”

At the heart of our *All Together* initiative is this very prayer of Jesus. It is a vision of a community shaped not by sameness, but by a shared life in God—a unity that holds together young and old, those from different places, and those formed by different traditions. And that raises an honest question for us: How do we continue to be one in the midst of our differences?

How do we live as one body when our experiences, perspectives, and stories are not the same?

This kind of unity is not easy. It takes humility, listening, grace, and a willingness to be shaped by something greater than ourselves. But it is also where life is found—where Christ is made known.

I offer one simple prayer for all of us:

That we might be one.

Grace and peace,

John

Pastor John



COMMUNION CALENDAR

Sunday, May 3

Sunday, June 7

Sunday, July 5

The Session of Brownson met on Monday, Ap

Devotional: The monthly devotional was pro fame and fortune, God’s assessment is based mitted to his purpose.

AE Sloan Leadership Introduction and Proce organization joined the Session meeting via z and guide faith leaders in engaging adaptive tial growth opportunity. An initial survey pro cesses of discovery, listening and learning. Co

Selection of Transformation Team for the AI The Transformation Team is designed to help recommended slate of members for the Tran vote by the entire Session determined the le willingness to serve.

90th Anniversary Celebration Update - John

Worship Ministry Team Action Item - An iter ble the continuation of weekly Sunday study,

SESSION DIGEST



April 20, 2026.

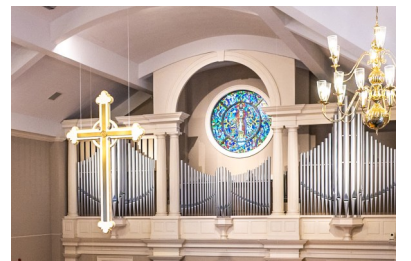
provided by Elder Kara Vonderkahl. Her message was based on a book "Dare to be Uncommon Everyday" by Tony Dungy. As opposed to traditional secular measures of success such as on the state of our hearts. Frequently, God's purpose is served with quiet, behind the scenes activities. We should trust God to bear fruit in our lives and remain diligent and com-

ness - AE Sloan Leadership has been selected by the Session to facilitate Brownson's journey through the All Together Initiative. Heather James, ordained PC(USA) pastor with that Zoom. AE Sloan was founded by Tod Bolsinger five years ago with Heather joining that organization shortly thereafter. Her work is designed to assist churches in navigating change. This work starts with a Discernment phase - establishing a partnership with the entire congregation and a discernment of which programs are functioning well with potential voice to the entire congregation. There is no predetermined agenda, rather the team provides support in the discernment process, equipping the congregation with new communication between congregation, staff, and Session is critical - listening to members' and God's message.

All Together Initiative - All members of Session, along with program staff and pastors, are considered part of the broader "Leadership group". The team will guide and move the All Together Initiative forward. The team will meet monthly and is intended to reflect a balanced representation of the congregation. The Session reviewed the Transformation Team as brought forward by the Coordinating Council. Additionally, Session members had the opportunity to offer additional nominations. After detailed discussion, a leading candidates to comprise the Transformation Team of twelve members. Those candidates will be contacted by John Hage and Art Edgerton to provide details and determine

John Hage provided a brief update of the activities planned for the 90th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday, May 3, 2026.

The schedule from committee was reviewed. Session vote approved the summer schedule for a single 10:30 AM Sunday service extending from May 24 - September 13. This schedule will enable groups to be held at 9:30 AM.



*Happy Birthday
Brownson Church*

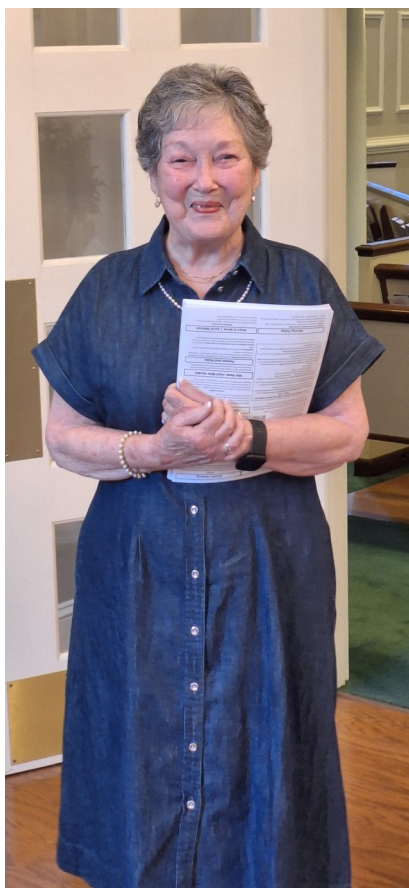


On Sunday, April 19 Brownson Church celebrated Gifts of Women Sunday!





Gifts of Women Sunday



Adult Discipleship

Brownson Connects

Our Sunday morning program, meets at 10 AM in the Atrium. Grab a cup of coffee and a donut from Higher Grounds and join one of our welcoming, engaging connect groups!

The Ligon Bible Class – This connect group studies scripture and biblical themes through The Present Word quarterly curriculum. Join us on Sunday mornings in Conference Room B. All are welcome! Led by Linda Branch and Mary Margaret McNeill.

The Living Word Today (hybrid) – Non-partisan current events are discussed each Sunday morning at 10 AM in Conference Room A or on ZOOM, using The Wired Word curriculum with biblical references. All are welcome to join us in person or via Zoom. Meeting ID: 825 8501 9818 Passcode: 664945.

Donuts and Devotionals – This connect group explores a wide variety of biblical passages and themes through informal discussion. We are currently engaged in our Lenten Small Group Series – *Healing What's Within*. Bring your coffee and donuts to Conference Room C and join the conversation! Led by Elizabeth Doolin and other group leaders.

Mid-Week Adult Studies

Men's Tuesday Fellowship Breakfast – This group meets the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7 AM at Sizzlin' Steak or Eggs. All men of the church are welcome to join! For more information, please contact Bill Berger at bill.ctr.berger1@gmail.com.

Spring Bible Study on the Book of Matthew: Join Alice Herrington's in-depth Bible study on the Book of Matthew from 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM in the Cornerstone Conference Room. If you have questions or need information, please contact Bill Berger (bill.ctr.berger1@gmail.com or 334.398.1941).

Moms of All Ages and Stages – Mom's Book Club is meeting Wednesday, May 13 at 7 PM in the youth suite. We are talking about the book "Counterweights" by Shannan Martin.

BROWNSON connects

Congregational Care and Connection

STEPHEN MINISTRY

I read a humorous book by Barbara Johnson titled MAMA, GET THE HAMMER! THERE'S A FLY ON PAPA'S HEAD!

One of her comments had particular resonance for me in my role as a Stephen Ministry Leader. Johnson says that as Christians, "We are pilgrims, not settlers." We Stephen Ministers are on a pilgrimage of sorts with our care receivers -- we are walking forward with them, one step at a time. Sometimes the terrain changes, sometimes it's level and sometimes it's ragged, but we navigate it together, with Christ as our trusted guide. While on this walk, we pray for wholeness for our care receivers. To learn more about this ministry, please contact Reverend Elizabeth H. Doolin, Jeff Ward or Gerald Ostlund.



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 1

Dave Malan
Joan Mergins
Mara O'Brien

May 3

Matthew Fanning
Betsy Robinson
Dorothy Shankle
Roland Stout
Cynthia Strohm

May 4

Callie Floyd
Ben Judd
Stephanie Soderlund

May 5

Nicholas Malan
Sean O'Leary
Jan Stone

May 6

Joelle Cole
Raleigh Entzinger
Ted Weatherly

May 7

Bill Clement
Lucy Zalzneck

May 8

Dean Morrison

May 9

Maegan Lombard
Liam Myles

May 10

Troy Disser
Paul Herrington
Harrison McClymont
Jim Pryor

May 11

Ashley Maiers
Kjirsti Myles
Wayne Tucker

May 12

Henry Brown
Jeff Gilbert
Ryan Ordway

May 13

Justin Ames
Brooklyn Riggan
Louis Scribner
Jane Scruggs

May 14

Mary Ann Blake
Isabel Davis
John Depenbrock
Beth Pryor

May 15

Patrick Depenbrock
Sheri Sullivan

May 16

Susan Bartz Herrick
Pam Gantt

May 17

Jody Marley
Kent Polkow

May 19

Tom Nesbit

May 20

John Judd

May 21

Elizabeth Carter
Dianne Barrett
Kenneth Beidleman
Norma Kilpatrick

Judy Oldham

Carolyn Tucker

May 23

Scott Dawson

May 24

Dee Lombard

Alex Patti

May 25

Dave Devendorf
Alice Sherrod

May 26

Wiley Barrett
Fiona Campbell
Billie Kennedy
Alex Martin

Mary Jo Newman

Harriet Speight

Linda Taylor

May 27

Fran Dixon

Ethan Ellis

Joan Hart

May 28

Betty Barkley
Robert Calhoun
Sue Clay

Drew Kessell

Grey Kittrell

May 29

Jack Dempsey
Bill Litton
Wyman McGuirt
Catherine Nazario

Sara Tanea

Matt Tanea

Reba Wurst

May 30

Everette Collogan

Dee Fordree

Marjorie Waters

May 31

David Ray Blue

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

May 1

Bob & Holly Daane

May 2

Julian & Deryle Carr

Bobby & Carolyn Maynor

May 3

Jim & Mary Tart

May 4

Allan & Lisa Beck

Jim & Susan Herrick

David & Susan Wood

May 5

Fred Garrett & Elizabeth Griffin

May 7

Tom & Lisa Corbett

May 8

Michael & Dottie Black

May 9

Paul & Alice Herrington

May 12

Doug & Robyn Lam

Albert & Kellye Parks

Dan & Jennifer Telles

May 14

Bruce & Debbie Rosenberger

May 15

David & Beth Carpenter

Bill & Joyce Reynolds

Ben & Reba Wurst

May 16

Charles & Allison Harris

May 17

Bob & Debbie Bell

Lee & Rebecca Pittman

Charlie & Mary Rivers

May 19

Jim & Kimberly Byrd

May 20

Steven & Laura McKenzie
Dean

Jim & Linda Webb

May 21

Bob & Mary Jo Newman

May 22

Ken & Marilee Huntley

Ravon & Erin Sheppard

Alex & Katie Smith

Mike & Patty Williams

May 23

Sean & Sarah O'Leary

Steve & Jayne Smith

May 24

Mark & Jan Lindstrom

Ken & Holly MacDonald

May 25

Bill & Mandy Berg

May 28

David & Leslie Greely

May 29

Roy & Gail Cameron

May 30

Jim & Mary Lynn Goulden

Mark & Laura Staal

May 31

John & Linda Anderson

Butch & Betty Chandler

Charlie & Abigail Taylor

Brownson Youth had an amazing and busy end to the programmatic year. Youth Sunday gave the youth an opportunity to share what they have learned throughout the year through words, music and art. Their leadership was inspiring and authentic. The confirmation class completed their process by sharing their faith stories with Session and answering membership questions. It was wonderful to welcome 15 new members to Brownson through confirmation! On May 3 Brownson Youth celebrated the end of the year during our last youth group by playing games, thanking the volunteers and honoring the senior class.

The summer will be full of exciting things too! Please keep the youth in prayer as they embark on missions trips and conferences throughout the summer.

Massanetta- Middle School Conference- June 18-21

Montreat- High School Conference- July 12-18

Appalachia Service Project- Missions Trip- July 26- August 1



BROWNSON
YOUTH
A missional community called to love and live in Christ



BROWNSON KIDS

A missional community called to love and live in Christ



Looking back at God's faithfulness and looking forward to what He will do in the future...that is so easy to see when looking at children's ministry. What a gift it is to love our children at Brownson, and to watch as they grow in friendship and faith.

Ways we've seen God's faithfulness just this year:

- Children plug into Milestones every month. It has been such an exciting time as we've learned about topics like our Identity in Christ, Communion and Worship, Bible Exploration, and more!
- Families being in genuine community with each other. Whether providing meals, praying together in small group, or just supporting each other in ways seen and not seen, God has been faithful in providing community here at Brownson.
- Children running and playing each Sunday evening! Whether we're doing a scavenger hunt to learn about the Parable of the Lost Coin, skating to learn about forgiveness, or duct tape games to learn about The Good Samaritan, there is fun being had and faith being formed!
- A nursery absolutely full of babies, and wonderful nursery teachers who love them so well! What a gift – what a joy!

This is just a snapshot of God's faithfulness in children's ministry, but we are also looking ahead to all God will continue to do. With children, it will be messy, loud, and chaotic, but still full of holy moments. We're excited about a summer of Vacation Bible School, Camp Monroe, community camp, some mission opportunities, and the privilege of worshipping together each week!

VBS—Save the Date
June 22-25 9-12 PM
VBS Sunday | June 28

Register: brownsonchurch.org/registration

Mission Statement:

To mobilize God’s people to build relationships and alleviate community suffering.

Local Missions

When Brownson began 90 years ago, serving the community was a significant part of their original mission. And the Local Missions Ministry Team continues to partner with local organizations, both through financial contributions and hands-on support.

On March 29, 16 friends and families from Brownson, ages 2 years to 101, participated in the Crop Walk for Hunger at Union Pines High School. Our team raised over \$1,000 of the \$20+K raised locally with a percentage of that staying in Moore County.

On April 10 & 11, seven members and friends hammered nails and cut wood to start the Habitat Apostle’s Build on Saunders Blvd. Our builders got in on the "ground floor" as floor joists were laid for the house and the front deck.

We’re still looking for some overnight hosts for our weeks at Family Promise. If you’d like more information, please contact Sara Conti (937-725-3016).

**Volunteers needed
Immigrant Hope, Sandhills, NC**

Immigrant Hope Sandhills is a national nonprofit organization offering the hope of Jesus and Godly community while providing affordable immigration legal services. Their legal representatives are accredited by the Department of Justice. Volunteers are needed to meet with clients as case workers to assist with intake of new clients. This is a way you can help clients as they navigate their legal journey towards residency and/or citizenship. Training is available based on the volunteer position. The organization is also seeking individuals to serve on the board of directors to help guide it in the months to come. More information is available on their website ihsandhills.org. You may reach the Executive Director, Tamara Fore by phone at 901-756-1490 or email tamarafore@immigranthope.org. The chairman of the board is Matt Jones; phone, 910-818-0055 or email, saved2serv@gmail.com



Brownson Learning Center

Brownson Learning Center is wrapping up its ninth year of ministry in the Brownson Church and Moore County community! What a blessing it is to open our campus each week to our 88 young students and their families. We do not take lightly the privilege it is to guide these children in their earliest school days and the trust their families have in us to lead and guide them!

The BLC held its annual Bike-A-Thon last month to raise funds for new equipment to complement our playground as well as new toys to refresh our center play. Our students brought their bikes, trikes and scooters and rode their little hearts out around our parking lot! They secured donations for each lap they completed and had the most fun! We are so thankful for the community of families and friends who helped make this day possible.

As we reflect on the 90th anniversary of Brownson Church, we are so thankful to be a small part of the overarching ministry to our local community. We close out this school year with grateful hearts and big dreams for our preschool graduates!



Worship & Music Notes

At our 90th Anniversary Celebration, the Chancel Choir—joined by Moore Brass and timpani—offered an anthem that felt both majestic and deeply fitting for the moment: “*O God Beyond All Praising*.” Set to the soaring tune often known as THAXTED, the music carries a history that reaches beyond the church and into the broader world of orchestral repertoire.

The melody itself comes from *Jupiter* in “The Planets” by Gustav Holst, composed during the first World War. Over time, this melody found new life in the church, paired with sacred texts that draw out its sense of awe, gratitude, and quiet strength.

Michael Perry’s 1982 text, sung on Sunday, captures that spirit with remarkable clarity:

O God beyond all praising,
we worship you today
and sing the love amazing
that songs cannot repay;

For we can only wonder
at every gift you send,
at blessings without number
and mercies without end:

We lift our hearts before you
and wait upon your word,
we honor and adore you,
our great and mighty Lord.

Then hear, O gracious Savior,
accept the love we bring,
that we who know your favor
may serve you as our king;

And whether our tomorrows
be filled with good or ill,
we’ll triumph through our sorrows
and rise to bless you still:

To marvel at your beauty
and glory in your ways,
and make a joyful duty
our sacrifice of praise.

What makes this pairing so powerful—especially for an anniversary—is the way it holds together two essential truths.

First, it is a song of *remembrance*. “Blessings without number and mercies without end” invites us to look back across nine decades of Brownson’s life and to recognize, with humility and gratitude, the faithfulness of God. The music itself—expansive, grounded, and luminous—mirrors that sense of accumulated grace, of a story larger than any single moment.

But just as importantly, it is a song of resolve and commitment. The second stanza turns forward: “whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill.” This is not a naïve optimism; it is a mature, resilient faith. It acknowledges that the future, like the past, will hold both joy and challenge. And yet, the promise remains: “we’ll triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless you still.”

That is the posture of a 90-year-old church at its best—not simply celebrating longevity but recommitting to purpose, moving forward together in faith.

Holst’s melody, born in a time of global uncertainty, and Perry’s text, written for the worshiping church, come together to form something uniquely appropriate for this moment in Brownson’s life. They remind us that praise is not dependent on circumstance. It is a discipline, a calling, and ultimately a response to who God is.

As we move beyond this anniversary and into what comes next, perhaps this anthem gives us a kind of musical and spiritual framework to remember with gratitude, to stand with courage in the present and to move forward with faith, knowing God will never leave us or forsake us.

And above all to “make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.”



Welcome New Members

The Session of Brownson welcomed the following new members into our church family on May 10, 2026



Hannah Wolf and family



Jennifer and Nick Gray and family



James and Shelby Zotto with Cash



Adam Bridges and Abbie Sargeant with Blair

Rev. John Hage
Senior Pastor
john@brownsonchurch.org

Rev. Elizabeth H. Doolin
Associate Pastor for Congregational
Care and Connection
elizabeth@brownsonchurch.org

Kelli Garbett
Director of Children and their Families
children@brownsonchurch.org

Erin Pollock
Director of Youth and their Families
youth@brownsonchurch.org

Amy Shortt
Director of Music Ministries & Organist
music@brownsonchurch.org

Kacy Depenbrock
Director of Brownson Learning Center
blcdirector@brownsonchurch.org

Dick Hart
Facilities Manager
facilities@brownsonchurch.org

Lia Keane
Administrative Assistant
assist@brownsonchurch.org

Jody Marley
Bookkeeper
finance@brownsonchurch.org

Stacey Ostlund
Church Administrator
stacey@brownsonchurch.org

910.692.6252
www.brownsonchurch.org

2026 Session of Brownson

Alex Bowness | Anne Friesen | Art Edgerton
Betsy Robinson | Bill Berger | Charles Harris
Chris Hunt | B. Christian Freberg | David Malan
Donna Chapin | Farra Wilson | Gena Smith
Jane Howard | Jan Stone | Jeff Ward
John Krahnert | Kara Vonderkall
Keith Walvoord | Lisa Hughes | Mandy Berg
Patrick Depenbrock | Pat Henry | Roy Cameron
Ryan Morrison | Ruth Burgin
Hardin Freberg (Y) | Ella Hall (Y)

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9-4 PM
Sunday Worship: 9 & 11:10 AM
Livestream Worship: 11:10 AM

BROWNSON
MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Brownson Church
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STAFF TEAM