



90 Years
ANNIVERSARY

*Ninety Years of Grace
Our Story
God's Faithfulness*

2025 Fall Small Group Series PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

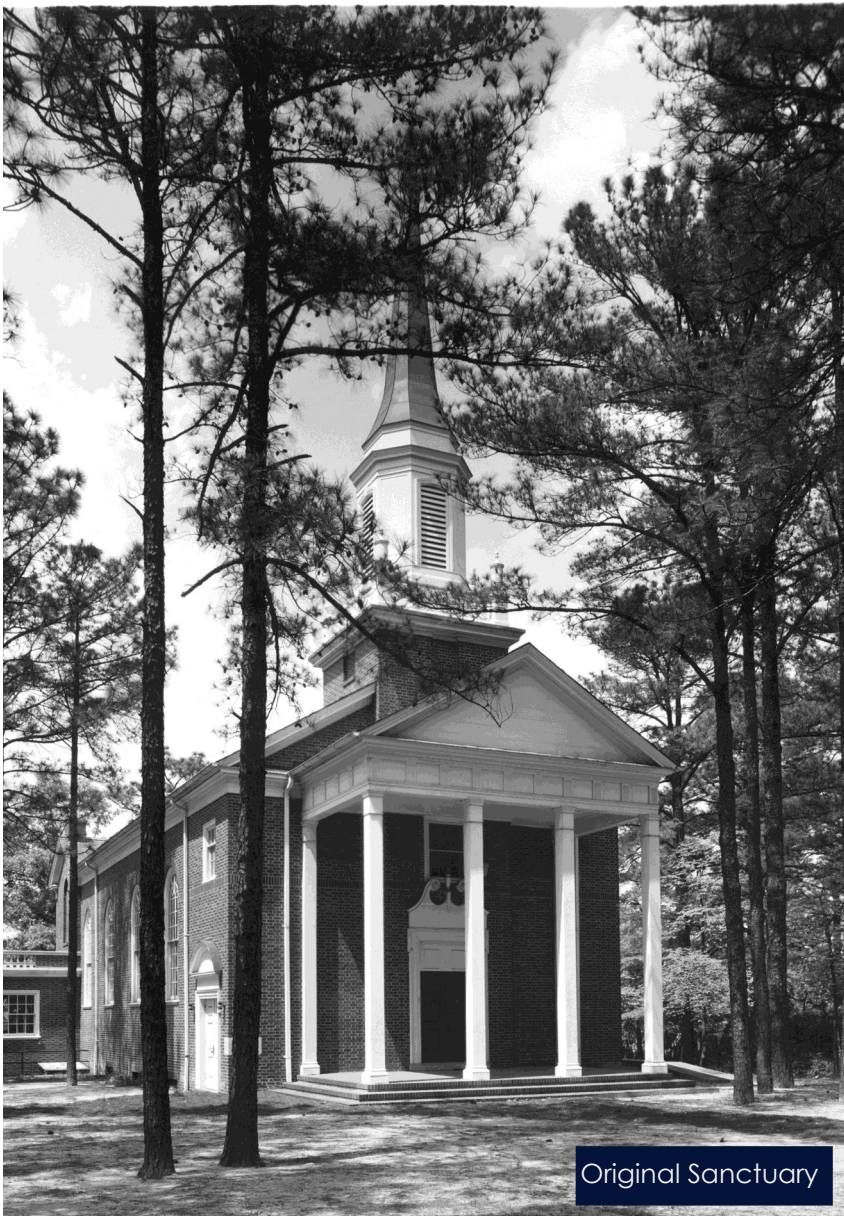
BROWNSON
MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
A missional community called to love and live in Christ



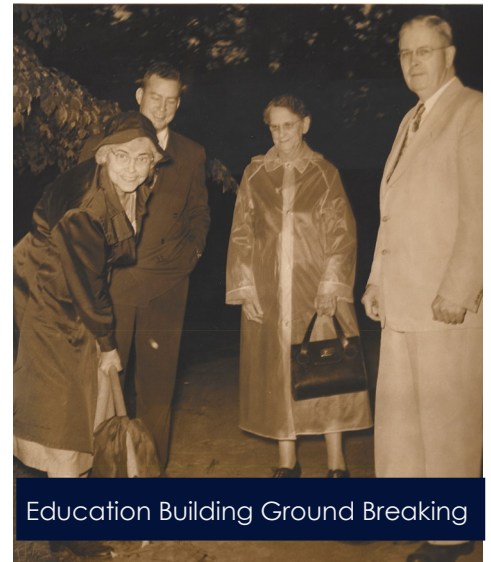
Rev. & Mrs. Chevez Ligon



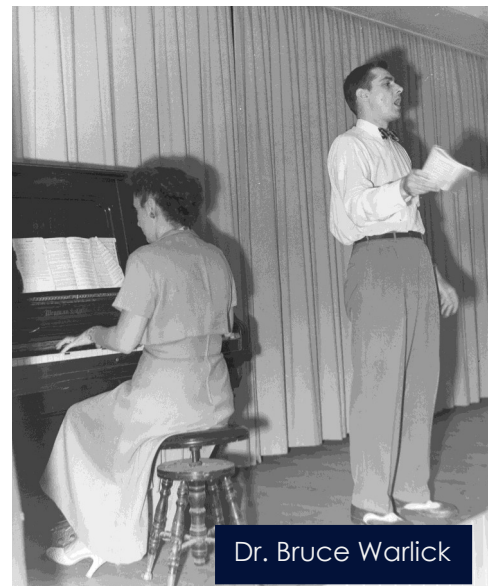
Rev. & Mrs. Ernest Barber & Rev. James Dellert



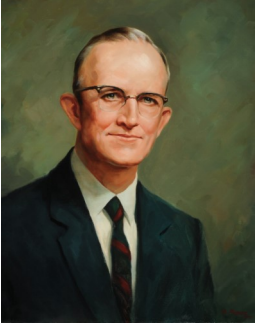
Original Sanctuary



Education Building Ground Breaking



Dr. Bruce Warlick



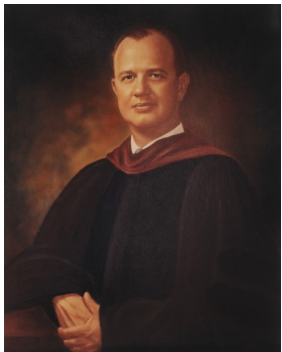
Ernest Lowry
Barber A.B., B.D.



Rev. Thompson
E. Davis



Rev. Chevez K.
Ligon



Rev. Dr. Julian
Lake

Our history...

April 15, 1935 - Reverend Ernest L. Barber conducted the first Southern Pines Presbyterian Church service, which was held in the Civic Building in Southern Pines.

June 28, 1936 - The church name was changed by vote of the congregation to Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church, in honor of Dr. Marcus Brownson.

June 23, 1937 - The official ground breaking was held for the original Sanctuary.

June 10, 1938 - The first worship service was held in the original Sanctuary.

1951-1955 - The Education Building was constructed.

November 5, 1978 - Fellowship Hall was completed, and the dedication service was held.

March 3, 1996 - Fellowship Hall was used for Sunday worship. Building Committee begins work on plans for a new Sanctuary.

May 2, 1999 - First Sunday services in new (second) Sanctuary.

May 23, 1999 - Dedication of the new Sanctuary

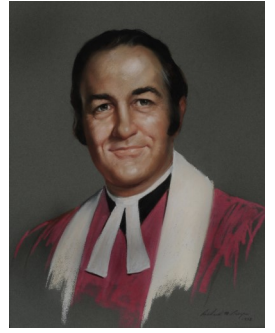
May 2010 - The Cornerstone Building was completed, and church offices were relocated.

July 11, 2010 - Cornerstone Building Open House was held.

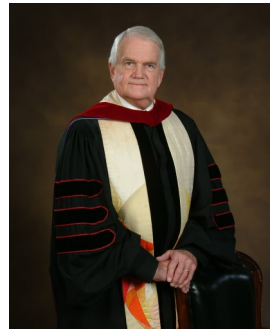
September 22, 2010 - Conference Center renovation completed.

November 14, 2010 - Dedication of Cornerstone Building and Conference Center renovation.

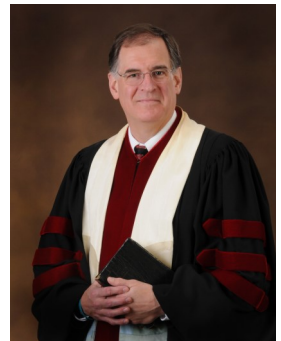
May 15, 2011 - Brownson's 75th Anniversary Celebration.



Rev. James R. Dellert



Rev. Dr. Harold E. Hyde



Rev. Dr. Grady J.
Perryman



Rev. John C. Hage

Acknowledgement about the Series

As we prepare to celebrate Brownson's 90th anniversary, we pause to remember that our story is not simply about buildings, budgets, or programs—it is a story of God's grace. For ninety years, God has called ordinary people in this community to step out in faith, to give sacrificially, and to build a spiritual home that has blessed generations.

Much of what we will cover in this season will highlight the early history of our church—the generosity and leadership of Dr. Marcus Brownson, the patience and perseverance it took to build a sanctuary during the years of World War II, and the creation of a camp for soldiers that offered care and connection in a time of great need. These stories remind us that the foundation of our congregation has always been faith lived out in action.

Some of the quotes you will encounter in this series come from *The History of Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church*, written by Ethel Ann Blue Britt. We are also deeply grateful for the additional pictures provided by our church historian, Elaine Sills, and our Church Librarian, Beth Carpenter, which help bring these stories to life.

This October, we will journey together in a five-week series called **“90 Years of Grace: Our Story, God's Faithfulness.”** Each week we will reflect on a central theme—Purpose, Perseverance, Provision, Presence, and Promise—drawing wisdom from Scripture and remembering moments from Brownson's history that reveal God's hand at work. Our prayer is that this series will not only remind us of how God has been faithful in the past but also inspire us to live with courage, generosity, and hope for the future. May we, like those who came before us, trust that God is still leading us forward.

Booklet Structure

This booklet provides a weekly lesson to be discussed in your small group as well as guidance for individual faith formation. Unless otherwise noted, scriptural passages included in the content of the study are the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Your group's first meeting will discuss *Lesson 1*.

Expectations for This Booklet

We hope that this participant booklet would serve as a devotional resource that encourages connection and deeper conversations in your small groups. We do not believe this is an exhaustive resource upon the texts we will cover or the history of Brownson church. The strength of this booklet is the space it creates for the conversation you will have in your small group.

Weekly Lesson Structure

Discuss one lesson each week. Each week will follow a similar pattern:

- 1) Gathering Question
- 2) Opening Prayer
- 3) Scripture
- 4) Scriptural Reflection
- 4) Vignette from Brownson's History
- 5) Discussion Questions
- 6) Closing Prayer
- 7) My Story, God's Faithfulness

Group Covenant

Your group is invited to review this covenant before beginning Week One. Please feel free to add, edit, and make it your own.

Small groups are wonderful opportunities to grow in faith, guided by the Holy Spirit, alongside others in our community. An essential component of the small group experience is to operate with a sense of trust and accountability to one another. Please prayerfully consider the covenant below as a way to affirm one another in this group setting.

I will make attending this group a high priority, missing only when ill or out of town.

I will strive to be on time to all of our group meetings.

I will come willing to fully participate, preparing for each meeting and being open to God’s presence and to others in the group. No one will be asked to share what they do not want to share. The group will respect each person’s position.

I accept that group members have the right to their own opinions. I will respect and receive what others offer, even if I have a different perspective. I will try to create space for others to share.

I will respect the confidence of each group member. What is shared in this group stays in this group, unless otherwise directed.

I will listen to and care for the members of my group.

I will pray for our group time and for each member of my group.

Participant signature: _____

The contents of the historical perspective in this study come from the church historical writings of Ethel Ann Blue Britt.

THE HISTORY
of
BROWNSON MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SOUTHERN PINES, NORTH CAROLINA
MARCH, 1936 – MARCH, 1949

LESSON 1: Called with PURPOSE

Gathering Question

When have you felt called to do something you didn't feel fully prepared for?

Opening Prayer

God of burning bushes and holy ground,
You call us with purpose even in difficult times.
Open our ears to your voice and our hearts to your leading. Amen.

Context

Exodus tells us that after Moses fled Egypt, he settled in Midian, where he married Zipporah, daughter of Jethro (also called Reuel), and worked as a shepherd. Scripture does not give an exact number of years, but Acts 7:30 notes that Moses was in Midian for about **forty years** before God called him at the burning bush. Mt. Horeb—often identified with Mt. Sinai—is traditionally located in the **southern Sinai Peninsula**. It is remembered in Scripture as “the mountain of God”

Scripture Reading (NRSV)

Exodus 3:1–12

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up.” When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey... The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” He said, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.”

Reflection on the Text

Moses was not seeking out a great mission—he was simply tending sheep when God interrupted his ordinary day with an extraordinary call. His first response was not confidence but fear and hesitation: *“Who am I that I should go?”* Yet God’s answer was not to build up Moses’ résumé but to promise: *“I will be with you.”*

This story reminds us that God calls ordinary people in uncertain times, not because they are perfectly equipped, but because God’s presence and purpose are enough. Our calling, like Moses,’ is not rooted in our adequacy but in God’s faithfulness.

Historical Context

Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church was born in the shadow of some of the most challenging years in modern history. Our congregation first gathered and organized while the nation was still reeling from the Great Depression, and the world was on the brink of World War II. Out of hardship and uncertainty, a community of faith took root—committed to hope, resilience, and God’s steadfast presence. The timing of our inception reminds us that the Church does not wait for perfect conditions to begin its mission, but shines brightest in seasons of need.

- The Great Depression (U.S.): October 29, 1929 – early 1940’s (commonly marked 1941)
- World War II (Global): September 1, 1939 – September 2, 1945
- World War II (U.S. involvement): December 7, 1941 – September 2, 1945

The Brownson Story: A Founding – Walking Together in Faith

In the mid-1930s, a small group of Presbyterians in Southern Pines felt a call much like Moses’—to begin something they didn’t feel fully prepared for. They petitioned the Fayetteville Presbytery to organize a church where they and their children could worship, grow in faith, and walk together as disciples.

On March 15, 1936, seventy people signed the Charter Roll of what became the Southern Pines Presbyterian Church. They gathered with resolve, trusting that God’s hand was in their midst. Within months, the congregation renamed itself *Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church* in honor of Dr. Marcus Brownson, whose spiritual leadership and encouragement inspired them.

The founding members’ courage, generosity, and willingness to take a step of faith remind us that God calls communities just as God calls individuals. They may have asked, “*Who are we to start a church in this town?*”—but they trusted God’s promise: “I will be with you.”

Brownson was founded with purpose and faith. Our giving today is a response to God’s ongoing call—to step forward in trust, to build up the body of Christ, and to carry the mission into the future.

An Important Hymn

From its earliest days, Brownson closed every worship service by singing “*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*.” Dr. Brownson requested it so that each member, “*would carry the song of the Cross stamped upon their hearts as they went into the world.*” (See Hymn on Page 9)

Discussion Questions

1. What strikes you most about Moses’ call story?
2. How does God assure Moses in his fear and reluctance?
3. How do you see God using ordinary people and gifts in extraordinary ways?
4. In what ways has Brownson’s story reflected God’s call in hard times? What connections do you see between Moses’ story and Brownson’s story?
5. What does it mean for us to live with purpose as a church today?
6. Take a look at the words of *When I Survey The Wondrous Cross* and discuss why you think this must have been such an important Hymn to Dr. Brownson and the congregation.

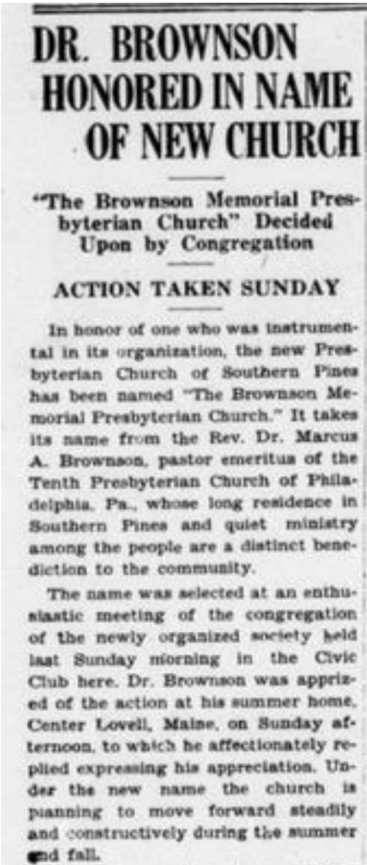
Closing Prayer

Lord, you formed Brownson with a purpose.
Help us live into that call with courage and generosity.
May we, like Moses and like those who came before us,
trust your promise: *"I will be with you."* Amen.

My Story, God's Faithfulness

What is my purpose?

NOTES:_____



From The Pilot

Mr. Brownson has been making Southern Pines his winter home since his retirement from active ministry a number of years ago. He has, however, preached in Sandhills churches on many occasions, and has endeared himself to one and all in the community. Prior to the organization of the new church he addressed an adult Bible class each Sunday at the Presbyterian Mission held in the Civic Club, and continued to lead the class after the mission was taken into the Fayetteville Presbytery several weeks ago as one of its established churches. The Rev. E. L. Barber of Aberdeen is pastor of the new church, and Dr. Brownson was one of those whose help and enthusiasm led to the church's establishment.

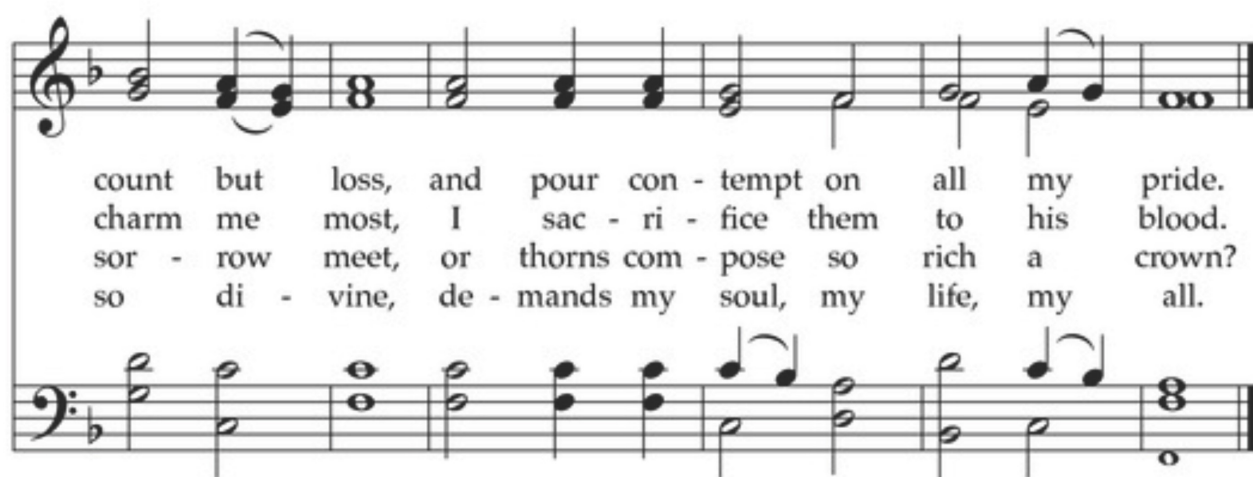
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross 223



1 When I sur - vey the won - drous cross on which the
 2 For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the
 3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sor - row and
 4 Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, that were a



Prince of glo - ry died, my rich - est gain I
 death of Christ my God; all the vain things that
 love flow min - gled down; did e'er such love and
 pres - ent far too small; love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss, and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
 charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
 sor - row meet, or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
 so di - vine, de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

First Photograph of New Brownson Church



Presbyterians Turn Another Milestone In Their Meteoric Career in Southern Pines With Institution of New Heating Plant in May Street Edifice

Another milestone was reached this week in the progress of the three-year old Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church of Southern Pines, three years which have seen not only the organization of the church but the erection of a handsome edifice on South May street.

A new heating plant has been installed during the past week and will be ready for use this coming Sunday, the Rev. Ernest L. Barber, pastor, announced yesterday. The plant is a modern, automatic, electrically-controlled oil burning, hot air model, made by the Lenox Furnace Company of Syracuse, N. Y., said to be the oldest furnace manufacturing firm in the country. The furnace will have ample capacity to heat the

entire building. The furnace was purchased from and installed by C. J. Wiggs, heating contractor, of Fayetteville at a cost of approximately \$2,000.

Few milestones are left to bring to completion the new home of the Presbyterians. The pressing needs are plastering the walls and overhead, hardwood floors throughout, completion of chancel, installation of pews, and a concrete floor for the basement.

The church is in a healthy condition, as week-by-week reports show a decided gain over last year and reveal that much is being accomplished. If the congregation can show as much development in the next few years as it has in the past three or four, it shall have every reason to be thankful.

LESSON 2: PERSEVERANCE: Built Brick by Brick

We must remember to build in our hearts a temple to the Lord, as we strive to build, week by week, a sanctuary which God can occupy. In truth, each brick represents sacrifice; the mortar, the tie that binds.” – Dr. Marcus Brownson, 1937, Groundbreaking of BMPC.

Gathering Question

Share a time when you had to keep going even when the way was hard.

Opening Prayer

Faithful God, you provide water in the wilderness and strength for the journey. Give us perseverance as individuals and as your church. Amen.

Scripture Readings (NRSV)

Exodus 17:1–7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?”

So Moses cried out to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” The Lord said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

“He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Romans 5:3–5

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Scriptural Reflection

Both Exodus and Romans remind us that perseverance is born in hard places. The Israelites, thirsty and afraid, tested God in the wilderness, asking, “*Is the Lord among us or not?*” Yet God provided water from the rock, sustaining them in their trial. Paul echoes this same truth: even suffering can become a channel of God’s grace, producing endurance, character, and hope that does not disappoint.

Perseverance is not simply about willpower—it is about trusting God’s provision in the dry seasons of life and allowing hardship to form us into a people of hope. Just as God was faithful to Israel in the desert and to the early church in struggle, so too has God been faithful to Brownson’s story.

The Brownson Story: Brick by Brick

Brownson's early years were marked by perseverance in difficult times. In 1936, the young congregation debated whether it was even possible—or wise—to build a church in the midst of the Great Depression. Many families were struggling, jobs were scarce, and war loomed on the horizon. Yet they pressed forward, purchasing land on the corner of May Street and Indiana Avenue.

The total cost of the land was a daunting \$30,000—and the congregation committed to a “pay-as-you-go” plan, refusing to go into debt. Progress was slow. Heated debates ensued. But the people kept going, brick by brick. Children even joined the effort, filling small wooden penny banks shaped like barrels to raise funds for the new church. Dr. Brownson inspired perseverance by reminding the congregation:

“Within the edifice, a congregation will gather to yield themselves supremely to Him...We cannot question His Holy Will, for the Lord is with us; He will be with us, and bring our desires to a full fruition.”

Each brick, as he said, represented sacrifice. Each layer of mortar represented the tie that bound the community together in faith. Like Israel at Massah and Meribah, they could have turned to fear. Instead, by God's grace, their endurance produced character—and character produced hope for generations to come.

Brownson's faith was never instant—it was layered and lasting. Their perseverance through the Great Depression built a church brick by brick, sacrifice by sacrifice. Our giving today continues that legacy, creating hope that will not disappoint.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the Israelites quarreled with Moses in Exodus 17? In some ways why are their fears justified? How did it also represent their lack of faith in God?
2. How does God provide even in times of frustration and fear?
3. What do Paul's words in Romans teach us about the relationship between suffering, perseverance, and hope?
4. Where do you see perseverance shaping character in your own life?
5. How does Brownson's “brick by brick” history reflect endurance and trust in God's provision?
6. How can our perseverance today become a witness of hope for future generations?

Closing Prayer

God, when we grow weary, remind us of your faithfulness. Strengthen our perseverance as we walk with you. May our endurance be shaped into character, and our character into hope, so that future generations may see your love poured into our hearts. Amen.

When and where has God given you the strength to persevere in your own story?

NOTES: _____

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

LESSON 3 – PROVISION: Giving That Sustains

Gathering Question

What is the most meaningful gift you've ever received or given?

Opening Prayer

Generous God, you provide through the hands and hearts of your people. Teach us to see every act of giving as holy. Amen.

Scripture Reading (NRSV)

Exodus 35:20–29

“Then all the congregation of the Israelites withdrew from the presence of Moses. And they came, everyone whose heart was stirred and everyone whose spirit was willing, and brought the Lord’s offering to be used for the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the sacred vestments. So they came, both men and women; all who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and pendants, all sorts of gold objects, everyone bringing an offering of gold to the Lord...All the Israelite men and women whose hearts made them willing to bring anything for the work that the Lord had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord.”

Scriptural Reflection

Exodus 35 reminds us that the tabernacle was built not only by gold and silver, but by the *willing hearts of God’s people*. Brownson’s early story is a living testimony to both. The sanctuary was not built in a day, but through the endurance of a people who believed that God was calling them to create a home for worship. Even in the scarcity of wartime, they opened their doors to strangers in need, embodying the character of Christ. Out of their perseverance came hope—hope that does not disappoint, because it is rooted in God’s love.

Their story reminds us that every act of giving, no matter how small, is part of God’s larger work of provision. Every gift matters. Together, small acts of faith sustain God’s work across generations. Endurance in giving builds a legacy of hope.

Brownson Story – Purpose and Provision in Hardship

On Sunday morning, June 11, 1939, Brownson held its first worship service in the new church building. But it was not a polished sanctuary—it was a crude, fresh-air shell, with rough benches for pews, unplastered walls, and no doors or windows. Still, God’s people gathered, confident that His presence was not bound by finished walls.

Then came new trials. By 1941, restrictions from the National Defense Effort made it nearly impossible to obtain building materials. Yet, “little by little,” as one church bulletin encouraged, the congregation kept working, praying, and giving. That same year, Brownson opened a Soldier Center in the fellowship hall, offering hospitality to soldiers and their families during a time when Southern Pines was bursting at the seams with military personnel and housing shortages. Members gave coffee, bread, cookies, even stationery, so that soldiers could write home.

The history tells us: “*Just as a soldier performs incredible feats of valor on the field of battle, so can church members perform deeds of Christian service in the face of an emergency the like of which they had never dreamed.*”

It took nearly twelve years before the church was fully organized and completed. And yet, in those years of sacrifice, perseverance, and generous giving, God’s presence was deeply felt.

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out about the Israelites' offerings in Exodus 35?
2. What do you think it means to have a "willing heart" and what are the obstacles?
3. How do you see Romans 5:3–5 illustrated in Brownson's early history?
4. How do you see God providing for you through the generosity of others?
5. In what ways does perseverance in giving—especially when times are hard—shape our character and deepen our hope?

Closing Prayer

Lord, take our gifts—large and small—and use them for your glory. Teach us to endure in hope, trusting that You always provide. Amen.

My Story, God's Faithfulness

When has the Lord provided in a difficult time in your life and your story?

[illegible]

LESSON 4 – PRESENCE: God With Us Then and Now

Gathering Question

What's one way you remember God's presence in your own life?

Opening Prayer

God of the Jordan and the Promised Land, you remind us that you are with us yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Keep us mindful of your presence in all we do. Amen.

Scripture Reading (NRSV)

Joshua 4:1–9

Select twelve men from the people, one from each tribe, and command them, 'Take twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood, carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you camp tonight.'

Then Joshua summoned the twelve men from the Israelites, whom he had appointed, one from each tribe. Joshua said to them, "Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, one for each of the tribes of the Israelites, so that this may be a sign among you.

When your children ask in time to come, 'What do those stones mean to you?' then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial forever."

The Israelites did as Joshua commanded. They took up twelve stones out of the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord had told Joshua, carried them over with them to the place where they camped, and laid them down there.

Scriptural Reflection

When the people of Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land, God did not simply perform a miracle and move on. Instead, God commanded them to remember. Twelve men, one from each tribe, carried stones out of the riverbed where the priests had stood holding the ark. They placed those stones where they camped that night, so that future generations would see them and ask, "What do these stones mean to you?"

These memorial stones were not just for decoration. They were testimonies. Each stone carried a story—of God's power in parting the waters, of God's faithfulness in leading the people through, and of God's presence in their journey. They were reminders that the people had not crossed the Jordan by their own strength, but by the grace of God.

Every community of faith needs such "stones of remembrance." They may not always be literal rocks, but they are the practices, prayers, buildings, ministries, and stories that remind us of what God has done. For Brownson, our sanctuary, our livestream ministry, our baptisms, our missions, and even prayers from long-ago bulletins are our memorial stones. They tell future generations: God was here. God was faithful. God carried us through.

Joshua's command is also a charge to us: when children and young people ask, "What do these stones mean?" we are called to tell the story—not of our strength, but of God's. Memorials are never meant to glorify us, but to bear witness to the God who makes a way when there seems to be no way.

The challenge is this: what stones are we setting down today? What will future generations point to and say, “This is where God showed up”?

Like the Israelites, may we carry stones of remembrance on our shoulders—not as a burden, but as a testimony of God’s faithfulness—so that others will see, hear, and know that the Lord is with us, yesterday, today, and forever.

Brownson Story

In 1949, a prayer was printed in the Brownson worship bulletin:

“God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship and a Father’s care, and narrow enough to shut out all envy, and hate. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, weakness, or straying feet, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the Tempter’s power. God make this house the gateway to Thine Eternal Kingdom.”

This prayer has become more than words on a page—it has shaped Brownson’s story across the decades. When the pandemic shut down the world on March 15, 2020, just six days later Brownson’s doors were opened in a new way, through livestream worship from our sanctuary. The door was indeed wide enough to reach beyond our walls into homes and hearts across our community.

In recent years, God has widened our ministry even further. The Brownson Learning Center was launched and now serves 88 children and their families, embodying Christ’s welcome and care. We celebrate baptisms—19 children and youth in 2023, compared to five the year before—a visible reminder that God’s promises continue from generation to generation. Our children and youth programs are flourishing with exponential growth, raising up the next witnesses to Christ’s love.

And true to that 1949 prayer, Brownson’s doors continue to open outward, reaching beyond ourselves. Through the Bold Initiative and the Fellowship of Churches in Moore County, we join hands with others to serve our neighbors in Christ’s name.

The prayer that asked God to make this house “the gateway to Thine Eternal Kingdom” has been, and continues to be, answered. For ninety years and counting, God has been faithful, and the Spirit continues to lead us forward.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does God tell the Israelites to set up stones from the Jordan? What do you think was going through the Israelites’ minds as they were crossing?
2. How do memorials help us remember God’s presence?
3. What are the “stones” in Brownson’s history that mark God’s faithfulness?
4. How can giving today become a visible testimony of God’s presence?
5. What “stones” have been left for you in your life? What “stones” do you want to leave for the next generation?

What is the Ark of the Covenant?

The Ark of the Covenant was a golden-covered, wooden chest containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, a jar of manna, and Aaron’s rod, which symbolized God’s sacred presence and his covenant with the Israelites. Built according to God’s instructions, it served as a holy symbol and portable sanctuary, a reminder of God’s laws, and a way for the High Priest to meet with God once a year to offer sacrifice and atonement. The Ark represented God dwelling with His people in a very real way.

Closing Prayer

God, help us to remember your presence and to live so others may see your faithfulness in us. Amen.

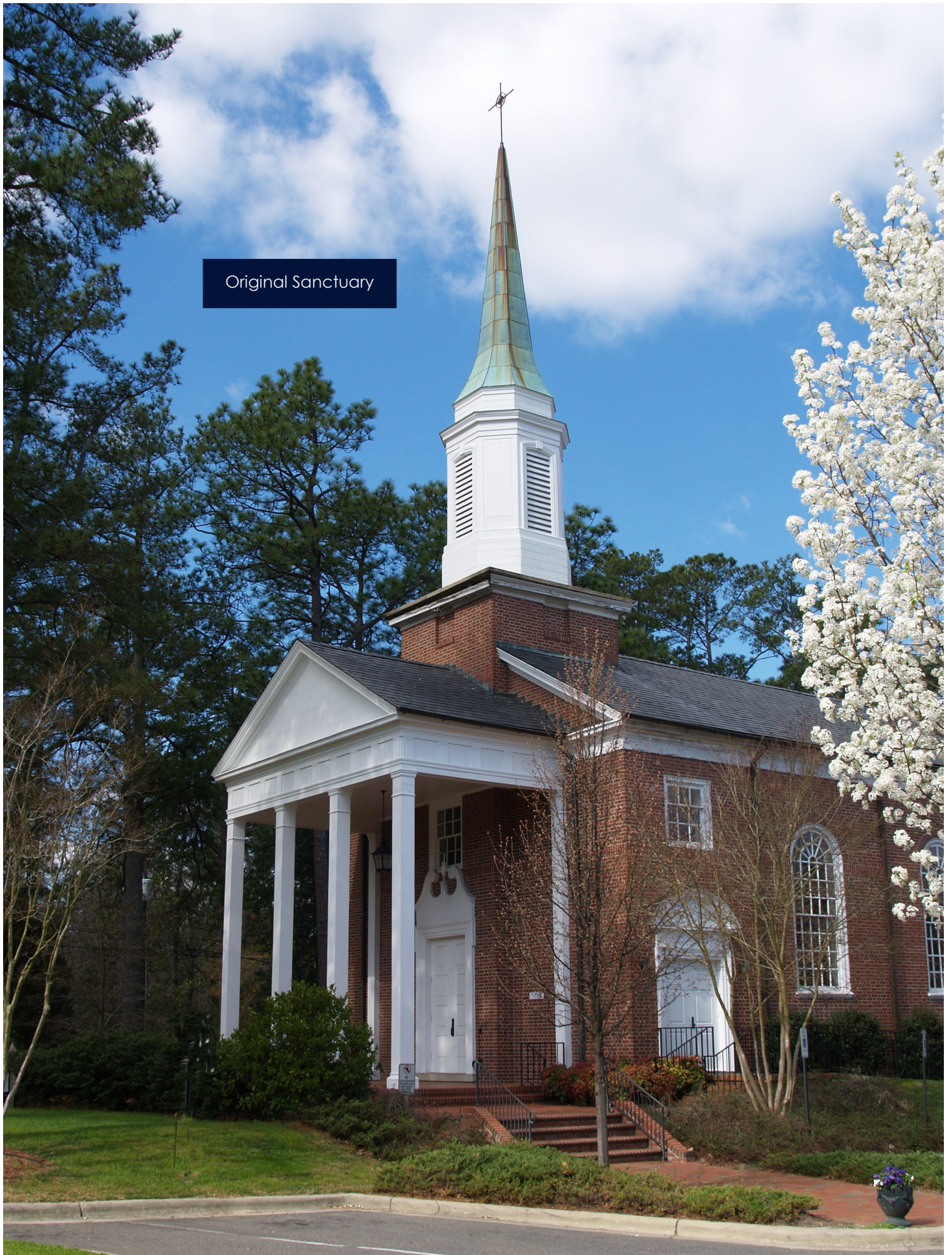
My Story, God's Faithfulness

What “stones” of God’s presence have you experienced in your life? What “stones” do you want to leave for the next generation?

NOTES: _____

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal black lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Original Sanctuary



LESSON 5 – PROMISE: Looking Back & Investing in the Future

Gathering Question

Who has been a “cloud of witnesses” in your life of faith?

Opening Prayer

God of promise and renewal, you are the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Give us vision to trust your future with hope. Amen.

Scripture Readings (NRSV)

Hebrews 12:1–2

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Revelation 21:3–5

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’”

Scriptural Reflection

Hebrews 12 encourages us to run with perseverance because we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Their faith strengthens ours, reminding us that we are not alone. Revelation 21 gives us the vision of God’s ultimate promise: a new heaven and earth, where mourning and pain will be no more.

Brownson’s history tells the same story. Our forebears trusted God’s promises and invested in the future, not knowing what the world would bring. They built not only a church building but also lives of faith, wells of hope, and testimonies of God’s presence.

The question for us is: *What wells are we digging today? How will our gifts, our perseverance, and our witness shape the future of Brownson and the lives of those yet to come?*

Brownson Story – Building Toward the Future

A church bulletin from September 28, 1941, reminds us that Brownson has always invested in its young people: *“The Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church is justly proud of its young people. We are represented by them in many colleges and universities. At North Carolina College for Women, Greensboro, NC are Catherine Hilderman, where she is doing outstanding work in Dramatics; Helen Hilderman, who is President of Freshman and Sophomore Presbyterian Student Organization; and Carlice Dickerson, a member of the Sophomore Class. Louise Blue is a Sophomore at Queen’s College in Charlotte, N.C. She is Treasurer, Student Christian Association; Vice-President, Student Christian Fellowship, prominent in athletics, and on the Dean’s list of outstanding students. Robert DuRant is a Freshman at Davidson College. We expect him to keep up his good record which he earned in High School.”*

These words remind us that Brownson has always seen its purpose not only in bricks and mortar but in building lives of faith. The “cloud of witnesses” is not only the saints of Scripture but also those in our own history—pastors, teachers, and members who poured themselves into the next generation.

Just as Revelation 21 points us to God’s promise of renewal—“See, I am making all things new”—so too Brownson’s investment in young people, mission, and ministry is a testimony of hope in God’s unfolding future. The wells dug in the past—through sacrifice, service, and generosity—continue to provide living water today.

Discussion Questions

1. As you read Hebrews 11–12, who are the witnesses named and why do they matter?
2. How do you see God’s promises fulfilled in Revelation 21?
3. What promises has God already kept in your life?
4. Who is your “great cloud of witnesses?” How does remembering the saints shape our faith today?
5. The saints gave to build Brownson—now it’s our turn. Our generosity is a sign of trust in God’s promises. By digging wells today, we provide living water for tomorrow. What does it mean for us to invest in God’s future through our giving?

Closing Prayer

Faithful God, you have carried us for 90 years, and your promises will carry us still. Strengthen us to invest in your future with hope and joy. Amen.

My Story, God’s Faithfulness

In looking back where has God been faithful and in looking ahead where is God leading me?

NOTES:_____

My Story—Bringing it all together

1. My Story, God's Faithfulness - Purpose

What is my purpose?

2. My Story, God's Faithfulness - Perseverance

When and where has God given you the strength to persevere in your own story?

3. My Story, God's Faithfulness - Provision

When has the Lord provided in a difficult time in your life and your story?

4. My Story, God's Faithfulness - Presence

What "stones" of God's presence have you experienced in your life? What "stones" do you want to leave for the next generation?

5. My Story, God's Faithfulness - Promise

In looking back where has God been faithful and in looking ahead where is God leading me?

Trivia - 90 Years of Grace: Our Story, God's Faithfulness

1. Who was installed as the first part-time pastor of the newly organized Southern Pines Presbyterian Church?
 - A) Rev. Brownson
 - B) Rev. Barber
 - C) Dr. McMillan
 - D) Rev. Smith

2. What was the original name of Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church?
 - A) Southern Pines Presbyterian Church
 - B) First Presbyterian Church of Pinehurst
 - C) Brownson Memorial Church
 - D) Sandhills Presbyterian Church

3. Which hymn did Dr. Brownson request to be sung after every Benediction, so the congregation would leave with the song of the Cross upon their hearts?
 - A) Amazing Grace
 - B) Great Is Thy Faithfulness
 - C) When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
 - D) A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

4. In 1936, the church purchased its building site on the corner of May Street and Indiana Avenue. What was the total cost of the land?
 - A) \$500.00
 - B) \$1,538.39
 - C) \$3,000.00
 - D) \$30,000.00

5. In 1938, before Brownson Church had been built and after the Civic Club lease was not renewed, where did the congregation worship?
 - A) Southern Pines Theatre
 - B) Local school auditorium
 - C) Town Hall
 - D) Community Center

6. On June 11, 1939, Brownson held its very first worship service in the new church building. What was the condition of the sanctuary at that time?
 - A) Fully completed with pews and stained glass windows
 - B) A crude shell with rough benches, no plaster, and no doors or windows
 - C) Half-finished but usable with heat and lighting
 - D) Completed basement only, worship held underground

7. In 1941, what special ministry did Brownson open in its fellowship hall to serve the community during the war years?
- A) A food pantry
 - B) A sewing circle for soldiers' uniforms
 - C) Brownson Memorial Soldier Center
 - D) A daycare for working mothers
8. How many years did it take from Brownson's organization until the church building was fully completed and the congregation moved from mission status to independence?
- A) 5 years
 - B) 7 years
 - C) 10 years
 - D) 12 years

- 1. B) Rev. Barber
- 2. A) Southern Pines Presbyterian Church
- 3. C) When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
- 4. D) the total purchase price was \$30,000
- 5. A) Southern Pines Theatre
- 6. B) A crude shell with rough benches, no plaster, and no doors or windows
- 7. C) Brownson Memorial Soldier Center
- 8. D) 12 years

Answer Key

Who was Dr. Marcus Brownson? (1857-1938)

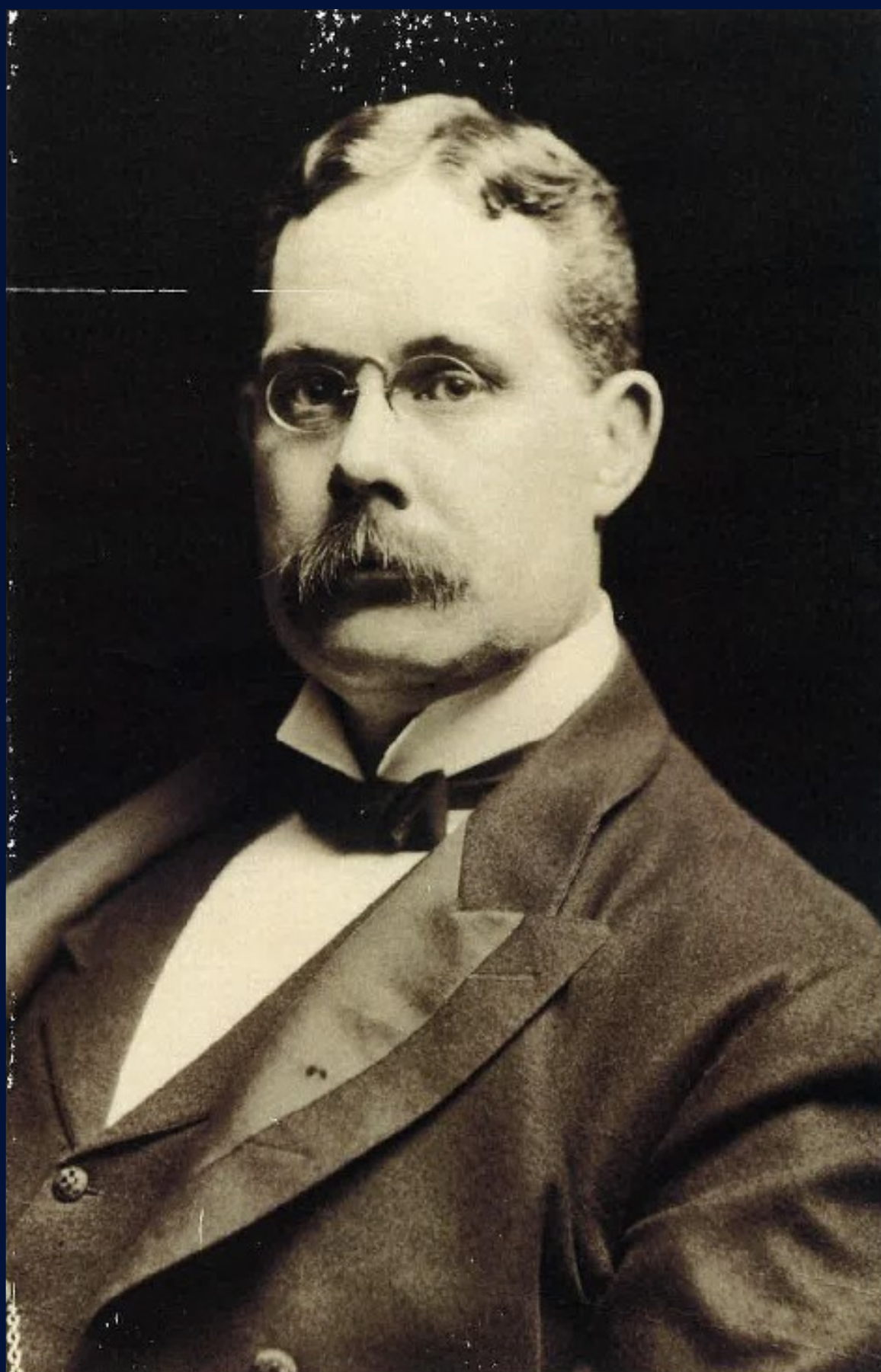
(The information below was taken directly from the History of Brownson Church By Mrs. Haynes Britt)

The son of the late. Rev. James I. Brownson, D.D., who for fifty years was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of that city, and of the late Eleanor Acheson Brownson. Marcus A. Brownson graduated from Washington-Jefferson College in 1878. He received his theological training at Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Divinity in 1881. Dr. Brownson was ordained to the Gospel ministry in 1883. His first pastorate was the First Presbyterian Church of Camden, New Jersey, from 1883 to 1889. During this pastorate he married Miss Julia Jonvier Bush, of Wilmington, Delaware, this marriage taking place in 1885. To this union was born a son, George Bush, who died in infancy. Mrs. Brownson died in 1889.

Dr. Brownson became the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Detroit, Michigan, in 1889, and in 1895, he married Miss Mary Pruyn Strain of Albany, New York. To them was born daughter, Agnes, who died in childhood. In 1897, Dr. Brownson became the pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he remained for twenty-five years, retiring in 1922, at which time he became Pastor Emeritus of the Tenth Church. Upon retirement, he and Mrs. Brownson came to Southern Pines to make their winter home. While in Southern Pines, the second Mrs. Brownson passed to her reward. Dr. Brownson received his degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1891 from Washington-Jefferson College. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of Princeton Theological Seminary; Trustee of the Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia; a member of the Board of Relief of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.; a delegate to the Pan-Presbyterian Council held in Liverpool, England, in 1904; a delegate to the John Calvin celebration in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1909, and a member of the National Service Commission during World War I.

During the last years of his life, Dr. Brownson became interested in the Presbyterian Church mission in Southern Pines. When the Sabbath School was organized, he became the first teacher of the Adult Bible Class, which he taught until he became ill just prior to his passing. According to the history of the Church already recorded, he manifested his love for the little Church which bears his name by innumerable services which he performed on its behalf. Always he exercised his great influence to strengthen the Church in its usefulness. Additional evidence of this is in the fact that the church was remembered in his will. Dr. Brownson willed the sum of \$2,000 to be used in finishing and in furnishing the Chancel, as a memorial to his "beloved wife, Mary Pruyn Brownson."

All members of Brownson Memorial Church, the town of Southern Pines, and surrounding communities, knew that they had suffered a great loss upon his death. It was felt, however, that Dr. Brownson was a man of rare gifts, a brilliant mind, a magnetic personality; and a great soul. He had, in the words of Job, come to his grave in a full age, like as a shuck of corn cometh in his season. No clergyman was better suited to his varied calls of duty than was Dr. Brownson.



BROWNSON

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