



The Bartley Family

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Dear Faithful Supporters,

September 2026

"If I had really known what I was getting myself into, maybe I would not have started this building project." These are the words that I said to my friend after a year and a half of working in the extreme heat and humidity! We were tired, we were exhausted, and sometimes even discouraged. This project seemed to go by very quickly, but at the same time it seemed to drag on forever.

However, every drop of sweat, blood, and tears was worth it. Looking back, God brought the people into my life that HE knew would bring glory to Him.

Bruceville Baptist Church is in an area of town most people do not go to. (Sometimes, even the police) After much prayer and trusting in the Lord to provide the funds, we started building. Up to when we started building, the gangs were active, the violence was ongoing, and the community was feeling the repercussions of all that. We knew that God had to be in this project because, from the moment we started building, all that commotion came to a halt, and that can only be explained as a miracle from God. In these 2-plus years, this community has been peaceful.

From the first dig to the last clean-up or painting job, God brought individuals and groups to help us along the way. Each one of them was a blessing and encouragement! Unexpected ways and unexpected people are usually how God gets things done, and we saw that firsthand!

There was never a day that went by when someone in the community did not stop by to ask what was happening and what we were building. It was a perfect opportunity to speak with them about God's love! One of these people was our neighbour right beside where we were building. Throughout the building process, he would help out and ask questions. Although kind, helpful and thankful that a church was going to be his neighbour, he is a man who is very confused and stubborn in his beliefs, and with a couple of "colourful" words, he said he would never set foot in a church like ours.

The construction continued, and we continued to pray for our neighbour. The day finally came for our open house and dedication Sunday! It was an exciting time; we had a full house.

Some were from other churches and a good number from Bruceville, and guess who was among them? Sitting at the back of the auditorium was our neighbour and his girlfriend! What an answer to prayer. Although he did not get saved that day, but praise the Lord, the seed of the Gospel was sown again, and he actually did something he said he would never do. ("Step foot in a church like ours")

We are praying that our building will be used for the glory of God and that souls will be saved. Along with our regular services, we have already used it for 2 VBSs with over 60 children (many indicated their acknowledgment that they needed to be saved), as well as using a portion of the bottom floor for monthly children's reading activities and small workshops. During the school break, my wife started a weekly reading and craft program for the children.

The work continues in Bruceville at Bruceville Baptist Church. One of our goals is to always point souls to the cross. As we put the final touches on the church building, our aim was for the people of Bruceville to always look to the cross. We added a light to the cross on the front of the building so that, at night, people could look up to the cross and know that the Light of the world is Jesus.

Matthew 5:14-16

"Ye are the light of the world, A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Would we do it again? In a heartbeat.



