

### Times of Services

#### Sunday

9:00 a.m. Bible Study  
10:00 a.m. Worship

#### Wednesday

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

### Other Study and Worship Opportunities

- The Pines/Cady Hills Bible Study -Sun. & Thurs. at 7:00 p.m.
- Young Bible Scholars – No meeting in December
- Lady’s Bible Classes at YMCA – January 9 at 1:15 p.m.
- Sunday and Wednesday Services/Lessons are recorded on FB
- Second Sunday Neighborhood Bible Study – 3:30 p.m.
- Third Sunday – Trinity Care Home Service - 1:30 p.m.
- Fourth Sunday Song Service following 10:00 a.m. sermon
- (NEW) Second Tuesdays at 11 a.m. – Trinity Personal Care Activities Room , January 9

### News and Notes

- **Prayer Requests:** Patsy Chunn, Jim Ratcliff, Wade McCrary, Doug Wheeler, Mike Lavender, Mike and Marion Butler, Lee Gallop, the Andy Elliott Family, and Rebecca Powell. Cindy Nutt requests our prayers for her grandchildren and family. Ellen and Dylan Haas ask for prayers for their family. Prayers are requested for John Lavender, Mike and Marilyn’s son John has kidney and heart disease issues.  
**Sick:** Andy Elliott is undergoing treatments for back injuries. Andy will also have eye surgery in March. Jim Ratcliff continues to battle health issues. Doug Wheeler has been undergoing treatment for tongue cancer.
- **Deaths:** Sara Williams, mother of Ed Williams, passed away on November 19, 2023.

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# East Columbus Bulletin

## Putting Our Hand to the Plow



“Yet another said, ‘I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home.’ Jesus said to him, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God’ ” (Luke 9:61,62).

ONE COMMON THREAD RUNNING THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT IS COMMITMENT. Will we follow Jesus? Our answer must be more than “maybe” or “if I don’t change my mind.”

Decisiveness. Too many so-called “Christians” have never decisively “put their hand to the plow.” But a true disciple is one who has considered the alternatives and made an actual commitment.

Sacrifice. Commitments are nearly always hard to keep. Circumstances arise that test our resolve. So we must be prepared to sacrifice and suffer loss rather than go back on our promise.

Trust. When tested, the only thing that will keep us steady and true is a deep trust that God is not going to let us down. We must believe that heaven will be worth any amount of loss.

The trust required to make our commitment to Christ, along with its attendant sacrifices, is based on God's worthiness of trust. Everything He has ever revealed about Himself shows that He can be counted on. His promises can be trusted. So we must not look back wistfully at the things we have given up; our Father has much better things waiting for us at the end of the road.

It was a strong, forward-looking faith that moved Abraham to leave his home in Ur of the Chaldeans. He may have had fears, but he "obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance" (Hebrews 11:8). And he was not alone in trusting God's promises. Through the centuries, many others have "died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return" (Hebrews 11:13–15).

So, my dear friends, may we "put our hand to the plow" in faith, love, and confident hope. May we commit ourselves to following Jesus Christ wherever He leads. And may we never look back.

"Has this world been so kind to you that you would leave it with regret? There are better things ahead than any we leave behind" (C. S. Lewis).

**Gary Henry — WordPoints.com**

## **Improvement**

Clarence W. Barron, considered the founder of modern financial journalism once succinctly observed: "Everything can be improved." It's easy to see the need for improvement in physical and material things. Roads. Houses. Building and Bridges. We all long to see improvement in the way our government functions. And, of course, we can easily spot the areas in which others can improve.

But what [about] you? And me?

And I'm not talking about financial, career or material improvement, but personal improvement. Self-improvement.

Regarding our homes, it's very easy to see how our spouse could improve. Or our children. Or our parents. But what about us? American businessman Bo Bennett once quipped, "Spend some time this weekend on home improvement; improve your attitude toward your family." How can I be more loving? More patient? More responsible? And less irritable? Less demanding? Less self-absorbed?

I often hear people criticize local churches. Every attendee is an expert on how the church can improve. We critique the preacher. The song leader. The announcer. The Bible class teacher. And the men leading prayer and those serving the Lord's supper. We evaluate the friendliness and hospitality of the brethren and the way visitors are received.

But what about you and me? Are we adding value to the local church? Are we doing our best? Serving? Teaching? Encouraging? Edifying? Using our talents? Extending hospitality? Speaking to others? Fervently worshipping? And joyfully engaging in fellowship?

The areas of improvement are obvious to us when observing the lives of other Christians, but less apparent in our own lives. To modernize the quote of Robert Burns, "Oh, the gift that God could give us, to see ourselves as others see us." But even more importantly would that we pray the prayer of David, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart" (Ps26:2).

In order to improve, we must see ourselves as God sees us. We must believe we can improve. Truly desire to improve. Identify those areas in which we can improve. And then make a conscious choice to set in motion a plan for improvement.

The Bible says, "Examine yourselves" (2 Cor 13:5). Are we growing spiritually? Increasing in knowledge? Developing deeper faith? And demonstrating the fruit of the spirit in our lives? Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. And self-control.

The Bible command "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 3:18) is not optional. And it implies that we can improve.

The Bible says that 12-year-old Jesus when home to Nazareth and was subject to Joseph and Mary and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Lk 2:52). If the Son of Man in His human state could grow and improve, surely that says you and I can and must follow His example to improve our lives.

Motivational author Brian Tracy urges us to "practice the philosophy of continuous improvement. Get a little bit better every single day." As Mark Twain once quipped, "Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection."

Finally, remember the words of baseball Hall of Famer, Dizzy Dean, "Pardner, when you quit gettin' better, you quit being good."

**—Ken Weliever, The Preacherman**