

APRIL 16, 2023

CHURCH OF CHRIST



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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:

Bible Classes.....9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes.....6:00 p.m.

*Minister, John Keith
(304) 266-9027*

WELCOME!

We invite you to all of our services.

“...the churches of Christ salute you” (Romans 16:16)

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE IN CHRIST.

Have you noticed when shopping that the most common, and most needed items are either very low or very high on the shelves, and the things that many are not really interested in are at eye-level. The stores do this on purpose to try and get consumers to “impulse-buy” or buy things we had not planned to buy. Humans can be very impulsive, whimsical, or erratic.

That is not the case with God. He had an eternal plan and has stuck with it for millennia. God, being infinitely wise, never had to guess or wonder if He was choosing the right course of action. He has never had to spend arduous and lonely hours or days agonizing over His next move. Significantly for us, before time began God even had a plan for redeeming sinful, fallen man.

Paul writes, “*just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having **predestined** us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will*” (Eph. 1:4-5 emp. added). Notice when we were “chosen”; “**before** the foundation of the world”. God determined before time to save the ones who were “in Him”, that is, in Christ. God did not randomly assign some to Heaven and others to Hell; that is **not** what predestination is about!

Suppose it was announced that this Friday, everyone living in Guernsey County would receive one million dollars. When Friday rolled around anyone not living in Guernsey County would not get the money. They were not chosen by name, but by *location*. Likewise, those who are *in Christ* (location) are the recipients of God’s blessings; those not in Christ do not receive His blessings.

Another facet of this eternal plan was that we all be united in Christ. “*having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might **gather together in one all things in Christ**, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him* (Eph. 1:9-10). God desires for His children the same kind of unity He has with Jesus Christ (John 17:21-23). Paul even draws an illustration from the Jewish temple when he points out that Christ “*Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might*

reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity” (Eph. 2:14-16). The “middle wall of separation” referred to a literal wall within the temple complex beyond which Gentiles were prohibited from passing. It stood as a reminder that the Ten Commandment Law stood between the Gentiles and salvation, and the Gentiles and the Jews. Christ effectively *broke it down* from the cross, thus, ensuring the God’s grace enveloped all nations (Titus 2:11), not just physical Israel.

A third aspect of God’s eternal plan for His predestined (in-Christ) ones, is the inheritance He desired to give us, the terms of reception of which are encapsulated in obedience to the Gospel (2 Cor. 9:13), or “the faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). In Ephesians 1:11-12, Paul wrote, “*In Him [note again the location] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.*” The “we” statements are referring to the Jews who were the first to be offered the inheritance through the saving Gospel in Acts 2.

In the verses following, Paul wrote that, *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory* (Eph. 1:13-14). Here, “you” refers to the Gentiles who later heard the word and believed. We should note that believing is tantamount to obeying. John writes, “*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does **not obey** the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him*” (John 3:36 ESV emp. added). The inheritance is only bequeathed to the *in-Christ-ones*, Jew, and Gentile.

When we are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3-5), we are thus, sealed by the Holy Spirit. That is, He dwells within us as our identification as a child of God. When students hand in papers to a teacher, the teacher knows which paper belongs to which student because he or she put their name on the paper; they sealed it, in other words: “This is my paper”. God claims us as His own because He has sealed us with His Spirit.

Since Gentiles can be fellow-heirs and partakers of the same promise (Eph. 3:6), we are bound to respond to the Father with thanksgiving (Eph. 3:14) for the greatest gift, greatest promise, and the greatest purpose ever known! —✍

Welcome!

We are thankful for your presence. To our visitors, please fill out one of the blue cards and place it on one of the collection plates.

Please welcome **Charles Pugh** who will be teaching our morning class and speaking at both services today while Tina and I are on vacation.

Wednesday Bible Study: Revelation 13:2f.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- There will be a baby shower for **Amanda Watson** on April 30th, immediately following morning worship. A light lunch will be served.

REMINDERS:

- ❖ **May 21-25**—Our *Gospel Meeting* with **Phil Grear**. Potluck on 21st
- ❖ There are change cans for **Potter Children's Home** on the back table.
- ❖ **Oct. 7**—*Men's Encouragement Day* here with **Roger Rush**.
- ❖ **Several area events are posted on the bulletin board.**

IN OUR PRAYERS: Kevin Adkins, Diann Bachmann, Betsy Cook, Erma Endly, Mike & Karen Grove, Cathy Jackson, Bruce & Kim Johnson, Gary Jones, Rick Lambert, Jody Main, Carol Mitchell, Bev Singleton, Linda Steele, Helena Tewksbury, Jean Whitley, and Randy Yost.

SHUT-INS:
Debbie Jones,
Nancy Love,

FAMILY AND FRIENDS: **Weston Boulet** (great-grandson of Shirley Patterson), **Betty Cox** (Diann Bachmann's sister), **Melanie Harper**, **T.J. Hart**, **Trudy Kerby**, **Linda Potts** (Joyce Starrett's sister-in-law), **Kellie Price** (Richard Mayo's cousin), **Addy Reed**, **Rodney Reeves** (Erica Cunningham's father), **John Rockhold**, **Conrad Schultz**, the U.S.A., **Ukraine** and remember to pray for **one another**.

AM STUDY	SUNDAY AM	SUNDAY PM	WED. STUDY	GIVING (\$2,460)
38	76	35	27	\$2,261

Just a thought—Put 100 black ants, and 100 red ants in a jar, Nothing happens. But if you give the jar a good shake, the ants will start killing each other. The red ants will consider the black ants their enemy, and the black ants will consider the red ants their enemy, but the real enemy is the one who shook the jar. The same is true in society. Before we begin attacking each other, we should consider who is shaking the jar. That's our real enemy.