

# CHRISTIAN CENTER

EQUIP ~ ENGAGE ~ EDIFY

January 2024

for the equipping of the saints  
for the work of ministry,  
for the edifying of the body of Christ  
Ephesians 4:12

## **Matthew 5:7**

**Blessed are the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.**

The topic of our men's retreat this coming weekend is Blessed. It is based on the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 5. As I prepare my teaching for the retreat, the thought is, "How can we be in a position to be blessed by God so we can be a blessing to others?" Without giving my whole message here, our continued need to walk in fellowship with the Lord has resonated with my heart; seeking for His will to be done and for Him to reign as King over the throne of our hearts. That is the best place we can be. When we are in the center of God's will, we will live the abundant life Jesus spoke of.

## **John 10:10**

**The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

An abundant life brings us to a place where we are satisfied, content, and fulfilled. We can thrive in all God has for us as we live out our days for Him. In addition to living a fulfilling life, we position ourselves to be used by the Lord. It is first Him working in us and then Him working through us. We can only be a blessing to others when we are in a position to have the Lord flow in us and through us. As Jesus said,

## **John 7:37-38**

**... "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."**

We drink first, and then the river flows forth. Living water is needed to bring life to the lost and hope to the fearful. We live in turbulent times. With wars breaking out in the Middle East and the possibility of that flowing into our homeland, not to mention the political landscape and division in our country, it is understandable that people would be concerned and afraid. This is an opportunity for us as believers to be grounded in our faith so that we can stand firm upon the Rock of our salvation. Jesus can work in and through us to be able to not only survive these times but to thrive through them. The key is positioning ourselves to receive His blessings which are exceeding, abundantly above all that we could ask or think. Stay close to Jesus.

God Bless You,

*Pastor Steve*



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**MEN'S RETREAT**  
January 26-28, 2024

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## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

BY MARIAN MELLOR

**Psalm 8:3-4 "When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?"**

This is the passage that the children in our fellowship are learning as we study Creation. What a joy it has been to ponder the incredible imagination of our God! He obviously is the Master Creator! Recently, Debie took some Lincoln Logs into her class so the children could create cabins and such. It is so awesome to realize that God is able not only to create the expanse of the heavens as well as the tiniest atoms, but also to know us intimately - better than we know ourselves. Thinking of such things is very humbling and awe-inspiring. It makes me want to sing praises to our God continually!

On a different note, we are really excited to be hosting Diane Mathis and Courtney Lee, a mother/daughter ministry team, for a women's retreat at the church on January 27th from 9:00-3:30. They will be sharing about the lives of Sapphira, Priscilla and Lydia, from the book of Acts. Teresa San Filippo was blessed to attend one of their retreats in 2022 and she is grateful that we will have the opportunity to receive from them as well.

May this new year be awe-inspiring for you as you consider the greatness of our God and remember that **"He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6b).**

Blessings,

Marian 😊





BY DUANE JOHNSON



### A New Year and a New Beginning

We have started a new year. This is the time when so many make resolutions to "fix" the areas in their lives that they see to be lacking. To be honest, I have never been one to make New Year's resolutions. That being said, I do believe that the beginning of the year is a good time to reflect on my life. Victoria Manley was explaining her view on resolutions, and it really impacted me. If we look at the definition of the word, we get a different take on the modern view of a resolution. Today people make statements that they will stop drinking or lose weight and when it isn't working or is going too slowly, they quit. One of the actual definitions of resolution is "the quality of being determined or resolute." The definition of being resolute is "admirably purposeful, determined, and unwavering". Shortly after that I heard a song, "Build My Life," by Pat Barrett. The bridge of the song reads:

I will build my life upon Your love it is a firm foundation

I will put my trust in You alone and I will not be shaken

With these thoughts in mind, I have determined to be resolute in seeking God's will in my life. I will build my life on the firm foundation of God's love. The line in the song that struck me to the core was "And I will not be shaken." Too often in my past I have been shaken off my path. What shakes us off the path that God has for us? Often it is the small things. We let life get in the way of God. My goal, and my prayer for each of you, is that we will not be shaken. It was said best in **Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."** If we want the best version of life, we just need to listen to Matthew. Be resolute in our actions to seek God.

With the world in the crazy state that it's in, it is so much more important that we as Christian men hold fast to our God. There are many ways we can do this. Spending time in the Word and seeking opportunities to grow in our faith are two important factors in our spiritual growth. One of those opportunities is the men's Bible study at 7:00AM Saturday mornings. May God bless you in the coming year and please join us Saturday mornings.

*Duane*





BY SUSIE SIMPSON

Well, here we go! We're off to another year! 2024 is a year full of possibilities, blessings, and challenges. None of us know with certainty all that this year holds. What we do know is if we have a relationship with Jesus, it doesn't matter so much what this year holds, but that our Lord and Savior holds us! Yes, there will be struggles that God allows in our lives, and He will use them for His divine purposes. What will we learn from those struggles or challenges? That's up to us.

We will fare much better in 2024 if we will bring everything to God in prayer. On Monday evenings, we are doing a study specifically on prayer. We are studying specific prayers recorded in the Bible, and specific types of prayer as well. We are learning that God invites all of our words, all of the time; and that prayer is way more than just asking God for things. Prayer does invite petition, but there is also praise, lament, intercession, and unity.

Are you a little anxious about this coming year? Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6 to put everything in God's hands. He tells us to be anxious about no thing - right, nothing! How do we do that? Pray about everything. Bring it all to the One who loves you unconditionally. Paul also stated in **1Thessalonians 5:16-17, to "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."**

Come and learn how to do this with us on Monday nights! This is a Bible study in which you can join anytime and still reap lots of benefits. We learn so much from each other and our individual life experiences. We pray for each other. We are better together.

God bless you,

*Susie*



LADIES CHRISTMAS PARTY



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE



## WOMEN'S MONDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

BY DEBIE DILLAHUNT



Happy New Year! What are you hoping this new year will bring? Peace? Joy? Freedom from worry? How about a closer walk with God? Whatever your hopes, God's Word contains rich guidance and wisdom on all of these topics and more. His Word is a treasure – a wealth of encouragement and the perfect guide for how our Lord wants us to live.

In our morning study, we are exploring the book of Romans in a study called, In View of God's Mercies, by Courtney Doctor. As Courtney shares, "Paul wanted his readers to rejoice and rest in the glorious ramifications of this salvation for everyone who is in Christ: peace, life, freedom, adoption, love, hope..." As believers in Jesus, we are truly blessed by God in countless ways! With all the negative things happening in our upside-down world today, don't we all crave Good News?! The book of Romans is focused on the good news of the Gospel. Jesus is our Good News!

Our study this season is centered on God's mercy toward us. The definition of mercy is "compassionate and kind treatment." Our Lord is so compassionate and full of mercy toward us! A beautiful verse that illustrates this is found in **Lamentations 3:22-23, "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not; they are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."**

As believers in Jesus, we are so blessed to belong to God's family! We are additionally blessed with a Bible-believing church where God is praised and glorified by our worship songs and by Pastor Steve, who faithfully teaches God's Word. The love and fellowship we share are priceless and truly a gift from God!

If one of your hopes for this new year is to have a closer walk with the Lord, consider joining us for Bible study. We have a sweet time together as we learn and share what we glean from spending time in God's Word. Come and soak up some GOOD NEWS!!

***"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13***

Love and Blessings,

*Debie*

### UPCOMING EVENTS

MEN'S RETREAT JAN 26-28

WOMEN'S RETREAT JAN 27 9:00-3:30

BUSINESS MEETING FEB 4 1:00

CHURCH DINNER FEB 12 5:30

