

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

April 6, 2025

Song: **621** – *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*

Song: **319** – *I Need Thee Every Hour*

First prayer: **Mark Brandt**

Song: **89** – *'Tis Set, the Feast Divine*

Communion servers: **Brian Zumalt** & **Shane Upton**

Prayer for giving: **Jeremy Thomas**

Song: **1** – *Wonderful Words of Life*

Sermon: “Baptism and Pardon of Sins” – **Jerry Brewer**

Invitation song: **430** – *God is Calling the Prodigal*

Closing song: **826** – *Will You Not Tell it Today*

Closing prayer: **Mernie Ray**

### PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

- Jerry & Sherlene – health
- Kim's cousin's son (Isaac Wood) – stroke recovery
- Rick Beauchamp and Jerry, Sonya, and Lee Smith (Northpointe) – car accident
- Our nation (1 Tim. 2:2)
- Our members with health issues: Kim, David

**Please continue to remember:** Connie Townsend, Lucinda, Vipin & family, India work, Aruna Kavali, Marinda Breeding, Holley Brewer, Kevin Brewer, Dylan Walker

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- “Precept Upon Precept” is a YouTube channel with many sermons/articles from faithful brethren ([www.youtube.com/@preceptuponprecept8495](http://www.youtube.com/@preceptuponprecept8495))

### RECORD FOR WEEK OF MARCH 30, 2025

#### ATTENDANCE:

Bible Class – 8      AM Worship – 22      Sun PM – 11      DBR – 9      Wed (4/2) – 9

Contribution – \$1512

# Yukon Church of Christ

## **THE LABORER**

702 South Ranchwood Blvd., Yukon, OK 73099      (405) 354-0238

Preacher: David Ray

Web Site: [www.yukoncofc.org](http://www.yukoncofc.org)

**Sunday Bible class:** 9am    **Worship** 10am & 12:30pm    **Wednesday Bible class:** 7pm

**Matthew 9:37-38** “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”

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## **“PRAISE TEAMS”**

[CONTINUED]

When discussing the alleged need for a praise team, it was usually claimed that the purpose was to teach the different parts (e.g., alto, tenor, baritone, etc.) to the other church members. But first, nothing in the Bible requires the church to sing with perfect four-part harmony; this has never been a part of God's command to sing. And second, if the congregation (or an individual member) desires to learn how to sing better, this is fine. But teaching brethren to sing can be done in another setting (e.g., in a class or in a member's home).

Another claim is that, if it's okay to have one song leader, then it's okay to have multiple song leaders at the same time, and this is all the praise team really is. Anyone witnessing these two things can easily see the difference, particularly in the presentation of each. A song leader is a simple, necessary expedient: for a group of people to sing the same song, someone has to lead it – pick the song, start it, pitch it, keep the tempo, etc. He stands alone on stage and leads the song, without showing off his musical ability (in reality, an abundance of musical talent is **not** necessary to be an effective song leader). While his voice is heard as a leader, it is easily matched by the voices of the congregation once they begin singing. It would be utter silliness for the congregation to feel any need whatsoever to clap for him or in any way acknowledge him in this setting.

These things cannot, however, be said of the praise team. Its members are chosen for their abilities to sing the multiple parts. Probably most men who are

able to satisfactorily lead singing in most congregations would not be considered good enough singers to be invited to sing on a praise team. They practice during the week so that their voices blend together beautifully, causing the congregation to audibly notice them throughout the song, giving their attention to them and their abilities instead of paying attention to the **words** of the songs and praising **God** appropriately, and resulting finally in the natural response of feeling the need to applaud the praise team, just as one would if he were at a concert. (While these things may not be true of every praise team, it's important to clarify that these feelings are not just this author's opinions and observations, but were complaints that were received from church members about the praise team.)

Additionally, as mentioned above, every praise team this author has ever witnessed has included women. This presents another problem: female leadership in worship. Yes, just as a single song leader is, by definition, a **leader** in worship, so is a group of song leaders in a praise team. Therefore, this is another violation of God's instructions. 1 Timothy 2:11-12 says, *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer (permit) not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."* This does not mean she can't sing; it means God has given the authority of the leadership of the church to the male. And when a woman stands on stage and leads singing, whether alone or in a praise team, she is violating this command. And no man (elder or otherwise) has the right to give this authority to her.

It is my opinion, based on my personal experience, that the purpose of a praise team is purely entertainment. People like to be entertained, and most people enjoy singers, particularly those who sing multiple-part harmony. There's nothing wrong with this. Listening to, and certainly singing, four-part harmony is one of my favorite things in life. But we have to remember that the worship of God is not the time or place to entertain me! Worship is about honoring and reverencing God, not entertaining ourselves.

It is sad that, throughout most of the religious world, it seems entertainment is **all** that worship is really about. Most religious groups have musical instruments, or even entire bands, turning what was supposed to be worship of God into a rock concert in order to attract, entertain, and retain members. "Worship should be fun" is their mantra, though nowhere to be found in Scripture.

And in churches of Christ that haven't yet apostatized to the point of bringing instrumental music into worship, they have the praise team, which may be

nothing more for them than a step in that direction. Praise teams have no greater purpose than to entertain the members. In this sense, they are very aptly named, considering these groups are **receiving** praise from members who applaud their singing abilities (sometimes literally). These same singers, who will claim this is a totally false accusation, will point their fingers up to God after they finish singing a song in order to remind the members Who is supposed to be receiving the praise! The very fact that they have to do this is proof positive that praise is being directed at them, not God. When was the last time you saw a traditional song leader point to God after leading a song? This doesn't happen because the church doesn't applaud him. But they do the praise team. And the praise team can point toward God all day long, but the "worshippers" know who they're applauding.

Praise teams are a man-made, unauthorized addition to God's authorized form of music in worship. The passages referenced above (Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16) teach that, during worship, we **all** are to sing songs of praise one to another (reciprocal action). There is no authority for soloists, duets, praise teams, or choirs, all of which are about impressing the listener with the vocal ability of the singers. It is **God** we should want to impress; and this is done by simply doing what He commanded us to do, without adding to or subtracting from His instructions. He is well able to communicate to His people what He wants in worship; so, if He is silent on an action, we can know that He didn't want us to engage in it (i.e., such an action is unauthorized).

Instead of employing praise teams and other man-made inventions for the perceived improvement of the musical portion of our worship, perhaps a better idea would be for each member to make a more concerted effort to improve the spiritual aspect of our worship by **focusing on the words** he is singing. Scripture nowhere dictates what type or quality of singing we must have (the true melody is in our hearts). But it does tell us that our words are to teach and admonish each other. Therefore, we should make every effort to sing only those songs that are scriptural in their message.

God wants to hear **all of us** sing, not just a portion of the congregation, or just a select few members amplified above the others because they have better voices. Let's simply do what God has commanded, and leave the man-made innovations to those who **do not** love and respect His Word.

David Ray