A silhouette of a church steeple with a cross on top, set against a dramatic sky with clouds and a bright light source, likely the sun setting or rising. The steeple is on the left side of the frame, and the sky fills the rest of the image.

*Great  
Swamp*

BAPTIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 31, 2017

# *Great Swamp Baptist Church*

December 31, 2017  
Sunday Morning Worship  
11:00 AM

## **Prelude**

## **The Welcome**

Announcements

*Pastor Ralph Lee, Jr.*

## **Call to Worship**

*Hymn # 203*

*“His Name Is Wonderful”*

## **Invocation**

*Robert O’Dell*

## **Selections of Praise & Worship**

*“Blessed Be Your Name”*

## **We Pray for Special Needs**

Pastoral & Offertory Prayer

*Pastor Ralph Lee, Jr.*

Offertory

Special Music

*GSBC Praise Band*

*“Good, Good Father”*

## **Message**

*Pastor Ralph Lee, Jr.*

## **Invitation**

## **Benediction**



## Nursery Workers



Today:

Pam Stanley

Olivia

Today:

Betty Robertson

Krey Lowther

Next Week:

Mike Mingledorff

Krey Lowther

Next Week:

Pat Bryan

Alice Way



## Toll Committee

For January

Alice Way & Pat Malphrus

## DEACON OF THE WEEK :



Today:

Robert O'Dell

843-422-9521

Next Week:

Duane Armstrong

843-726-6795



IF YOUR DEACONS

CAN MINISTER TO YOU IN ANY WAY,

CALL THE CHURCH @ 726-3631



*From Pastor Ralph's Desk:*

## **Should We Be Celebrating Christmas?**

*Intro: I wanted us to consider the question of whether we should be celebrating the Christmas story as Believers? I ask this question for two reasons. First, because no where in the Bible does Jesus tell us to celebrate His birth, but He does explicitly tell us to celebrate His death through the means of the Lord's Supper. The second reason why is because some cult groups don't celebrate Christmas and they say that the church didn't start celebrating Christmas until two to three hundred years after His birth.*

*However, I want to come out with a very loud and clear affirmative yes that God's people should indeed be celebrating the Christmas story. I believe that I can show many reasons why from the Word of God. So, let us see what some of the reasons why we should are.*

### **I. First, we should be celebrating the Christmas story because the Word of God does.**

*The Word of God celebrates the Christmas story in both the Old and New Testaments. Isaiah the prophet tells us how the Christ Child would be born of a virgin and be called Immanuel (Is. 7:17). He also tells us that many wonderful things, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Is.9:6-7). Then the Old Testament even tells us where the Christ Child would be born. Hundreds of years before His birth, we are already told where it would take place at in "Bethlehem Ephrathah" (Micah 5:2).*

*However, long before either Isaiah or Micah's prophecies, the first Book of the Bible only there chapters in gives us our first glimpse into the Christmas story. After Adam and Eve have sinned*

*Against God, god promises the consequences of their sin. Speaking to the serpent indwelt by the devil, god said, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and hers; He will crush your head and you will strike His heel" (Gen. 3:15). The offspring of the serpent would be the devil and his followers but the seed of the woman is referring to a single individual because it then calls Him, "He". The woman I believe is referring to the virgin Mary and her seed is of course Jesus Christ who alone has the power and did indeed crush the serpent.*

*So, as we see the Old Testament has much to say about the Christmas story thousands of years before it happens. But then, of course, we don't have to say much about the Christmas story in the New Testament because we are already well aware of it. Very clearly Matthew and Luke's gospels plainly tell us the story of the birth of our Savior. Also, though John doesn't mention the specific characters of the Christmas story, he clearly lets us know that His birth took place when he tells us that, "the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (John 1:14).*

*Many folks tell us that the Christmas story wasn't important to the early believers because Paul didn't mention it. However, that is not true, Paul tells us in Gal. 4:4-5, "But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman (The Virgin Mary), born under the law, to redeem those under the law that we might receive the full right of sons." So, Paul mentions who His virgin birth and Matthew, Luke and John who mentions the Christmas story are the early Believers. So, the Word of God and the Old and New Testament Believers recognized and celebrated the Christmas story. If it is good enough for the Word of God, it ought to be for us as well.*

## **II. Second, we should be celebrating the Christmas story because the actual participants in the Christmas story did.**

*Now, simply what I by this point is that the actual person involved the first Christmas celebrated the great news of the Savior's birth. Mary, upon receiving the news went and met her cousin, Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist. It was during this visit that John in his mother's womb leaped for joy when Mary entered the home and Elizabeth herself filled with the Holy Spirit worshipped the child Mary was carrying, actually calling Him Lord because that is who He was and is and will ever be. Then Mary herself broke out in singing over the whole event. (Luke 1:39-56) So, celebrating began by the Christmas story individual even before Jesus was born.*

*Now, there is no need for me to go over all of the rest of them be-*

cause the fact for their celebrating the first Christmas is well established, Joseph, the angels, the shepherds and the wise men. All of the persons really cover the bases. With their names, we have both Heaven and earth together celebrating His birth. We also have the rich (the wise men), and the poor (Mary, Joseph and the shepherds) celebrating His birth. We also have the lowest of the low (the shepherds) and the highest of the high (the wise men) celebrating His birth.

There are also a couple more persons often left out when it comes to celebrating the Christmas story who were there at that time and they are a man named Simeon and a senior adult lady named Anna who was a prophetess. Both of these persons were at the temple the day that Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to the temple to get him circumcised according to Jewish law. He was just eight days old. Both of them right off, by the Spirit's leadership, knew that this was the coming Messiah which the Jews had been looking for and both of them worshipped the Child and acknowledged that He was both Lord and Savior. (Luke 2:21-40)

Now, if everyone that was there at the actual first Christmas event worshipped and celebrated that first Christmas, then there is no doubt that we need to.

### **III. Third, we should be celebrating the Christmas story because of its' connection to the rest of His story.**

Or I probably should say to the rest of the events of His life. We are calling it the Christmas story and the other parts of His walking on earth as a story but we mean a story that was real not made up. There are actual events that took place that make up His story, and all these events connect together. You can't have one of them without the other. You see the critics say Jesus told us to only celebrate His death, not His birth. Well, if we are going to use that argument then we shouldn't celebrate Easter, either because Jesus didn't tell us to celebrate His resurrection.

Well nobody told the early believers not to celebrate His resurrection because they did and they did so quickly afterwards and never stopped celebrating it.

You see Jesus death without the resurrection would be of no service to any of us. Nor would His death save any of us without Him being born of a virgin which was essential. For He had to be without sin to be our sacrifice. Thus His virgin birth was required. So, to celebrate one event was to celebrate them all.

### **IV. Fourth, we should celebrate the Christmas story because of what it means to us. (Luke: 8-14)**

In these set of verses, the angels tell the shepherds that the Christmas story was great news of great joy for all the people. Then he goes on to tell them that the great news was that a Savior had been born to you and that He is

*Christ the Lord. So, notice this news is for all the people and this Savior was born to you. This means the Christmas story is for us. Without, we would have no redemption but because of it, we do have redemption. So, it would be sinful not to celebrate such a great event that effects the salvation of our souls.*

*Concl. Oh, let us come out every Christmas with songs, sermons, plays and events that proudly display our praise and worship that our Savior has been born.*

*Jesus Loves You  
Ralph Lee, Jr.*



*January 1st*

*Alyssa Schrader*

*January 2nd*

*Dora Reynolds*

*January 3rd*

*Teresa Garbade*

*January 6th*

*Duane Armstrong*



**MENU**  
Lasagna  
Salad  
Bread  
Dessert

Roberts  
Family  
Cooking  
Team

\$5.00 each or  
\$15.00 for a family  
of 4 or more

# Children's CHURCH

## Children's Church Helpers

Today:

Olivia Stanley

Angel Cole

Next Week:

Evelyn Bradley

Olivia Stanley



# Announcements

**Grandmother's Group**  
Tuesday, January 2nd  
11:30 am



**The Quilting Club is meeting in the  
Old Parsonage**  
Thursday, January 4th @ 10:00am

**Watchman Prayer Group**  
Saturday, January 6th @ 8:00 am



## **Nursery Volunteers needed!**

*Our nursery is growing and we are in need of volunteers. Below is a list of our current workers. Please contact Vanessa Smoak if you would like to add or remove your name from our rotation schedule.*

*Vandy Amason / Natalie*

*Pam Stanley / Olivia*

*Donna Carter / Amanda Hodges*

*Debra Daley / Cathryn*

*Diane Thames / Chesney*

*Natalie King*

*Cassandra Bradley / Evelyn*

*Pat Bryan / Alice Way*

*Latrell Steedly / Kim Malphrus*

*Vicky Roberts / Emma Grace*

*Anita Blanton / Alyssa*

*Thanks!*

*Vanessa Smoak*

*Cell (843) 637-7677*

*Email [mcclendonv26@gmail.com](mailto:mcclendonv26@gmail.com)*

Great Swamp Baptist Church  
 9009 Tarboro Road, Ridgeland, SC  
 Office - 726-3631  
 Email: greatswampbc@gmail.com  
 Website: greatswampbaptistchurch.com

## Church Staff

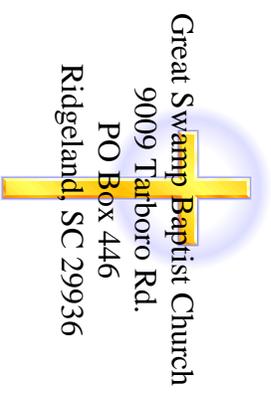
*Pastor: Rev. Ralph Lee, Jr.* .....jehu27@gmail.com  
*Music Director: Richard Waitt* .....waittfamily@embarqmail.com  
*Sunday School Director: Wallace Malphrus* .....Josie6@embarqmail.com  
*Pianist: Michelle Waitt* .....waittfamily@embarqmail.com  
*Administrative Assistant: Sybil Reynolds* .....greatswampbc@gmail.com  
*School Administrator: Donna Carter* .....dcarter@hargray.com  
*Custodian: Ann Malphrus* .....ramalphrus@hargray.com  
*Landscaper: Wallace Malphrus* .....Josie6@embarqmail.com

## Calendar of Events

*Sunday Morning Breakfast (September thru May Only)*..... 8:30AM  
*Sunday School*..... 9:45AM  
*Morning Worship*.....11:00AM  
*Evening Worship*.....6:00PM  
*Wednesday Night Supper (September thru May Only)*..... 6:00PM  
*Wednesday Night Service*.....7:00PM  
*Saturday Watchman Prayer*.....8:00AM

## Stewardship

Budget Offerings	This Week	Weekly Budget	Surplus/Deficit + / -
<i>Tithes &amp; Offerings</i>	\$2,653.00	\$ 4,943.56	-\$2,290.56
Designated Funds	This Week	*****	Acct. Balances
<i>Poinsettias</i>	\$75.00	*****	\$0.00
<i>WNS</i>	\$162.00	*****	\$640.27
<i>Cemetery</i>	\$200.00	*****	\$435.00
<i>Lottie Moon Offering</i>	\$255.00	*****	\$1,572.24



Great Swamp Baptist Church  
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