

*Great Swamp Baptist Church*  
*December 17, 2023*

# *Great Swamp Baptist Church*

Sunday Morning Worship

10:30 AM

**Announcements**

*Pastor Ralph Lee*

**Call to Worship**

**Invocation**

*Keith Gamo*

**Praise & Worship**

Pastoral and Offertory Prayer  
Worship by Giving  
Offertory Special

*Pastor Ralph Lee*

**Message**

*Pastor Ralph Lee*

**Invitation**

**Benediction Prayer**

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*Sunday Mornings*  
*Following The Song Service:*



Nursery



Teacher:  
Olivia Stanley

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DEACON OF THE WEEK:

*Keith Gamo*



Phone: 843-986-8525

*From  
Pastor  
Ralph's  
Desk:*



### **Christmas is a Fear Remover**

#### **Introduction:**

No less than three times in the Christmas story we discover that the actual participants are encouraged not to be afraid, or as some translations say "do not fear." The participants that are encouraged not to be afraid are Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds.

Now with Mary and the shepherds their fear was created by the sudden appearance of the angelic beings that came to reveal to them the coming of Christ into the world. This is what I would call the fear of a sudden disruption.

Though everything wasn't perfect in their lives by a far stretch of the imagination, yet they were content with where their lives were. Especially was Mary happy she's engaged and will soon be married to the man she loves. Thus this sudden disruption is scary in and of itself, and on top of that it changes the direction of her whole life. Who of us wouldn't have been afraid as well?

Sudden disruptions in our lives also create great fear. Sometimes those sudden disruptions bring us into a place of great depression because of the changes that they create in our lives.

Now for the shepherds they were out in the fields outside of Bethlehem taking care of their sheep far removed from the hustle and bustle of city life. They weren't bothering anyone and no one was bothering them. For the most part they liked it that way. Just leave us alone and we will do the same for you.

Then into their simple life came a call to take a moment and step out of that simple life and venture where they spent so little time. They were called to step into what may be an uncomfortable situations for them.

So it is for us sometimes our fears overtake us when we are called out of what makes our lives uncomfortable and secure.

Now Joseph's fear wasn't exactly like Mary's and the shepherds'. Theirs was an angelic being that appeared to him but it was during a dream. So it wasn't the sudden appearance that created fear but his fear existed before the dream. His fear was a fear of change, a fear of confusion and a fear of direction.

We too have these same fears that Joseph had. But to all the fears that each of these participants had the angel just as quickly as they caused them to have fear, also removed their fears. So with this message we are going to look at how Christmas is a fear remover. We will use what the angel said to the shepherds to see how Christmas removes fear.

### **I. First, Christmas is a fear remover because Christmas is good news (vs 10)**

First the angel said to the shepherds not to be afraid because he had for them good news. Now that was an unusual statement because what they've been used to hearing as well as us today is bad and negative news. As a matter of fact there were times when even the angels didn't bring good news.

In our world today there's not one, not even one, television or radio station that does nothing but deliver good news for 24 hours, or even 12 hours, or even less. Even the ones set aside to bring good news still deliver the bad things going on in this world.

However, on that first Christmas night the angel said with all the gusto, assurance, and full confidence that a person could have that it was a night to dispel all fear because it was the night of good news. And that good and great news was that God had sent the Lord the Messiah into the world to reconcile us unto Himself.

That night was a dark night out in those fields for those shepherds. Darkness is often a symbol of loneliness and separations. But on this night the angels lit up their world and gave them the good news that the Lord the Messiah had come to bring them out of the darkness into the light. Oh let our fear dispel because we have good news that our Lord the has come to bring us into His light through the Christ child.

### **II. Second, Christmas is a fear remover because Christmas brings great joy (vs 10)**

After the angel told the shepherds not to be afraid because he had good news he also told them to not be afraid because the good news was filled with great joy.

Christmas is a mixed bag time of the year when it comes to our emotions. As a general rule there's probably no time when most people are more joyous and happy than at Christmas time. This seems to be true for even unbelievers. The reason being is because as a general rule we spend more time with our family. We also are uplifted by all of the Christmas festivities and decorations.

However it also can be a very depressing period of time especially for those that have recently lost loved ones with whom they want be able to share Christmas with. Or because we have so many divided family with whom it's often difficult to get any sense of unity and cooperation.

Well, the good news of great joy is that God desires for our joy not to be based upon the time of the year, nor the good fortunes of the moment, nor simply the festivities or decorations or fellowships of the seasons. No, he wants our joy to be great. He wants it to be so great that it rise above all of our circumstances and the activities of one season. It's to be a joy unending, undiminished, and uplifting through all circumstances and times.

This great joy is available because the good news that the Lord the Messiah had come was not for the purpose to condemn us, but rather to save us. And this salvation gives us joy unspeakable and full of glory because Christ Jesus comes into our lives to never leave us. Oh, let us shout the praise of our Lord for this ever lasting and eternal joy.

**III. Third, Christmas is a remover because Christmas is for all people (vs 10)**

For many the Christmas story is so uncharacteristic of how a king should come into this world. In the first place characteristically speaking the child should be born from the womb of a queen, and the place of birth a grand castle of enormous size. The child should be attended by servants of all kinds. Then the first guest to welcome the child should be dignitaries of all kinds from many places.

But as we know just the opposite took place. The mother of Jesus was just an ordinary young lady, from a small town, unknown by most of the world but the few around her. Joseph, the legal father, was just a simple carpenter and the child was born in a stable. The first guest invited to view the child was not dignitaries, politician, or royalty but rather just shepherds who were despised by most. Yet it was to them that the angel welcome first to view the child who came for all people even if they were just shepherds.

He didn't come to limit Himself for just the religious folks, or rich and famous, or to just the Jews. No, He came for all people. "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28).

Thus let our fear be gone for no matter who we are Christ came for us all. The question is are you willing to take His offer and trust Him?

**IV. Fourth, Christmas is a fear remover because Christmas is a reality (vs 12-20).**

The final statement that the angel said to the shepherds was, "This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (vs 12).

Now this verse just shown doesn't actually tell the shepherds to go and see the child, but it does say if they go this is what they would find -- the child lying in a manger.

Well, of course, the shepherds excitedly chose to go and find the child which the angel told them about. They did just that and found everything exactly as the angel had told them. Then, "the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." (vs 20).

The shepherds found out for sure that what the angel reported to them was not just some kind of fairytale, or made up story, but was indeed reality. SO let us not fear because the events of that first Christmas were real, therefore, our salvation is factual. Amen. Praise God.

**Conclusion:**

So because Christmas is good news of great joy for all the people which actually and factually took place, we can put away our fear and rest in the peace and joy that Christ has come to give to all who believe in Him. Therefore, be not afraid!

Jesus Loves You,  
Ralph Lee, Jr.

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The SwampKids will be going Christmas caroling on Wednesday, December 20 to the Homebound members of our church. We will be leaving promptly at 7pm and returning at 8pm. We will not have a regular program this night. Parents, please return the permission slip that was handed out on Wednesday night.

**Parents/Leaders: If you are able to drive or chaperone, please see Kim Malphrus.**

The SwampKids were able to give 19 Christmas backpacks (10 boys and 9 girls for grades K-4 to 12th grade) to the local children of Jasper County through the joint ministry of DSS and Savannah River Baptist Association. Thanks to the kids, parents, leaders, and church members that donated items and/or money for this project. It was such a blessing!

**Because of Christ,  
Kim Malphrus  
SwampKids Director**



## Christmas Card Delivery

\$0.25 per card delivered  
The SwampKids will deliver  
in-house Christmas cards this year.  
Mailbox for cards is in the foyer.

Proceeds go to Lottie  
Moon Christmas offering.



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# THANK YOU!

Thank you to Richard and all of those  
who participated in the Christmas  
gathering. It was great and we look  
forward to next year!

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The church office will be closed  
December 25th and 26th  
(Monday and Tuesday) due to  
Christmas.



# AGENDA

**Business Meeting**

Wednesday, December 13th at 7:00 p.m.

**Deacons' Meeting**

Monday, December 11th at 6:00 p.m.

**Prayer Meeting**

Every Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m.

**Grandmothers' Group**

Monday, February 5th at 11:30 a.m.  
All ladies welcome!

**Swamp Kids**

Every Wednesday night at 6:00 p.m.

**Men's Ministry Meeting**

Thursday, December 21st at 7:00 p.m.

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Candlelight Service & Lord's Supper**

Sunday, December 24th during worship service  
\*\*No Breakfast\*\* and \*\*No Sunday School\*\*



<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>19th</i>	<i>Diane Thames</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>22nd</i>	<i>Tammy Lee</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>22nd</i>	<i>Krey Lee Lowther</i>



*Happy Anniversary*

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

**Tuesday, December 19th:**  
Bill & Donna Carter

**Wednesday, December 20th:**  
Wallace & Allene Malphrus



**Greeters for Today:**  
Latrell & Mike D.

**December:**  
12/24 - Courtney & Jeff  
12/31 - Kim & Richard

# Sunday School Classes

**@ 9:15am**

**CAMO CLASS - Room 406 - Bobby Smith**

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**GLEANERS CLASS - Room 401 - Darlene Bollack**

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**VISIONARIES CLASS - Building 3, Old Social Hall  
Leader - Greg Mariocourt**

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**SOJOURNERS CLASS - Room 417 - Mack Pope**

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**YOUTH - Youth Annex Leader - Amanda Hodges**

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**BLUE ANGELS - 1ST & 2ND GRADES - Room 417 -  
Nicole Mauriocourt**

**RAINBOW KIDS - 3RD GRADE AND OLDER - Room 415 -  
Kelly Scherger**

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# Wednesday Night Services

**@ 7:00 pm**

**WORSHIP SERVICE Multi-Purpose Building**

**Leader-Pastor Ralph Lee, Jr.**

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**YOUTH GROUP Youth Annex**

**Leader-Michelle Waitt**

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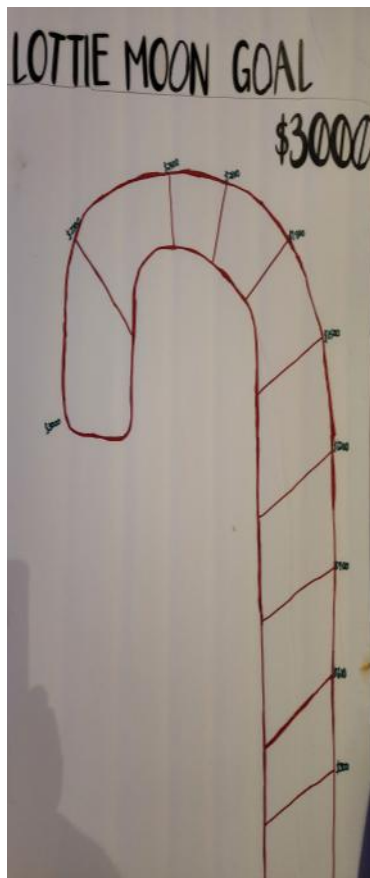
**SWAMP KIDS Nursery Hall**

**Leader - Kim Malphrus**

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**Goal: \$3,000.00**



Ok, Church family, let's meet our goal! Let's color our candy cane for Lottie Moon. For every \$300, a section will be colored. This candy cane be displayed at church starting Wednesday night. This includes our youth and SwampKids. Thank you for giving. I know we can meet our goal!!

--Kim Malphrus



## Wednesday Night Supper

Meals served from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  
every Wednesday night.

**Team Keith is cooking for Wednesday, Dec. 20th.**

\$5.00 per person or \$15.00 per family of four or more.

No meal deliveries.

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## Sunday Morning Breakfast

Breakfast will be served  
from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00  
a.m.

\$5.00 per person or  
\$15.00 per family of  
four or more.

# GSBC Prayer Page

## Church Leadership

*Sunday School*  
*SFCA-Donna Carter*  
*Child Development*  
*Ministries*  
*Ralph Lee, Jr. - Pastor*  
*Richard Waitt- Music Director*  
*Deacons*  
*Church Finances*

## Leadership

*President / Vice President of*  
*the United States of America*

## Bereavement

## Unspoken

## Hospitals

## Surgery/Recovery

*Ann Blocker - Sprenger*  
*Healthcare in Bluffton*  
*Erma Cooler - Sprenger*  
*Healthcare in Okatie*  
*Debbie Hale*  
*Chyleen Mock*

## Cancer/Treatments

*Revel Crosby - 4 years old*  
*(Leukemia)*  
*Morgan Warren*  
*Ken Lawler*

## Other Health Needs

*Mary Kay Cade*  
*Debbie Hale*  
*Julia Rushing*  
*Pinky Rushing*  
*Amy Hannah*  
*Kathy Breland*  
*Grace Hetrick*  
*Arthur Pierson*  
*Clark Daring*  
*Arlette Jones*  
*Jennifer Wall*

## Nursing Centers

*Bobby Mohn - Indigo Pines HHI*  
*Byron Vaigneur - Legacy at South Pointe*  
*Erma Cooler - Ridgeland Nursing Home*

## Please Continue To Remember

### Homebound

<i>Shirley Malphrus</i>	<i>Tom Hinely</i>
<i>Rose Boyles</i>	<i>Ann Blocker</i>
<i>Judy Smith</i>	<i>Doby Cleland</i>
<i>Vera Floyd</i>	<i>Red &amp; Helen Malphrus</i>
<i>Barbara Mills</i>	<i>Thomas Cooler</i>
<i>Kenny Smith</i>	<i>Marie Malphrus</i>
<i>Diane Hannah</i>	

### Pray For Our Military

*Sgt. Jared Blanton-Deployed*  
*Matthew Mills-US Marines*  
*Jericho Malphrus-Sp. Agent/Air Force*  
*Washington, D.C.*  
*Michael Sottile - Ret.*  
*Tristan Blanton-San Diego/SWCC*  
*Andrea C. Daring-Charleston, SC*  
*Schuyler Johnson - Basic Training Marines*

## Church Staff

*Pastor: Pastor Ralph Lee, Jr* ..... *jehu27@gmail.com*

*Music Director: Richard Waitt* ..... *waittfamily83@gmail.com*

*Sunday School Director: Mike Davis* .....

*Pianist: Michelle Waitt* ..... *waittfamily83@gmail.com*

*Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Meador* ..... *greatswampbaptist@hargray.com*  
*843-726-3631*

*School Administrator: Donna Carter* ..... *dcarter@sfcaweb.org*

## Stewardship

Tithes	This Week	Weekly Budget	Surplus/Deficit + / -
	<i>\$3,171.00</i>	<i>\$ 5,012.49</i>	<i>\$-1,841.49</i>
<i>Online Offerings</i>	<i>\$350.00</i>		
<b>Designated Funds</b>		*****	<b>Acct. Balances</b>
<i>Lottie Moon</i>	<i>\$520.00</i>	*****	<i>\$1,079.00</i>
<i>Wednesday Night Supper</i>	<i>\$153.00</i>	*****	<i>\$173.43</i>



Great Swamp Baptist Church  
9009 Tarboro Rd.  
PO Box 446  
Ridgeland, SC 29936

*Sunday School*.....9:15AM  
*Morning Worship*.....10:30AM  
*Wednesday Night Service*.....7:00PM

Email: [greatswampbc@gmail.com](mailto:greatswampbc@gmail.com)  
Website: [greatswampbaptistchurch.com](http://greatswampbaptistchurch.com)  
Church Office: (843) 726-3631