



GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH  
AT CASTLEWOODS

ORDER OF WORSHIP  
December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

# MORNING WORSHIP

Thomas Winn — Elder/Pastor

- The Prelude ..... Prepare your heart for worship
- The Call to Worship ..... Chris Kimbrell
- Hymn ..... "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"
- The Prayer of Confession and Praise ..... Seth Lirette
- Hymn ..... "Angels We Have Heard on High"
- Hymn ..... "The First Noel"
- The Reading of the Word — *Isaiah 9:1-7* ..... Hal Pritchard
- Hymn ..... "Away in a Manger"
- The Pastoral Prayer ..... Pastor Winn
- The Sermon — *"He Shall Save His People" (Matthew 1:18-24)* ..... Pastor Winn
- A Time of Reflection Upon the Word Preached
- Hymn ..... "Joy to the World"
- The Benediction ..... Pastor Winn
- The Postlude

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# EVENING WORSHIP

Scripture  
&  
Carol  
S E R V I C E



# COMMENTARY

## Spurgeon's Guidance on Celebrating Christmas by Matthew Perry

Spurgeon's childhood influences led him to embrace the Puritans. He valued them so much so that many scholars deem him the last of the Puritans. As a result of this Word-centered influence, Spurgeon struggled with the origin and the day on which we celebrate Christmas.

*There is no reason upon earth beyond that of ecclesiastical custom why the 25th of December should be regarded as the birthday of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ any more than any other day from the first of January to the last day of the year; and yet some persons regard Christmas with far deeper reverence than the Lord's-day.*

Spurgeon always struggled with the rites of both the Roman Catholic (which he would often refer to as "popish") and the Anglican Church and their "superstitious" celebrations of Christmas (i.e., Christ-Mass). In 1871, he went into more depth as to the reasons why he struggled with this season:

*We have no superstitious regard for times and seasons. Certainly, we do not believe in the present ecclesiastical arrangement called Christmas: first, because we do not believe in the mass at all, but abhor it, whether it be said or sung in Latin or in English; and, secondly, because we find no Scriptural warrant whatever for observing any day as the birthday of the Saviour; and, consequently, its observance is a superstition, because not of divine authority. Superstition has fixed most positively the day of our Saviour's birth, although there is no possibility of discovering when it occurred.*

The dismissal of the mass and the lack of Scriptural warrant regarding the day we observe the birth of Christ as well as the celebration itself always gave Spurgeon pause personally and pastorally. He always felt obligated to share with his congregation and any of his readers that the celebration of the day and the origin of the celebrations were not grounded in anything God said in regards to its observance. However, Spurgeon was aware enough to recognize their error in the Puritans' observance (or lack thereof) of

Christmas as an overreaction to Catholic practices, throwing out the proverbial baby with the bathwater, if you will.

*The old Puritans made a parade of work on Christmas-day, just to show that they protested against the observance of it. But we believe they entered that protest so completely, that we are willing, as their descendants, to take the good accidentally conferred by the day, and leave itssuperstitionstothesuperstitious.*

To use another expression in the vernacular, chew up the meat (the celebration of Christ's incarnation) and spit out the bones (the superstitions). This recognition allowed Spurgeon to observe Christmas in a broader way that appreciated some positive aspects of the season in the culture that would help us even today. In a quote from an 1876 sermon, after Spurgeon acknowledged the problematic origins of Christmas, he conceded this point.

*Still, as the thoughts of a great many Christian people will run at this time towards the birth of Christ, and as this cannot be wrong, I judged it meet to avail ourselves of the prevailing current, and float down the stream of thought. Our minds will run that way, because so many around us are following customs suggestive of it, therefore let us get what good we can out of the occasion. There can be no reason why we should not, and it may be helpful that we should, now consider the birth of our Lord Jesus. We will do that voluntarily which we would refuse to do as a matter of obligation: we will do that simply for convenience sake which we should not think of doing because enjoined by authority or demanded by superstition.*

Much like today when we hear "Joy to the World" or "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!" as we Christmas shop in Target or Starbucks, we can, like Spurgeon, rejoice that "many Christian people will run at this time towards the birth of Christ." The season draws the Church toward the incredible doctrine of the Incarnation.



# RESPONSIBILITIES

## Today's Nursery Volunteers

<b>December 19<sup>th</sup></b>
<i>Morning</i> Ashley Lirette & Jessica Mullins
<i>Evening/Afternoon</i> Dumi Thakkar & Lawanda Winn
<i>Wednesday - December 22<sup>nd</sup></i> No Prayer Meeting

Today's Sound Operator - John Ingram



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The Preschool and Children's Choir will meet not this afternoon.

## SCRIPTURE AND CAROL SERVICE

Our Scripture and Carol Service will be tonight at 6 pm.

## SCHEDULE REMINDERS

We will not meet for prayer meeting this Wednesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Also, there will be no evening service on next Sunday, December 26<sup>th</sup>.

## LOTTIE MOON OFFERING

Each year at this time the Lottie Moon Offering is received. All money received through this offering goes directly to foreign missions. You can go here: <https://www.imb.org/generosity/lottie-moon-christmas-offering/> to learn more about the Lottie Moon Offering. Please make this a matter of prayer and support our foreign missionaries. Put on your check memo: Lottie Moon Offering.

## CHRISTMAS CARD POST OFFICE

In lieu of purchasing stamps to mail your Christmas cards to the congregation, we ask for you to make a donation to Lottie Moon (please specify on your check memo!) and we'll hand them out for you. Please place your Christmas cards in the basket across from the choir room in the sanctuary hallway.

