



M Grace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

122 Walnut Street
Madison, AL 35758
256-837-8821

GBC HOMEPAGES

<http://www.gracemadison-al.com>
<http://sermonaudio.com/gbcmadisonal>

"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters, and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— December 2009 Issue —

NURSERY SCHEDULE

December

06 Linda Olive & Sonja Williams
13 Vicki Johnson & Amber Solan
20 Bob & Faye Williams
27 Troy & Jessica Moseley

January

03 Jon & Tanya Amis
10 David & Mary Alice Olive
17 Kevin & Sara Smith
24 Linda Olive & Sonja Williams
31 Vicki Johnson & Amber Solan

CHURCH CLEANING

(see Jon Amis with questions)

January - The Palazzolos

February - Dean & Linda Olive

March - The Moseleys

FINANCIAL SUMMARY AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2009

Budgeted expenditures (ytd)	\$111,359.39
Actual on-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$113,548.62
Actual off-budget expenditures (ytd)	\$ 3,845.42
General Fund offerings (ytd)	\$139,153.66
Love offerings (ytd)	\$ 3,602.00
Total offerings (ytd)	\$143,995.66
November Love offerings	\$ 0.00
November General Fund offerings	\$ 11,028.11
Building Fund balance	\$ 76,603.46
Missions Fund balance	\$ 10,897.11
General Fund balance	\$ 66,161.10



A Christmas Gathering 2009

Our friends at Providence Presbyterian Church will be joining us for a Christmas Gathering on Sunday Evening, December 20. We will eat a meal together and have a joint worship service.

- o The Christmas Dinner will be served at 5 PM. We will provide the main course and the ladies of Providence Presbyterian will bring desserts.
- o The Christmas Service will follow the meal at approximately 6 PM. The service will consist of Christmas hymns and a message by Pastor Mark Winder.

Everyone is encouraged to attend and join in the time of fellowship and worship.



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

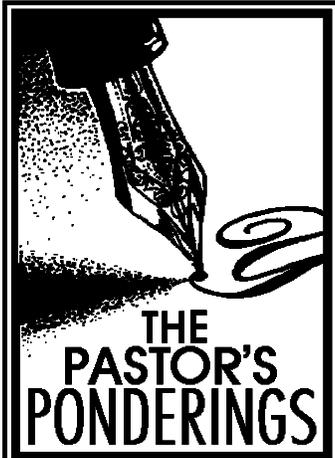
Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
7:00 PM

FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship 9:30 AM
Sunday School 11:00 AM
Dinner at the Church 12:00 Noon
Afternoon Service 1:30 PM
(No Evening Service)



Believe the Gospel

The call of the gospel is a call to believe. We preach “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). Paul instructed the Philippian jailer, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).

The emphasis of the Scriptures is that we believe and that we believe in Christ.

It Matters That We Believe. No one can become a Christian and go to heaven when they die unless they believe. Salvation does not come to us by a process of osmosis. We can’t just sit by and passively wait for God to strike us with lightning in order to transfer us into his kingdom. We must believe! We must exercise faith in order to become a Christian.

It is true that we cannot do this without God’s enablement. We are dead in trespasses and sins and cannot awaken ourselves out of this spiritual death, but the gospel comes to us as a message to believe. Thankfully, God supplies us with the power to believe, so the gospel invitation is, believe!

When the Scriptures call us to believe, it means that there is no other way of salvation. We cannot save ourselves by works. Faith and works are often contrasted in the Scriptures. Works is not the way to salvation; faith is. Nowhere is this more in evidence than John’s Gospel and Paul’s letters.

John speaks of believing almost 100 times in this Gospel, e.g., “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (3:18). “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (5:24).

And Paul everywhere preached faith alone in Christ apart from works. “For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law” (Rom. 3:28). “Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (Gal. 2:16).

It matters that we believe!

It Matters What or On Whom We Believe. Faith has content; faith has an object. The content of the gospel, the one on whom we must believe, is Jesus Christ. He is the only Savior.

The Huntsville Times recently published an article by a person that attends the local Unitarian Universalist Church. The article was entitled, “Remember the Strength of Having Faith in Yourself.” She commended her church for encouraging her to have faith, “any faith.” She went on to say, “Not necessarily in God, not necessarily in any higher power or any religious doctrine, but even just the strength of faith in oneself. The strength of faith in faith.”

That is delusion, pure and simple. We cannot believe in ourselves nor have faith in faith in order to be saved from sin, death and hell. Faith has an object and that object is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important that we believe but we must believe the right message and the right person! The content of the Gospel is Christ, his person and work.

As to his person, he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. To believe that Jesus is the Christ and that he is the Son of God involves the total acceptance of the revelation of God in him. It means to believe everything about him. He is the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, sent by God to save sinners.

The title “Son of God” does not signify or imply biological descent like being a son does in the human sense. Sonship with divinity is a metaphor that “expresses the unity of nature, close fellowship, and unique intimacy between Jesus and the Father. Human fatherhood and sonship are only a faint copy of the relation between God the Father and God the Son” (Tenny).

When Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter confessed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:15-16). The Gospel calls us to believe in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.

As to his work, he died on the cross for our sins and rose again from the grave. He substituted himself in the sinner’s place and bore the wrath of God. The innocent one was punished for guilty ones. Sin must be punished and Jesus willingly was pierced through for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities.

This is the gospel. *Believe. Believe in Christ.* And the promise of God is that all who believe in Christ will be saved. Saved from the penalty of sin; saved from the power of sin; and ultimately saved from the very presence of sin.

Will you not believe? Believe, not in yourself, not in religious dogma, or even in faith itself. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. The reason Jesus came into the world was to save sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). His very name, Jesus, signifies that he will save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). Remember, dear friends, this message: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

WEB SITES

LIGONIER BLOG—

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/>

ALPHA & OMEGA MINISTRIES—

<http://aomin.org/>

MODERN REFORMATION MAGAZINE ONLINE—

<http://www.modernreformation.org>

THE CROSTALK BLOG —

www.crosstalkblog.com/

WHITEHORSE INN BLOG —

www.whitehorseinn.org/blog.html



DECEMBER 6 & 13 – With this year being the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth, we are going to take a look in Sunday School at his influence in the Christian world by viewing a DVD entitled, "The Geneva Reformer." Calvin scholar, W. Gary Crampton, takes us on a journey into the heart and mind of John Calvin.

DECEMBER 20 – Providence Presbyterian Church will be joining us this year for our annual Christmas service. The meal will be at 5 PM, and the worship service, with Pastor Mark Winder preaching, will be at 6 PM. Our church will provide the main course for the meal and the ladies from Providence will bring the desserts.

DECEMBER 27 & JANUARY 3 – No Sunday School on these two days. Worship services will be at normal times, except the first Sunday meal and the afternoon service on January 4 (a communion service) will be an hour earlier.

DECEMBER 27 – Roger Best, a retired pastor living in Chapel Hill, TN, who is also a member of F.I.R.E., will be preaching in the morning service.

FEBRUARY 7 – The annual church business meeting will be held in the afternoon after the first Sunday meal.

FEBRUARY 18-21 – True Church Conference, Grace Life Church, Muscle Shoals, AL. The theme of the conference is *The Quagmire of Hyper-Calvinism*. For more information see <http://www.anchoredin-truth.org/tcc10/>

APRIL 24-25, 2010 – Spring Bible Conference with Dr. Michael Haykin.

We Believe

The 1689 Confession of Faith

CHAPTER 2 - GOD AND THE HOLY TRINITY
(paragraph 2)



God is all-sufficient, and all life, glory, goodness and blessedness are found in Him and in Him alone. He does not stand in need of any of the creatures that He has made, nor does He derive any part of His glory from them. On the contrary, He manifests His own glory in and by them. He is the fountain-head of all being, and the origin, channel and end of all things. Over all His creatures He is sovereign. He uses them as He pleases, and does for them or to them all that He wills. His sight penetrates to the heart of all things. His knowledge is infinite and infallible. No single thing is to Him at risk or uncertain, for He is not dependent upon created things. In all His decisions, doings and demands He is most holy. Angels and men owe to Him as their creator all worship, service and obedience, and whatever else He may require at their hands.

Job 22:2, 3; Ps. 119:68; 145:17; 148:13; Ezek.11:5; Dan. 4:25, 34, 35; John 5:26; Acts 15:18; Rom. 11:34-36; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 5:12-14.

The Geneva Reformer Sunday School December 6 & 13



A DVD presentation of John Calvin, a man loathed by some but loved by many. Calvin remains after 500 years one of the most controversial and dominant figures in church history. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, first published when he was only twenty-seven years old, became the manifesto for Reformed theology in the sixteenth century. Both Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon referred to Calvin as the theologian of the Reformation.



Puritan Gems

Praise for the Incarnation

John Newton

*Did the Lord a man become,
That he might the law fulfill,
Bleed and suffer in my room,
And canst thou, my tongue, be still?*

*No, I must my praises bring,
Though they worthless are and weak;
For should I refuse to sing,
Sure the very stones would speak.*

O Come, Let Us Adore the God-Man

Steve Burchett

A preacher once said that Christmas is often a time when people buy presents with money they don't have for people they hardly know who will then take the gifts back for a cash refund. So goes the typical "holiday season" in America.

But Christians know, even those who don't celebrate Christmas as a holiday (like the Puritans of old), that the commercialization of Christmas is a disgrace and that what *should* be the reason to celebrate on both December 25, and any day of the year, is the fact that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," said the apostle Paul (1 Timothy 1:15), and on the cross, He accomplished the redemption of His people.

But as we think about the entrance of Christ into this world, questions surface about how Jesus could be both God and man. Perhaps two statements will help us to begin thinking through the relationship between the humanity and the divinity of Christ.

"Jesus has always been God"

In John 1:1, Jesus is referred to as "the Word," and the opening verse of John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John says that Jesus was present "in the beginning," specifically that He "was." The tense of the verb for "was" shows that Jesus did not come into being "in the beginning." He already was! Another way of saying it would be, "In the beginning, the Word continually was," meaning he was already there. Jesus existed before the

beginning; He is eternal.

John concludes, "the Word was God," which means Jesus is God, and since he was there "In the beginning," He has *always* been God. Therefore, in relationship to His humanity, it is correct to say that there was a time when Jesus was God and not man, but there never was a time when Jesus was man but not God; Jesus had existed forever as God before he became a man. This refutes the idea (found among Jehovah's Witnesses, for example) that Jesus was a created being.

*Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be glory
given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing.*

"In becoming a man, Jesus remained God"

In the Incarnation, *subtraction* didn't happen—Jesus did not lose some of His deity in order to become a man. In the Incarnation, *division* didn't happen—Jesus did not become a combination of man and God (50% man and 50% God, or 60-40, or 70-30). In the Incarnation, *addition* happened—Jesus became what He had never been, man, without ceasing to be what He had always been, God. He didn't *turn into* a man, He *became* a man while remaining God, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9).

Theologian J.I. Packer remarks, "(Jesus) was not God *minus* some elements of His deity, but God *plus* all that He had made His own by taking manhood to Himself." The baby born to the virgin

Mary was not simply half-man, half-God. He wasn't even just "God with skin on," not really man even though He appeared to be a man. Christ is now two natures united in one person forever. His deity was not humanized, nor his humanity deified; He is fully God, and fully man, and each nature remains distinct, yet Jesus is only one person.

Jesus did choose to limit His deity on occasion, but this doesn't nullify His divine nature. It simply shows that not only is Jesus God, but Jesus is man, thus He is the God-man. Packer is right, "The mystery of the Incarnation is unfathomable. We cannot explain it; we can only formulate it."

A Practical Implication

If Jesus was not fully God but just a mere creature like us, then he could not bear the wrath of God against the sins of His people. If Jesus was just a good man dying upon a cross as an example of love, then ultimately He was just one guy dying for one man named Barabbas (cf. Matthew 27:26).

But when we say that Jesus was not just a man, but He was the God-man, then the cross becomes an act whereby God demonstrates His love for sinners, because the God-man truly atoned for the sins of any who will repent and put their faith in Him. He had to be God, because only God could accomplish such a feat, and He had to be man, because only a man could pay the penalty for the sins of men.

O come, let us adore Him, Jesus Christ the God-man!

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