



M G Grace Messenger

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

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GBC HOMEPAGES

<http://www.gbcmadison-al.com>
<http://sermonaudio.com/gbcmadisonal>
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"Preaching the free grace of God which brings a change of lifestyles, masters and destinies."

DEAN OLIVE, Pastor

— December 2018 Issue —

*"You have dealt well with your servant, O LORD, according to your word."
Psalm 119:65*



NURSERY SCHEDULE

December 2018

02 Troy and Jessica Moseley
09 Peter and Jenny Lovassy
16 Lori Hewlett and Nellie McFadden
23 Amber Solan and Vicki Johnson
30 Susan Gay and Linda Olive

January 2019

06 Troy and Jessica Moseley
13 Peter and Jenny Lovassy
20 Linda Olive and Susan Gay
27 Amber Solan and Janet Marsh

CHURCH CLEANING

December - Olives

Thank you to our 2018 cleaning volunteers

Remembering the Incarnation of the Christ

December 16, 2018

For many years we have enjoyed getting together with our friends from Providence Presbyterian Church for a Christmas meal and a worship service in the month of December. It is our privilege to host them this year.

- A Christmas Dinner will be served at 5 PM. We will provide the main course and the ladies of Providence Presbyterian will bring desserts.
- The Christmas Service will follow the meal at approximately 6 PM. The service will consist of Christmas hymns, Scripture readings, and a message by Pastor Darren Thole.

Everyone is encouraged to bring a friend and join in the time of fellowship and worship.



*For unto you is born this day
in the city of David a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.
Luke 2:11*

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

NORMAL SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	5:00 PM

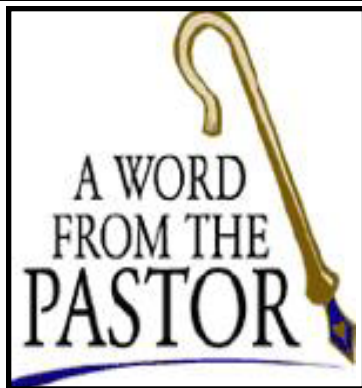
WEDNESDAY EVENING

Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
7:00 PM

FIRST SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Worship	9:30 AM
Meal at the Church	11:00 AM
Afternoon Service	12:30 PM

*No Sunday School
or Evening Service*



What Child is This?

What Child Is This, was a question William Dix, of Glasgow, Scotland, asked concerning Jesus as he studied the biblical narrative of his birth. His inquiry led him to

write one of the most well-loved Christmas carols that has this important question in its title.

*What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping.
This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the son of Mary.*

Those who first heard of the birth of the Divine Christ Child must have asked the same question. The shepherds we read about in the second chapter of Luke were privileged to have an announcement made to them about the birth of this special child. An angel appeared in the heavens one night as they were tending sheep and declared:

“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:10-12).

This was the first noel and it tells us this child was no ordinary child! The news of his birth was good news that brought great joy. His coming wasn't for Jews only, but for all mankind. Elsewhere he is called “the king of the Jews” but he was also known as “the Savior of the world.” The good news of his coming is for everybody.

But the significant part of the announcement concerns why his coming is good news for all people. The question, what child is this, is answered in the ringing declaration given in v. 11: “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:11 contains a rich theology.

The angel first made known that this Child born and laid in a manger was a Savior. The good news

was not “that God had sent a soldier or a judge or a reformer, but that He had sent a Savior to meet man's greatest need” (Wiersbe). That he is a Savior is also expressed in his name, Jesus. You remember what the angel told Joseph? He said, “You shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Mt 1:21). The name Jesus is equivalent to the title Savior.

This baby born in Bethlehem was also Christ. That means he was the Anointed of God, the Messiah of Israel. He is the One promised by God who would come and bring deliverance to his people, not political deliverance from oppression, but spiritual deliverance from sin.

Not only is he Savior and Christ, he is also Lord. He is the sovereign ruler manifest in the flesh. This title carries the same concept as king. Jesus the Christ is of the Davidic line, the royal line, and he rules. He is Savior of those who recognize that he is the Christ and who bow to him as Lord. “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him” (Col 2:6). Matthew Henry once said, “He is a Savior, and he will be a Savior to those only that accept him for their Lord.”

What Child is this? He is a Savior, sent by the Father to save sinners. He is Christ, the Anointed of God, the Messiah of Israel. He is the Lord, the sovereign ruler manifest in the flesh.

We desperately need this One who came into the world by the virgin's womb. He came to be our prophet, priest, and king. He took our sins upon himself and paid the debt. Salvation is found only in this One, who came to save sinners from sin, death, and hell. We cannot by our own merit gain pardon. So God sent his Son into the world for us. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Let the question posed in this wonderful hymn be uppermost in our minds as we consider his coming into the world. This One born in such mean estate was the promised Messiah. He is Lord. He came for us. He came to save us.

Who is this child? What child is this? *This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing/Haste, haste to bring Him laud—The Babe, the Son of Mary.*

THE BOOK THAT

A series of questions Geoff Thomas asked pastors and other church leaders.

This interview is with **Malcolm Maclean**, pastor of the Greyfriars Free Church of Scotland in Inverness.



The Book that I am currently reading... *The Doctrines of Grace* in an Unexpected Place by Mark R. Stevenson. He details how many of the early Plymouth Brethren agreed with the five points of Calvinism. I was converted in the Brethren and retain some interest in their history.

The Book that changed my life... *Desiring God* by John Piper. I had read many books before as a Christian but this book changed my thinking on how God's people should react to God and his grace.

The Book that I think is the most underrated... *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* by George Smeaton. He says what we need to know about the Holy Spirit, whether from the biblical details or from systematic theology or from church history.

The Book that made me say Amen as I read... *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, although it is usually an amen of what I would like to have, rather than what I have.

The last book that made me weep... *Something Must Be Known and Felt* by Stuart Olyott. The author describes a kind of Christianity that once was common in my Christian background, which has become rare in the contemporary church, and which I miss every day.

The Book that I am ashamed not to have read... *Calvin's Institutes*, I have read many chapters in it, but nowhere near all of them. A copy has been within my reach for forty years and I still have not read it all. Maybe one day.

The book that I most often give to new church members and young Christians... If I were to give one, it would be *The Hidden Life of Prayer* by David McIntyre. Most people struggle regarding prayer and I suspect new believers need something that is short and straightforward on this essential Christian activity.

The best book for Children... Depending on their age, for younger children, Carine Mackenzie's books for Christian Focus. For older children, those by Carine Mackenzie for Christian Focus. But then, I am biased.



DECEMBER 16 – We will be hosting our annual Christmas meal and worship service with our friends from Providence Presbyterian Church this year. The meal will be at 5 PM followed by a worship service at 6 PM. Darren Thole will be preaching.

JANUARY 20 – Don Currin, pastor of Providence Gospel Chapel, Muscle Shoals, AL, will be preaching at the 5 PM service (dv).

MARCH 15-16, APRIL 12-13, MAY 10-11 – Grace Community Church, Huntsville, AL, will once again be hosting an extended conference for the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors. Be sure to register early if you wish to attend.

Spurgeon's Catechism with Scripture Proofs



Question 48: What is required in the third commandment?

Answer: The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

Scripture: Psalm 29:2; Revelation 15:3-4; Ecclesiastes 5:1; Psalm 138:2; Job 36:24; Deuteronomy 28:58-59.

Commentary: We are at all times, in our public speaking, private conversations, and religious worship, to ascribe glory and honor to the matchless name of our great God and Savior. God's name is Wonderful! His name is above all names! "O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together" (Psa 34:3).

May God deliver us from this horrible corruption that makes a man swear and curse and trample underfoot the name of God. Misusing God's name "is a very great sin. It is a direct attack on his honor and glory, and anyone who makes such an attack deserves to be condemned" (Ryken). But there is forgiveness for those who have taken God's name in vain, and who among us is not guilty? If we repent, God will forgive us. Peter, who cursed and denied that he knew Christ, went out afterwards, wept bitterly and repented. He was forgiven and Christ subsequently blessed his gospel labors.

Calvin said that the object of the third commandment is "that the majesty of the name of God is to be held sacred." He went on to say, "Whatever our mind conceives of Him, whatever our tongue utters, must bespeak his excellence and correspond to the sublimity of His sacred name; in short, must be fitted to extol its greatness." If we have reverence toward God, we will have reverence for his name. For us to use God's name is to speak of all that God is, and all that he stands for.



Thomas Brooks Puritan Quotes

DAILY REPENTANCE

"Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation, as well as other graces. A true penitent must go on from faith to faith, from strength to strength; he must never stand still or turn back. True repentance is a continued spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing. 'My sin is ever before me.'"

Reading for a Change

Malcolm Maclean

If we had access to an ordinary Christian's bookshelf in nineteenth-century Scotland we would perhaps be surprised at what we would see. In addition to a well-used Bible, we would see books such as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Richard Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*, *Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray McCheyne*, the *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* and Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Bible*. People in those days worked long hours, yet we would find that they knew the contents of their books, rather than the contents of their bookshelves, very well.

Now we might say that reading such literature is only a matter of taste. Yet it may be the case that one reason for the shallowness in Christian experience that is often experienced today is the failure to read substantial Christian literature. It is important to read Christian books that are marked by depth of content.

Of course, there are wrong uses of Christian literature. Here are four that are frequently found and I have succumbed to each at one time or another.

One is *to substitute Christian literature for more essential spiritual activities such as Bible reading and prayer*. It is not to our spiritual benefit to use a Daily Readings book instead of the Bible.

A second wrong use is *to become collectors of books instead of readers of books*. It may be obvious, but we need to remind ourselves that a book is meant to be read. Imagine two such collectors meeting together.

One collects Puritan works and shows his friend the complete sets of a wide range of Puritan authors. As he stands, basking in his collection, his friend asks him about the contents of the books, only to discover that he has not a clue. Still, it is their shared hobby, so the Puritan collector asks his friend what writers he has amassed. Quickly overcoming his shock at his friend not reading his Puritan books, he says that he concentrates on Scottish theologians and lists his sets. But he too is slightly embarrassed to reveal that he knows as little about their contents as his friend did about his. What spiritual good are these books doing? None.

A third wrong use is *to focus on the sensational rather than the spiritual*. One area of sensational Christian literature concerns prophecy (and there are other areas as well). In the years that I have been a Christian I have lost count of the number of titles that have claimed to identify the Antichrist or the next stage in the history of the modern state of Israel. One can easily fill a shelf and empty one's pockets by purchasing them. My advice about such books – ignore them and leave them in the shop.

The fourth wrong use is *to say that either the old or the new is best*. There are good writers in the present and there are dull and tedious writers from the past (and vice versa). Good writers of Christian doctrine, experience and biography are among God's gifts to his church and should be utilized by us.

I suppose that none of us want to misuse the time we spend reading. Yet how often do we come to the end of a book and discover that we cannot recall what is contained in it? When that happens, it is clear that we have not interacted with the book

as we turned its pages, or else we have skimmed our way through it. We have to read at a pace and in a manner that will enable us to imbibe what we are reading.

What should be the effect of reading Christian literature?

First, *Christian literature should inform our minds*. In order for this to happen, we should read respectfully (after all, the author has worked hard on his book), read critically (after all, the author is not infallible), and sometimes read above what we think our level is (after all, that is one way to increase our knowledge).

Second, *Christian literature should inspire our emotions*. The effect of reading a Christian book, whether doctrinal, practical, biographical or historical, should be an increasing love for God and a growing joy in what he has done for his people. If a Christian book does not move your heart, either with delight in grace or with penitence for failures, put it aside and read a book that does.

Third, *Christian literature should influence our choices*. If only our minds are affected, we may become boring know-all's; if only our emotions are affected, we may become marked by sentimentality. Books should change us permanently, and for that to happen our wills also have to be affected. The correct reading of a Christian book will change our choices for the better. So, how about reading for a change!

This article was first published in the March 2016 edition of the *Free Church Record* magazine. Malcolm Maclean is pastor of the Greyfriars Free Church of Scotland in Inverness.