

Churches Across the Country Join in Troubling Closure Trend for Final Sunday of 2025

In recent years, a quiet but troubling habit has taken root among some of America's largest churches.

On the Sunday between Christmas and New Year's – a day that once felt like a natural extension of the season of worship – many congregations are now told not to come at all. Services are canceled outright, or replaced with an “online-only” option, as if gathering in person has become an inconvenience rather than the point.

The justification is usually framed as practical or compassionate. Staff are tired. Volunteers are burned out. The production calendar has been intense.

All of that may very well be true – but it also reveals something deeper and more unsettling about how worship has come to be understood in the modern zeitgeist.

When church begins to resemble an event that must be staged, staffed and managed like a concert tour, it becomes easy to believe it occasionally needs to be shut down for rest.

But that understanding is backwards. Christians do not gather because the lighting is perfect, the transitions are smooth, or the band has rehearsed enough hours.

We gather because Scripture calls us to gather. We gather to hear the Word preached, to pray together, to sing together and to orient our lives – collectively – toward God. None of that requires spectacle. None of it requires polish.

It merely requires presence.

Historically, the Sunday after Christmas has never been treated as expendable. If anything, it has been a moment of quiet continuation – less pageantry, more reflection. The Incarnation does not expire on Christmas Day, and the call to worship does not take a holiday because the calendar is inconvenient.

A church that cannot meet without full production risks sending the message that worship itself is optional when it becomes difficult.

This isn't an argument for grinding people down or ignoring legitimate needs for rest. It's a reminder of priorities. When churches choose cancellation over communion, or livestreams over embodied fellowship, something essential is being lost.

And as more high-profile churches normalize this choice, it's worth asking – gently but honestly – what we think the church is for in the first place.

Just look at the message being sent by many of these larger churches:

As is their custom, JD Greear's Summit Church closes their doors the Sunday after Christmas, in order to give their staff and volunteers the 'gift of rest.'

– Protestia (@Protestia) December 28, 2025

Pastor Tom Buck issued a perfect rebuttal to these posts:

You don't need volunteers to have a basic service that allows the church to gather and worship the Lord as Scripture commands. Without any volunteers, the church can gather and...

Read the Word

Pray the Word

Sing the Word (a cappella)

Preach the Word

This is the Lord's Day!

– Tom Buck (Five Point Buck) (@TomBuck) December 28, 2025

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Buck further pointed out: “If your church is so much of a ‘production’ that you feel the need to cancel worship services during Christmas week to give everyone a break, you've lost the ultimate purpose of the gathering!”

The pastor is exactly right, and the rebuke cuts deeper than some churches may want to admit. When worship becomes so dependent on staffing charts, stage cues, and technical perfection that it can't exist without them, the church has quietly swapped substance for structure. What's being protected in those moments isn't reverence – it's a brand.

The early church gathered without fog machines, countdown

clocks, or social media teams. They gathered under persecution, in homes, in secrecy, and sometimes in fear. The idea that modern churches – flush with resources, buildings, and platforms – must shut their doors for “rest” during one of the most theologically rich seasons of the year should give us pause.

If Christmas week is too demanding for the church to function, something has gone seriously wrong.

The solution isn't guilt, outrage, or burnout-driven heroics. It's simplicity. Strip worship back to its essentials: Scripture, prayer, song and the gathered body of believers. The church does not exist to impress, entertain, or exhaust itself. She exists to worship God – faithfully, consistently, and together.

And if that can't happen without a full production crew, then the problem isn't the calendar. It's the priorities.

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