

# PLEASANT RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

1997 Pleasant Ridge Road

State Road, N.C. 28676

## Address Service Requested



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October 1, 2022

Vol. 51 No 12

## Christ's Return: Preparing for the Coming of the Bridegroom

I've known about the Second Coming of Jesus ever since I was a boy. Primarily because every first Sunday of the new year, my dad would preach a sermon that announced, "This may be the year that our Lord will return!" I recall, like it was yesterday, the trauma that statement struck in my heart when I was 6 years old. I wondered, *What if my dad is right? Everyone in my family would go to be with Jesus, and I would be left behind!* So when we got home from church, I asked my dad how I could be included in that event, and that day my dad led me to the Lord as my Savior. But through the ensuing years, while always believing the promise of His coming, I admit that for the most part it was a Biblical truth that had minimal impact on my everyday life.

Until more recently.

Given all that is happening in our world, I find myself thinking *Lord, haste the day!* The promise of Him coming again to judge all that is wrong, to deal the final blow to Satan and his hordes, and to launch His emerging new world order—where there is no sorrow or death and where all things will be made new—is a compelling, wonderful thought. And not only is it a wonderful thought, but when fully embraced, it has life-changing ramifications for us today. Writing to a church living in a dark and hostile culture, John the apostle focuses his readers' attention on the impact of Jesus' return when he writes, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3). Simply, when we fully embrace the coming of Christ, we become hopeful people motivated to pursue pure lives!

The Biblical sense of hope is different than how we normally think of the concept. Typically, we might say, "I hope it doesn't rain on our vacation." But that hope is not for sure. It's merely wishful thinking. Biblical hope, on the other hand, is not a "hope so." It is grounded in the belief that what we are looking forward to is something that will really happen. Believing the Word of God is true and that Jesus' teachings are credible, His return is not a matter of "hope so" but a certain reality we look forward to. And, the certainty of the Biblical hope of His future return has relevant impact on life in the present. We live in an increasingly dark culture where our dearest values and virtues are at best dismissed and at worst despised. Increasingly marginalized and often canceled as Christians, we fear that we have lost and that evil will advance without restraint—which leaves us prone to a despairing sense of hopelessness. And to a watching world that also thinks we are the losers, hopelessness makes us look like the losers we mistakenly think we are.

But, being certain of His return cancels our sense of hopelessness. It makes us hopeful people who are confident that in the end we are not losers at all. His return initiates His victory over Satan and proves the point that He, King Jesus, ultimately wins. And because He wins, we win too. His return gives us the certain hope that we are not part of an old-fashioned, out-of-date world order like many in today's culture assume. Rather, we belong to an emerging victorious world order that is free of evil, sorrow, shame and guilt, and is blessed with a robust sense of righteousness, peace and joy where all things are new (Romans 14:17; Revelation 21:1-5).

This hope reminds us that life is like a feature-length film with God as its director. Freeze-framing the film in a dark moment always leads to hopelessness. But as followers of Jesus, we let the film roll, knowing that in the end He returns as the victor, as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16) and that we will, as John says, be forever locked into an eternal likeness of Him.

Given this great hope, it's no wonder that John wants us to be busy getting ready for the grand event! And getting ready is all about purifying our lives in anticipation of meeting the perfectly pure Jesus when He appears. According to the Collins English Dictionary, "If you describe something ... as pure, you mean that it is very clear and represents a perfect example of its type." Our "type" is the pure Jesus, and our purity is an example of Him. Granted, we are all victims of the fall, and a perfect purity in every area of our lives is not yet possible.

Someday, at His return, we will be perfectly pure ... but not now. However, followers of Jesus who believe that at any moment He will return seek to ready themselves with a growing purity that is increasingly more like Him and less like our fallen selves. Pure in our love for Him and pure in our love for others, even our enemies and those who spitefully use us. Pure in our morals. Pure in our allegiance to the truth. Pure in our generosity. Pure in our humility. Pure in our ethics. Pure in our pursuit of justice. Pure in compassion for all. The pursuit of purity, as He is pure, is the pursuit of hopeful people who can't wait to see Him face to face!

I can't help but think of John 14:1-3, where Jesus speaks to a group of traumatized disciples who are about to be left in a hostile world without Him. He comforts them by saying that though He is going away to prepare a place for them, He will come again and receive them unto Himself. The imagery is reflective of Jewish marriage customs of the day. In that culture the groom-to-be would strike a marriage agreement with the father of the bride and then go back to his father's house to prepare an apartment for him and the bride to live in after they were married.

Meanwhile, the bride-to-be would wait in her father's house, preparing for the day that her lover would come to take her to the wedding—having no clue as to what day or what time that would be. When the groom finished preparing their home, he would start through the village with his friends, and as they walked, other villagers would join the entourage crying out, "The bridegroom comes! The bridegroom comes!" Hearing the shouts, no doubt the bride's heart would be racing, knowing that the moment she had hoped for had finally come. And you can be sure that she had used the time in waiting getting herself ready for that very special day.

We, too, are waiting for a very special day!

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). ©2022 Joseph M. Stowell

### God's Blessings September 4, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$9,266.55
Baptist Men:	\$40.00
NC Missions:	\$70.00
Sunday School Attendance	117
Worship Attendance	185

### God's Blessings September 11, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$7,663.00
NC Missions:	\$100.00
VBS	\$25.00
Worship Attendance	175

### God's Blessings September 18, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$5,483.00
Sunday School Attendance	116
Worship Attendance	182

### God's Blessings September 25, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$4,054.10
Cemetery Fund:	\$100.00
NC Missions:	\$40.00
Sunday School Attendance:	98
Worship Attendance:	178

**Tri-C for October:** Canned Fruit Donations:

**Ark Meal for October 18:** Debbie Garner & Mom

**Senior Saints:** We will be going to the Carolina Classic Fair on Tues. Oct. 4th, leaving PRBC at 8:00am. Sign up in the vestibule.

**Men's Fishing Trip:** This year will be Oct. 16 to 19th. We will be going to Atlantic Beach and stay at the Oceanna Motel & Pier. The cost will be \$140 per person and includes room, pier passes and 1 pound shrimp. Money needs to be turned in to Robert Hinson by Oct. 2rd. The sign up sheet is in the vestibule. See Robert for more info.

**EmpowHer:** What is a Woman? God's standard vs. the world! October 23rd, immediately following the worship service, the ladies of the church will be hosting our young ladies for an EmpowHER lunch event. EmpowHER's goal is to train these young ladies to be ambassadors for Christ in their home, school, and community, while building relationships between all women in the church. All women are invited and encouraged to join us in investing in our future. Please see Barbara Cason for more info.

**Trunk O 'Treat:** Info coming.

### PRBC BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS SEPTEMBER

- The average Sunday School attendance for August 2022 was 96.
- The letter of recommendation on behalf of Joshua Sparks was received from First Baptist Church of Ronda.
- Due to an oversight, the membership request letter was never sent to Austin Baptist Church on behalf of Destiny Myers. This error was found and corrected.
- We received a request for transfer of membership to Center Grove Church on behalf of Melissa Settle Orr. Request granted.
- The light under the shelter has been replaced. The area near the children's wing has been cemented and stained to match the parking lot. The air conditioning company is waiting for cooler weather to install the new unit. The men completed landscaping and weed removal on 9/13/22.
- The Bus is scheduled to be repaired by October 3.
- The Nominating Committee recommended last meeting that a change to the constitution be made stating that the committee will have the discretion to increase the number of committee members as necessary during yearly appointments. Motion carried.
- The Nominating Committee is recommending that Jane Love be added to the Nominating Committee, Todd Garner be added to the Building and Grounds Committee, and James Burcham be added to the Finance Committee. Motion carried.
- The Personnel Committee is finalizing the job descriptions, evaluation information, and recommendations. Information will be presented to the church soon.
- There is an upcoming mission trip to Baltimore, Maryland being sponsored by the Elkin Baptist Association. The cost is \$50 per person, and is October 26-29.
- The mission team is planning a Fall Community Outreach later in the fall.
- Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry is coming soon. More information to come.
- Trunk O' Treat is being planned for late October.
- We have a new opportunity for ministry with the North Carolina Aging Ministry.
- Ridgefest will not be held this year. An outreach event is being planned for the Spring.
- The Ark meal was prepared for 22 residents. We were able to cook part of the meal at the facility. The van will be traveling to the Ark to offer residents a ride to church.
- The children and youth will be traveling to a *For King and Country concert in Greensboro on December 11. See Sam Comer for more information.*
- The High Spirits will be delivering items to the Hospice Home in Dobson on October 3.
- The Seniors will be traveling to the Carolina Classic Fair on October 4. Please sign up in the vestibule if you plan to attend.
- The deacons have elected Chris Reeves to be the vice-chairman of deacons.
- Please continue to be in prayer regarding the deacon position that needs to be filled.
- The church has a need for data management software to make people management easier for the staff and clerk. After completing research, *Churchtrac was presented as a solution. Churchtrac offers ways for members to update their own contact information, add pictures, access an online directory and administrative staff can sort and tag people based on their work within the church, run reports, mass texting, and online giving. There are benefits to the church body, but the main purpose is to help our staff. The cost for this software is \$480 for one year of service. This is an unbudgeted item. Vote taken after discussion with 37 in favor of purchasing the software, 5 opposing. Motion passed.*

### PRBC, WELCOME TO CHURCHTRAC CHURCH CONNECT APP!

Churchtrac Church Connect App: Church Connect is designed to be the hub of communication between members and staff. By interacting with your ChurchTrac database, Church Connect gives PRBC the ability to connect by submitting forms, registering for events, recording their attendance and more! Once you scan the code it will open an app on your phone. You need to save the link onto your phone. You must create an account to sign in. You will have to provide your name, address, phone number and email.

Once you complete and submit the form, you will automatically be sent a temporary passcode to validate your identity. Please see Gala or Kevin for more info.



<https://prbc.churchtrac.com>

### Pastor's Corner

Life choices are sometimes pretty tough. I know growing up I had all kinds of great ideas of career choices. I once wanted to be a commercial pilot, then there was the season that I thought being an architect would be a fantastic career. I really thought that being a band director would be my career of choice and even started off in college headed in that direction. Electronic engineering was entertained and structural steel detailing was even a real occupation.

In our Wednesday night study we had a look at Lot and his life choice. It all seemed good, as he "pitched his tent toward Sodom". There are some things we can learn from his life and choices. How did it affect him and how did he affect it. How has your life choice affected your personal and spiritual life?; How have you affected the people and community around you?; How has it been a benefit?; How has it affected your family?

Matt 6:33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

In-JOY!  
Your friend and pastor,  
John Newton