

PLEASANT RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

1997 Pleasant Ridge Road

State Road, N.C. 28676

Address Service Requested



«Name»

«Address»

«City» «State» «Zip»

Web site: www.myprbc.net

1997 Pleasant Ridge Road, State Road, NC 28676

Church phone: 336-874-2875

Email: office@myprbc.net

December 1, 2022

Vol. 51 No 14

The Surprise of Christmas

John Wesley, having arrived in Newcastle, England, wrote in his journal in 1742: “I walked into the town. I was surprised: So much drunkenness, cursing and swearing. ... Surely this place is ripe for Him who ‘came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance’” (See Luke 5:32).

Ripe for revival? Yes. That was Wesley’s way of viewing Newcastle. Some may suppose that the worst possible condition means that revival is more remote than ever. But no. It is the other way around! Historic revival soon followed Wesley’s visit to Newcastle. It was also the pattern in the early church, and it holds bright promise for our dark world today.

In Our Darkest Hour

“The fullness of time” (Galatians 4:4)—when “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14)—happened when conditions were the darkest. It was as if God waited until all seemed beyond hope. God is like that. It is His style. Not only choosing the time but also the most unlikely place—Galilee.

Isaiah was the first to see it coming: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone” (Isaiah 9:2). That is why Matthew quoted Isaiah as he did: “those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned” (Matthew 4:16). It was the common perception in Israel that no one expected anything good to come out of Nazareth (John 1:46). And since a man from Galilee was preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” and was “healing every disease and every affliction” in Capernaum (Matthew 4:17, 23), a prophetic explanation was appropriate.

This was God’s plan all along. He picks the time, the place and the people He chooses to put on the map. Yes, a new pecking order was on the horizon. It was assumed that Jerusalem was God’s most cherished focus, that whatever hope there was it would be centered in Jerusalem. It was assumed that Galilee was dark, that Jerusalem was light.

The Pharisees and Sadducees had a lot to learn, namely, that their hearts were as dark as the hearts of people living in Galilee. Indeed, Jesus said that all people love darkness rather than light because their works were evil (John 3:19). We all were born dead and in sin (Ephesians 2:1).

There are two ways to grasp the word *darkness*: outwardly and inwardly. The land of “deep darkness”—outwardly—was the way the Jews generally regarded the north part of Israel. The closer people lived to the border of the Gentiles in the north—thus the farther from Jerusalem—the more ignorant and unqualified they were (many assumed). Jesus, however, showed that sin is internal. It is what comes out of a man’s heart: evil thoughts, murder, adultery and sexual immorality (Matthew 15:19). Therefore, true righteousness is also inward, as in loving your enemy and dealing with sexual lust in the heart (Matthew 5:44, 29-30).

The Light of the World Has Come

Isaiah prophesied that out of dark Galilee would come a great Light. How dark? Very dark. But how bright a light? Very bright, such being the Light that lights everyone (John 1:9), the “light of the world” (John 8:12), the One in whom there is “no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5); the Light that dazzled Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:3-5).

This Light would also enable one to see that sin is inward, that righteousness is inward and comes from Him and by Him who was actually brought up in Nazareth and made His home in Galilee.

The new pecking order had arrived. The Jews who were self-righteous not only hated Jesus for what He said (His view of sin and righteousness), and what He did (choosing fishermen, tax collectors and sinners); they were prejudiced also because of where He was from. Two Galileans, Peter and John (fishermen), became the chief spokesmen for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Saul of Tarsus became the chief theologian. A new pecking order indeed. The Pharisees and Sadducees who had rejected the Cornerstone would be put out of the picture (Acts 4:11).

A Light in Our Darkness

The situation today is like that of ancient Israel 2,000 years ago. The setting is dark. How dark? Very dark. Not very long ago, half of America believed that Jesus was the only way to God. Today 52% believe that Jesus was a great teacher—and nothing more. How dark? Very dark. Since COVID, 30% of those who attended church are gone, 40% uncommitted. Since 1973, an estimated 62 million abortions have taken place in the U.S. In the past decade, same-sex marriage has become largely accepted; any sense of outrage has evaporated. Prejudice regarding the color of one’s skin still prevails almost everywhere. Unprecedented violence in our cities no longer surprises anyone. Theological liberalism in pulpits has become normal. How dark? Very dark.

But there is hope. That was the surprise of the first Christmas. God bypassed King Herod and revealed His glory to shepherds. A new pecking order indeed. So, too, the people dwelling in dark America must be reminded of a great Light. How bright? It is the glory of the eternal Gospel. We were born “dead” and in sin. Yes. “But God” (Ephesians 2:4), rich in mercy, saved us.

The Light that caused Saul of Tarsus to fall to the ground is the same yesterday and today and forever. How bright? Very bright. The same God who sent Jesus in the fullness of time is still in control. Never have conditions been worse. Ripe for revival. ©2021 R.T. Kendall

R.T. Kendall served as minister of Westminster Chapel in London from 1977 to 2002. He lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife, Louise.

God's Blessings November 6, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$8,391.10
In Memory of Arvil Luffman:	\$100.00
In Memory of Billy Gentry:	\$100.00
Sunday School Attendance:	101
Worship Attendance:	165

God's Blessings November 13, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$5,850.50
In Memory of Arvil Luffman:	\$25.00
Sunday School Attendance:	111
Worship Attendance:	158

God's Blessings November 20, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$5,508.00
Lottie Moon:	\$25.00
NC Children's Home:	\$40.00
Sunday School Attendance:	105
Worship Attendance:	181

God's Blessings November 27, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$6,231.46
Lottie Moon:	\$50.00
NC Children's Home:	\$1,460.00
Sunday School Attendance:	112
Worship Attendance:	172

Tri-C for December: Tooth Paste Donations:

Ark Meal for December 20: Anita Darnell

Senior Saints: On Wed., Dec. 14 at noon we will be having a Christmas Lunch in the fellowship hall. There will be fried chicken and ham but I ask that you guys bring a side dish or dessert to complete the meal. The drinks and bread will be furnished. Please sign the sheet in the vestibule if you can attend. We will have a surprise guest that day and Pastor John will lead us in a devotional time.

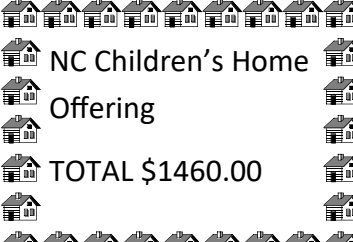
PRBC Christmas Play: "A Christmas to Believe In" Dec. 18th., 6:00pm.
Come join us!

Pastor's Corner

Rousseau, Kentucky a small unincorporated community located in the hills of Kentucky a few miles from anything. We turned off the main highway and followed a winding county road along what I believe was a part of the Cumberland River. The flooding last July had left remnants of what used to be homes of residents in that small community. We were there with Stone's Throw Ministries, to provide a couple of meals for families that would have little else over this Thanksgiving week. I truly believe what happened during that 24 hour period was an absolute "God Thing"! Hot meals were provided to more than 400 family members and Thanksgiving boxes and hams were passed out to more than 200 families. Those meals were the vehicle that was used to share Jesus and see "hands and feet" literally put into action! Hope with Christ is on the horizon as local community assistance and these sweet residents are neighbor helping neighbor. They are working to get families out of tents and temporary shelters and back into more substantial structures and helping family units come back together after being displaced following the disaster.

My thanks to you, church family, as we were all part of this mission to Rousseau. We are so very blessed! Continue to pray for these and many others that need the hope that comes through knowing Jesus as Savior! Special thanks to Mitch Callaway and all the great volunteers at Stone's Throw for being obedient to what God has called them to do!

Blessed!
Pastor and Friend, John Newton

<p>Announcement! Attention PRBC Family- we now offer ONLINE GIVING! This can be accessed through the Connect App. There are printed instructions in the vestibule to assist if needed.</p>	 <p>NC Children's Home Offering</p> <p>TOTAL \$1460.00</p>
---	---

We need to fill one vacancy with our active Deacons. Per our constitution, "vacancies will be filled as needed from among those men who are active members of the church and who have the spiritual and scriptural qualifications as found in Timothy 3:8-13. Any church member can approach the deacons and recommend a man or woman to be considered for deacon." We ask that you speak to the man you wish to recommend and make sure they are willing to serve. Inactive Deacons at PRBC and other ordained men are eligible to be recommended. After prayerful consideration and examination, we will present this man to the church and vote two weeks later. If you have any questions, please see one of our active Deacons. Thank you.

PRBC BUSINESS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS DECEMBER

The average Sunday School attendance for October 2022 was 97. Next quarter our Sunday School will begin studying the book of *John*.

Handbells are working hard on music for the Christmas season and will be performing at the Hanging of the Greens service. Attendance at Choir Practice is increasing.

ChurchTrac continues to be an asset to our church and staff. We now offer online giving, and have the capability to text information to members. Please go to the Connect App and click on the different cards. Some of them are interactive and include shower registry information, links to websites, prayer list updates, and event registration. If you have suggestions for items that need to be added to the app, or if you need assistance, please see Gala Calloway.

The heating/ air conditioning unit has been replaced in the fellowship hall.

The air conditioning unit on the bus has been repaired.

The mission team sponsored Trunk O'Treat on 10/30. 19 cars participated, with approximately 100 children receiving candy and gospel tracts.

The mission team budget covered the cost of shipping the OCC shoeboxes, and plans to give a donation to Stone's Throw Christian Ministry for their upcoming Kentucky Mission trip on 11/18-11/19.

The team are seeking out community members who are in need of assistance during the Christmas season. If you know of a family or individual in need, please let a member of the mission team know their contact information by 11/27.

There will be a special offering on 11/27 to assist the NC Baptist Children's Home. A speaker and/or a tour of one of the children's homes will be scheduled in the spring.

Plans are in process for a Ridgefest type event and for Operation InAs-Much for the Spring of 2023.

The fall Elkin Baptist Associational meeting was held on November 3 at Poplar Springs Baptist Church. The message was brought by Pastor James King. Information was given regarding the NC Baptist Children's Homes, as well as the NC Baptist Aging Ministry. The Association has three focused areas: Pastor Joe Wood is working on a Prayer Initiative that will be held in the spring. Pastor Mike Smith is planning a training session on ministering in the NC Baptist Aging ministry. Pastor Stephen Robbins works with mission opportunities and he updated on the Baltimore, MD partnership with Pastor Charlie Brown. Other Association outreaches are a Youth/Family Event that will be held 11/19 at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, and the Associational Toy Store, which ministers to many families in our area, and is being held December 8-10. Please remember to pray for all these outreaches.

On Monday, November 14, over 60 people from 7 different churches met in the fellowship hall to pack boxes in preparation for distribution in Kentucky through Stone's Throw Christian Ministries. The Kentucky Mission Trip will have two teams leaving this weekend: one on Friday morning and one on Saturday morning. The teams will be distributing 300 Thanksgiving meals to residents in the area, as well as preparing 500 hot meals to be taken to a FEMA camp. Gospel tracts will also be distributed.

The Ark meal was prepared for 17 residents. Robin and Mitch Callaway were able to cook the meal at the Ark. One of the teenage residents assisted them with cooking.

There is an Angel Tree located at the Ark if anyone wishes to sponsor one of the residents for Christmas. Next month, our church will take gifts to all the residents when the December meal is prepared.

The High Spirits have assembled 100 gift bags for the residents of Pruitt Healthcare that will be delivered in December. They also created sewing kits and fishing kits to be included in the OCC shoeboxes. These were delivered with the shoeboxes to be added to boxes as needed.

On November 29-30 the group will travel to Abingdon, Virginia to see the drama "It's A Wonderful Life" at the Barter Theater. This will be an overnight trip, with shopping scheduled on the 30th.

Thank you to all who gave cards, money, gifts, and gift cards for Pastor Appreciation. Pastor John and Cindy were overwhelmed to feel the love and support of the church family. It has been almost a year of serving at PRBC. Please continue to assist with recognizing visitors and making them feel welcome. There are lots of activities coming up surrounding the Christmas season. A Christmas Eve service is being planned, Hanging of the Greens, a Christmas Play, PR Kids Art sale this Sunday at 9 am, and Christmas Caroling on 12/21.

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. Online access: prbc.churchtrac.com. Please see Gala or Kevin for more info.



<https://prbc.churchtrac.com>