

PLEASANT RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

1997 Pleasant Ridge Road

State Road, N.C. 28676

Address Service Requested



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THE DARKNESS DOES NOT WIN

The title of this article is hard to believe, isn't it?

Doesn't it seem like every week we hear about wars and rumors of wars, about terrorism or mass shootings, about Christian persecution and cultural degradation? We can look back on this past year and think of loved ones who've died, or friends who've been diagnosed with cancer. And others who are gripped by addiction or saddled with chronic pain or mired in a depression that will not lift.

In our own lives, there are too many tears, too many unknowns, too many closed doors. It's not hard to be discouraged, maybe even despair.

And yet, the spoiler is true: the darkness does not win.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:1-5).

The symbolism of "light" in John's Gospel has many layers. Light can refer to Christ (as in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world"), or to obeying the will of God (as in John 3:20, "everyone who does wicked things hates the light"), or to eternal life and the abundant life that can be found only in Christ (which is what verse 4 means by "In him was life, and the life was the light of men"). I think John is being deliberately ambiguous in verse 5. What he is saying is that the entire Light Side is victorious over the entire Dark Side.

Christians will not be overcome by the darkness—either amid our lifetime struggle with sin or in the life of eternal bliss to come—because we belong to the One who is the Light of the World. Darkness, which is John's way of talking about the fallen world of sin and Satan, will not prove victorious in its long, persistent fight against the light.

Light is more powerful, even when darkness is more pervasive. Have your kids ever shone a flashlight in your face in the middle of the night? Have you ever been kept awake by an overly bright night light in the corner of the room? Have you ever been drawn with curiosity to some grand sale in town because the establishment blasted a spotlight into the sky? No matter how much darkness, light pierces that darkness. And the darker the night, the brighter the light shines.

This is not a pie-in-the-sky inspirational pep talk. There are all sorts of generic, vaguely spiritual messages that sound forth during December. Yes, Christmas is about the Good News that the bad guys will not ultimately defeat the good guys. Yes, Christmas is about peace on earth and good will toward men. Yes, Christmas is about the hope of better days to come and a better life after this life. Christmas is supposed to be happy and cheerful and inspiring. But if that's all we say, or all we believe, we haven't gotten the literal beating heart of the Christmas story.

Why can we be confident that the darkness will not win? It's not because of grandma's cooking or a familiar Christmas movie. It's not because dreams come true when we believe, no matter what we actually believe. Our confidence is rooted in history; our faith is based on fact. What we celebrate in this season is not the triumph of the human spirit or the importance of family or the power of positive thinking. We worship a Baby Boy born in a bloody mess in a manger in Bethlehem.

That Baby was really born, to a real virgin, just as the prophets foretold. He lived. He died. He rose from the dead on the third day. He is coming again. We know that the darkness will not be victorious over the world, because it was not victorious over the One through whom the world was made.

If God can summon light into existence when there was only darkness, surely He can send His light into the world with assurance of complete success, no matter how impossible the odds. For this is the miracle and the wonder of Christmas: The Light of the world was born in the darkness of night, as the Word of God lay in the manger unable to speak a syllable.

The story is true, all of it—the Baby, the virgin, the shepherds, the angel, the manger, the star, the wise men, even the hard-to-pronounce words like *Quirinius* and *Ephrathah*. All true.

So now what?

Repent. Believe. Trust. Obey. Worship and rejoice. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). The True Light, which gives light to everyone, has come into the world.

And the darkness does not win. ©2022 Kevin DeYoung

God's Blessings December 4, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$8877.00
Lottie Moon:	\$2208.00
Sunday School Attendance:	98
Worship Attendance:	156

God's Blessings December 11, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$5,183.00
Lottie Moon:	\$175.00
Sunday School Attendance:	104
Worship Attendance:	182

God's Blessings December 18, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$7,381.00
Baptist Men:	\$50.00
Lottie Moon:	\$2,050.00
Sunday School Attendance:	96
Worship Attendance:	172

God's Blessings December 25, 2022

Budget Needs:	\$7,265.61
Budget Receipt:	\$3,466.00
Baptist Men:	\$200.00
Lottie Moon:	\$1,315.00
Worship Attendance:	161

Tri-C for January: Pudding/Jello Donations: 27 Pounds, \$31

Ark Meal for January 17: Brandon & Regina Davis

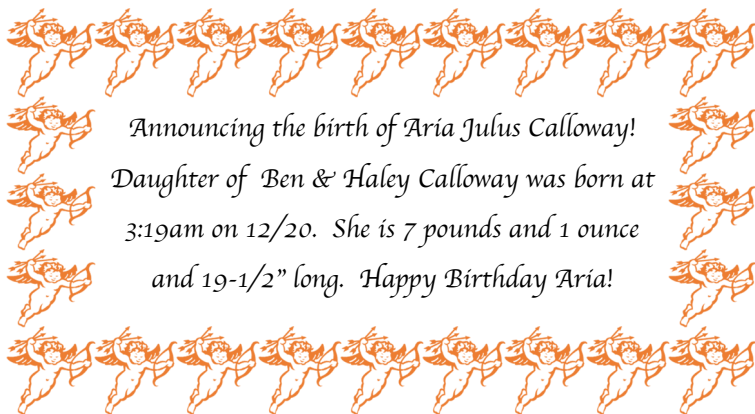
PRBC Office: Will be closed for New Year's Jan. 2, reopening Jan. 3.

Titling Envelopes: Our order is still being worked on. The company apologizes for the delay. Their goal is to have every order out by Christmas but they cannot guarantee that. If we do not have them by Christmas, it will be shortly after the first of the year. The company apologizes for the delay.

PRBC Business Receipts: Upcoming for the End of Year. Please keep in mind that all credit card and reimbursement requests need to be in as close to 12/31 for recording and payment. Thank you!

PRBC Church Council: PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE .

All PRBC Committee Chairs are asked to attend the yearly Church Council meeting scheduled on Sunday, Jan. 15 at 4:00pm. Please mark it on your calendar.



Merry Christmas from Pastor John & Cindy

TOY STORE RESULTS: the Elkin Baptist Association, with PRBC's contributions, helped 202 children and 69 families! May many seeds be planted through this year's Toy Store.

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.

LOTTIE MOON OFFERING for DECEMBER: \$6,673.00 GOAL \$10,000

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, 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>