

The First Edition

First Presbyterian Church, Ellerbe, NC

June 2020

www.pcanet.org
Church Website: www.ellerbepca.com

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From the Pastor:

If any teaching is ingrained in the twentieth century American evangelical psyche it is the so-called “Secret Rapture.” Perhaps, like me, you grew up singing “Wish We’d All Been Ready.” Perhaps you watched the *Left Behind* movie. Perhaps you have read the Tim LaHaye / Jerry Jenkins novels. All the above assumes that Jesus will one day, in a split second and without a moment’s notice, return to secretly whisk Christians away to heaven. This will be the ultimate nightmare for those who are left, as history will continue through a seven-year period of tribulation. At the end of which Jesus will return a second time to set up his millennial reign and on we go. Again, this understanding of the so-called “end times” is so engrained in evangelical culture that most have never even doubted whether it is true. But is it?

First, we should note that for roughly eighteen hundred years the concept of the “secret rapture” as explained above was essentially unknown to the church. The fact that this interpretation has a relatively short history does not necessarily make it wrong, but it should at least cause us to pause and ask how the church somehow missed something so big for so very long. The idea of a “secret rapture” actually emerged in the early 19th century with the teachings of John Nelson Darby (1800-82) which later developed into a system of theology known today as dispensationalism. To put it simply, dispensationalism is built on the assumption that God ultimately has two peoples, Israel and the church. Furthermore, God has a separate and distinct plan and destiny for political Israel, as opposed to the church. We will not tarry here, but it is worth noting that the New Testament clearly teaches that the promises given to Old Testament Israel are fulfilled in the church which is composed of Jew and Gentile (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28). The apostle Paul refers to the church as “the Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) and Peter uses Old Testament terminology for Israel to refer to a mixed body of New Testament believers (1 Pet. 2:9). So, we should see that the idea of a “secret rapture” flows from a system which fundamentally misunderstands God’s redemptive purposes.

Not only does the “secret rapture” rest on a flawed foundation, it relies upon a faulty interpretation of select passages. There are several texts in the Bible which teach that Jesus’ return will be “like a thief in the night” (Matt. 24:42-44; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10). There is also Matthew 24:40-1 in which Jesus says: “Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left” (ESV). However, as these passages are studied in their context, we see that the emphasis of this being taken by surprise is the incredible loss unbelievers will experience because they have not taken Christ seriously and prepared for his coming. In fact, all of these selective verses fall within passages teaching that Jesus’ return will immediately precede the final judgment. These passages also teach that Jesus’ return, far from being secret, will be loud and visible and unmistakable with eternal consequences for all of mankind. As for the idea of one person being taken and another left, it is worth noting that the immediately preceding verses liken Christ’s return to the days of Noah when the unbelieving were taken by surprise and were “unaware until the flood came and swept them away” (Matt. 24:38-9). So, the persons taken may be either believers taken up to meet Christ or to unbelievers who are taken away to final judgment. Either way, there will be nothing secret about these events when they come to pass; nor will history continue as we know it.

Actually, though the term “rapture” is commonly attached to some unbiblical baggage, the concept is biblical. The following definitions for “rapture” are found in one online dictionary: (1) “the carrying of a person to another place or sphere of existence”; (2) “the experience, anticipated by some fundamentalist Christians, of meeting Christ midway in the air upon his return to earth.” The Greek word *harpazo* is used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 to refer to Christians being seized or taken up to meet Jesus in the air upon his return. This verse, read in its context, clearly does not refer to some *secret* “rapture” of believers prior to the end of history but to the return of Christ at the close of history. At which time he will first raise those who have died in faith and then those who are ready and awaiting his return (1 Thess. 4:13-8).

If you live within a few blocks of the church and would like to hear the sermon live, try tuning into radio station 87.9 FM at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning.

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Sadly, the idea of a “secret rapture” leaves people having a greater fear of a seven-year tribulation than eternity in hell. Furthermore, the idea that Christians will be whisked away not to face difficult times or persecution goes against the clear teaching of the Bible and the experience of believers around the world and throughout history. The “secret rapture” also raises the question of who will be evangelizing the lost if believers are taken out of this world. Finally, believers can wind up getting more excited about the “secret rapture” than about beholding the face of Christ and being with God forever. Yes, Jesus is returning and it won’t be secret. It will not be good news for those who are not ready, but it will be glorious news for all who are eagerly awaiting. May we be counted in that number.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Stan

From the Session

The monthly stated Session meeting was held Wednesday evening, May 13. A pastor’s report was presented by Teaching Elder Mr. Layton with discussion on the cancellation of upcoming church activities. Concerns on the sick and shut-ins with updates were shared by the Session members.

The Central Carolina Presbytery to be held at Covenant Church in May has been rescheduled for June 30, 2020 at the same location with Ruling Elders Robert Mabe and Timm Dazey serving as commissioners. A final decision on Vacation Bible School for July 18, 2020 will be made during the next Session meeting. Our church is grateful to Kevin Stivers for his time and effort in selecting and installing an FM transmitter. This enables Mr. Layton’s sermons to be received through a stronger and clearer signal especially during our drive-in services. Opening up timing and planning worship service along with other activities will be announced at a later date.

“Blessed is the Nation whose God is the Lord.” (Psalm 33:12)

Ruling Elder Billy Carter

WIC Update



Let us all have the faith of Noah that God is in control and will carry us through the stormy seas. I would like to thank all who continue to help with our services each week. I would also like to thank all of you who are still supporting our church. We love and miss those who are unable to join us! Please everyone be safe. Let me know if I can help you in any way.

Sandra Futrell, WIC President

Announcements

- Unless otherwise notified via the bulletin and/or One-Call-Now, all church activities and services (other than 11 a.m. Lord’s Day worship) are suspended.
- If anyone needs help with essentials (grocery shopping, transportation, etc.) during these extra-ordinary times, please call either the church (910-652-5231), Pastor Stan (910-206-9035), or your shepherding elder.
- While working full-time, Timm Dazey continues to pursue seminary studies at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte. The Session has set up a fund to help defray Timm’s seminary costs. Persons wishing to contribute to this fund should so designate on their checks.

Greeters

7 M/M Tim Clark & Family
 14 M/M Mark Tyson
 21 M/M Billy Carter
 28 Mr. Timm Dazey and Josh Dazey

Anniversaries



7 M/M Ricky Monroe
 9 M/M Alex Bryant
 15 M/M Tim Clark
 20 M/M Perry Dawkins
 23 M/M Pete Abbott
 26 M/M Jamie Lambeth
 28 M/M Andrew Snead



Happy Birthday!
 June

1 Patrick McCormick
 2 Barbara Wagers
 3 Beth Meacham
 3 John Quick
 3 Ricky Monroe
 13 Janice Carter
 14 Robin Horne
 15 Jewell Paul
 15 Faye Fetter
 16 Donald Murdock
 16 Bill Carter
 17 Kellie Sears
 17 Beth Bryant
 17 Amanda N Moore
 18 Kristi Wagers
 19 Mary Nell Watson
 19 Jennifer Lambeth
 22 Lewis Paul Stewart
 26 Joleen Moore
 27 Clay Wagers
 29 Marion Covington



Prayer List: Armed Forces and Families, Our President and national leaders, the Persecuted Church and Christians worldwide, Peace and Unity in our country, Coronavirus concerns, Harvey Almond, Jack Berry, Billy Bostick, Lori Boyer, Donna Buckridge, Jerry Britt, Austin Bryant, Carol Chappell, Virgie Clark, Kevin Conner, A. T. Covington, Evon Craven, Alli Cundy, Casey Dawkins, Perry and Lisa Dawkins, Rev. Billy Dennis, Sharon DeWitt, Christina Greene Eller, Ellerbe First Responders, Jack Fetter, Fred Fletcher, Mark Futrell, Libbie Haithcock, Kayla Hawkins, Becky Henderson, Doris Hill, Nancy Hunter, Melanie Johnson, Ronnie Lovin, Meredith McBride, Max McCormick, Dan McInnis, Shannon McNeil, Peyton Monroe, Mary Murdock, Jason Norton, Sami Poore, Sophia Potterfield, Dick Ransom, Revival and speaker Josh Owen, Cozette Rush, Carolyn Sellers, Mark Sellers, Jane Smith, Herman and Naomi Stutts, Jean Stutts, Clay Thomas, Katie Tyson, Hayley White, Colton Williams, Unspoken Requests

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
June 2020	1	2	3 7:00 pm Session meeting	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 Happy Father's Day!	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	Worship service remains at 11:00 am Sunday mornings unless notified otherwise.			

Church Officers:

Ruling Elders

- Austin Bryant
- Bill Carter
- Tim Clark
- Timm Dazey
- Rickie DeWitt
- Robert Mabe
- Richard Smith
- Jimmy Wagers
- Tony Yates

WIC Officers

- Sandra Futrell, President
- Patricia McCormick, Vice-President
- Jan Stivers, Secretary
- Jane Carriker, Treasurer
- Barbara Wagers, Historian
- Beth Bryant, Mission to the World Chair
- Nancy Daugherty, Mission to North America Chair
- Lori Clark, Christian Growth Chair