



LENT

VINE & BRANCHES

Newsletter of
Front Royal Presbyterian Church



Coffee with Pastor Jaci



Take Heart!

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (*John 16:33b*)

The period of Lent calls to mind the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, where he was tempted. This life can often feel like a wilderness, even though we know full well that there can be moments, and even long stretches, of joy to be had.

The world is in a wilderness place right now. We could say, somewhat wryly, that the world is in the throes of Lent. This Lenten experience is, however, more like the excruciating temptation of Jesus than like our own individual attempts to observe a Holy Lent through repentance and renewal. In current circumstances, we are yet to witness any repentance from any quarter. We the people around the world, on the other hand, find ourselves in a barren place, being tempted to castigate and judge, which accomplishes nothing, except adding to everyone's misery (including our own!).

The past few mornings have not offered much good news: the military situation is broadening; the tragedies of the world are deepening. But Jesus has words to uphold us and keep us confident and focused in our calling. That is something we can count on, and provides something for us to do.

Jesus also warned that there will be wars and rumors of wars, so such things should not surprise us. Yet we are so used to living in some state of normalcy that having a broad range of "unknowns" thrust upon us can knock the wind out of us. Maybe you know that feeling from when you were a kid. I fell off a jungle gym one time, flat on my back, and suddenly couldn't breathe. My eyes got wide from the shock of it. The response from adults (including my parents): "You just got the wind knocked out of you!" I heard it was a kind of childhood rite of passage. I learned to be careful but not fearful. People's smiles conveyed a "take heart" kind of attitude, and it took any fear about what happened away.

When Jesus told the disciples to take heart, he was informing them concerning what would occur in their near future, following Jesus' departure. He wanted them to be aware so they didn't panic, so these events wouldn't knock the wind out of them. But the truth of what Jesus had to say applies to us too, particularly in situations such as we face today. This truth that Jesus shared runs even deeper than the tragedy of unfolding events in the Middle East. His truth cries out in hope even for those in the middle of the mess. Jesus has overcome the world – not by might, but by love.

God's got this. Matters may yet unfold in ways we cannot foresee or do not desire. Yet God's still got this. We must still be wise. We can always be prayer warriors to ask for protection for all involved, to pray for the children affected everywhere, to protect specific communities about which we are aware, and of course, to pray that this spreading conflict ends soon. To pray is to do something important.

What's Inside

2 Upcoming Events
3 & 4 Music News
5 Faith Builders
6 Tithes & Offerings

Jesus' words apply to us today and have value in the world and beyond. Because he has overcome the world, we can take heart. For all who are in Christ, we know we have a hope-filled ending that is truly a new beginning; so pray, too, for the harvest, that others might have the same comfort.

Pastor Jaci

Sunday Mornings at FRPC

Sunday School (all ages): 9:30 a.m.

Worship: 10:30 a.m. — All are welcome!

Children's Church: Children leave after the Faith Builders' sermon and return before the last hymn. (Room 102)

UPCOMING EVENTS & SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Easter Flowers, Please sign up [online](#) to donate an Easter plant in honor or memory of a loved one. \$20 per plant • Orders due by Wednesday, April 1

March 2026

HARTS **Thermal Shelter** remains open (6 pm-7 am, 7 days a week) until March 28.

March 7 (Sat.) - **Faith Builders Egg Stuffing "Party"** - 9:30-11:30 am, Sunday School Room

March 7 (Sat.) - **Work Day** 11am-1pm. A few men of the church will be doing some tidying of old, bulky and worn-out items that have sat unused for years. Fellowship Hall and other destinations where said items will find their eternal rest.

March 10 (Tues.) - **Session Meeting** at 6 pm

March 15 (Sun.) - **Fellowship Luncheon** and **Congregational Meeting** in Fellowship Hall following the service.

March 22 & March 29 (Sun.) - **One Great Hour of Sharing**. This special offering offered each year by our denomination supports disaster relief, hunger programs, and development initiatives around the world. Donate [here](#). (Select "Give to One Great Hour of Sharing" in the dropdown menu.) Invitations to give in person will be explicitly extended on March 22 & 29.

March 24 (Tues.) - **meal prep** for Dinner Together in FRPC Kitchen at 12:30 pm

March 26 (Thurs.) - **Dinner Together**: Load up at FRPC (3:00); assemble meals at First Baptist (3:30). Meals served from 5:00-6:00 pm. Brief period of cleanup follows.

Meal: Chili Mac, Veggies and Dessert - Donations Needed: Desserts

March 28 (Sat.) - 3rd Annual Community **Easter Egg Hunt** - 1:00-3:00 pm, Volunteers needed!

March 29 - Palm Sunday, **REACH Deliveries** - Following worship. Grab a box (or two!) and help deliver food and essential items to our neighbors in need. Volunteers always welcome!

March 31-April 2, **CrossWalk** (Stations of the Cross), Sanctuary, 10:00 am-2:00 pm

April 2026

April 2, **Maundy Thursday** at 7:00 pm

April 5, **Easter Sunday** at 10:30 am

April 14 (Tues.) **Session Meeting** at 6:00 pm

April 17, **Blue Ridge Singers** Spring Concert, 7:30 pm

April 24 (Fri.) - **Brava Community Handbell Concert**, 7 pm

April 28 (Tues.) - **meal prep** for Dinner Together in FRPC Kitchen at 12:30 pm

April 30 (Thurs.) - **Dinner Together**: Load up at FRPC (3:00); assemble meals at First Baptist (3:30). Meals served from 5:00-6:00 pm. Brief period of cleanup follows.

Meal: Chicken Spaghetti, Veggies and Dessert - Donations Needed: Desserts

Wednesday Opportunities

Backpack Buddies Packing, 11:00 am (Rm 101)

Bells @ 6 pm; Choir @ 7 pm

UPCOMING
BIRTHDAY & ANNIVERSARIES

Click Here

PRAYER REQUESTS

Music News

How's your Lenten journey going? As with life, Lent is a journey. Yes, there's a destination, but it's the journey that shapes and strengthens us. We are often tempted to wish away the process and hasten to the happy ending, but God most often works through times spent in wildernesses between seemingly more valuable moments in life. On March 15 (Lent 4), we'll sing a new-to-us hymn that captures well this aspect of life and Lent. "Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song" (Jésus, je voudrais te chanter) originated with the Little Sisters of Jesus (Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus), a community in France that works with people on the margins of society. L'Arche (the Ark) international community, which provide family-style living for adults with mental disabilities, has also adopted this hymn and is the community with which I associate this hymn. Perhaps the life-as-a-journey concept is more palatable to people whom society marginalizes; the less we expect this life to fulfill us, the more willing we will be to look beyond earth for meaning and hope. In this, we can learn from these communities. The text is a prayer set to a gentle tune that seems to convey a carefree sense of having surrendered all of one's burdens to Jesus. We sing this regularly at the Lutheran retirement village where I play on Wednesday, since it's the chaplain's favorite hymn, and I've developed an appreciation for the simple faith it expresses.

The first verse expresses a commitment to Jesus—both a dependence on His peace and a promise to tell others about Him. The imagery of Jesus as song calls to mind Psalm 42:8 ("By day the Lord commands His steadfast love, and at night His song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life."). The second verse is the most joyful, promising to praise Jesus along the journey and inviting creation to join the song of praise. In the third verse, the speaker prays to be a servant in a fitting response to Jesus' sacrificial death, which we anticipate in our own Lenten journey. The final verse expresses both fear and courage and, ultimately, confidence in God's salvation at the end of our journey. Though it doesn't directly reference the Resurrection, we know that our journey concludes with joy because of Christ's triumph over death.

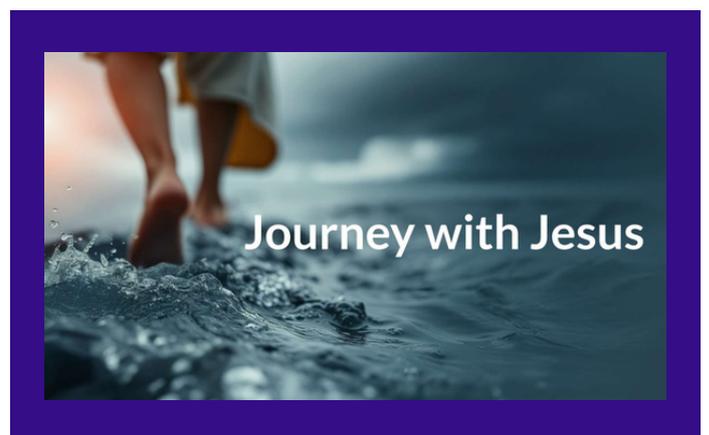
Take a few minutes to read through the English text of this hymn. I'm trying something new this month by including a link to listen to it on YouTube as well. Click [here](#) for a covid-era video from a Lutheran church

Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.
I'll tell everybody about you wherever I go.
You alone are our life and our peace and our love.
Lord Jesus, you shall be my song as I journey.

Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.
May all of my joy be a faithful reflection of you.
May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song.
Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.

As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant.
To carry your cross and to share all your burdens and tears.
For you saved me by giving your body and blood.
As long as I live, Jesus, make me your servant.

I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey;
but courage will come with the sound of your steps by my side.
And with all of the family you saved by your love,
we'll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey.



Music News

It has been suggested to me that the hymn the choir will be singing on Maundy Thursday (April 2) would be more meaningful with a few words of explanation. The text, "This Is the Night," by Peter Abélard, exhibits a mastery of irony and paradox, which might be expected from a medieval philosopher and theologian. Since the text is so rich, there is much that could be written. I will limit myself to one or two observations per verse with particular attention to the ironic/paradoxical nature of Abélard's poetry.

The first verse opens with words that would have been very familiar to Christians in the 12th century, because they are the words that recur the *Exsultet*, a very lengthy solo chanted at the beginning of Easter Vigil and still sung today in liturgical churches. Vigil is the first service of Easter (either Saturday late evening or in the pre-dawn hours of Sunday); in that text the night being referenced brings redemption: Israel being led to freedom, the pillar of fire in the wilderness banishing darkness, Christians being set free from besetting sins, Christ breaking the prison bars of death, and night becoming as bright as day. That those same words refer here to the night when evil seemed to win would have reminded 12th-century Christians of the coming Resurrection.

In the second verse, the traitor betrays—not Jesus (though that's assumed)—but himself by bringing about the will of God. As a result, the verse ends with the line that inspired the choir to recommend clarification: "sin brings about the cure for sin's own ill." Judas' actions were clearly sinful, but, ironically, brought about the cure for sin.

In verse three we see a reference to the Lord's Supper, the institution of which is a central theme in all Maundy Thursday observances. Again, Abélard creates an image of evil (in this case, injustice and treason) bringing redemption.

The paradoxical nature of the fourth verse centers on slavery and criminality. Arrested by slaves who see themselves as lords, Jesus destroys slavery to sin; though the righteous Judge is accused of criminality, it is those who seem to be judges who are the true criminals.

The final verse is a prayer to share in Christ's Passion in order to be able to share in Easter's joy, which calls to mind Paul's words in Romans 6:5: "For if we have been united with him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His." This is Good News, indeed!

1 This is the night, dear friends, the night for weeping,
when powers of darkness overcome the day,
the night the faithful mourn the weight of evil
whereby our sins the Son of Man betray.

2 This night the traitor, wolf within the sheepfold,
betrays himself into his victim's will,
the Lamb of God for sacrifice preparing:
sin brings about the cure for sin's own ill.

3 This night Christ institutes his holy supper,
blest food and drink for heart and soul and mind;
this night injustice joins its hand to treason's,
and buys the ransom-price of humankind.

4 This night the Lord by slaves shall be arrested,
he who destroys our slavery to sin;
accused of crime, to criminals be given,
that judgment on the righteous Judge begin.

5 O make us sharers, Savior, of your Passion,
that we may share your glory that shall be;
let us pass through these three dark nights of sorrow
to Easter's laughter and its liberty.



Blessings,

Heather

Faith Builders



February has flown past! We finished our unit on the Exodus talking about how God answered the Israelites complaints through Moses. When they needed water, he became their source of water. We used the different forms of water (ice, water, and steam) to see how God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit work to help us in our lives.

After completing the Exodus unit, we moved on to learning about Jesus' beginnings. We learned about Jesus' visit to the temple in Jerusalem when he was a baby. We talked about Anna and Simeon and how their story helps us look for hope in our own lives. We then moved to Jesus in the temple at 12 years old. We learned that he was left behind at the temple without his parents' knowledge. We discussed the fear and distress his parents must have felt. We learned that Jesus talked with the elders and they listened to him because they were surprised at his knowledge. Our next lesson moved us to the story of John the Baptist and how he came before Jesus to tell people to repent their sins and promise to follow God's will in their lives before they were baptized in the Jordan River. We each told an idea that we would preach if we were a pastor. Some of our ideas were: to listen to God, be kind to each other, and to be happy. The children will continue to learn about Jesus' life and activities throughout March and April.

Ms. Marisa

Coming Up!

Easter Egg Stuffing "Party" | Saturday, March 7

9:30-11:30 AM

Sunday School Room

All are welcome!



3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt | Saturday, April 4

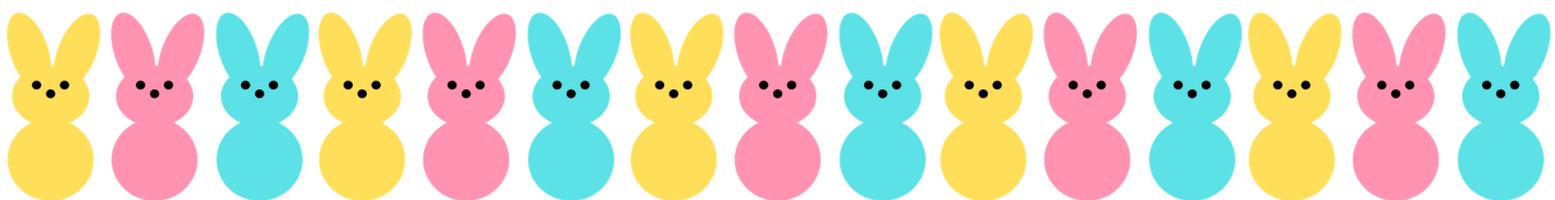
1:00 PM: Egg hunt for the Under-Fives.

2:00 PM: Egg hunt for the Six-and-Ups.

We will be having sign-ups for volunteers. Watch for the Easter Bunny!

April-July Activities

We have several possible activities in the works for April through July. Stay tuned!





Support the Mission of FRPC in 2026

As we move more fully into the new year, we continue to invite members and friends to prayerfully consider supporting the ongoing ministries of FRPC. Your generosity sustains vital work, including worship, outreach, feeding ministries, and maintaining our church and staff.

Ways to Give:

- **In-person:** Bring your gift to the 10:30 AM Sunday service.
- **By mail:** Send a check to the church office.
- **Office drop-off:** Visit during office hours.
- **Online:** Make a secure gift or set up recurring donations through our [church website](#).
- **Bank auto-pay:** Arrange automatic giving through your bank.
- **Tax-advantaged giving:** Consult your financial advisor to explore options like securities or minimum distributions.



Online giving also allows you to manage your contributions and schedule automatic donations at your preferred frequency.

Your faithful support enables us to continue the work God has called us to—creating a welcoming space, extending our outreach, and sustaining programs that bring hope to our community.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact [Ruth Younk](#) (Treasurer) and cc [Misty Bordner](#).

Thank you for your generosity, and may God bless you richly in the year ahead!

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