



VINE & BRANCHES

Newsletter of Front Royal Presbyterian Church



Peppermint Mocha with Pastor Jaci



On the first Sunday in Advent (Nov. 30), we distributed Advent Calendars to the children and youth of the church. Below, you will find another one, developed just for you! It is downloadable, and you may click each reading to access the indicated passage on Bible Gateway to be able to read on your device. You may also print a copy and post it to your fridge or tuck it into your Bible for easy reference. Using such a calendar daily can help us orient ourselves to the heart of this season. When so many competing messages seek to capture our attention, it's especially good to remain tethered to Christ and his coming.



I invite you to take advantage of this opportunity. The readings are both familiar and short. Take a moment to read and ponder the passage for each day. Say a brief prayer for your day, inviting Jesus into all that you do. Be sure to note the other entries on the calendar, which provide reminders of activities sponsored or hosted by the church over the next few weeks that are related to Christmas! We hope you will join us as we celebrate and proclaim our focus on Jesus Christ and his Advent!

We are preparing a combined December/January newsletter this month to ease the transition into the New Year. January news will continue to make its way to you through the weekly emails, so be sure to open them to get the latest updates.

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Advent blessings to you,

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

December

- Dec. 5, **Blue Ridge Singers Christmas Concert**, 7:30 pm
- Dec. 6, **Front Royal Christmas Parade**, Meet up at 1:45 (Government Center) or 2:00 (at church) to help decorate the float!); parade at 4:00 pm. Snacks and movie to follow.
- Dec. 9 (Tuesday) **Session Meeting**, 6 p.m.
- Dec. 7, **HARTS Thermal Shelter** opens for the season (6 pm-7 am, 7 days a week)
- Dec. 21, **Christmas Caroling**, 2:00 pm at Commonwealth Senior Living
- Dec. 21 - **REACH Deliveries** - Following worship. Grab a box (or two!) and help deliver food and essential items to our neighbors in need. Volunteers always welcome!
- Dec. 24, **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** - Lessons & Carols, 7:00 pm
- Dec. 28, **Virtual Worship Service** (online only)

January

- Jan. 10 (Sat.) **Session Retreat with Stated Meeting** (for all classes of Elders, including incoming *and* outgoing), 10 am - 1:30 pm (with lunch).
- Jan. 11 (Sun.) **Ordination and Installation of incoming Elders** in worship.
- Jan. 21 (Wed.) - meal prep for **Dinner Together** in FRPC Kitchen.
- Jan. 22 (Thurs.) - **Dinner Together**: Load up at FRPC (3:00); assemble meals at First Baptist (3:45). Meals served from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Brief period of cleanup follows. Meal: Baked Chicken Thighs, Roasted Veggies & Dessert **Donations Needed**: Desserts
- Jan. 25 - **REACH Deliveries** - Following worship. Grab a box (or two!) and help deliver food and essential items to our neighbors in need. Volunteers always welcome!

Wednesday Opportunities

- Adult Bible Study, 11:00 a.m. in the Virtual Classroom.
- Backpack Buddies Packing, 11:00 a.m. (Room 101)
- Bells @ 6 p.m.; Choir @ 7 p.m.

Dec. & Jan. Birthdays
& Anniversaries

[Click Here](#)

Prayer Requests



Stewardship & Year-End Giving

As we approach the end of the year, we invite you to prayerfully consider your year-end gift to Front Royal Presbyterian Church. Your generosity helps sustain the vital work of our church, including outreach ministries, online worship broadcasts, feeding programs, and maintaining our church building and dedicated staff. And as we enter into the new year, we invite you to prayerfully consider increasing your pledge for 2026 ever so slightly. Did you know that if each pledging family unit increased their pledge by just \$10 per week, it would yield over \$15,000 in additional income for the church? Costs are rising for us all, and we realize that everyone's situation is different. But for those who are able, and who have not already initiated such a change, it could help the church tremendously in this crucial phase of the transition.

Here's how you can give:

- **In-person:** Bring your gift to the 10:30 AM Sunday service or stop by the church during office hours.
- **By mail:** Send a check to the church office.
- **Online giving:** Make a secure one-time or recurring gift through our [church website](#). It's simple, safe, and convenient.
- **Auto-pay:** Set up automatic giving through your bank.
- **Tax advantaged giving** of securities and/or required distributions: speak to your financial advisor if this is an option that might work well for you.

[Online giving](#) also allows you to create a donor account, making it easy to manage your tithes and gifts and schedule automatic contributions at your preferred frequency.

Your support enables us to continue the good work we've been called to do—providing a space for ministry, supporting outreach efforts, and maintaining the services and programs that impact so many lives.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to reach out to our treasurer, [Ruth Younk](#) and cc [Misty Bordner](#).

Thank you for your faithful support, and may God bless you abundantly this season!



Music News



I pray that your Advent is off to a peaceful and purposeful start as we, once again, eagerly await the coming Messiah. On December 14, we will have our annual **Advent hymn festival** during morning worship. This year we will feature more congregational hymns than we do some years, in part, because there are so many wonderful new Advent hymns in our new hymnal. Rather than choose one hymn to feature, I've decided to give you a glimpse at each hymn and anthem, hopefully providing a "30,000-foot view" of the trajectory for the whole service. The title of the hymn festival this year is, "**The Coming Son of David**," so it isn't surprising that we'll be focusing on aspects of His royalty.

After the Call to Worship (Isaiah 11:1-5), we'll sing a hymn, "**Now the Heavens Start to Whisper**." I imagine that all of heaven was abuzz with excitement as God's plan for redemption entered this new phase of Incarnation. Referencing Isaiah, the hymn identifies Jesus as the "seed of promise, deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse's stem!" Likewise, our service will begin with the whispered buzz of expectation as we look forward to the coming descendent of Jesse (and David, his son). After hearing Micah's prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, we'll sing the familiar carol, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," which in vs. 4 addresses Jesus as the "holy child of Bethlehem."

After hearing a reading of the Annunciation (Gabriel's appearance to Mary), we'll sing a paraphrase of Isaiah 9:2-7, "**The People Who Walked in Darkness**." I paired these for several reasons. First, Gabriel came to Mary in Nazareth, which is in the land that Isaiah specifically mentions as where people in darkness will see a great light ("the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali"). Second, Gabriel promises that God will give Mary's Son the throne of David and an everlasting kingdom—fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that the government would be on his shoulders and he would call, "Prince of Peace" whose rule will never end.

Our first anthem of the day is based on the Lutheran chorale, "Gottes Sohn ist kommen," usually translated, "**Once He Came in Blessing**." Here we find the clearest presentation of the salvation the Jesus will bring and a promise that "those who then are loyal find a welcome royal." And who better to offer a royal welcome than a king? Like Mary in the Magnificat (her song of praise and the reading before this anthem), we praise and welcome Him. After a reading on Gabriel's appearance to Joseph, another anthem follows, simply titled, "**An Advent Reflection**." The text of this anthem mirrors Joseph's confusion and "fragile longing" as we pray for hope and healing and that Christ will "come, live in our praise." To be like Joseph, we pray, "teach us to follow and obey." After reading the Song of Zechariah (John the Baptist's father), we will sing new hymn to a familiar tune. "**O Lord, How Shall I Meet You**" is a fitting culmination for this series of personal encounters with Gabriel. Like Mary, Joseph, and Zechariah may we give thought to how best to greet Jesus' coming.

Next, we'll have a bit of flashback, all the way to Numbers when Balaam—commissioned by Balak to curse Israel—instead blesses with a short, but potent prophecy that a star would come from Jacob and a scepter from Israel. The new Advent hymn that follows, "**While We Are Waiting, Come**," is a simple, meditative prayer entrusting waiting hearts to our faithful God. Our final anthem will follow the reading of Isaiah 40:1-11. Frequently using the text of the familiar and similarly named hymn, the anthem, "**Come, O Long-Expected Jesus**" invites Him to "rule in all our hearts alone" as we respond to His royal coming. Our concluding hymn will be a paraphrase of Isaiah 40, "**Comfort, Comfort, Now My People**," which is both familiar and comforting as we wait for the coming Son of David in our own troubled times.

I hope to see you on December 14, when the choir will welcome several guest singers to help lead us in worship. Please join us as we worship through music.

Blessings, *Heather*



Faith Builders



The Faith Builders have been busy since our Halloween blowout! We spent November talking about Esau and Jacob. We watched as Jacob cheated to get Esau's inheritance. We saw them argue and Jacob run away. We also got to see them come back together. We talked a lot about getting along with others and problem solving. One of the ways we learned and have been practicing was the Five Finger Problem Solving Method. We are getting better at it. Here's how it goes:

Thumb-Ignore, Pointer-move away, Tall Man-Explain, Ring Man-Stop!, Pinkie-Tell a teacher or parent.

As we continued our Food Drive we collected 63 pounds of food to give to C-Cap before Thanksgiving. Thanks to everyone who donated!

And here we are in December! We have begun our wait for the arrival of Jesus in the season of Advent. The children are following the Jesse Tree story in Sunday School and, hopefully, daily at home. It is a wonderful way to see how the stories of the Bible lead up to the birth of Jesus. They had fun making the 25 Jesse Tree ornaments that you can see on the Faith Builders' tree in the narthex. We think they are great and each one is a symbol for a specific story. We have papers that explain the stories and the symbols if you are interested. Check out our tree! Nearly all the ornaments on the tree have been made by us!

Along with our Jesse Tree story we have some activities planned for us and everyone who wants to participate:

Food Drive We are continuing to collect non-perishable foods to take to C-Cap to help those who may be struggling during the holidays. You can help by dropping items in the box provided in the Narthex.

Christmas Parade On December 6, we will be participating in the Front Royal Christmas Parade. We will be riding on the float. We get to toss out candy and wave to all our friends. We can also invite them to come and join us and have fun as Faith Builders.

Christmas Caroling! We will be going Christmas Caroling on December 21. We will meet at Commonwealth Senior Living Center at 2:00 PM. Come join us! We had a great time last year and would love to see lots of you come to sing along! All are welcome!

We will take a short break after Christmas Day and enjoy some time with our families. But we will be back in January with some fresh ideas and lots of energy. Stay tuned for our ideas and activities then.

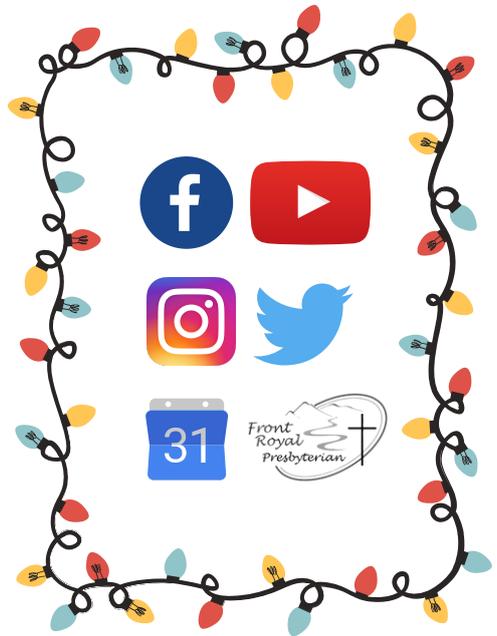
We want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas!

Ms. Marisa



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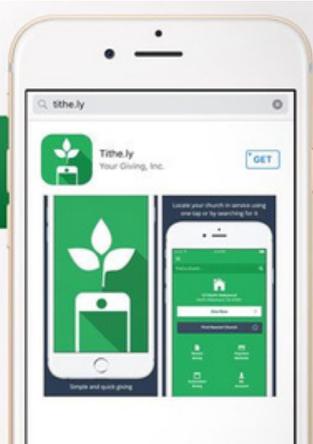
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