



Sermon Series: *Christmas Can Happen*

Manufactured Christmas is everywhere now. Old and new films, carols and jingles and pop anthems are in our air pods and speakers. Cards are sent and gifts are purchased and parties are planned. We act as though Christmas can be created through our effort to produce it. Such is modern life. But Christmas as the incarnate God entering the world is nothing we can create, produce, or manufacture. It is gift, and it is surprise. An Advent people, then, become a people who know the light, resist the light, await the light, and celebrate the light. And within those waiting people, Christmas Can Happen.

December 1—*Light Always*—John 1:1-4

December 8—*I'm Baaaaa-aaaack!!*—Luke 1:5-25 & John 1:6-8; 19-28

December 15—*Thirsting for Light*—Luke 1:26-38 & John 1:9-13

December 22—*Light in the Darkness*—Luke 1:39-45 & John 1:5, 16-18

December 24—*Shining*—Luke 2:1-20



**Thursday, December 5, 2024
7:00 PM—Chapel**

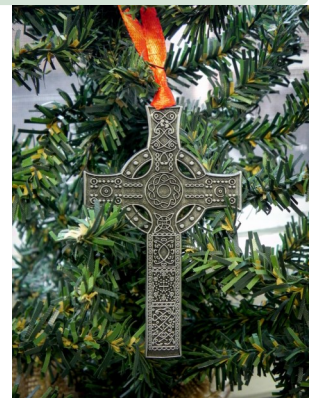
December is here! And with it there are many things we are carrying. Some are carrying lists of presents to buy and parties to plan, Nutcracker costumes to sew, and tickets to purchase. The exhaustion of making Christmas "perfect" weighs us down. Others carry sorrow and loneliness in this season as grief grips hearts. We mourn for those who have died, those from whom we are estranged, and for those who are struggling. Some of us carry large weights of worry about the world, the planet, our community. Whatever you carry this Advent, this worship service is an opportunity to lay it down before Christ, to trust that Christ actually comes in our waiting. Come and find a center, a peace, a hope to guide us through this season of darkness and light.

Poinsettias for Advent

If you would like to dedicate a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone special, please complete the form in the This Week @ RCPC with name(s) for dedication or complete the envelope in the pews and place the envelope in the offering plate. Please note on the memo line of the check "Poinsettia" or in the notes field if paying online. The deadline to order is Sunday, December 15. A list will be included in the bulletin on Sunday, December 22. Dedications are \$12 each and can be paid by cash, check (made payable to RCPC with "Poinsettia" in the memo line) or online: tinyurl.com/RCPCPoinsettias2024.

RCPC Christmas Ornament

To continue with our celebration of 100 years of Raleigh Court Presbyterian Church, we have created a pewter ornament that is a replica of the Celtic cross that hangs in our sanctuary! The ornaments will be for sale on Sundays starting November 24 in the Gathering Area. They are \$20 each. Hang one on your tree or buy one for someone you know who loves RCPC! Any questions? Reach out to Emily Jarrett at 662-610-2705.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School—December Classes

Advent Creation: An Intergenerational Adventure,

Led by Leigh Sackett, Fellowship Hall

Parents and children come, join us for a hands-on exploration of creating some memorable Advent traditions that you can continue year to year. We will create an Advent wreath, we will make ornaments to give as presents to grandparents or other family members, we will frost cookies for our neighbors, and we will create a Tree of Hope for friends in need.

Heaven and Earth, by Will Willimon

The Seekers, Room 201

It's not within our own power to make a fresh start. If we're to have a future different from the past, it must come as a gift, something not of our devising. What we need is a God who refuses to be trapped in eternity, a God who not only cares about us but is willing to show up among us and do something with us, here, now.

In *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation*, Will Willimon introduces you to the God who does just that, bringing heaven to earth and changing everything. In Advent we celebrate and anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming good news that God is coming to us. Watch out. Get ready. God is on the way.

History of Christian Theology

Led by Mike Lockaby - Room 101

Ever wanted to learn about how Christians think by thinking along with them as they grappled with what it means to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and teach it to others? This course is designed to think along with the people before us in the Christian tradition, rather than remember dates, places, and names. The class will follow along with a series of half-hour lectures on the *History of Christian Theology* by Dr. Phillip Cary, a professor of philosophy at Eastern University and a widely published scholar of Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, and Protestantism. Following each lecture will be a 20 to 30 minute discussion of the subject matter led by Mike Lockaby, who will also provide copies of additional related materials to people who are interested.

Adult Small Groups

Being part of a Small Group is an experience rich in personal connection and spiritual growth. Small Groups discuss what is shared in worship, therefore the experience of worship is more deeply ingrained in our minds and hearts.

Sermon Reflections: Monday 12:30 PM-2:00 PM - Andrew Whaley, Room 102

The Fools: Tuesdays 4:00 PM-5:30 PM - David Dixon, Room 102

Soul Sisters: Tuesdays 8:00 PM-9:30 PM - Emilie Biddle, Rotating Houses

The After Dinner Crowd: Wednesdays 7:00 PM-8:30 PM - Leigh Sackett, Room 102

Thursday Theology: Thursdays 10:30 AM-12:00 PM - Elise Hansard, Room 101

Presbyterian Women

November 22:

Line Dancing and Lots of Food

Save the date for Presbyterian Women (PW) events coming up in 2025! Women of all ages are invited to attend to join in intergenerational fellowship. These are great opportunities to get to know other women in the church, whether or not you are able to attend the monthly PW meetings.

- Friday, January 24: Game Night
- Friday, February 21: Women, Wine, and the Word
- Saturday, March 29: Walk, Talk, & Taste at Mill Mountain Gardens
- Saturday, April 26: Paint and Praise
- Saturday, May 24: Taste, Talk, and Walk on the Roanoke Greenway (lunch at Wasena Tap and Grill)

More details will be provided closer to the event dates. If you have questions please reach out to Ellen Austin at ebaustin11@gmail.com.

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATES

Advent Youth Sunday School

Film & Theology: *The Muppet Christmas Carol*

Each week we'll watch 30 minutes of this Christmas Classic and then discuss connections between the film and our faith! The film will begin at 10:05 AM on the dot giving students time to make their cups of hot cocoa and to provide time for conversation at the end. You won't want to miss it!



RCPC Youth enjoying popsicles after HAT flyer distribution!

Progressive Dinner

Sunday, December 8

6:00 PM—8:30 PM

It's time for one of our youth's favorite Christmas festivities! Don't forget on Sunday, December 8 that Youth Group is on the go. Drop-off is at the Whaley's at 6:00 PM and pick-up is at the Swanner's at 8:30 PM. Addresses will be in the weekly e-newsletter. Be sure to wear something festive.

MUSIC MINISTRY UPDATES



Christmas Concert ...And Glory Shone Around

Sunday, December 15 at 7:00 PM

Join us for our annual Christmas Concert at RCPC presented by the Sanctuary Choir and orchestra and organ. This year's theme titled "... And Glory Shone Around" features images of light and angel song throughout moments of the Nativity story. Selections include music by Egil Hovland, Craig Courtney, René Clausen, Felix Mendelssohn, and more! You won't want to miss this special annual RCPC tradition.



Children & Youth Pianists

Children and youth pianists interested in offering a Christmas carol as part of the 5:00 PM Christmas Eve gathering music can sign-up by Wednesday, December 18 by emailing Dillon J. Swanson, Director of Music Ministries at dillon@rcpres.org.



God Alive Christmas Pageant

Wednesday, December 18 at 6:30 PM

Please join us for the God Alive Christmas Pageant on Wednesday, December 18 at 6:30 PM in the Sanctuary. This year's pageant is titled "The Gift that Changed the World" written by Dillon J. Swanson, Director of Music Ministries. The pageant features all of your favorite Christmas carols and characters from the Nativity story.



Christmas Eve

Tuesday, December 24

5:00 PM—Sanctuary & Livestream

Worship is led by the God Alive and Youth Choirs, and Genesis Ringers of Raleigh Court Presbyterian Church. Prior to the service, RCPC children and youth piano students will perform gathering music.

11:00 PM—Sanctuary & Livestream

Prior to the 11:00 PM Candlelight & Communion Service The Raleigh Court Ringers will perform gathering music in the Sanctuary beginning at 10:30 PM. All are invited and encouraged to gather early for the service to enjoy the music.

FELLOWSHIP & MISSION

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

1 Fred Davis	14 Christie Akers	21 Cheryl Gilliland	27 Debra Abbott
4 Christopher Bowes Milee Hoffman	Connie Chandler	22 Lydia Goad	Martha Gibbs
5 Adria Fox	Diane Lawson	Michael Hertz	28 Steve Prichard
6 Jennifer Bryant	Keith Pollash	23 Bob Atkinson	29 Bob Snead
7 Joe Kennedy	16 Kris Merritt	Cathy Guilfoyle	30 Janet Nash
8 Matt Arnold	18 Kai Davis	Bill Nance	Bella Pickel
10 Jimmy Ward	Barbara Nesmith	26 Heather Flora	Edward Staley
13 Jack Spyhalski	Julie Satterwhite	Linda Wickert	31 George Baldwin

Special Birthday Wishes:

Connie Chandler on celebrating her 90th birthday on December 14.
Steve Prichard on celebrating his 95th birthday on December 28.

Fellowship Dinners Wednesdays at 6:15 PM

Meals are a suggested donation of \$8 per person and free for 3 and younger, with a max suggested donation of \$25 for a family. Please register by noon the Tuesday before each meal either online at rcpres.org/dinner, the sign-up sheet in the Gathering Area, or by calling the church office, 540-343-5541 x 106 and leaving Julie Satterwhite a message. In our efforts to become an Earth Care Church, the Fellowship Committee asks you to please bring your own container if you would like a takeout meal on Wednesday nights. We thank you for your help with this.

December Menus

12/4—Lasagna, Italian Green Beans, Garlic Bread, Chocolate Cake, Veggie Lasagna

12/11—Chicken Alfredo with Fettuccine, Broccoli, Homemade Garlic Bread, Brownies, Veggie Alfredo

12/18 (at 5:30 PM)—Pan Seared Pork Chops, Yellow Rice, Roasted Veggie Medley, Homemade Bread, Lemonade Marble Cake, Mushroom Steaks

Young Adults

All Young Adults are invited to an Christmas Party on Saturday, December 21 at 12:00 PM at Abby & Brandon Pierson's new house. Join us for a Christmas lunch and to meet the Pierson Alpacas RSVP to Leigh Sackett at leigh@recpres.org

Earth Care Team: Roanoke Tree Stewards

The Earth Care Team at RCPC is excited to join the Roanoke Tree Stewards for their December planting on Saturday, December 7 at 9:00 AM at Raleigh Court Park. Roanoke City declared 2024 to be the Year of the Tree. In addition to the beauty and importance to wildlife, our city's trees have tangible value in many ways, including reducing stormwater runoff and providing canopy cover and shade which helps reduce the heat island effect. Planting trees in our yards and in our neighborhood is a simple way we can help mitigate the effects of climate change and strengthen our communities. Come learn more! If you're interested in joining us, please text Chris Bryant at 540-314-9977.

December Mission Partner: Haiti Mission Group

December is "Haiti Month" on the RCPC Generosity Calendar and this is a very brief update on our mission endeavors there.

General circumstances in Haiti remain most challenge. Gangs continue to control the nation's capital city and the surrounding areas with brutal authority. Fear and concern abound around the city, forcing many to flee to rural family villages. The country's government is severely compromised in function. Resources are scarce and a crisis state of hunger affects more than 5 million people. In the midst of all of this, the RCPC sponsored St. Timothee School ("our" school) continues to function. Each day teachers walk miles to teach and students walk to learn. Each day all children and staff present receive a hot lunch. We are greatly assisted logistically by the Haiti Education Foundation and Trinity/HOPE.

This month please contribute to our ongoing efforts to maintain Christian outreach to all those involved with the operations at St. Timothee's School and please pray for the routinely neglected children of Haiti.

-Haiti Mission Group

MISSION GROUPS UPDATES

Alternative Giving: November 24—December 18

While the mainstream narrative of Christmas these days requires us to do more and spend more money, the amazing biblical narrative of Christmas is that it's not up to us at all. Christ enters the world. Christ comes to us all as a gift, regardless to what we do, make, or purchase in this season. As a way of honoring the gift we are given in Christ, we invite you to celebrate Christmas in an alternative way to the mainstream narrative by participating in Alternative Giving. Alternative Giving encompasses a variety of ways to give to others this Christmas season and allows your whole family, no matter one's age, to participate. Read below for all the ways you might honor the gift we're given in Christ.

- You can donate a gently used **stuffed animal** to the Rescue Mission to be given out to kids in need by placing your stuffed animal in the stable in the Gathering Area by **Christmas Eve**.
- You can participate in the **West End Center collection of socks and underwear** aiding in each child at the West End Center receiving a full outfit with the efforts of other local churches. Sign up to give using the link found in This Week @ RCPC. You'll sign up to provide a specific size of socks and underwear for a specific student. Drop off the Socks and Underwear in the appropriate box in the Gathering Area by **Sunday, December 15**.
- You can give a gift by **donating to our mission partners in honor of a loved one**. Stop by the tree in the Gathering Area, scan the QR code below, or use the Link in the This Week @ RCPC. Whether by physical form or an online sign up, let us know the gift you wish to give to support mission partners (Family Promise, House of Bread, RAM, Hunger Mission Team, Haiti Mission Group, Presbyterian Community Center, Rescue Mission, Care Portal, Sudanese Mission Group, and West End Center) in honor of your loved one. Submit your gift online or submit the form and payment via check or cash to the church office to the attention of Julie Satterwhite. Whichever way you donate to our mission partners in honor of a loved one, **the Deacons will collect the submitted information to mail a card of thanksgiving to your loved ones. All Forms must be submitted by Wednesday, December 18**. Here's how a monetary gift to a mission partner can help their mission:

\$20 funds the flour for one bake day at **House of Bread**

\$25 supports an overnight stay through the **Rescue Mission**

\$25 gifts a complete uniform to a student at the Abukloi School supported by the **Sudanese Mission Group**

\$35 pays for a family's tuition for one week at the **West End Center**

\$40 supports one week of services for a client a **RAM**

\$40 covers diapers and wipes for a financially struggling mom through **Care Portal**

\$56 will provide a monthly bus pass for one adult at **Family Promise**

\$85 covers an average food order picked up at **PCC** food pantry

\$100 equals 20 bags packed for a hungry kid through the **Hunger Mission Team**

\$150 pays for 404 meals served in a single day at **St. Timothee's School in Larivoire, Haiti**



CarePortal

Haiti Mission Group
Hunger Mission Team
Sudanese Mission Group

Scan the QR Code to donate.

Abukloi School—Well Update!

A partnership between Abukloi Foundation, Makerdit Community, and Raleigh Court Presbyterian Church has brought fresh drinking water to the community workers farming 50 acres of land to provide food to the Abukloi Secondary School. This partnership effort will decrease food insecurity and the health risks of drinking contaminated water during the rainy season and the long three-mile walk during the dry season.



December 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Advent 9am—Worship: Chapel 10am—Sunday School 11am—Worship: Sanctuary 5pm—Youth Choir 6pm—Youth Group	2 10am—Monday Morning Prayer Group 12:30pm—Small Group: Whaley 7pm—Roanoke Valley Choral Society Concert	3 9am—Staff Meeting 9:30am—PW Coordinating Team 4pm—Small Group: Dixon 6:30pm—Genesis Ringers 7:30pm—Raleigh Court Ringers 7:30pm—Small Group: Biddle	4 4pm—God Alive Pageant Rehearsal 6:15pm—Fellowship Dinner 7pm—Small Group: Sackett 7pm—Christmas Choir 7:45pm—Sanctuary Choir	5 9am—Hunger Mission Packing 10:30am—Small Group: Hansard 6pm—BSA Council Meeting 7pm—RCNA Board Meeting 7pm—Contemplative Advent Service	6	7 9am—Earth Care Tree Planting at Raleigh Court Park
8 Advent 9am—Worship: Chapel 10am—Sunday School 11am—Worship: Sanctuary 12:15 PM—Earth Care Committee 6pm—Youth Group: Progressive Dinner	9 10am—Monday Morning Prayer Group 12:30pm—Small Group: Whaley	10 9am—Staff Meeting 10:15am—Presbyterian Women 4pm—Small Group: Dixon 6:30pm—Genesis Ringers 7:30pm—Raleigh Court Ringers 7:30pm—Small Group: Biddle	11 4pm—God Alive Pageant Rehearsal 5pm—Hospitality Committee 6:15pm—Fellowship Dinner 7pm—Presbyterian Women Circle 2 7pm—Small Group: Sackett 7pm—Christmas Choir 7:45pm—Sanctuary Choir	12 9am—Hunger Mission Packing 10:30am—Small Group: Hansard 5:30pm—Justice, Equity, & Belonging Committee	13	14 Christmas Concert Dress Rehearsal
15 Advent 9am—Worship: Chapel 10am—Sunday School 11am—Worship: Sanctuary 12:15pm—Youth Choir 7pm—Christmas Concert	16 10am—Monday Morning Prayer Group 12:30pm—Small Group: Whaley 3:30pm—Preschool Committee 4:30pm—Personnel & Administration 5:30pm—Stewardship & Finance	17 9am—Staff Meeting 4pm—Small Group: Dixon 5:30pm—Endowment Board 6:30pm—Genesis Ringers 7:30pm—Raleigh Court Ringers 7:30pm—Small Group: Biddle	18 4pm—God Alive Pageant Rehearsal 5:30pm—Fellowship Dinner 6:30pm—Christmas Pageant 7pm—Small Group: Sackett 7pm—Christmas Choir 7:45pm—Sanctuary Choir	19 Preschool Winter Break Starts 9am—Hunger Mission Packing 10:30am—Small Group: Hansard	20	21 12pm—Young Adult Christmas Party

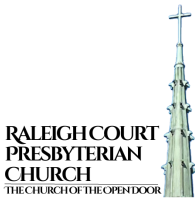
December 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
22 Advent 9am—Worship: Chapel 10am—Sunday School 11am—Worship: Sanctuary 7pm—Youth Choir & Raleigh Court Ringers at Brandon Oaks	23 10am—Monday Morning Prayer Group	24 Christmas Eve 5pm—Christmas Eve Service 8:30pm—Sanctuary Choir Call Time 9:30pm—Raleigh Court Ringers Call Time 11pm—Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed	26	27	28
29 11am—Worship: Sanctuary	30 10am—Monday Morning Prayer Group	31				



WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR GROUPS

Monday-Friday Monday	Preschool Centering Prayer	9:00 AM—12:00 PM 10:00 AM at St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
Monday Monday Monday	Cub Scouts BSA Troop 2 Roanoke Valley Choral Society	6:30 PM 7:00 PM 7:00 PM
Tuesday & Thursday Tuesday	AA: Primary Purpose AA: Seeds of Hope	10:30 AM 5:30 PM
Tuesday & Thursday Thursday Friday	Tai Chi Hip Sober Chicks Al-Anon	5:30 PM 6:30 PM 11:45 AM



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Weekly Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship Services:
9:00 AM—Chapel, Nursery Available
10:00 AM—Sunday School
11:00 AM—Sanctuary, Nursery Available, Livestream (Facebook & YouTube)

The Rev. Andrew C. Whaley	Pastor and Head of Staff
The Rev. Isabella Fagiani	Associate Pastor
Leigh Sackett	Director of Christian Education
The Rev David Dixon, MD	Minister of Care
Dillon J. Swanson	Director of Music Ministries
Betsy Prillaman	Preschool Director

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