

# Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church



**HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH**  
1101 Cherokee Road  
Louisville, KY 40204



**HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH**

*A thinking, feeling, healing community of faith*

**Inside This Issue...**

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## Join Us as We Celebrate with Joe This Sunday!

This Sunday, January 21, Highland Baptist Church will celebrate Joe Phelps and his two decades of ministry with his last Sunday as Senior Pastor. We will worship in all three morning services with Joe preaching his last sermon. Then, from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m., we will gather in Fellowship Hall for a joyful Reception. After the Reception, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., we will move to the sanctuary for a Service of Celebration to close a full, meaningful day marking Joe's ministry with and alongside us all. We hope that you and your family will join us Sunday as we give thanks for Joe, Terri, and their family as they transition into a new season of life and ministry.

During the Celebration Service, we will offer childcare for infants, toddlers and 2s. We will not be providing care for children during the reception. **If you plan to use childcare during the Celebration Service, a reservation will be necessary** as spaces are limited and will be provided by caregivers outside of Highland. Contact Renee Purtlebaugh to reserve a space for your infant, toddler, or 2 yr. old child **by tomorrow, January 18.**

## Joe Phelps Legacy Fund

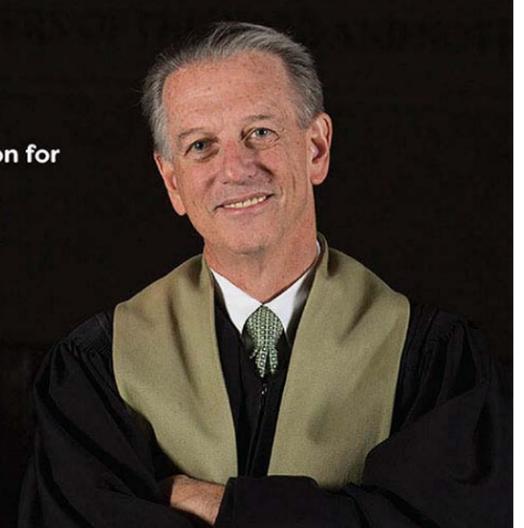
Upon Joe's retirement as pastor of HBC, we are pleased to announce the establishment of the Joe Phelps Legacy Fund. This fund is being created to celebrate the achievements and milestones Highland has reached under Joe's leadership and guidance over the past two decades. At Joe's request, the initial goal of the fund is to help retire the building debt from the Building Love Campaign. Once the church is debt free, future dollars from the fund will be disbursed in consultation with Joe and upon a recommendation of the Finance Ministry Group to the church. The goal is to provide funding for ministry activities that reflect Joe's passions and the values/vision of Highland Baptist. Visit <https://hbclouisville.org/give/>, choose DONATE, then select the Joe Phelps Legacy Fund. Those who wish to contribute by check may write "Joe Phelps Legacy Fund" in the memo line.



A Day of Celebration for

**JOSEPH OWEN PHELPS**

Senior Pastor of Highland Baptist 1997-2018



**Final Sunday**  
Sunday, January 21, 2018  
8:30, 9:30 & 11:00 Morning Services

**Afternoon Reception**  
3:00-4:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall

**Celebration Service**  
4:30 p.m. Sanctuary

## Highland Welcomes...



Cathy Meine



Rachel Pacyga



David Tribble



Amber & Kevin Burke

## Thinking Together...

In conclusion: Thank you.

Thank you, Highland.

Thank you for allowing me into the most sacred places of your hearts and lives. And thank you for entering into the sacred spaces of my family's life. We've shared tears and laughter, moments of heartache and heart-awakening. We've grown together, in the multiple meanings of that phrase. The Instamatic photo from my January 1997 call weekend reveals how we've grown.

Thank you for entrusting me with Highland's pulpit and its reputation. I return them to you with hope that I have been a faithful steward of them for the gospel and the church.

Thank you for being partners in preaching—you listen deeply and respond faithfully by transforming Highland's preached word into a lived word.

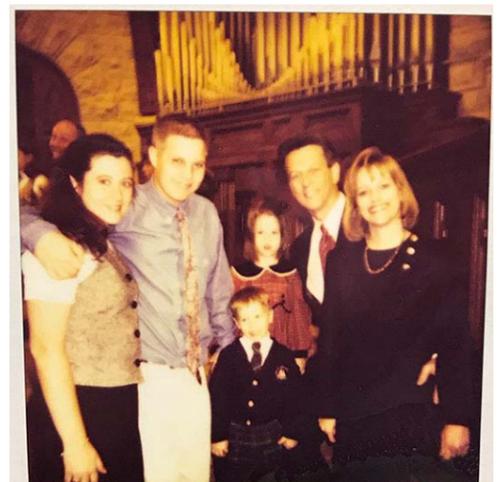
Thank you for encouraging me to trust God's guidance through many congregational dangers, toils and snares. Thank you for allowing me to extend our collective ministry in areas outside our walls. Your generosity and courage enabled us to develop a broader ministry in the city.

Thank you for decades of showing up, loving, giving, forgiving, hoping, thinking, feeling, healing. Thank you for singing the songs of faith deep into my soul.

Thank you to trusted colleagues on Highland's ministry staff—present and past—for sharing God's vision for our church, for calling forth our best, for smoothing my rough edges, for cleaning up my messes, for wisdom that added to and enriched any I brought, for the harmony we made as we each sang our parts in the Great Song.

Thank you to past faith communities. From Far Hills Baptist in Dayton, Ohio, where I was baptized and ordained; to Highland Park in Austin, Texas, where I caught my first glimpse of a Bigger Faith; to Church of the Savior where I saw faith become a real flesh and blood embodiment of love.

*(continued to page 4)*



*Kara, Bobby, Carly, Steven, Joe and Terri Phelps and 1997*

## Children's Worship Returns January 28

After a pause for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, Children's Worship returns on Sunday, January 28! We will pause on January 21 so that all can be present for Joe's final Sunday together, and return to our regular pattern on January 28.

Children's Corner

## Virtual Book Study for Parents

This spring, we hope to explore the possibility of hosting a virtual book study beginning in February for an hour or so during your lunch hour at work, once every two weeks! If you would be interested in participating, please contact Renee Purtlebaugh by January 23.

## Important Dates to Remember

February	Teacher Appreciation Month
March 25	Easter Festival
June 26-29, 2018	PASSPORT <i>kids!</i>
July 20-22, 2018	Vacation Bible School Camp

## Weekend Services Third Sunday after the Epiphany

*In Conclusion: Look Forward*  
Joe Phelps, Proclaimer

Congregational Anthem:  
*Christ Is the One Who Calls*  
...

Celebration Service  
for the Ministry of Joe Phelps  
4:30 p.m.

## A Joyful Return to Mentor Groups!

Last Sunday, *all* of our mentor groups gathered in fellowship with one another amidst the holiday weekend (and snow days). Ten middle and high school guys went out for lunch after church, eating a fair amount of chicken and laughing a great deal together. The MS Girls group spent time at the home of Lauren and Tyler Mayfield, scheming for HBC Got Skillz, drinking hot chocolate, enjoying some hilarious games with amazing leader Sally Evans, and all around just enjoying one another. The HS Girls group were welcomed back into the home of Kim Shippey, where they processed life together with joy and familiarity, continuing their own sacred space in their small group. Each of our mentor groups provides meaningful space for community outside of the faith formation setting of Sunday mornings or slightly more focused programming on Wednesday nights. The groups are not purposeless, though. Quite the contrary, each offers invaluable time for youth in growing friendships with others who are walking the journey alongside them. Our groups meet every other week in a rotation of homes and locations, sometimes including special events or outings, always including fun in community. It is never too late to join in and we hope you will jump in with us this Spring! *To find out more about our groups and to ask any questions, contact Perry by email ([perry@hbclouisville.org](mailto:perry@hbclouisville.org))!*

Youth Corner

### This Sunday, 1/21

Bible Study 9:30 a.m. in Youth Suite

### Next Sunday, 1/28

Bible Study 9:30 a.m.  
Guys Group 12:30-2:00 p.m.  
MS Girls Group 4-5:30 p.m.  
HS Girls Group 7-8:30 p.m.

### Sunday, 2/25

HBC Got Skillz! 5:30 p.m., at Highlands Community Ministries

## Hymns for the Hymnless [explicit], January 28, 7:00 p.m.

This unique and new worship opportunity will take place in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 28, at 7:00 p.m. A merger of culture, story-telling, sacred text, sacrament, and creative liturgy will bind us in the creative energy of God among the people. Let Lauren know if you have skills, interests, or talents to share. Please attend, it's going to expand and give shape to who we are as young people in this world today.

Young Adult  
Corner

## Super Bowl LII 2018

Our annual throw-down par-tay will be February 4. More detes coming soon. Whether you like the game, the commercials, the half-time show, or the party snacks, plan to join us!

## A Call for Children's Books

During the month of January, Highland's Anti-Racism Team will be collecting new and gently used books for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade children to be used in a reading program at Portland Memorial Missionary Baptist Church in West Louisville. If you have books your children are no longer using, we would love to have them. You can place them in the bins outside the choir room.

If you would like more information or have interest in volunteering for this new ministry, contact Nancy Goodhue, Missy Smith, or Lauren Jones Mayfield ([laurenjm@hbclouisville.org](mailto:laurenjm@hbclouisville.org)).



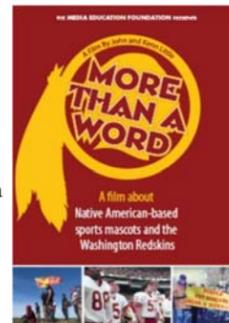
Missions  
Corner

## More Than a Word, Documentary

Highland's Parents for Progress Bible Study and the Anti-Racism Team will host a screening of *More Than a Word* (2017) this Thursday, January 18, at 7:00 p.m., in the Commons. Directed by John and Kenn Little (Standing Rock Sioux), *More Than a Word* takes a deeper look at the issues surrounding the derogatory naming of the Washington Redskins football team.

Scholars, activists, and sports fans share their perspectives on the use of racist imagery in American society, touching on the long history of Native American cultural appropriation. Alessandra Link, a church attendee, member of the Bible Study, and a scholar specializing in Indigenous histories, will lead a discussion after the screening.

Alessandra recently wrote a post on a history blog about the Indigenous names of Louisville's city parks. It deals with some of the same themes addressed in the film: <https://erstwhileblog.com/2017/12/06/whats-in-a-name-louisvilles-city-parks-as-sites-of-learning/>.



## Ministry Council Report

Highland Baptist Church Ministry Council met Monday evening, January 8, 2018. The Ministry Council heard the Pastoral Interim Committee's recommendation and agreed Pastoral Interim Committee bring a recommendation to Highland Baptist Church members on Wednesday, January 10, and to church vote on Sunday, January 21, Ministry Council discussed ways they could plan to provide support to the current Pastoral Interim Committee and the future Pastoral Search committee in the coming months. The Ministry Council will continue the support conversation at the Leadership Summit on January 26-27. Ministry Council reviewed timeline to post draft of proposed Policy and Procedure Manual and Ministry Group Manual online so church members and Ministry Groups can review and submit comments to Ministry Council. Ministry Council will review and discuss comments received and finalize policies. In April, final proposed Policies and Procedures Manual and Ministry Group Manual will be posted for review and church will be asked to vote at the April Quarterly Church Conference. At this time, Ministry Council and Highland Baptist Church Staff would like to recognize and thank the Ministry Council members who are rotating off in 2018. Those rotating off are Greg Bunten, Ryan Eller, Joey Eubank, John Pacyga and Tony Carney. These humble, wise and discerning individuals have graciously logged many hours serving Highland Baptist Church exceedingly well. The Ministry Council and Highland Baptist Church Staff would also like to give special recognition and sincere appreciation to Ryan Davis, who is also rotating off. Ryan has diligently and faithfully served as Ministry Council Chair for four years while we have been in transition. Ryan's intentional focus on the church's needs, his gift of asking thought-provoking questions, his skill in stretching the Ministry Council and keeping complex matters moving forward has increased the effectiveness of the Ministry Council and the value the Ministry Council brings to Highland Baptist Church. Thank you!

Church Business  
Corner



**Wednesday, January 17**

Fellowship Supper (FH) .....5:20-6 p.m.  
 Children's Activities .....6-7:15 p.m.  
 Youth Group (Youth Suite) .....6-7:15 p.m.  
 Adult Class—Cloud of Witnesses: Stories from  
 Saints-In-Progress (Sanctuary).....6:10-7:10 p.m.  
 Sanctuary Choir rehearsal (Choir Room) ....7:15-8:15 p.m.

**Thursday, January 18**

Worship MG (103) ..... 6 p.m.  
 "More Than a Word" Documentary (Commons) ..... 7 p.m.  
 Alcoholics Anonymous (FH) ..... 7 p.m.

**Friday, January 19**

Friday Church (Sanctuary) .....7-7:45 p.m.  
 Narcotics Anonymous (FH)..... 8 p.m.

**Saturday, January 20**

Young Adult MG Planning Retreat (FS) .....9 a.m.-12 p.m.

**Sunday, January 21**

Worship .....8:30 a.m.  
 Worship .....9:30 a.m.  
 Bible Study .....9:30 a.m.  
 Worship ..... 11 a.m.  
 Bible Study ..... 11 a.m.  
 Reception for Joe Phelps (FH).....3-4:30 p.m.  
 Celebration Service for Joe Phelps (Sanctuary) ... 4:30 p.m.  
 Global Missions MG (103) ..... 5:30 p.m.

**Monday, January 22**

Deacons (Commons)..... 7 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 23**

Hope for a Brighter Day (FH) ..... 5:30 p.m.  
 Richard Rohr Book Study for Men (FS) .....7-9 p.m.  
 Alcoholics Anonymous (FH) ..... 10 p.m.

**Upcoming Events at Highland**

January 18 "More Than a Word" Documentary  
 January 20 Young Adult MG Planning Retreat  
 January 21 Reception/Celebration for Joe Phelps;  
 Vote on Pastoral Interim Recommendation  
 January 26-27 Leadership Summit  
 January 28 Highland Book Club  
 February Teacher Appreciation Month  
 February 1 Theology on Tap  
 February 4 Highlights Class  
 February 6 Cream of the Crop Trip  
 February 10 MensWork Breakfast  
 February 14 Ash Wednesday Service  
 February 21 *Coro Vocati* Choral Concert  
 February 25 HBC Got Skillz

**Wednesday Night Menus**

**January 24**

Chicken Piccata  
 Wild Rice  
 Grilled Vegetable Platter  
 Caesar Salad  
 French Bread  
 Dessert



Adults: \$7; Children ages 4-12: \$3.50; Max per family: \$21

**Reminder:** If you have a reservation you are responsible to pay for it. Cancellations must be made *no later than 11:00 a.m. the Tuesday before your reservation.* You may also contact the church office to make your reservations/cancellations.

**This Week's Deacons**

**Friday, 7:00 p.m.**

Cheryl Davis (C), Becky Smith

**Sunday, 8:30 a.m.**

Kristie Abney, Tony Dougherty (C),  
 Gene Streible (G), Tyler Swim

**Sunday, 9:30 a.m.**

Bruce Carroll (C), Michael DeWhatley,  
 Allison French (G), Susan Pierce

**Sunday, 11:00 a.m.**

Bill Martin (G), Sharon Sanders,  
 Ginny Sims (C), David Wells

**Highlights Class Offered February 4**

If you are a new or prospective member, you will want to attend the upcoming Highlights class on Sunday, February 4, 3:00-6:00 p.m., in Fellowship Hall. This class is part of the process for becoming a member of Highland, and is offered several times a year. Nina Maples will lead this class which offers an in-depth look at topics such as how our church is structured, how to join, and how to be involved in ministry at Highland. There will be a light dinner served, and childcare is provided with a **reservation**. For more information or to make a childcare reservation, please contact Nina at [nina@hbclouisville.org](mailto:nina@hbclouisville.org).

**Cream of the Crop Trip, Tuesday, February 6**

Cream of the Crop is a group, retirement age and above, that gathers monthly. Our activities range from pot-lucks to trips to local places of interest.

We hope you will join us on Tuesday, February 6, as we gather at Derby City Antique Mall and have lunch at the Café at noon. RSVP to Joanne Taheri by Friday, February 2, if you plan to attend. Please be sure to indicate whether you plan to meet us there or if you would like to carpool when you make your reservation.

**Office Support Volunteers Needed**

HBC Office Volunteers needed one half-day weekly to answer phone, etc. mornings 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., or afternoons 1:00-5:00 p.m.. Please contact Joey Eubank if interested.

**Giving Thanks for Your Faithful Giving!**

Because of your sacrificial giving throughout the year and a strong December of giving, Highland was able to complete 2017 with roughly \$120,000 income in excess of expenses—a budget surplus! Total income for the year was \$74,462 over budget and expenses were \$45,845 under budget. We give thanks to God for this exciting news!

Have you ever wondered where all the money goes? Here's a helpful breakdown for 2017:

Youth/Preschool/Children	22%
Missions & Justice	21%
Worship/Music	21%
Pastoral Care/Fellowship	14%
Young/Median/Senior Adults	12%
Outreach/Evangelism	10%

**Wednesday Night Adult Programming**

**January 17: "Cloud of Witnesses: Stories from Saints-In-Process"**

Highland's sanctuary is filled with saints—the ones in the stained-glass windows who have completed the race *and* the ones in the pews who are still in process. When we assume saints to be perfect people, we miss the truth they have to share. Saints are the ones who wonder if God is up to something and step out in humility and boldness to share their glimpses of the divine. Story-telling by these "Saints-in-Process" makes God visible for the church.

For four Wednesdays (January 17, March 21, April 18, May 16) this winter and spring, we will gather in the sanctuary for "Cloud of Witnesses: Stories from Saints-In-Process" where three individuals will share their faith journey guided by our facilitator, Bob Cunningham. Join us Wednesday, **January 17**, to hear from Reece Little, Terri Phelps, and Vicki Rynnion.

**Winter Term: January 24, January 31, February 7**

**No Innocent Bystanders: Becoming an Ally in the Struggle for Justice** (*Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell*): LPTS Professor of Theology Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell released *No Innocent Bystanders* this past fall as an invitation to help ally groups to understand what they can accomplish, what they can't, and what kind of humility and clarity is required to tell the difference. In partnership with Highland's Anti-Racism Team, Dr. Craigo-Snell will teach this 3-week course to help us explore how we work for justice not only with God but with our marginalized neighbors as well.

**The Worship that Is Our Very Lives** (*Carol Harston*): In *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, James K. A. Smith writes, "We are what we love, and our loves is shaped, primed, and aimed by liturgical practices that take hold of our gut and aim our heart to certain ends." Every Sunday, Joe has sent us forth from worship with the same benediction: "We end this form of worship to begin the worship that is our very lives." Highland's mission as articulated in Vision 20/20 is to "boldly live out" this worship. What might that mean in our individual lives, our communal life, and our witness? Inspired by *Desiring the Kingdom*, Carol Harston will teach this 3-week course that explores how we might better understand our communal weekly worship *and* our daily worship as a training of our hearts to love God.

For a full Wednesday night schedule of classes for the Winter, Lenten, and Spring terms, please visit <https://hbclouisville.org/2017/08/15/8260/>.

**Special Wednesday Dates**

February 14: Ash Wednesday Service (*Sanctuary*)  
 February 21: Choral Concert by *Coro Vocati* (*Sanctuary*)  
 March 28: Holy Week Service (*Sanctuary*)  
 April 4: No dinner or programming due to Spring Break  
 April 11: Quarterly Church Conference (*Fellowship Hall*)  
 May 23: Handbell and Orchestra Concert (*Sanctuary*)



**Around Highland ...**

... The Highland Book Club will meet on Sunday, January 28, 6:00 p.m., at the home of Pat Ramsey, to discuss *An Irish Country Doctor* by Patrick Taylor. Everyone is invited!  
 ... If you have not picked up your 2018 offering envelopes, please do so! They are located in the office workroom (across from the women's restroom on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor). As of today, there are **40 boxes** and it costs **\$3.00/each** to mail them out. Thank you!  
 ... Lauren Jones Mayfield will attend a joint conference of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and the United Church of Christ in Tampa, FL, January 22-29. (Lauren is ordained in the UCC.) This "Nurturing Excellence in Ministry" gathering will give Lauren the opportunity to participate in a workshop led by Rev. Traci Blackmon entitled, "Prophetic Protest in the Public Square." Rev. Blackmon serves as the Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries of the UCC and Senior Pastor of Christ the King UCC in Florissant, MO. She rose to prominence alongside the Black Lives Matter movement while leading her congregation and the people of Ferguson, MO in the aftermath of the Michael Brown shooting.

## Pastoral Interim Committee Brings Motion for Interim Structure

Below you will find the motion which was made by the Pastoral Interim Committee at the January 10 Quarterly Church Conference. At that time, some context was placed around this motion, so permit me to make the following points: 1) We are blessed with many persons who have an amazing array of talents and gifts. This made our initial task easier as we quickly settled on Rev. Jim England to serve as our Interim Preacher/Pastor. Jim brings much experience as a hospice chaplain, having also served as a pastor and interim pastor, including HBC at the time Joe was called. We believe he is well-suited to lead us through the initial phase of our interim period. 2) As you may recall, Nina had announced a desire to go to a part-time status last fall, but is working full-time for the foreseeable future and is willing to accept any role we might together discern for her going forward. 3) We have much work to do in this initial phase of our interim period and our motion puts in place a structure to both meet our immediate needs, as well as giving us more time to gather information needed to determine our path forward. 4) While we have a gifted ministerial staff, there is no “heir apparent” with regard to whomever our next pastor might be. We have yet to determine what we need. In the coming weeks, you will see our ministerial staff serving in new capacities. All this means is that something needs to be done, and someone needs to do it. To that end, let me encourage everyone to explore how we will all support our ministers and our church during this upcoming interim period.

This motion will be voted on by ballot in all services this coming weekend of January 19-21.

The Pastoral Interim Committee makes the following motion:

- That Highland Baptist Church employ Rev. Jim England to serve as our Interim Preacher/Pastor. In this capacity, Rev. England’s primary responsibilities will be to function as the principle preacher for approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our regularly scheduled services, which includes the three Sunday morning services and the Friday Church service. Jim will also participate in regular ministerial staff meetings and other leadership meetings as needed in coordination with current ministerial staff and lay leadership. Jim will coordinate closely with our current ministerial staff to further shape his role based on their and the congregation’s needs. Remaining preaching responsibilities will be filled by our ministerial staff and pulpit supply as needed.
- That Rev. Nina Maples be recognized as senior pastor, with oversight of the ministerial staff. Nina will also assume additional liaison functions with the following ministry groups: Personnel, Finance, and Faithful Giving. Previously these groups related to the Pastor but will now work with Nina.
- That the aforementioned changes be evaluated in June 2018 (after approximately 4 months) for the purpose of determining what the remainder or next phase of the interim period will look like. As interim periods are times when congregations typically: 1) assess their overall needs; 2) determine the configuration and size of staff as they move towards calling additional ministers; 3) identify and deal with any challenges which will surface during the initial interim period; we recommend continuing evaluations at 3-4 month intervals throughout the duration of the interim. Ministry Council, Deacons, Personnel Ministry Group, Pastoral Interim and Pastor Search Committees, our ministerial staff, and any other bodies deemed necessary will have input in the evaluation process.

Respectfully submitted by the members of the Pastoral Interim Committee: Molly Braun, Diane Brewer, Allison Keenan, Chip Miller, John Pacyga, Abby Self, and Roy Fuller, chair.

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## Thinking Together... *(continued from page 1)*

Thank you to pioneers and prophets and pastors and pilgrims who have lit my way: from Finley Edge who first implanted the idea that there could be more to religion than just religion, to Frank Tupper, to Bill Leonard, to Richard Rohr, to Walter Brueggemann, to the Neighborhood—brothers through thick and thin. Great men all, but that they are all white men reveals the scant limits of my experience and understanding. I have seen through a glass dimly, at best.

Three women dominate my gratitude, however.

I thank my mother, Corabelle, whose delight at me being “a preacher” once felt like a burden; now I receive it as a mother’s blessing in seeing her child who found himself “in the place just right.” She was right: it has been “the valley of love and delight.”

Secondly, thank you to my sister, known now only by me and a few others by her birth name: Mary Ann. My sister instilled in me a capacity to see beauty all around, to approach life as an adventure rather than a burden. She embodies a sacred gratitude for life’s simplest pleasures: a bird on the feeder, a warm home, a favorite drink. She always was, and will always be, the coolest person I know. She taught me that life is fun, so enjoy it, even when it’s not so fun.

The third woman in my trinity is my beloved, Terri Phelps, the most whole and holy person I know. I’ve said jokingly, “She’s my Holy Spirit,” but it’s no joke. Terri has been my Sacred Voice and Welcome Home for 30 years on next Tuesday. It is not hyperbole to say that I would never have made it without her. Terri Phelps has been both a ballast and a beacon for me, and I know for many of you as well. She is a wise, resilient, unassuming giant whose own powerful gifts have taken a back seat to my role and extroversion. And yet, she’s never complained. Instead, like Ginger Rogers to my Fred Astaire, she followed every move I made, only more gracefully, with a smile, and backwards, and in high heels. She harmonized beautifully with my loud life and made her own unique contribution to Highland.

Finally, thank you to God for a front-row seat at Highland, a church uniquely attuned and ready to roll during one of the most transformative eras in Christian history. Consider this— In the past two decades at Highland we have witnessed:

- the end of Highland’s connection to Southern Seminary, from which it was born.
- the leadership of women in all places of ministry after millennia of male domination.
- our move from “don’t ask don’t tell” to full, public inclusion of LGBT.
- stirrings and awakening to the perils of white privilege.
- a maturing recognition of the gospel that understands salvation as God’s justice for all.

It’s all been such rich, fulfilling work. I am so grateful both to have done it and for it to be done. It was done, as best as I knew how, with love.

And so, I end this form of ministry, in order to begin the ministry that is my very life. Build on what we’ve done together. Don’t get stuck in the details. Focus on Love. Err on the side of Love. *For Love is of God and those who love are born of God, and know God.*

Love— God— the source and the goal who connects us all. Forever and ever. Amen. ~Joe

P.S.

1. In consolidating 42 years of ministry and vacating my office this week, I’m leaving many good books behind and would be delighted if you find something you’d like to have. I also have years of gifts, mementos, pastor-bling, stuff. Antique books. An antique sermon manuscript. Bibles. Lots of older books. Come by the office and see if there’s something you’d like. It’s all going away as I thin out my life.

2. I will not be around Highland for a season. I’m not banished and I’m not deserting you. Rather, I need time and space away from my routine in order to gather myself and listen for God’s call. You also need time with me away in order to prepare for the next era of Highland’s life. Remember: every ending is a beginning. On Sunday, we will mark the end of my work with you, but also quietly happening is the birth of a new day for Highland. Please be faithful to what lies ahead, as it builds on the foundations that were here long before I arrived on the scene. I hope to eventually join you in that future as it unfolds.