

Where transformed people are joining the work of God.



HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH

1101 Cherokee Road
Louisville, KY 40204



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A thinking, feeling, healing
community of faith

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Virtual Quarterly Church Conference Scheduled for August 19

We will have our first virtual Quarterly Church Conference next Wednesday, August 19, at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom. This Quarterly Church Conference will include our regular reports, as we seek to adapt to new avenues of meeting during this season where we're healthy at home. Our agenda will include reports from Finance, Membership, Pastor Search Committee, and Interim Committee. Please mark your calendar so that we can make sure we meet our quorum even during this digital age!

For the Living of These Days—A Word from Perry Dixon

This week, I have had the opportunity reflect on our youth at Highland and how they each live into this core value we share: "We value all people, not in spite of, but precisely because of all that makes each one unique." One of my favorite things to experience is a church member discovering the youth for who they are for the first time. We are isolated from the rest of the congregation in a variety of ways, from our physical space tucked away upstairs, to our full schedule each week (especially in pre-pandemic times). Every so often, though, by accident or invitation, a church member will experience the energizing delight that comes from the realization that the youth are many in number, unique and diverse in myriad ways, and fully rooted within Highland in more ways than one. Put another way, our youth *are* Highland when they gather within our walls and out, and far more often than not the church would be proud to know how our youth reflect our congregation.

Our youth celebrate one another's differences. Among our youth community are included a variety of family backgrounds, ages, life stages, experiences, personalities, interests, learning differences, passions, neurodiversity, and more. Naturally, it is quite the task for me to figure out how to effectively *teach* such a group. But, it is a miracle again and again to see such a group love one another. This is because in celebrating one another, the youth actually care for one another in profound, authentic ways during ordinary times and in extraordinary times. We are a community that is *for* one another in all seasons. It is hard to describe what this all looks like, of course. In truth, the only way to get a real glimpse is to spend some intentional time in our midst.

But all of these things are true of many youth organizations and communities throughout the country. I know because I have seen and heard them. What makes us different, or rather, distinguishes us from a transformative, secular youth organization, is that our youth's love for one another and celebration of one another is rooted in the theological truth (small t) we find woven throughout our scriptures, embedded in our traditions, and incarnate in our lives: it was God who first loved and celebrated us in this way and much more. If God loves and celebrates us precisely for all that makes us unique, how can we not live into that love and celebration for one another?

In this time of pandemic, it is difficult to be reminded that we cannot gather together in our usual rhythms. This is true for our youth and it is true for the rest of our congregation, too. But, the relationships we have invested in and the connection of faith we share continue to grow and shape our lives even and especially as every square inch of our lives has been disrupted in this season. Know, too, that we among the youth community are still here and still seeking to live into the liberation of Christian faith we have found together as part of our home at Highland.

A Word from Mary Alice Birdwhistell

Dear Highland Family,

What a JOY it is to finally be "with" you and to begin my time at Cherokee and Grinstead as your pastor! And what an oddity it is to begin serving as your pastor in the midst of a global pandemic when I still haven't met so many of you. One of my favorite books about ministry is called *This Odd and Wondrous Calling*, and I can't think of a more accurate description of this season in ministry than that. It is odd and wondrous, indeed!

I remember a moment last fall when I was talking to my friend Emily Hull McGee about Highland. It was still fairly early in the search process and I wanted to learn more about the church. I knew of Highland from an outside perspective—your commitment to social justice, your prophetic witness, and your thoughtful worship—but I wanted to know more about Highland from an inside perspective. Specifically, I wanted to know more about the people.

I was at a church I loved dearly and serving with people who were truly the family of God for me in this place. I wanted to know if the people at Highland could become this kind of people to me, too. And I will never forget Emily's immediate response that day. She said, "Oh Mary Alice, I LOVE these people. Josh and I *still* talk about how much we miss the people at Highland." And then, one by one, she began to tell me about so many of you—your names and stories and the significant impact you have made on her life and ministry.

I still haven't met most of you (at least not face-to-face), and yet in my two short weeks in Louisville, I have already seen such beautiful glimpses of what Emily was talking about that day: The beautiful hospitality of Marilyn Whisler and Vicki Runnion, who coordinated volunteers to help me with everything under the sun during my move to Louisville. The countless people who brought such amazing meals, food for my pantry, and helped in ways I didn't even know I needed. Terri Connolly, who surprised me with beautiful flowers on my front porch. Bob Cunningham and Bob Belcher, who built beautiful bookshelves for my office and have helped with so many jobs around my house. Larry Hoover, who showed up on a hot afternoon to mow my yard. And of course, Doris Hornbuckle's behind-the-scenes care in helping me find my new home. Through your thoughtful notes and messages, homemade bread, overflowing chips and queso, lava cake and cookies, vegetables from your garden, and mini-refrigerators, you have already shown me such an incredible welcome in these days. Thank you so much, Highland Family!

I am so looking forward to meeting many of you in the days to come. In next week's newsletter, I will include a link if you would like to sign up for a time to meet with me in whatever way you feel most comfortable: masked and socially distanced in Highland's sanctuary, outside Highland in the playground or a nearby park, on your front/back porch, or even on Zoom or by telephone. There will be a variety of days and times of the week available to accommodate different schedules, and I will continue to open up new spaces every month until I can meet with the entire Highland family.

Know how much I look forward to my time with you, friends! I hope to learn your stories, to discover what you value most deeply about Highland, to listen to your concerns or questions about the future, and to hear your hopes and dreams for our faith community as we journey together in odd and wondrous ways in the days ahead.

With gratitude and great hope, ~ Mary Alice

Weekend Services

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Isiah 56:1, 6-8
Psalm 133
Matthew 15:21-28

Mary Alice Birdwhistell,
Proclaimer

Please Note:

All *in-person* services, activities, meetings and events at Highland Baptist Church are cancelled until further notice.

Highland's Word To Our Community

... on NPR: ...welcoming new pastor Mary Alice Birdwhistell beginning this weekend. Join us on Facebook and YouTube for Friday Church and Sunday morning worship.
... on our marquee:



Staying Connected Outside These Walls

As we live through these days where we are rarely, if ever, physically connected with each other we make use of technology to bridge some of the gaps that exist between us. Below are some of the ways that you may use to stay connected to the community of Highland Baptist Church:

Worship from the sanctuary on our Facebook page at 7:00 p.m. on Friday nights and 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. These streams also appears on our YouTube page.

Bible study & children's gatherings via Zoom. Several adult Bible study classes and Pastor Renee are gathering weekly via Zoom which allows connectivity via computer or phone. If your child would like to connect, email Renee. If your Bible study class would like to begin meeting this way, email Carol at carol@hbcloouisville.org or Walter at walter@hbcloouisville.org.

Deacon Testimonies

Each year, Highland's new deacons share their faith journey as part of our weekend worship services as we prepare to welcome them into deacon service. Our new deacons have graciously agreed to offer their deacon testimony through an online video shared with the community. These testimonies are gifts that our new deacons give to our congregation, shared by the church on our YouTube channel under an unlisted link.

Links to the videos will be available in our Saturday email with the worship bulletin and in the email version of our weekly newsletter. We encourage all Highland's people to watch these videos to get to know better those serving in this role as deacon. To provide more privacy, we ask that you refrain from sharing these on social media.

Update from Faithful Giving Ministry Group

Greetings! We come to you with an update on giving so far this year. We are pleased to say that pledged giving has maintained a steady pace and is at 98% of where we should be at this time! We are so grateful for the generosity of the congregation in these uncertain times.

We are writing to petition to the givers whose contributions are "unpledged." Many of us are not able to make significant commitments in advance and simply give as we are able. And without weekly in-person services, the reminders and opportunities to give have been fewer. As a result, we have fallen significantly behind in this portion of the budget. Now is a perfect time to make a gift, if you are able!

Thank you,

~ Drew Harston, Cheryl Priddy, Vi Chatmon, Jim Hawkins, Susan Pierce, Steven Michael Carr and Renee Purtlebaugh

Weekday Devotion Series: Bible Studies Featured This Week

We have expanded our weekday devotions in order to welcome more voices into our online space! Ministers will still offer a devotion at 10:00 a.m. each Monday, introducing the week's participants. We will focus each week on one of Highland's Core Values. This week, Perry Dixon offered a devotion on Monday and now other church members will have a 10:00 a.m. devotion posted the rest of this week. This week's devotions will reflect upon the following core value: "We value all people, not in spite of, but precisely because of all that makes each one unique." This week's leaders include Emily Moyers, Livia Mayfield, and Anna Hall.



Zoom to Table Talk

Table Talk will meet this Thursday, August 13, at 6:30 p.m., using Zoom conferencing technology. We shall have an opportunity to check in with each other and meet new people interested in an informal time to build new and strengthen existing relationships within the congregation. Everyone is invited to participate. To join the gathering, contact Marc Dowell, Jim Shelton, or Earl Shelp.

Take the 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge

Some of Highland Baptist Church's Bible classes are currently taking the 21-Day Challenge. The challenge is for 21 days to do one action to further your understanding of power, privilege, supremacy, oppression, and equity. The actions include reading articles, listening to podcasts, watching videos, observing, and finding ways to form and deepen community connectedness.



**Missions
Corner**

If you are interested in taking the challenge, are not in a class doing it, and would like to join others in a weekly Zoom meeting for encouragement and discussion, contact Missy Smith or Lauren Jones Mayfield to receive the invitation to join the Zoom meeting.

The meetings will be held Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. August 4-25. You can still join us if you missed August 4!

You can access the challenge materials at <https://www.eddiemoorejr.com/21daychallenge> or <https://debbyirving.com/21-day-challenge>.

Around Highland...

... Congratulations to Linda and Hank Ellington, former members of Highland, who were married in our sanctuary 50 years ago this month!



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Our Mission

God's Love compels us to cultivate a safe, welcoming community of faith where all are challenged to discover, grow, and serve, as together we boldly live out the worship that is our very lives.

Our Vision

We dream of being an engaging, vibrant Christian church, where transformed people are joining the work of God, creating a world where justice and Love are abundant.

Our Values

- We value a **deeply spiritual, Christ-centered faith** that opens us to life, equips us to serve, and calls us to action.
- We value a **courageous, progressive theology** whose relevance extends from the pew to the street, that engages both the mind and the heart, and that welcomes everyone from the skeptic to the devoted.
- We value **all people**, not in spite of, but precisely because of all that makes each one unique.
- We value **being doers of the word**, living out what Jesus taught: showing hospitality to strangers, confronting injustice, giving voice to those who have been silenced.
- We value a **healthy community**, where honest relationships provide all people safety, encouragement, acceptance, and healing, and challenge us to practice gentleness, forgiveness, and continued growth.
- We value **embracing challenge and change**: naming hard things, asking questions, and leaning into tensions and ambiguity.
- We value **growing together across the lifespan**, through multi-generational and intergenerational relationships and ministries.
- We value being rooted in our **distinct and radical heritage** that compels us to breathe new life into bedrock Baptist principles.
- We value **broad and deep worship** that invites us into the mystery of a loving God.
- We value **being good stewards** of all we have been given, discerning together how best to use our financial, physical, human, and spiritual gifts to follow Jesus and carry out our mission.