

Where transformed people are joining the work of God.



HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH
1101 Cherokee Road
Louisville, KY 40204



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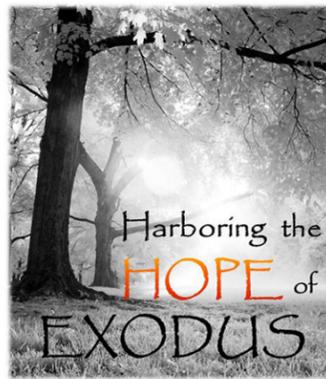
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Harboring the Hope of Exodus

Last year, the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. displayed a small collection of Scriptures whose title page read, "Parts of the Holy Bible, selected for the use of the Negro Slaves, in the British West-India Islands."

The "Slave Bible" as it was called was first published in 1807 by British missionaries and was created specifically for use among enslaved Africans. However, what's even more disturbing is that it omitted various parts of Scripture that might have been considered "too encouraging" or that could have prompted any kind of uprising or rebellion among enslaved people. For instance, it omitted Galatians 3:28, "For there is neither slave nor free...for all are one in Christ," and the entire book of Revelation, which might offer too much hope about a new heaven and earth. *(continued to page 2)*



A Word from Mary Alice

Dear Highland Family, what a wonderful first weekend it was to worship with you! The past few months have been a whirlwind for me, but on my first weekend as pastor at Highland, time stood still. I was able to soak in the beauty of this space, this beloved community, this significant moment—and God's unexpected goodness in it all. As I reflected on this time, I realized that I needed this tangible marker of this new season in ways I didn't even realize. During a time when we have lost so many rituals and celebrations that we would normally use to honor various life moments, this time with you was truly sacred space.



I am so looking forward to finally meeting many of you in the days to come. Starting this Sunday, August 23, I have scheduled blocks of time several days a week to meet with the Highland family in whatever ways 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 week until I can meet with everyone.

To schedule a time with me, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/yxm4pgmn>. For those without internet access, please contact the church office. Please note that I will need to meet at Highland (inside or outside) on weekdays during office hours. On weeknights or weekends, I'm happy to come to your front porch/back porch, have you over to mine, or meet at another outside space.

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 the days ahead.

With gratitude and great hope, ~ Mary Alice



Weekend Services

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Psalm 138
Romans 12:1-8
Exodus 1:8-2:10

Mary Alice Birdwhistell,
Proclaimer

Please Note:

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

Tomorrow: Virtual Quarterly Church Conference

We will have our first virtual Quarterly Church Conference tomorrow, 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!



Global Mission Month at Highland

Our emphasis on the Offering for Global Mission continues through the month of August. This Sunday, August 23, we welcome Terri Connolly to share our mission moment, which highlights the work of CBF field personnel.

Please plan to give to the Offering for Global Mission as you are able (<https://hbclouisville.org/give/donate>). The monies collected directly support global mission work. To date, we have collected \$4,220. Thank you for your generosity, Highland, especially during the ongoing pandemic realities we all face.

Highland's Word To Our Community

... on NPR: ...with worship leadership by new pastor Mary Alice Birdwhistell; on YouTube and Facebook Sunday mornings and Friday evenings.

Join Us for Drive 'Round on August 30

In the spirit of Gather 'Round in recent years at Highland, this year we invite you to Drive 'Round with us! On Sunday, August 30, from 5:00 until 7:00 p.m., we will host a drive through event with multiple purposes and opportunities for celebration and blessing. Primary among them will be the opportunity to meet Pastor Mary Alice for a few moments to welcome her in person. You'll also receive a packet of Highland's Communion bread for our Communion Sunday the following weekend, families with children will receive faith formation materials for September and a school year blessing, and youth will receive an encouraging word. We'll also receive donations for a local community organization. Be looking for more information in next week's newsletter. We can't wait to see you there!



Harboring the Hope of Exodus *(continued from page 1)*

My jaw dropped this week when I realized that this so-called Bible left out *all of the texts* I plan to preach from the lectionary for the next six weeks in Exodus 1-17. Instead, the book goes straight from Genesis 45 to Exodus 19, omitting the entire story of the Israelites' escape from slavery under Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. It's a significant reminder about just how powerful these stories were (and still are) that they were considered too dangerous and risky for enslaved people to even have access to them. Even those who sought to oppose its message recognized the undeniable power of this story.

And yet, the Exodus story still made its way into the hearts and souls of enslaved people. As Andrew Prevot shares in his lecture on "The Hope of Exodus in Black Theology," there came to be "a tradition inaugurated by Black Christian slaves, who despite being subjected to coercive practices of noneducation and miseducation, managed to discover another meaning of Christianity buried deep in the stories, images, and songs of their living faith. These resilient, material symbols of theological wisdom could not be made to communicate merely the politically crafted message of obedience to masters preached by apologists of American slavocracy. Something more was here: a mystery and a promise deeper than words:

*Christianity harbored a hope of Exodus.
It whispered the dream of a divinely orchestrated escape
from the death-dealing circumstances of the present order of things.
It inspired a communal prayer for healing and freedom."*

As we reflect together on these stories from Exodus over the next six weeks, I would like to challenge us to read the text as if it had been excluded from our Bibles, as if these words were too dangerous and subversive for us to read, and as if we were coming upon them for the very first time. I would like to invite us to read from the lens of an oppressed people desperately seeking deliverance and freedom. And I would like to encourage us to listen to how marginalized voices in our culture and world today help bring new understanding and perspectives to the hope of Exodus that we haven't considered before.

What challenge do these words bring to us today? What hope do they harbor within us? Because to the Pharaohs of the 21st century, the story of Exodus still declares, "Let my people go."

Learn more at:

- * <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/674995075>
- * <https://www.history.com/news/slave-bible-redacted-old-testament>
- * <http://lumenchristi.org/event/2019/05/hope-of-exodus-in-black-womanist-theology-andrew-prevot>

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.

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@hbclouisville.org or Walter at walter@hbclouisville.org.

Around Highland...

... Congratulations to Sharon Sanders for receiving University of Louisville's 2020 Distinguished Faculty Award in Teaching! Sharon will be recognized by President Neeli Bendapudi as a special guest at the next "Celebration of Faculty and Staff Excellence" where she will receive an engraved UofL Medallion and a financial gift. Sharon Sanders teaches with the Kent School of Social Work.

Fall Rhythms Taking Shape

As we move into a new school year and thereby new fall rhythms for each of our families, I'm working diligently on crafting different ways for your family to engage with the stories of God at home. Much like Compassion Camp invited you to engage at the level your family had the time and energy for, so also will our opportunities to engage in faith formation. In addition, encouraging each of you as parents navigating the seemingly impossible is forefront in my mind too!

For now, mark your calendar for our August 30 Drive 'Round event from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.! Pack a picnic to eat in the car if you like. You'll receive a packet of faith formation materials for the month of September, as well as receive a blessing for your family for this school year. More details will be in our weekly email this Friday.

In addition, we'll still be marking milestones of beginning Kindergarten and 3rd grade with Bibles as we do each year. I'm working out the logistics of this and will be in touch with each of you with a child in these age groups in the coming days! ~ Renee

Children's Corner