



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church November 28, 2023

Advent Beyond Imagination

“Advent is the glorious affirmation that God creates newness—
in the world and in your life and mine; that something new is coming.
That is the gift, the miracle of the newness that God will give to those
with imagination enough to receive it.
That is new birth that can happen in and for each and every one of us.”

~ John Buchanan

This year at Highland, we want to posture ourselves in the season of Advent with a sense of imagination. After all, Advent is this season when we wait, watch, hope, and pray for God to do a “new thing” among us, and yet more often than not, we approach the season in the same ways that we always do, with the same traditions, and the same expectations for the same outcomes, year after year. Others of us approach the season at such a frantic and frenetic pace that we just hope to say we survived at the end of the holidays! But what if we were to slow down long enough to approach this Advent season differently - with openness, wonder, awe, and curiosity?

Like the shepherds were that first Christmas night, can we be willing to be surprised in the midst of the status quo? Like Mary, can we ponder in our hearts what new thing God might be birthing within us? How might we open ourselves to experience the birth of the Holy One in ways that are beyond our wildest imagination?

Join us this Advent season as we re-imagine what hope, peace, joy, or love might look like in God’s world. Each day, we invite you to read Advent reflections written by various members of our Highland family. They will be available via email, on Facebook, and on Highland’s website ([link](#))

[here](#)). We are grateful to all of our writers for their willingness to help guide our journey together this Advent season. Thanks especially to Cheryl Davis, Nancy Goodhue, Paul Henderson, and the Worship Ministry Group for their help coordinating this year's project.

We would love for you to share your own thoughts, reflections, and photographs online throughout the season of Advent, too. What is it that piques your curiosity or stirs your own sense of wonder as we watch for God to break into our weary world? How might you re-imagine your own holiday traditions to experience hope, peace, joy, and love in new ways? What "new thing" is God birthing within you this season? Snap a photo or share your reflection online using the hashtag #AdventBeyondImagination

~ Mary Alice Birdwhistell



Advent Beyond Imagination

Sunday, December 3 ~ Hope Sunday:

First Sunday of Advent Worship Services at 8:45 and 11:15 AM

Join us for the first Sunday of Advent as we begin a new liturgical year and this year's theme, Advent Beyond Imagination. Special music from the woodwinds of Highland's Orchestra.

Hanging of the Green at 6:00 PM

We will gather at 6 PM for our annual Hanging of the Green service to adorn the sanctuary for the season. You are invited to bring donations for Highlands Community Ministries and La Casita Community Center. (See a detailed list of needed items in the Commons). The service will be followed by a church-wide holiday reception in Fellowship Hall.

Monday, December 4:

Sorting Soiree for Senior Adults at 9:00 AM in the Commons.

Wednesday, December 6:

On our last Wednesday night of regularly scheduled activities for the year, join Mary Alice for some of our learnings from our Advent Small Groups based on Kate Bowler's, "Bless The Advent We Actually Have."

Friday, December 8:

Sorting Soiree for Families with Children and Youth and Young Adults at 6:00 PM at La Casita.

Saturday, December 9:

Youth Christmas Party (Eden Hill from 3:00-7:00 PM). Contact [Justin](#) for complete information.

Sunday, December 10 ~ Peace Sunday:

Second Sunday of Advent Worship Services with Crosses on the Lawn at 8:45 and 11:15 AM

The Second Sunday of Advent is our time to remember those who have been killed in our city by acts of violence. We will read each name and place crosses on the front lawn as an act of remembrance and a call to action in our community. Special music from the brass of Highland's Orchestra.

Children's Advent Service at 6:00 PM

Children's voices and the ringing of bells are a highlight of the season! Join us for an evening of music from Highland's Carol Choir, Chorister Choir, and Children's Handbell Choir—ages 3 through 5th grade.

Tuesday, December 12:

La Casita Community Center Resource Day 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Many volunteer opportunities are available to prepare for and serve this event! See sign-ups in the Commons.

Wednesday, December 13:

Families with Children are invited to gather an outdoor hot chocolate bar and to enjoy the Christmas lights at Brown Park from 5:45-7:00 PM.

Friday, December 15 and 22:

Singing the Carols of Christmas at Friday Church at 7:00 PM

Join us as we sing our favorite Christmas carols and end each service in Candlelight.

Sunday, December 17 ~ Joy Sunday:

Third Sunday of Advent Worship Services at 8:45 and 11:15 AM

Join us for a morning of music and celebration with the Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra singing Bach's Magnificat at 8:45 and 11:15 AM, with special music from the strings of Highland's Orchestra.

Orchestra Christmas Concert at 6:00 PM

This delightful concert includes special solos, duets, and Highland's Handbell Choir.

Thursday, December 21:

Longest Night Service at 6:00 PM

Christmas is often characterized as the most wonderful time of the year, but it is often anything but this, especially for those who are grieving at the holidays. Whether you are reflecting on the loss of a beloved family member or friend, a job, a relationship, a life transition - all are welcome to this quiet and reflective worship service on the longest night of the year.

Sunday, December 24 ~ Love Sunday:

Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship Service at 10:00 AM (No Bible Study).

Christmas Eve Services at 4:00 and 6:00 PM

We will gather to sing the carols of Christmas in a more casual and family-friendly service at 4:00 PM. Lessons and Carols, the centuries-old English tradition, tells the Christmas story through Scripture, carols, and music by the Sanctuary Choir at 6:00 PM. Both services end with candlelight to mark the joy of Christ's birth!

Sunday, December 31:

Online Worship. No in-person services or activities.



Vote on 2024 Ministry Fund Budget

We will vote on the proposed 2024 ministry fund budget over the weekend of December 1-3. You can [click here](#) for the budget consolidation details. Much work has been done by staff, lay leaders, and the Finance and Personnel Ministry Groups to help make reductions to this budget in light of current giving trajectories and upcoming debt payments that will begin in mid-2024, and we are grateful for everyone's diligent work. There have been cuts made across the board to this budget, and none of them have been easy to make. Here are some of the highlights from previous church-wide discussions:

- This budget reflects an **\$80,000+ reduction in ministry, mission, and facilities budgets**, including a **\$35,000 decrease in the mission budget**.

- It should also be noted that our mission and justice teams currently have almost \$100,000 in projects funds that will carry over to next year that they can also spend in their work. Therefore, our hope is that this decrease won't feel as significant with these other funds available.
- Other groups have made what we call "meaningful cuts" - changes that would make a budgetary difference without being detrimental to a particular ministry.
- The personnel budget has increased 2%, but this still includes almost \$30,000 of reductions, including a \$4,000 reduction in the choral scholars line, eliminating the summer youth intern, and decreasing the hours of our custodial staff. These cuts were, by far, the hardest to make.
 - The remaining increase to this budget is in large part because we have received bids for staff health insurance that are 50-100% higher than what we current pay and we need to prepare for what will likely be a significant increase to these costs starting June 2024.
- Tracy Holladay and Susan Pierce have worked hard to determine an **estimated amount of debt payment we will begin to incur in mid-2024 to begin to pay for our Sacred Space work, and they think \$61,200 is reasonable. However, this number will double in 2025.**
- Even with these significant budget reductions, we are also incurring significant increases. Therefore, this is a relatively flat budget from 2023.

You will receive a link to vote in your email inbox on Friday, December 1 and will be able to vote online through the weekend until Sunday, December 3 at 5:00 PM. If you have follow-up questions or feedback about the budget, you're welcome to reach out to David Bannister (Chair of Ministry Council), Charlie Suer (Chair of Finance), Arlette Tinsley (Chair of Personnel), or Mary Alice Birdwhistell.

Hanging of the Green Reception

Following the Hanging of the Green service on December 3, we will have a church-wide reception in the Fellowship Hall to kick off the holiday season together! We ask you to bring desserts and/or appetizers for this gathering.



Please note that we won't have a way to keep food warm this year, but you're welcome to bring desserts, cookies, cheese, crackers, small sandwiches, fruit, veggies, etc. If you plan to bring something, please contact Kathey Golightly Sanders at ktgsanders@aol.com.

Recognizing Sharon Sanders



On Sunday, we celebrated Sharon Sanders and the incredible gifts she has shared with us over the past year and a half as our Interim Organist and Music Associate. Below are Kathy Collier's words of recognition for Sharon:

Interim is a Latin adverb meaning "in the meantime". Interim is the time between, and you can use it as a fancy way of referring to a time you squeeze something in.

Today we are noting how you *squeezed in* many hours of practicing both organ and piano in preparation to lead Highland's worship services. To *squeeze in* additional time, that meant arriving at church on Sunday mornings before 7 a.m. or practicing late into many evenings.

Squeezing in involved spending hours poring over organ literature to find music that would connect scriptures to hymns to proclamations noting appropriate tempos and dynamic levels so worship experiences would be heightened for many.

Squeezing in meant making sure ministers and lay leaders understood Highland's rich and beautiful practices of intentional worship planning as well as visual elements placed in our sacred space for deep connections to God, our Creator.

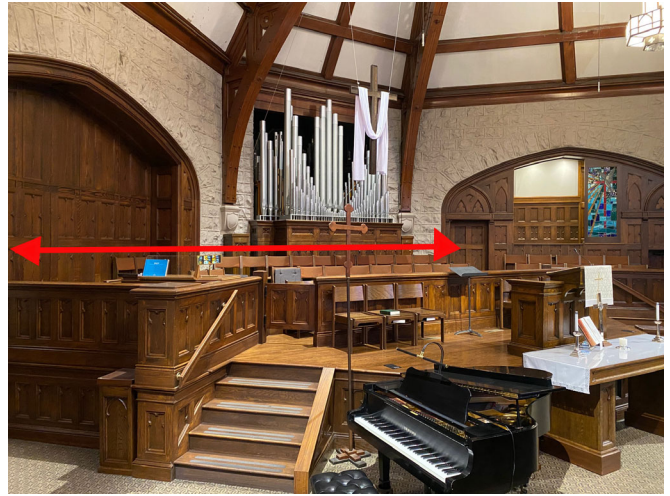
The words: *squeezing in* to describe an interim time may sound negative but I know that you and God worked closely together these past 17 months and I'm pretty sure time was suspended for you. How do I know this? Because after your time each day serving as a professor in the Kent School of Social Work at the University of Louisville, the time you gave to Highland was not *squeezed-in-time* but rather time filled with love and joy for every note rehearsed and music chosen and played.

So today, it is my great honor, on behalf of our faith family, the Worship Ministry Group, the Music Ministry and your involvement with almost every ensemble from Sanctuary Choir to Children's Choirs to Orchestra to Handbells, we say *thank you, thank you, thank you!*

Sacred Space Project Update

Geothermal drilling and piping in the parking lot is largely complete. The pipes have been pressure tested to ensure that all joints and connections are ready to go.

Creation of the new mechanical room underneath the chancel in the sanctuary continues apace. Eventually this room will house the HVAC hardware for the sanctuary. Excavation has reached the door that the choir members use to enter the back of the choir loft. The first picture below shows the mechanical room and the second shows the reach of the room in the sanctuary.



~ Walter McWhorter

Cream of the Crop Christmas Luncheon Tuesday, December 5 Fellowship Hall at 11:30 AM

Potluck luncheon with meat, bread and drinks provided.
Please bring a salad, vegetable, or dessert to share.
Don't miss this program of Christmas music
presented by Cathy and Richard Ryan!



Cloud of Witness Returns

Our next Cloud of Witness evening will be on Wednesday, November 29 at 6:15 PM in the sanctuary. Bob Cunningham will facilitate the conversation as Mary Burks, Paul Henderson, and Kent Pugh share their stories of faith. We hope you will join us!



Paths to Holiday Giving at Highland

We will collect new blankets and \$25 gift cards to Kroger for Highlands Community Ministries. HCM will disburse these items to their community residents during the month of December. Please bring these items to the church at anytime or to the Hanging of the Green service on December 3.



Start shopping now! We will pack 200 grocery bags and 100 hygiene kits for our friends at La Casita Community Center. This means we need LOTS of donations: bags of black beans and white rice, canned fruit and veggies, spaghetti, size 6 diapers, pull ups, baby wipes, \$10 Walmart gift cards, toothbrushes, and toothpaste. We will also collect paper towels, toilet paper, and specialty Latinx holiday foods again.

Shopping lists and the annual family's scavenger hunt are available in the Commons. Please place your donations in the brown bins outside the choir room or bring them with you to the Hanging of the Green service on December 3.

Volunteers are needed for the resource day at La Casita on Tuesday, December 12 from 9:00 AM-12:00 Noon or 12:00 Noon-3:00 PM. Please email Lauren at lauren@hbclouisville.org, or sign-up in the Commons. Noelle Tennis Gulden netgulden@gmail.com and Mary Ida Gray maryida@bellsouth.net can answer any additional questions.



2 Sorting Soirees

Senior Adults will gather on Monday, December 4 at 9:00 AM in the Commons to sort the bounty of donations collected the night prior at the Hanging of the Green service.

Families and Young Adults will gather on Friday, December 8 at 6:00 PM at La Casita to pack the food and hygiene bags. Pizza will be served. Please RSVP to one of the email addresses listed above, or sign-up in the Commons.



~ Lauren Jones Mayfield

Listen Learn Act

Would you like to learn more about Listen Learn Act, the antiracism group that's connected with the Earth and Spirit Center? Please join some of us from the Anti-Racism Team as we gather on December 7. For more information on this organization, go to listenlearnact.org.

Listen Learn Act and the Earth and Spirit Center invite you to a *Holiday Meet and Greet*

What?

We hope you can join us for this social gathering of Listen Learn Act friends and classmates, along with spiritually-grounded justice groups to connect and support each other in this work of love.

*Please sign up so we know how to plan. You can share this link with anyone that would like to come!

[Sign up here](#)

Where?

At the Earth and Spirit Center
1926 Newburg Rd.

When?

Thursday, December 7, 2023
6:00 - 7:30 pm

Casual. Drinks, libations, and snacks will be offered.

Family and friends welcome!



Join us on Wednesday nights! Dinner begins at 5:20 PM and children's choirs and youth activities begin at 6:00 PM. Adult programming begins at 6:15 PM.

Prices are \$12 for adults, \$6 for children (age 4-11), with a family max of \$35. Children below three years and below eat for free.

Reservations are due by noon on Friday each week. [Sign up here](#) to reserve your spot. Payments can be made via cash or check as you arrive, but we also encourage paying ahead [here](#) (*Note: those with standing reservations can make payments for the whole month (or more!)*).

Any changes to reservations can be made by emailing [Paul](#) or [Kathleen](#) or calling the Highland Baptist office at 451-3735. If you are in a season of financial hardship that makes paying difficult, you can speak to any of the ministers about assistance for Wednesday Night Supper.

Menu for November 29 (note updated menu): white chicken chili, cornbread, salad, desserts

Streaming Worship Links

Below are the links to stream the worship services each week at Highland.
Please bookmark them since they remain the same from week-to-week!



Sunday, 11:15 AM

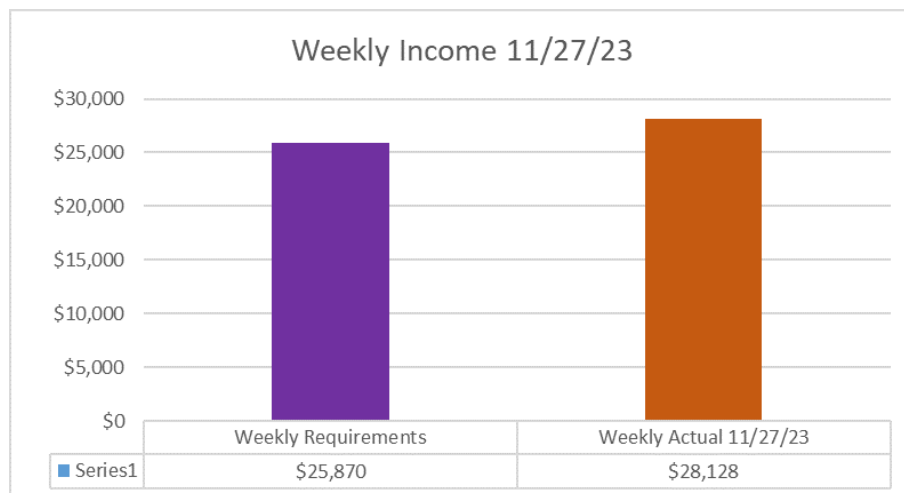
<https://www.facebook.com/hbclouisville.org>

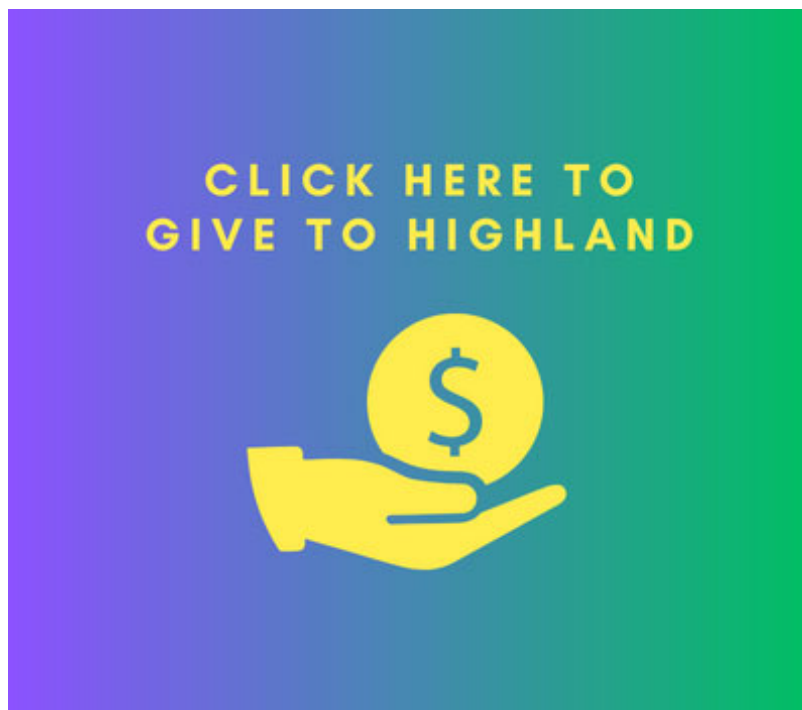
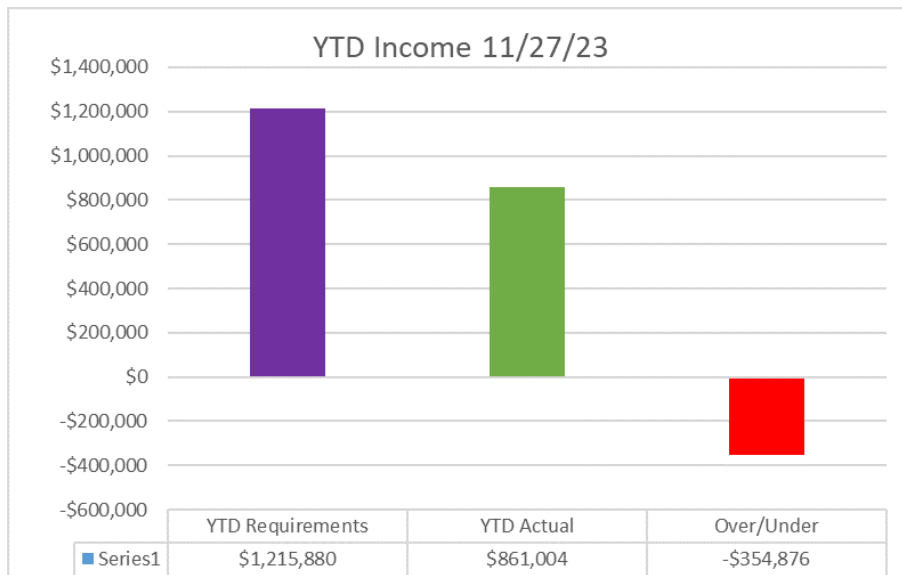
<https://www.youtube.com/@highlandbaptist>

Friday, 7:00 PM

<https://www.facebook.com/hbclouisville.org>

Financial Reports





To make a donation from your phone, text "give2hbc" to 502-747-1212 and open the link.



Louisville Homicides

Please join us in prayer and action as we remember those who have been killed in recent weeks in our city. We grieve with those who mourn, while we also maintain a hope that one day, all things will be made new.

- Quinn Dunlap, 42, killed November 11
 - Antwawn Shackelford, 39, killed November 11
 - Jordan Trotter, 26, killed November 13
-



Facebook



YouTube



Website



Instagram

Copyright © 2023 Highland Baptist Church, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).