



## *The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church December 19, 2023*

**Reminder: the newsletter is not published next week.**

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Dear Highland Family,

It's been a brutiful (brutal + beautiful) year for Evan and me, and you have been by our side in the midst of it all: celebrating our wedding, moving into our new home, beginning life together in Louisville, and the long journey healing from my injury this fall. God's Love has truly carried us in each moment through the expansive love and generous care we have received from each of you.



Other pastors and friends often ask me, "How has your church been in the midst of everything that

has happened to you this year?" I absolutely love responding to that question, because I beam with pride and deep gratitude for ALL the ways you have been the family of God for us in this place! I will never be able to fully articulate the depth of my thankfulness for each of you.

I so look forward to beginning a new year with you. Louisville needs a church like Highland, now more than ever before. After several years of transition and change, both for me personally and for us as a church, 2024 feels rich with opportunity for us to take some new steps forward in the work of Love that we share together here at Grinstead and Cherokee, in the broader Louisville community, and around the world.

Frederick Buechner says that the grace of God means something like this: "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Do not be afraid. I am with you." May we each hold on to the good news of God with us, not only this Christmas, but into a beautiful new year.

Merry Christmas, Highland!

With love and great hope,  
*Mary Alice*

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Around Highland  
on December 17







# Advent Beyond Imagination

## **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.

*Care provided for infants through pre-kindergarten children.*

## **Friday, December 22:**

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

Join us as we sing our favorite Christmas carols and end the service with candlelight.

## **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!

Christmas Eve 4:00 PM – *Care provided for infants, toddlers and twos.*

Christmas Eve 6:00 PM – *Care provided for infants through pre-kindergarten children.*

**Sunday, December 31:**

*Online Worship.*

On December 31, we will not have any in-person services or activities as a way to offer Sabbath rest to our staff, lay leaders, musicians, and volunteers who work so hard throughout the year, and particularly through the holiday season. We will offer a virtual service on Highland's Facebook and YouTube accounts for you to worship from home at 10:00 AM on New Year's Eve. We hope you will join us for in-person and online worship again on Sunday, January 7 at 8:45 or 11:15 AM. Bible study classes for all ages also meet at 10:00 AM.

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## Highland Orchestra and Handbell Concert



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## Financial Update

For many of us, the work and witness of Highland Baptist Church continually inspires and expands our imaginations! We believe the welcome, work, and witness of Highland are uniquely needed in God's world.

Based on total ministry budget donations received as of Sunday, December 17, **\$322,000 in additional gifts are needed by 12/31/23** to meet our projected 2023 actual expenses. **While this number might be overwhelming to read, we are also bold enough to imagine that the goal of meeting our ministry expenses is entirely within reach!**

In a world where churches tend to think small, Highland is at our best when we are willing to "risk something BIG for something good," as William Sloane Coffin once prayed. **This Christmas, would you be bold enough to imagine joining us in this holy, risk-taking work by making a**

## year-end gift to Highland?

You are welcome to give in person during any of our services on Sunday, December 24. You may also [give online here](#) or by contacting our financial secretary, Kathleen Gordon, at [kathleen@hbclouisville.org](mailto:kathleen@hbclouisville.org) or at 502-451-3735. If you would like to make a stock gift or have any other questions about donating, please contact Kathleen.

If you would like to hand-deliver a gift to the church office, we will be open December 27-29 from 9:00 AM—3:00 PM. As a reminder, any gifts for the 2023 budget year must be received or postmarked by December 31. Thank you for all the ways you give generously to Highland as we join in the work of God, creating a world where justice and Love are abundant!

We want you to know that your gift deeply matters to us. Your generous and faithful giving to Highland makes good and faithful work possible. Thank you for all the ways you join us in the work of God, creating a world where justice and Love are abundant!

Wishing you an Advent and Christmas season filled with hope, peace, joy, and love beyond imagination.

~ *Mary Alice Birdwhistell* and the  
*Faithful Giving Ministry Group*

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**Merry Christmas from your Highland Baptist Church Staff!**

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Last Wednesday evening, 51 parents, grandparents, and kids gathered to enjoy the Christmas lights and a hot chocolate bar at Brown Park in St. Matthews. It was a cold night filled with warmth of laughter, play, and all the marshmallows and sprinkles a child could ever hope for!



# Christmas Lights and Hot Chocolate



## Advocacy in Frankfort

Last week several congregants traveled to Frankfort to attend the Joint Judiciary Committee hearing on two bills, one connected with gun violence and the other with anti-crime measures. Moms Demand Action and Highland members in attendance wore red to identify with the proposition regarding the gun control bill called the CARR bill (Crisis Aversion and Rights Retention).



## Join us for The Longest Night

December 21 at 6:00 PM  
Highland Baptist Church

A service  
of hope  
and support  
for those  
experiencing  
loss.



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.

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## Calling for a Ceasefire in Gaza

The Alliance of Baptists, of which Highland Baptist Church is a member, serves as a theological home for congregations committed to pursuing God's call to justice and love.

On behalf of the alliance, co-director Reverend Elijah R. Zehyoue, Ph.D., has [called for a ceasefire in Gaza](#) and has invited Alliance members "to find your moral clarity in this moment, learn more about the way of nonviolence, and join us in being a witness to the power of nonviolence as an avenue for seeking God's Beloved Community."

To that end, we invite you to call your members of Congress and urge them to support a ceasefire in Gaza. (If leaving a voice message, please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied.)

### 1. Representative Morgan McGarvey

- Phone number: 202-225-5401
- Message: "I'm calling to urge Representative McGarvey to support [House Resolution 786](#), which calls for an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire in Israel and Palestine. Enough innocent lives have already been lost."

### 2. Senator Mitch McConnell

- **Phone number:** 202-224-2541
- **Message:** "I'm calling to urge Senator McConnell to support an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire in Israel and Palestine. Enough innocent lives have already been lost."

### 3. Senator Rand Paul

- **Phone number:** 202-224-4343
  - **Message:** "I'm calling to urge Senator Paul to support an immediate de-escalation and ceasefire in Israel and Palestine. Enough innocent lives have already been lost."
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# 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>

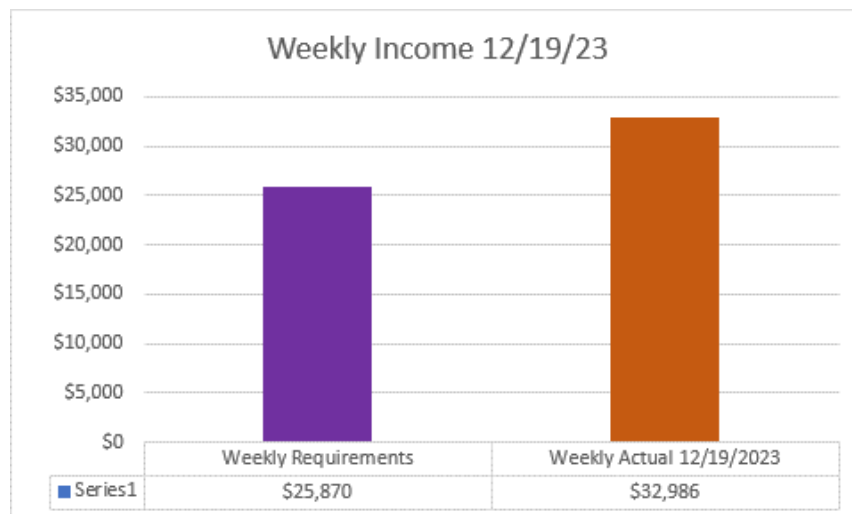
<https://www.youtube.com/@highlandbaptist>

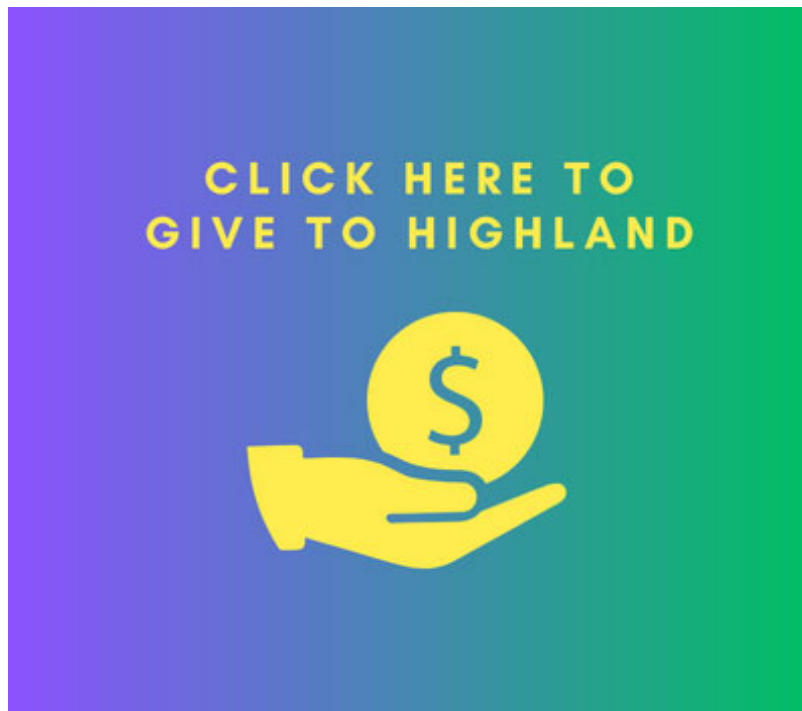
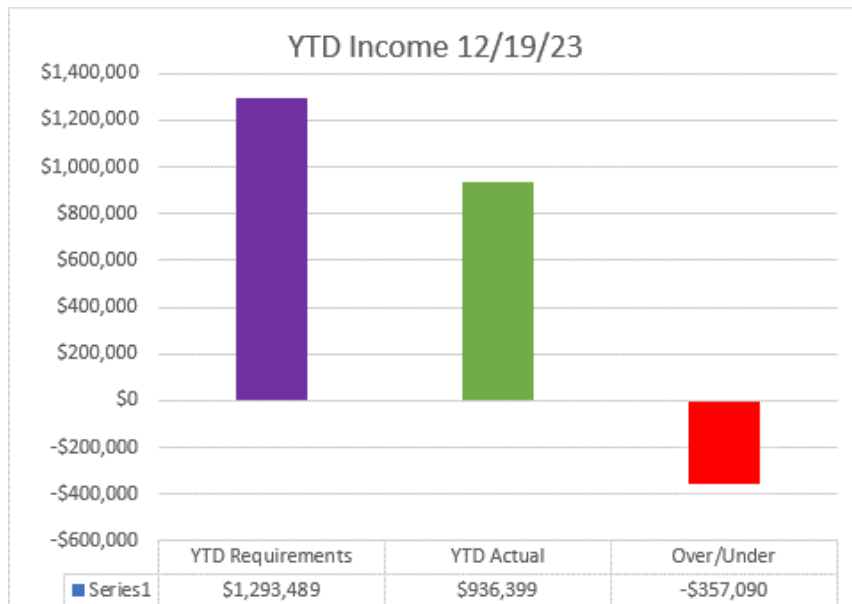
## Friday, 7:00 PM

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

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## 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.

- Deshawn O'Neal, 22, killed November 11
  - Antwan Brame, 50, killed December 2
  - Demonte Cobbs, 45, killed December 2
  - Rashon Tyler Holloway, 28, killed December 8
  - Troy D. Young, 27, killed December 8
  - Jermaine Bishop, 42, killed December 10
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