



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church ***January 17, 2024***

Dear Highland Family,

We write to share an important update with you about how we ended the 2023 fiscal year.

You may remember that in December, we anticipated that end-of-year expenses could significantly exceed our income. We are overjoyed to share that Highland boldly stepped up to the challenge, and in December alone, we received \$367,000 in contributions! We ended the year having received \$1,238,262 for our ministry budget, in addition to \$824,616 for the Sacred Space Campaign. That's over \$2 million dollars for our shared work in creating a world where justice and Love are abundant. Thank you, Highland family, for your faithfulness and generosity!

Our 2023 budget was \$1,345,229, and our final expenses for the year were a bit below that at \$1,294,072. This means that unfortunately, we still ended the year \$55,809 behind our expenses, although this number is not nearly as high as it could have been. Thankfully, we have funds in our reserves to meet this additional need, but we also recognize that this is not a practice that we can sustain in the long-term, particularly as we prepare to take out a loan for our Sacred Space work.

The Ministry Council has named the church finances as an area that needs strategic visioning in the year ahead, both in terms of how we talk about giving as a church and in how we can proactively prepare for 2025. You will be hearing more feedback from the Finance Ministry Group on these topics at the Quarterly Church Conference on Sunday, February 4 at 4:00 PM on Zoom.

Even though we didn't meet our total 2023 expenses, we still begin this year with deep gratitude and high hopes. We knew that this situation was a possibility based on giving trends during our last capital campaign, and just like we paid off those expenses in a healthy and timely manner, we believe that we can do the same again this time. We look forward to continued conversations with

you about the ways in which we give to our shared work of Love at Highland in the year ahead.

With great hope,

Mary Alice Birdwhistell, Pastor
Drew Harston, Finance Ministry Group
Rob Thompson, Faithful Giving Ministry Group



Sacred Space Project Update and a Volunteer Opportunity!

"What's going on in the Sanctuary?" If you're not asking this question, then you might hear

someone else voice it in the coming days. While most of the Sacred Space Project work is related to HVAC systems for the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, other projects have been part of the overall vision since the beginning. Two of those projects are relighting the sanctuary and repainting the sanctuary. Both of those require the use of scaffolding, which requires the removal of all the pews in the sanctuary. The pews are being stored at a warehouse within a mile of the church. Their removal began on Tuesday of this week.



This Thursday (tomorrow!) we're asking that everyone who is capable of moving stacks of chairs to show up between 3:00 and 6:00 PM to help relocate chairs within the building so that we'll have seating in the sanctuary on Sundays. Yes, our worship space will look a bit different for a few weeks on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings, with plywood on the floor and traditional chairs for seating, but it will all be worth it in 6 to 8 weeks when the lighting and painting are complete.

Additionally, we are looking for folks to come at 8:15 AM on Sundays to help set up the remaining 100-150 chairs before the 8:45 service begins. If you can help sometime over the next 6-8 weeks, please [sign up for a date here](#).

Thank you for your patience and your cooperation during these awkward phases of the project work, and thanks for your continued financial support of the Sacred Space Project!

~ Walter McWhorter

Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole

On Sunday, I preached about the internal messages we tell ourselves and the inadvertent impact they have within us. We say things to ourselves that we would never say to anyone else! At least, I know that has been the case for me in my recent journey toward recovery. As I looked around the sanctuary on Sunday, I saw quite a few nods and tears wiped away from your eyes, which tells me that I'm not alone in this struggle.

The reality is that filtering out all the other noises in order to listen with every fiber of our beings to that still, small voice – that voice that calls us “Beloved” - is some of the hardest and yet most important spiritual work you and I can or will ever do. And it takes a lifetime! There's no easy way out, no way to skip or to find shortcuts around it, and no one else can do it for us.

But I believe it's worth it. Because I believe we are worth it. All of God's children are worth it. As Debbie Hoover so beautifully summarized the sermon on Sunday, let's start telling ourselves, “Beloved, you're worth it.” And actually believe it.



If you'd like to continue learning and growing to love yourself as God created you to be, I'd like to invite you to join me for our upcoming Wednesday night class on the book *Loving Our Own Bones: Disability Wisdom and the Spiritual Subversiveness of Knowing Ourselves Whole*.

I deeply appreciated reading this book throughout my own recovery over the past several months and think that the author, Julia Watts Belser, a rabbi, Hebrew scholar, and wheelchair user, has such rich wisdom to share with us. Her writing challenges not only ableism but racism, sexism, and all the other prejudices that are so deeply rooted within us. She writes:

“In this book, I bring disability wisdom into conversation with my own religious tradition, with spiritual practice, with questions of the heart. Diving deep into my own disability experience has led me to unexpected insights as a teacher of Jewish text and tradition. Everything I know about God comes through these disabled bones.”

You are welcome to read the book along with us, but it is not required, the conversation around our tables will be richer because of everyone who participates. To read an excerpt from the book, [visit here](#).

~ Mary Alice Birdwhistell

Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. at Friday Church

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Friday Church will be hosting Duane Nathaniel. He will deliver Mr. King's "I Have A Dream" speech on Friday, January 19 at the 7:00 PM service.



If you have heard Duane deliver this speech before, I'm sure you will want to be there. If you haven't heard him - you will be in for a very moving experience. We hope to see you there.

~ Becky Smith

Children's Camp Registration Opens Tomorrow

2024 SUMMER CAMPS

SAVE THE DATE

Completed
Grades

JUNE 10-14

Music Camp

1st-5th

JUNE 24-27

PassportKids

3rd-5th

JULY 8-11

Discovery Camp

K-2nd

As we turn the page on the new year, summer is just around the corner! Registration for Highland's summer camps for children (completed K-5th grades) will open on Thursday, January 18.

Information about our children's camp offerings for Summer 2024 will be available in this week's *Family Ministry Happenings*, our weekly Thursday e-newsletter for families with children. Reach out to [Megan Fuller](#) for more information on how to subscribe!



Wednesday Night Suppers have resumed! 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 and cancellations 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 January 17: Cold Cut Subs / Potato Salad / Chips / Dessert

Upcoming Menus:

January 24	Chicken Tenders / Tots / Salad / Vegetable Medley / Dessert
January 31	Hamburger Pasta / Salad / Green Beans / Dessert
February 7	Green Gumbo / Rice/ Salad / Dessert

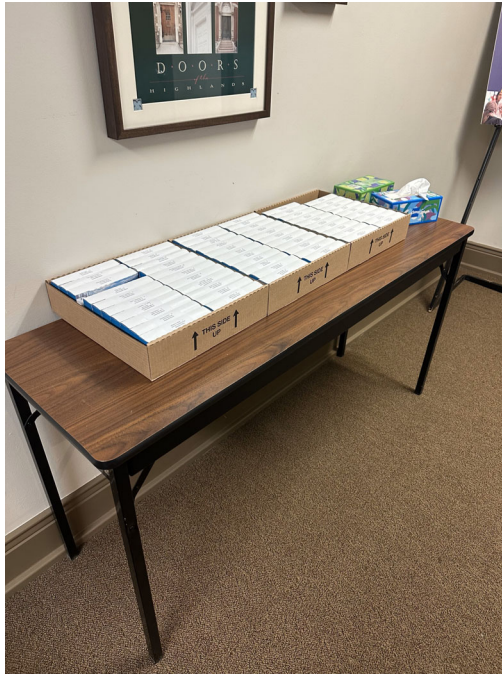


Looking Ahead

- January 17 Cloud of Witness 6-Year Anniversary Evening at 6:15 PM
January 19 MLK's "I Have a Dream" speech by Duane Nathaniel at Friday Church, 7:00 PM
January 28 Highlights Class for Newcomers after 11:15 AM Worship
February 4 Quarterly Church Conference at 4:00 PM via Zoom (please note date change)
February 11 Church-Wide Celebration of *Hard and Holy Work* book release - More Info Soon!
February 13 Cream of the Crop Potluck "Agape" Meal at 12:00 Noon - More Info Soon!
February 14 Ash Wednesday - The Season of Lent Begins
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Offering Envelopes

On behalf of the Finance and Faithful Giving Ministry Groups, I would like to thank you all for your generosity and commitment to Highland Baptist Church. If you requested offering envelopes, they can be found in the hallway leading to the Commons from now until January 31. If they have not been picked up by then, I will mail them to you.



As we move forward into 2024, please remember contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account. They can also be processed using your credit or debit card. Please review your accounts regularly if you have signed up for Highland to automatically draft your contributions. If you find any discrepancies, please feel free to contact me at the church office by phone at 502-451-3735 or by email at Kathleen@hbclouisville.org.

~ Kathleen Gordon

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

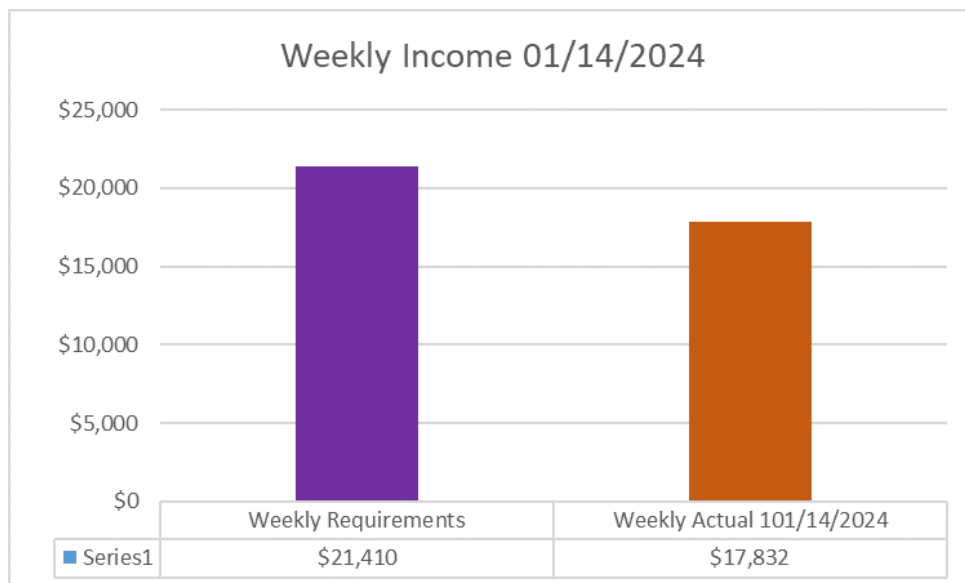
<https://www.facebook.com/hbclouisville.org>

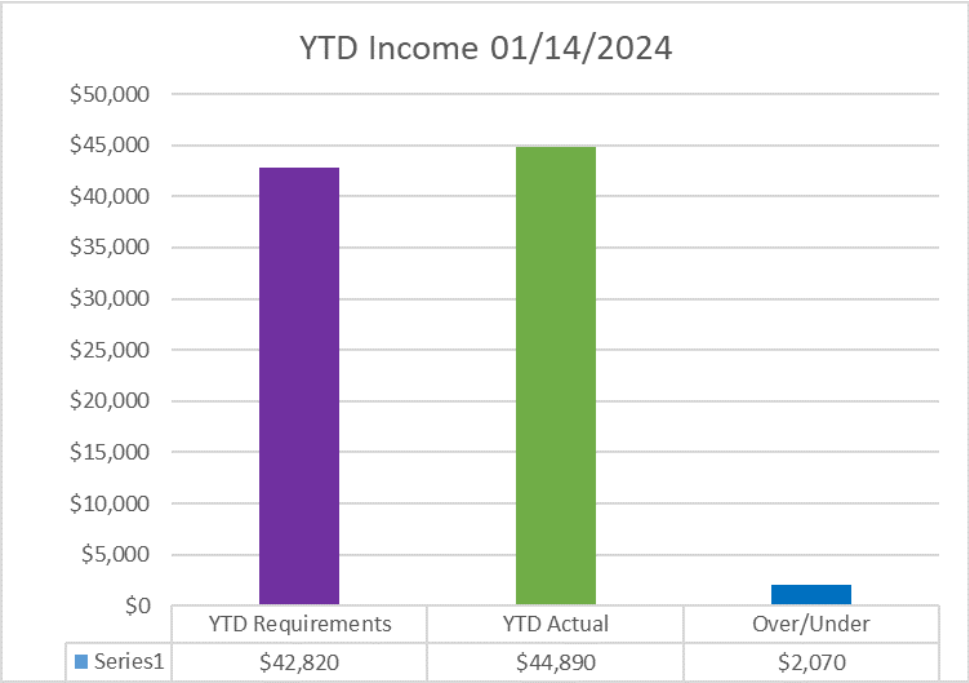
<https://www.youtube.com/@highlandbaptist>

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.

- Christopher Mayes, 30, killed October 15
 - Terrance Edward Mason, 45, killed November 7
 - Caleb Bruce, 19, killed December 6
 - Da’Kia Murrell, 34, killed December 8
 - John Robinson, 23, killed December 14
 - Stepphon Pattrick Garner, 31, killed January 1
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