



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church *July 16, 2024*

Fish and Loaves

On Sunday, I preached on Jesus and the disciples feeding the crowds on the hillside. I don't know about you, but I've always read this as a story of abundance – that with God, there will always be more than enough! It's certainly a story of how God provides, but not at all in the ways you might expect. Because in reality, this is a story about scarcity.



Jesus and the disciples are working under several significant constraints: 1) They are out in a remote place, and there is no food close by, 2) It's getting late, and they're running out of time (and daylight) to prepare any food, and 3) They don't have enough money to pay to feed all these people. However, operating from a [constraint mindset](#), Jesus encourages the disciples to go and see what resources they DO have: five loaves and two fish. And somehow, working with what they do have, they are able to feed everyone, with twelve basketfuls of food leftover.

Highland is no stranger to participating in miracles in our own seasons of scarcity and constraint. For years, we have operated in a landlocked corner of an historic neighborhood with limited

parking and building space and seating in our sanctuary. And these constraints have forced the church to get creative about things like parking spaces with local businesses and building usage by community partners and different weekend worship schedules.

With our ongoing church-wide renovation work and the loan we have now signed for this \$3.8 million project, we are going to have another constraint, and that is on our budget. Last year, we reduced our budget by almost \$100,000 to help with this work, and this year, we will likely need to reduce the budget by at least another \$60,000. There are a few ways that I want to invite you join us in considering how we might respond to this constraint in the days ahead:

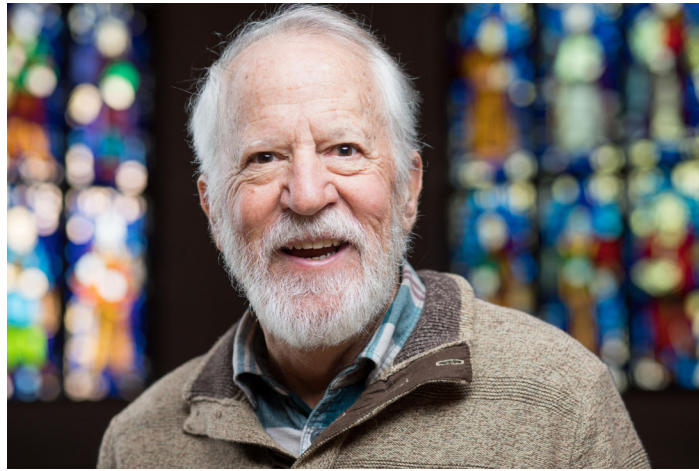
1. Like the people on the hillside that day, how can you look in your satchels and see what you can share with Highland in this season? If you believe in what God is doing among us, how can you participate with us in this unfolding miracle? If you've never given financially to the budget before – we need you. If you do give to the budget, could you also make a commitment to our Sacred Space renovation? If you're already giving to both, do you have any bandwidth to give for a longer length of time? This is a season when Highland truly needs all hands on deck!
2. We're going to need to get creative, so join us in thinking about what we can do differently in response to this constraint in the coming years. What are things staff have done previously that we need volunteers to start doing? What are some of the things we may need to stop doing altogether, in order to do the most important things God is calling us to do?
3. We're going to need to trust God instead of our resources, which is hard for us to do as privileged people. Like the disciples who couldn't pay to feed all those people on the hillside, we probably aren't going to be able to pay for everything we'd like to do as we begin to budget for 2025. I don't want us to have a "pie in the sky" attitude that we can operate from a budget that is bigger than what we can actually afford in this season – because that is not faithful, responsible, or wise for any of us. Instead, I want us to honestly name this constraint, and then ask the Spirit to guide our work with what we **DO** have. And I want us to trust that what we do have – what we can do – and ultimately what God can do in and among us is always enough.

This is what Jesus and the disciples do in Mark 6. When Jesus sees the beautiful constraint of five loaves and two fish, he and the disciples get creative with what they have and trust God to provide. And by the Spirit's work within them, "all ate and were filled." May we go and do likewise, Highland, and may there be no end to the miracles unfolding in our midst.

~ Mary Alice Birdwhistell

You can listen to Mary Alice's full sermon from Sunday [here](#).

Celebrating Fred Bogert



As we announced last week, Fred Bogert is concluding his time on staff at Highland. We are so grateful for the incredible gifts that Fred has brought to Friday Church for over a decade and for his deep passion and commitment to this space in our community. Through Fred's leadership, we have built relationships with community partners from across the city of Louisville, and he's done this with such creativity, insight, and love for the Friday Church community. He will be dearly missed! **Please join us Friday, July 26, starting at 6:30 PM for a celebration of Fred's ministry over the last decade with us at Friday Church.**

Renee's Sabbatical Reflection

Beloved Highland,

What a gift it is to be back with you after a season away of renewal and Sabbath-keeping! I'm so thankful for your warm welcome back, hugs, cards, and notes as I find my footing in the daily rhythms of Highland life. So many of you have asked about my Sabbatical and what shape it took, for as we know plans are guidelines, and then there is the actual lived experience. In my mind, I divided the time by months.



April was a month of remembering. It became a time of remembering rest, remembering what brings me joy, remembering what it is like to move and be with a freedom that modern life doesn't afford often, if ever. It looked like journaling every morning on my sunporch, listening to the birds sing, noticing spring springing in my backyard, naps, reading, and reconnecting with my family in everyday ways like watching the solar eclipse and going on a dinner date with Tyler.



May was a month of replenishing. It became a time to focus on what parts of me needed more attention and care, how to care for my body, and like the Cole Arthur Riley quote that grounded my entire leave, how to “recall the ground” right in front of me. It meant shifting some of my original plans to more everyday practices that could sustain me for the long-haul. It meant volunteering at Eliza's school during teacher appreciation week. It meant more journaling and more sunporch sitting and watching more flower blooms emerging. It meant trying to save a nest of baby bunnies born in our herb garden from our eager beagle, Mazie. It meant ice cream celebrations on the last day of school, and with the help of a neighbor, finally finishing a puzzle I'd been working on for a very long time.



June was a month of rising. It became a month of practicing what I'd learned, anticipating my return to Highland, trying to finish a few things on that original planned to-do list, and giving grace when that to-do list didn't quite get conquered. There are fewer images of this season, because it became more active and the days more full.

I hope you'll see evidence of my rest, my renewal, my presence in the moment as we move into this season together. Thank you, Highland, for the gift of time, for the ability to reconnect with God, myself and my family, and for the opportunity to find again a place of grounded wholeness that is life-transforming.

With deepest gratitude,

~ Renee Purtlebaugh

Congregational Votes on July 28

On Sunday, July 28, we will have a ballot vote on three items of business needing church approval:

- The [Job Description for the Associate Pastor of Ministry Coordination and Formation](#) was approved unanimously by the Ministry Council last week. Since this position and the job description was already discussed in last month's QCC, we will not have any formal discussion on July 28. However, here are [some Q&A's](#) that were discussed in the QCC if you weren't able to attend. Additionally, representatives from Personnel and Ministry Council will be available before and after worship on July 28 to answer any questions and/or to receive any further feedback you'd like to share.
- Ministry Council has also voted to nominate the following individuals to serve on the search committee for the Associate Pastor position:
 - Tanya Cornely (chair)
 - Troy Burden (vice-chair)
 - Robert Davis
 - Tracy Holladay
 - Margaret Pennington
 - Carol Harston (consultant/ex-officio)
 - Mary Alice Birdwhistell (ex-officio)

- The following individuals have been nominated by the church and asked by outgoing deacon leadership to serve as deacons. They are sharing their faith stories in worship throughout the summer, and brief bios on each candidate can be found in the newsletter each week. Upon church approval, they will be ordained on Sunday evening, August 25 and begin serving as deacons on September 1: Greg Bunten, Bruce Carroll, Roy Fuller, Kelly Garrett, Noelle Gulden, Bonnie Lindsay, Corey Moran, Genene Nisbet, Gene Streible, Charlie Suer, and David Swim.

Welcome to Highland's New Organist and Music Associate



After a several month-long nationwide search, we are pleased to announce that Joseph Parr has accepted our offer to be the new Organist and Music Associate. Joseph has finished his undergrad degree in organ performance from Stetson University in Florida studying under Dr. Boyd Jones, formerly a Professor at Southern Seminary. In August he will begin graduate work at Indiana University where he will pursue a Master of Music in Organ Performance as well as a Master of Music in Sacred Music. Joseph's anticipated start date is August 28. Welcome to Highland, Joseph!

~ Paul Henderson

Deacon Nominees

Over the course of the next several weeks, we will have the opportunity in worship to hear from those who have been nominated to serve as deacons this coming year as they share their faith stories. In addition, we will learn more about them each week in the newsletter.

We are excited about the gifts that each of these individuals bring and grateful for their willingness to serve in this capacity. We will have the chance to vote on these folks later this month.



BRUCE CARROLL

I was raised Catholic in rural southern Indiana, a few miles outside of New Albany. With cornfields and woods nearby I developed a love for nature as a place closer to God, which I still hold today. I left the Catholic church years ago to search for another house of worship that better fit my understanding of our Lord's love for everyone.

On March 10, 2012 I met Virenee Chatmon who would become the love of my life. She invited me to attend her place of worship, Highland Baptist Church. Since she was/is a member of the church choir I had to sit in a pew by myself. Being a new face in the sanctuary, church members began to introduce themselves. Time passed and I realized Highland would be a good place for me to worship; it truly is a thinking, feeling, healing community of faith that advocates God's love for everyone.

Although I had been baptized as an infant I decided to be baptized again in my new community of faith. On November 24th of 2012 Virenee and I were married in our church. Then on August 30th of 2015 I was ordained as a deacon. I had found my spiritual home, thanks be to God.



CHARLIE SUER

Erin and I first visited Highland on Pentecost, 2018, which was Nina's last Sunday. As a result, we have experienced very few moments in the past six years where Highland was not in transition of some sort. We came to Highland because it was progressive and affirming. But we found that Highland was so much more: it is a thriving community that always challenges and pushes and supports each other through changes. Such changes include ministerial and staff changes, worship form and logistics changes for various reasons, building upgrades and renovations, the growth of people of all ages and walks of life, and so many more.

Some churches and communities thrive on stability and consistency, but I am so proud to be a part of a church that embraces change, loves everyone for all the wonderful diverse gifts that they bring, and welcomes every single human being who walks through our doors. I am a member of the Good Time Gospel Hour, I take down walls in Fellowship Hall once a month, and I served on and chaired the Finance Ministry Group. I am grateful to continue my service to Highland as a deacon.



If you haven't yet had an opportunity to attend a Party with Your Pastors, we hope you will sign up for the next one coming up on July 21! These gatherings are a fun and relaxed way to meet new people – maybe you've seen them in the pews but you've never met them before – and to get to know our pastors in a more personal way, too. We create space for intentional dialogue with one another so that it's not just "small talk," and don't worry, we've got great questions to spark the conversation, too!



You can RSVP for our upcoming Party with Your Pastors at Justin and Abby Sizemore's house on Sunday, July 21 from 4:00-5:30 PM [here](#). If you've already attended before, you're welcome to join us for another party this year to connect with new people from across the Highland family.

Preschool Play Date



Cream of the Crop News

July 25 – Tour of the Kentucky Derby Museum

We look forward to seeing those of you who are visiting the Kentucky Derby Museum with us. We will meet at 10:00 AM at the museum, located at 704 Central Avenue (parking available in the Red Lot).

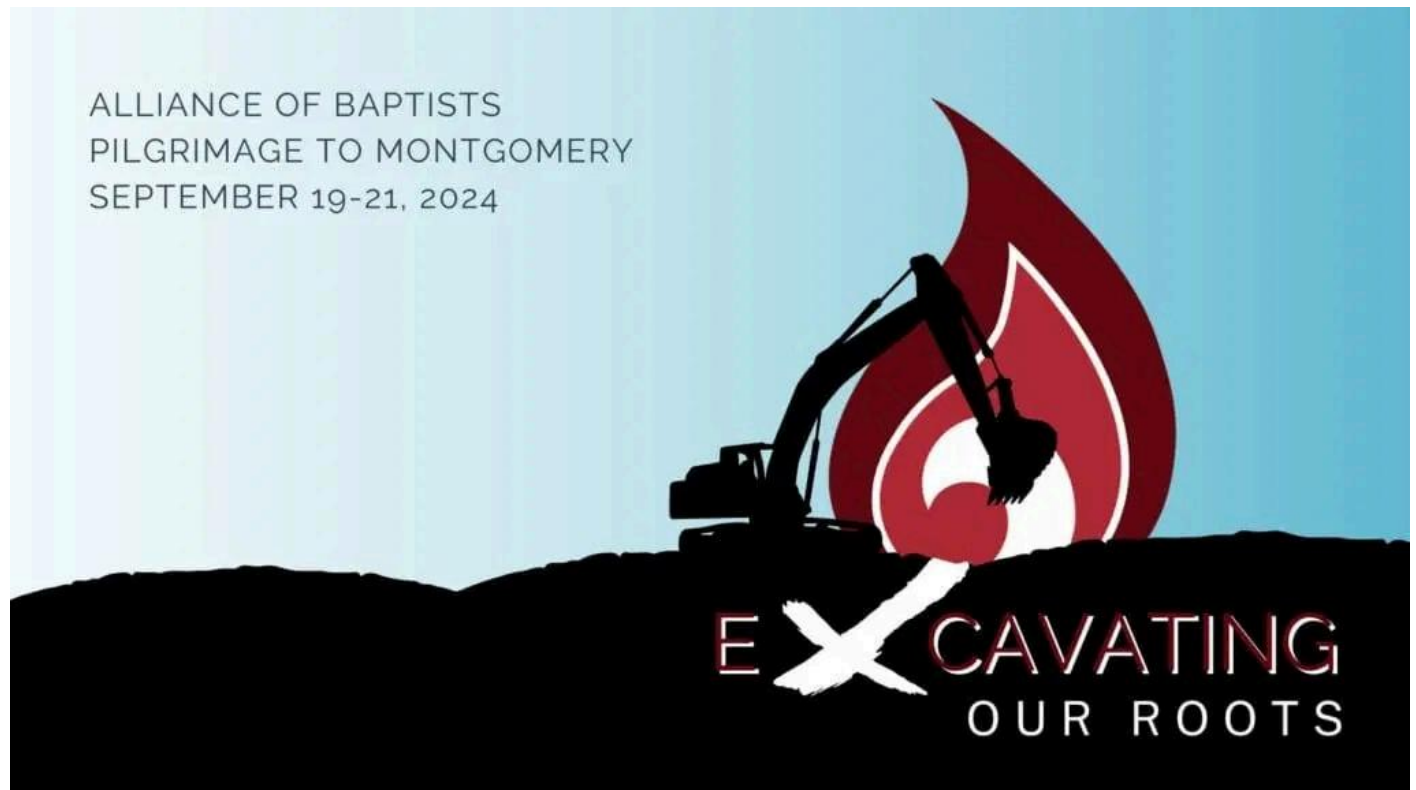
- 10:10 The Greatest Race, 18-minute film in the Great Hall
- 10:30 Group historic walking tour and guided track visit of Churchill Downs
- 11:00 Group self-guided museum and gift shop time; self-guided access to two floors of permanent, specialty and interactive exhibits; browsing in the museum stable area.

After our tour, we will have lunch at the historic Wagner's Pharmacy.

August 13 – Potluck Luncheon at 12:00 Noon with entertainment by Emmanuel Maize and Paul Henderson from the American Songbook repertoire

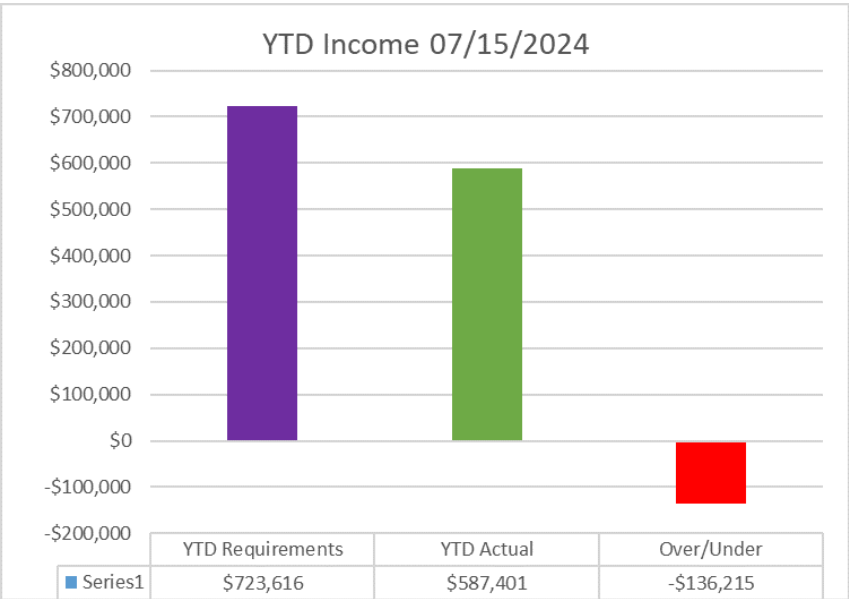
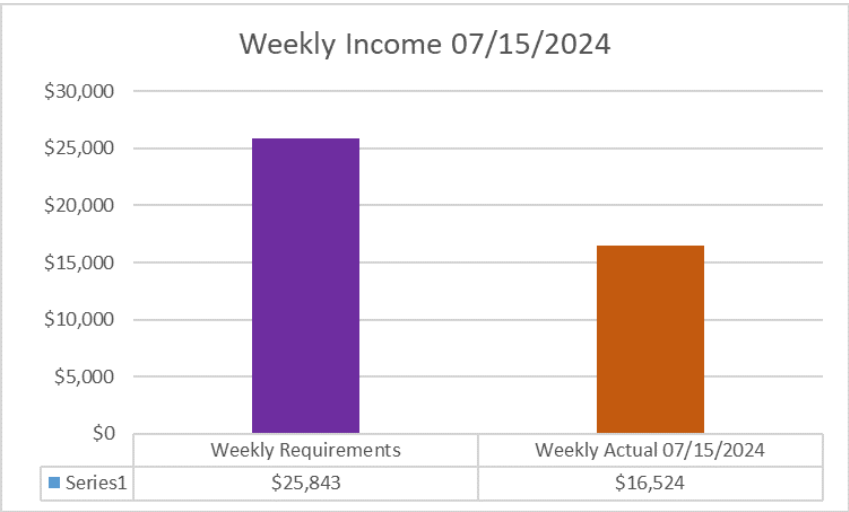
Shredded pork taco bar. Sort school supplies we will collect through July.

Excavating our Roots: Pilgrimage to Montgomery, September 19-21



If you missed HBC's first pilgrimage to Alabama in 2021, another opportunity to visit the Legacy Sites of the Equal Justice Initiative is being offered by the Alliance of Baptists September 19-21. There are three legacy sites: The Legacy Museum, The National Memorial for Peace and Justice (a memorial dedicated to victims of racial terror and lynchings), and the new Freedom Garden Sculpture Park. For more information and to register, go to [Excavating Our Roots 2024 - Alliance of Baptists](#). You may also contact [Mary Burks](#) or phone her at 502-419-3552. In addition to the site visits, the Alliance will offer education and inspiration for being anti-racist.

Financial Reports



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



Looking Ahead

July 21	Larry Gray, Guest Proclaimer; Young Adult Lunch (following worship); Party with your Pastors (Sizemore House, 4:00-5:30 PM)
July 25	Senior Adult Tour of the Kentucky Derby Museum
August 13	Senior Adult Luncheon with Emmanuel Maize and Paul Henderson (12:00 Noon)
August 18	Gather 'Round Sunday
August 21	Wednesday Activities Return
Sept. 15	Cole Arthur Riley visits Highland on Sunday Evening

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>

**Streaming
Worship
Links**



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.

- Ali Almasri, 16, killed July 7
 - Renata Veljacic, 29, killed July 8
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