



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church September 10, 2024

Cole Arthur Riley at Highland Sunday Evening, September 15, 6:00 PM

“Did you know that birds do not land because they are tired? It is a remembrance. They know and have always known that their liberation depends on their ability to recall the ground.” - Cole Arthur Riley, *This Here Flesh*



I wonder... what it means to stop and rest, yet not because I am tired?

I wonder... what it means to remember?

I wonder... what it means to recall the ground?

I wonder... what it means to be liberated by remembering and recalling said ground?

These wonderings, among others, came to mind for me as I read Cole Arthur Riley's brilliant work, *This Here Flesh*, particularly her exploration of the idea of "place" in Chapter 2. The opening story (about birds finding their way from dwelling underground to allowing their wings to catch the wind in flight) anchors the chapter, and the final sentences of the story—the quote above—drew me in and just would not let me go.

These words turned again and again through my mind until I realized they were an invitation – to recall the ground, to remember, to replenish, to rise. I texted my colleagues as the words continued to settle into my spirit. What if we invited Cole Arthur Riley to Highland? How might her perspective on embodiment, rest, and collective care speak into our longing to be a people of both contemplation and action in 2024? As a primarily white congregation, how do we approach these topics of place, remembering, replenishing, and recollection. Her words were grounding my clergy renewal leave plans and practices; what if her words could ground our congregation in our collective work too?

With their enthusiastic "Yes!" I reached out to Cole Arthur Riley's team filled with curiosity and what ifs. To my joy, the reply was quick, gracious, and named, "Cole would certainly be interested in offering something like this."

And so this Sunday evening—exactly 18 months to the day after pressing submit on that website inquiry form—Cole Arthur Riley will make her way to Louisville, Kentucky to share with our congregation and our community what it means to recall the ground in this time and place.

I hope you will join us! There's still time to register if you haven't already. Use [this link](#) to sign up and share with your friends. It's an opportunity you will not want to miss. Let's fill the sanctuary to its capacity as we learn, grow, and discover what God might reveal to us through Cole Arthur Riley's wisdom.

~ Renee Purtlebaugh



Discovering the Unshakable

A question I've been asking myself and others as we approach the fall is, how can we stay spiritually grounded in the midst of the tenuous election season? How do we faithfully engage with the world and yet not be overcome by all that is happening in the world? I'm reminded of the words of Harry Emerson Fosdick on the cusp of the Cold War: "The highest use of a shaken time is to **discover the unshakable.**" How might we be mindful to ground ourselves in the steadfast love of the Holy One, even and especially as we continue to work for change and liberation in God's world?

I'm planning a worship series based on the lectionary readings from the Psalms for September 22-October 6. These readings remind us that "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in

times of trouble.” They ground us in the unshakable, calling us to be like “trees planted by streams of water...whose leaves do not wither.”

To kick off this worship series, we will have the privilege of hearing from our Honor Deacons. On Sunday, September 22, I will interview Procter Eubank, Nancy Goodhue, Jim Hawkins, and Reece Little as our sermon time in worship. Procter, Nancy, Jim, and Reece have each experienced and discovered ways in their own spiritual journeys to stay grounded both in tumultuous seasons in our world and in their lives. What a gift that we can receive from their deep wells of wisdom and spiritual insight they share with us!

~ *Mary Alice Birdwhistell*

QCC on September 22

Save the date for our upcoming Quarterly Church Conference on Sunday, September 22 at 4:00 PM on Zoom. You will hear updates on our budget and stewardship season, the Sacred Space Campaign and Renovation, our upcoming work with the Center for Congregational Health, the formation of our strategic planning team, and a proposal from Ministry Council that Highland join the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. A full agenda will be emailed, along with a Zoom link, next week.

~ *Mary Alice Birdwhistell*



Louisville Pride 2024 Thoughts from Sally Evans

A couple of weeks ago in worship, Rev. Sally Evans shared a justice moment with the church about Louisville Pride and what it means to find a safe space. Here are the words she shared with us:

“Love the sinner, hate the sin. Many of us who identify as LGBTQ+ in this room hold memories of this mantra being preached, written in familiar handwriting, held up on a sign or even whispered in prayer. We had to wrestle with the invasive vines of this false binary, wrapping itself around whatever desire or relationship was trying to grow... and that God loved the part of us that wasn’t being gay? This disembodied theology has divided our being into broken parts and fractured the church into disputing pieces. Historically, it has built a fence that effectively kept queer folks from

full participation in church life, on the outside looking in.

Our epistle text today from James begins with 'Every good and perfect gift is from above..'

Here at Highland, I have experienced a deeper level of blessed integration of who I am and who I love. To see this identity as... **gift**. As our pastor often says, we are a more whole & beautiful community because of each of our LGBTQ+ siblings. Indeed I would add, we help others in the Body of Christ see a more complete picture of who God is.

The theme for Louisville Pride this year is Homecoming. It is imperative that those in the queer community know they don't have to choose between being gay and Christian, that they too have a spiritual home... a sense of belonging in a safe, welcoming community of faith."

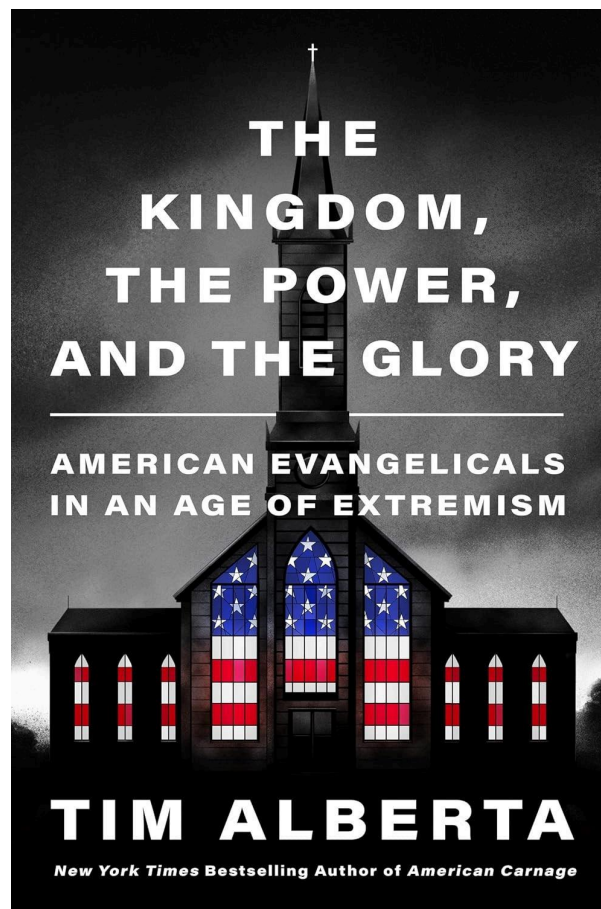
A promotional poster for the Louisville Pride Festival. At the top and bottom are horizontal bars with six colored segments: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. The word "LOUISVILLE" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, arched over the word "PRIDE". The word "PRIDE" is written in large, bold, sans-serif letters, with each letter colored to match the rainbow spectrum: P (red), R (orange), I (yellow), D (green), I (blue), E (purple). Below this, the event details are listed: "SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 14TH 11 AM - 10 PM" on the left, a rainbow-colored logo of a cross with a circle in the center in the middle, and "VISIT HIGHLAND'S BOOTH IN FRONT OF MID-CITY MALL" on the right. At the bottom, the text "MAKE YOUR OWN BUTTONS" is in pink, followed by a small purple ampersand, and "RECEIVE A GLITTER BLESSING" is in blue. To the left of the bottom text is a yellow starburst icon, and to the right is a circular transgender flag icon.

The Louisville Pride Festival is this Saturday from 11am-10pm. We would love to have Highland folks show up for this event. Highland's booth is fully staffed by volunteers, please stop by and jump in if you are able! We will see you on Saturday!

~ Sally Evans and Justin Sizemore

Christian Nationalism: Reading and Learning Together

As many of us do, I'm always paying attention to what others are reading and adding books to my list to check-out from the library or purchase. When several people mention a particular book to me, I usually bump it up the list. That's exactly what happened earlier this year when a pastor friend recommended the book *The Kingdom, The Power, and The Glory: American Evangelicalism in an Age of Extremism* by Tim Alberta as one of the most insightful and important reads on what is happening in the evangelical Church today. The next week, Robert Davis shared that he was reading it, too. Then Robin Ramsay Lee mentioned it at lunch one day. I purchased the book that day, and it's come up in countless conversations ever since.



Alberta writes from his perspective as a political journalist, a practicing Christian, and the son of an evangelical pastor. After the unexpected death of his father in 2019, Alberta expected to receive condolences and love from his father's congregation at the funeral. Instead, person after person offered him critical remarks about his recent political writing. "In our house of worship," he writes, "people were taunting me about politics as I tried to mourn my father."

After that experience, he sets out to interview pastors, churches, and organizations across the

country in order to piece together what he believes is the foundational problem in evangelicalism. “America,” one pastor says to him. “Too many of them worship America.”

As *Publishers Weekly* has shared, “Alberta adeptly illustrates how Christian nationalism is 'destroying the evangelical church' on a big-picture level, as well as how it's justified individually, framed scripturally, and blared over pulpits...While he suggests a 'true Christianity' might still be salvageable, Alberta's own evidence reveals how deep the rot has already spread. It's an incisive, unsparing look at a movement in crisis.”

On October 16, 23, and 30, Bruce Maples, Robert Davis, and I will be co-leading a Wednesday night series on Christian Nationalism and will facilitate discussion around excerpts from Alberta's book. While reading the book in advance is not necessary, we wanted to give you plenty of time to join us in reading before the conversation if you're interested. If you're like me, you might consider bumping this book up your list. It offers significant insight into this election season and awakens all of us to the dangers of marrying our love of “God” and “country.”

~ *Mary Alice Birdwhistell*

Young Adult Lunch



SEPT. 15TH, OCT. 20TH,
NOV. 10TH

Young Adults, those of you between the ages of 18 and 35, are invited to join us for lunch! We'll gather in the Commons after 11:15 Worship then head to a local restaurant. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a meal, engage in meaningful conversations, and strengthen community bonds. We hope to see you there!

Worship Care Volunteer Training Sessions

3 Sessions Offered:

September 15

10:00 AM
&
12:30 PM

September 22

10:00 AM

Whether this is your first time to serve or you're a returning volunteer, attending one of the offered training sessions is required.



Children's Commons

Wednesday Night Fellowship Dinners



Meal costs are \$10 per person, \$5 for children, with a maximum of \$25 per family. We encourage you to take advantage of this great opportunity for intergenerational fellowship! **We are still in**

need of *one* more person each week to help dry dishes. Volunteers serve one week per month. Contact [Kathy Belcher](#) if you can help.

It is important that we have accurate numbers of folks who plan to attend each week. Please make your reservations by Monday at 12:00 Noon for that week's meal. You can either make standing reservations or make them weekly by emailing [Kathleen Gordon](#) or calling her at the church office, 502-451-3735.

September Menus:

September 11: Meatloaf / Mashed Potatoes / Roasted Vegetables / Mixed Green Salad / Rolls / Dessert

September 18: Lasagna / Steamed Vegetables / Mixed Green Salad / Bread Sticks / Dessert

September 25: Taco Bar / Rice / Black Beans / Chips, Salsa, and Guacamole / Dessert

Lois Anderson Celebrates 100th Birthday September 12!



Jean Jane's Baptist Women celebrated with Lois Anderson, former Highland member, on Saturday at her new home in Stanford, KY. Lois lives with her daughter, Linda Gray, along with Mitch and Eva.

SENIOR ADULT SPONSORED RETREAT

SEPTEMBER 26, 2024
9:30 AM-3:30 PM

**Living Beautifully with
Uncertainty and Change:
Pema Chödrön and
the 3 Commitments**



Pema Chödrön, an 87-year-old American Buddhist nun, lives and teaches in Nova Scotia. She wonders, “How can we relax and have a genuine, passionate relationship with the fundamental uncertainty, the groundlessness, of being human?...Discomfort arises from all of our efforts to put ground under our feet, to realize our dream of constant okayness...When we embrace the groundlessness of our situation and relax into its dynamic quality, that’s called awakening to our true nature, to our fundamental goodness.”

Retreat attenders will look to Pema Chödrön’s teaching about the three commitments that lead to a deep experience of freedom. We will also consider a few Christian theologians who affirm our groundedness in God. Join us on this experience of collective wondering, tangible practice, and mutual efforts to embrace human groundlessness while loving a grounded God.



Rev. Dr. Lauren Jones Mayfield and Rev. Dr. Tyler D. Mayfield will co-lead the retreat. Lauren serves as the Interim Director of Field Education at Louisville Seminary, where Tyler also works as the Interim Dean and Professor of Old Testament.

We will meet at the Copperfield Subdivision Clubhouse, 406 Wickfield Drive. If you prefer van transportation, meet in the church parking lot at 8:45 AM. The cost is \$35, which includes lunch. Call the church at 502-451-3735 or email [Paul Henderson](mailto:Paul.Henderson) to SIGN UP BY SEPTEMBER 18 and let him know if you'd like a copy of Chödrön's book.

Thank You, Wall Volunteers!



Seeking volunteers!
Sign up today to move
the fellowship hall walls
one Sunday per month.

Reach out to
Cheryl@hbclouisville.org
to volunteer.

A special thank you to Bruce Carroll, who has volunteered for over 10 years, moving the fellowship hall walls on a monthly basis.



[Link for Tickets and More Information Here](#)



- Sept. 14 Louisville Pride, 11:00 AM-10:00 PM
- Sept. 15 Worship Care Volunteer Training Sessions, 10:00 AM and 12:30 PM
- Sept. 15 Young Adult Lunch, 12:30 PM
- Sept. 15 Cole Arthur Riley visits Highland on Sunday Evening, 6:00 PM (registration required)
- Sept. 22 Worship Care Volunteer Training Session, 10:00 AM
- Sept. 22 Quarterly Church Conference, 4:00 PM (Zoom)
- Sept. 26 Senior Adult Sponsored Retreat, Copperfield Sub. Clubhouse, 9:30 AM-3:30 PM

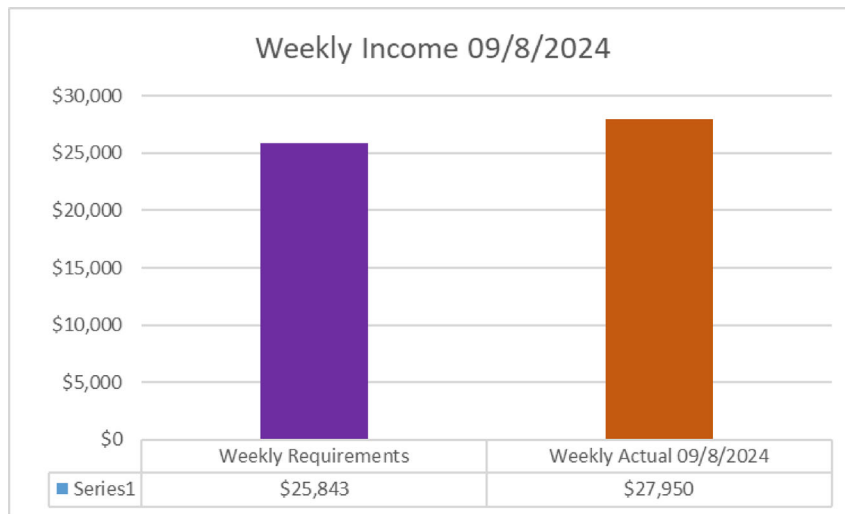
- October 4-6 "Unstructured" Women's Retreat - contact [Ginger Miller](#) if interested.
- October 13 Empty Bowls 2024, Highlands Community Ministries, 4:30-7:00 PM
- October 16 Wednesday Night Series: Christian Nationalism

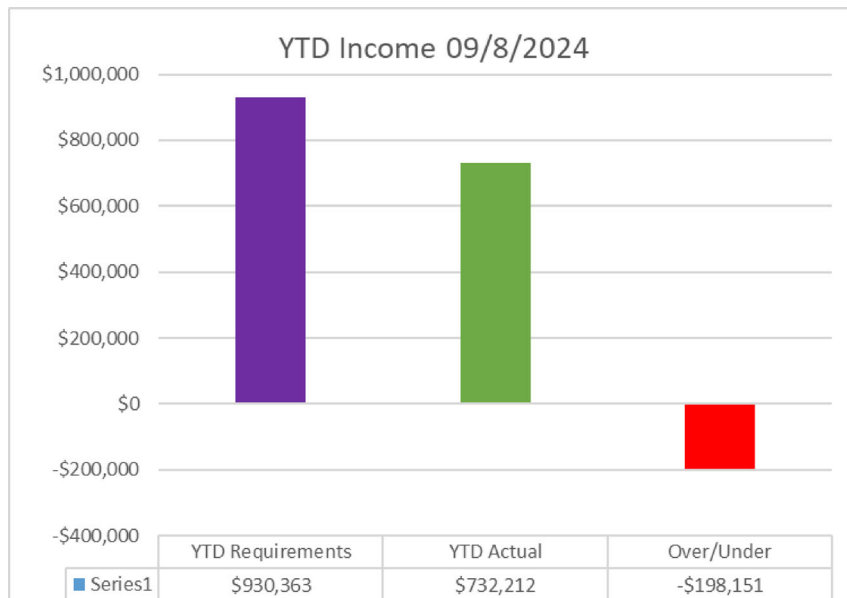
Sunday, 10:15 AM
<https://www.facebook.com/hbclouisville.org>
<https://www.youtube.com/@highlandbaptist>
Friday, 7:00 PM
<https://www.facebook.com/hbclouisville.org>



[Click Here for Church Signup Links](#)

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.**



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.

- Kevin Saunders, 32, killed August 28
 - Justin Wells, 33, killed September 1
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