



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church September 17, 2024

Our Evening with Cole Arthur Riley



“What is the cost of a disembodied life? What is at stake?
No less than our full and collective liberation.”

~ *Cole Arthur Riley,*
speaking at Highland on September 15

For all who made this brilliant evening come to life, we give thanks! For our office staff who immersed themselves in coordination, registration, communication, and setup. For Kim Fritsci who organized greeters to serve alongside her: Kathy Belcher, Carolyn Downey, Joey Eubank, Roz Heinz, and Ginger Miller. For members of the anti-racism team who tidied up our building between worship and the event: Christy Chesnut, Roz Heinz, Kristin Morris, and Vicki Runnion. For Sally Evans who coordinated every detail with Carmichael’s Booksellers. For the ministry staff who

showed up in every way. For Gary Waller who ran the sound system for a second time in one day. For Bill Campbell who captured beautiful photos of our event. To the Lilly Endowment, Inc. for selecting our congregation to receive a grant making it possible to host such a relevant voice of wisdom and wonder for this time and place. For each of you, who came with open minds and hearts to listen. For Cole Arthur Riley, whose depth of wisdom, vulnerability, strength, and heart shone so brilliantly as she spoke words of wisdom and wonder. For God, who has gifted us not only with minds, but also with bodies-that we might inhabit them fully with all their practical limits and infinite possibilities. For all of this we say, thanks be to God!

~ Renee Purtlebaugh



Around Highland
on September 15



QCC on September 22

Save the date for our upcoming Quarterly Church Conference this 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, later this week.

~ Mary Alice Birdwhistell

131 and Still Not Done, Highland's Faithful Giving Season Begins!



As we enter our time of pledging for our 2025 Ministry budget of \$1.3 million and ongoing pledging/giving toward our Sacred Space campaign we invite you to join us in celebration of our heritage. For over 130 years Highland Baptist Church has been a staple of the community of the Highlands and beyond. As we celebrate our 131st year as a church and a congregation, we look for new ways to build on that legacy. One critical part of that legacy is the generosity of the congregation in allowing Highland to fulfill its ministry. We strive to continue this life changing work!

As you know, we have two ongoing financial needs. First, we hope that you will consider how you are able to provide financial support for the ministries of Highland Baptist Church and make a

pledge to the 2025 Ministry Fund.

Second, we continue the Sacred Space campaign that was started two years ago to ensure our Sacred Space remains welcoming and usable for current and future generations. With the physical work finishing up, we still have financial work to do to support the new HVAC system. The very generous gifts we have received so far have given us much of the funds necessary, though we still need approximately \$900,000 in gifts/pledges. At present, we are paying almost **\$550 a day on our loans**. Every dollar given now helps decrease that expense. During this giving season, we hope you will consider whether you are able to make a new, or increase your current, commitment to the Sacred Space campaign.

In the coming weeks, you will hear more about pledging for 2025. You will receive pledge cards in the mail. We hope you will prayerfully consider how to participate in this moment - how you can support our church to build upon the best parts of our 131 years of community, activism, inclusion, and Christ-lead love that Highland Baptist Church has brought to our congregation, to Louisville, and beyond.

Thank you,

Faithful Giving Ministry Group

Rob Thompson - Chair, Kelly Garrett, Jim Hawkins
Tracy Holladay, Michelle West, Renee Purtlebaugh, Staff Liaison

Discovering the Unshakable: A Three-Part Worship Series

In 1952, Harry Emerson Fosdick gave a series of lectures at the Pacific School of Religion called "A Faith for Tough Times." That year in the State of the Union Address, President Truman warned Americans that we were "moving through a perilous time" at the threshold of the Cold War, and by the end of the year, the U.S. had tested our first thermonuclear bomb in the Pacific.

I have often heard Fosdick's lectures referenced for their depth of spiritual wisdom during such a tumultuous time in our country, but I've never come across a copy of them. However, this week I discovered a hidden gem: [audio recordings of his lecture series available online](#). As I've been listening to such rich history, I am amazed at how Fosdick's words in 1952 transcend time and seem to speak directly to us in 2024, almost 75 years later.

Fosdick says, "The hydrogen bomb makes everything seem perishable...But can it be that life is not all flux? Is there something else here – abiding, everlasting? That question goes to the heart of

our faith. What does life mean in a mess of a world like this?

Christian faith maintains its assurance, despite the world's disorder, by centering its attention on something else – not fast nor noisy but quiet, unobtrusive, inconspicuous, and vital...The highest use of a shaken time is to discover the unshakable. When everything that can totter is staggering, then is the time to get your eyes on what stands firm.”



This week, we begin a 3-part worship series called “Discovering the Unshakable” inspired by Fosdick’s lectures and the wisdom of the Psalms. To kick off this series, we have the privilege of hearing from our Honor Deacons. This Sunday, September 22, I will be interviewing Procter Eubank, Nancy Goodhue, Jim Hawkins, and Reece Little in worship. Over the years, Procter, Nancy, Jim, and Reece have each experienced and discovered ways to stay spiritually grounded in the midst of challenging seasons in our world and in their own lives. What a gift that we can receive from the deep wells of wisdom and spiritual insight they will share with us. Believe me, you won’t want to miss hearing from them!

~ Mary Alice Birdwhistell

Louisville Pride 2024



Pride Booth

SEPTEMBER 14



On behalf of the True Colors Ministry Group, we want to express a huge THANK YOU to all our booth volunteers and Highland folx who came out to support the Louisville Pride Festival this past Saturday! While working the booth, I had several folx stop and say how thankful they were to see churches showing up and supporting the LGBTQ+ community. It really was a wonderful day connecting with our community and showing that God's love is expansive and inclusive. Thanks again for making Louisville Pride such an amazing event this past weekend.

~ Justin Sizemore

Save the Date: Two Church-Wide Sessions with the Center for Congregational Health on Sunday, October 20

On Sunday, October 20, we will be shifting our Sunday morning schedule in order to welcome the Center for Congregational Health and begin our strategic planning process together. There will be no 8:45 AM worship service that morning and no regular adult Bible studies. From 9:30 – 11:00 AM, all adults will meet in the Fellowship Hall for Part 1 of our congregational listening session. We will break for worship at 11:15 and lunch, and then you're invited to join us back in the Fellowship Hall for Part 2 from 2:30-4:00 PM. More details will be available as we finalize our Strategic Planning Team and can begin preparing for the weekend with them. Whether you have called Highland home for many years or are new to Highland, you have an important voice in this process, and we hope you'll plan to join us for these important conversations together as we dream about where the Spirit may be leading us in the days ahead.

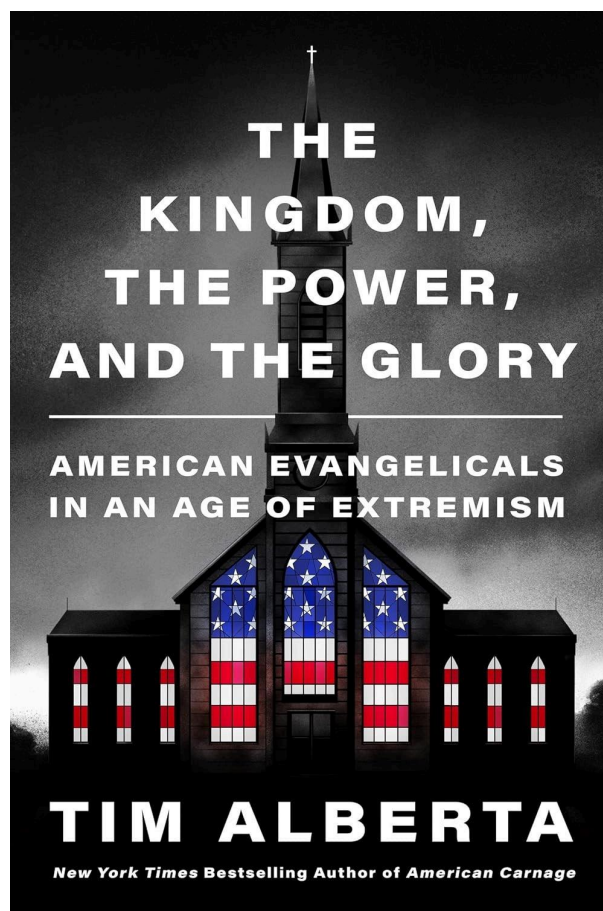


For the next two Wednesdays, we will be showing and discussing the recent documentary **1946: *The Mistranslation that Shifted Culture***, a film that follows the story of researchers who trace the origins of the anti-LGBTQ movement among Christians to a grave mistranslation of the Bible. The film has been shown at festivals and at churches across the country and is now available to stream online as a rental via Amazon. For more information, please visit 1946themovie.com. We will start the film just after 6:00 PM both weeks in the Fellowship Hall.

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 Collaboratory at Princeton Theological Seminary

I am so excited to share about a grant program Highland has received! Highland has been invited to participate in the Ministry Collaboratory at Princeton Theological Seminary on Sept. 19th – Sept. 22nd. The Collaboratory is designed for churches that want to enhance and understand how to better serve the young adults within their community. Funding for the Collaboratory was provided by the Lily Foundation.

There are two main requirements for our participation in this program. First, the Collaboratory requires that each church send the pastor working with young adults AND a young adult from the church. Abbi Wolfe, the chair of the Young Adult Ministry Group, has graciously agreed to travel with me and be our young adult representative.

The second requirement is that by participating in this Collaboratory, Highland will be awarded a \$500 micro-grant to put on an event for young adults in our community. The catch is that we cannot do an event at the church itself but must use the money out in the community. The Young Adult Ministry Group will be working and coordinating plans for that future event.

This is an amazing opportunity to strengthen our already growing, strong, and vibrant young adult community here at Highland. When Abbi Wolfe and I return, we will be sharing more about what we have learned and future plans for our use of this grant.

~ Justin Sizemore



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.

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 18: Lasagna / Mixed Green Salad / Bread Sticks / Dessert

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

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**



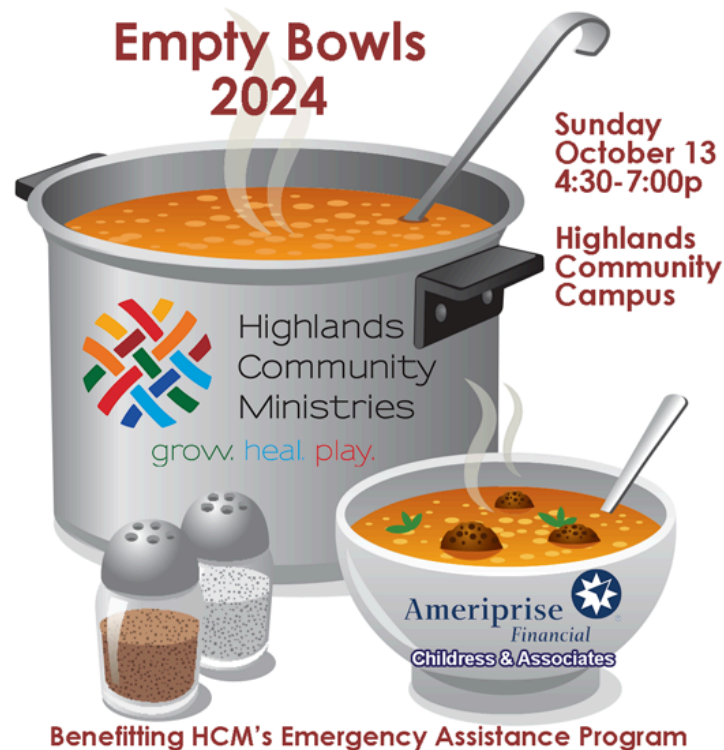
Pema Chödrön, an 87-year-old American Buddhist nun, lives and teaches in Nova Scotia. She wonders, “How can we relax and have a genuine, passionate relationship with the fundamental uncertainty, the groundlessness, of being human?...Discomfort arises from all of our efforts to put ground under our feet, 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@highlandscommunityministry.com) to SIGN UP BY SEPTEMBER 18 and let him know if you'd like a copy of Chödrön's book.



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

Looking Ahead

- 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 Begins: Christian Nationalism

Sunday, 10:15 AM

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

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

Friday, 7:00 PM

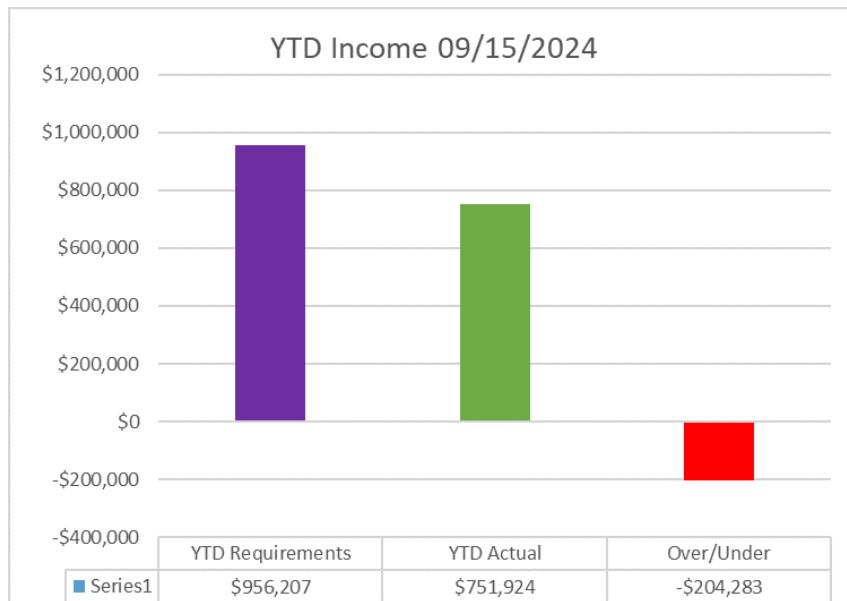
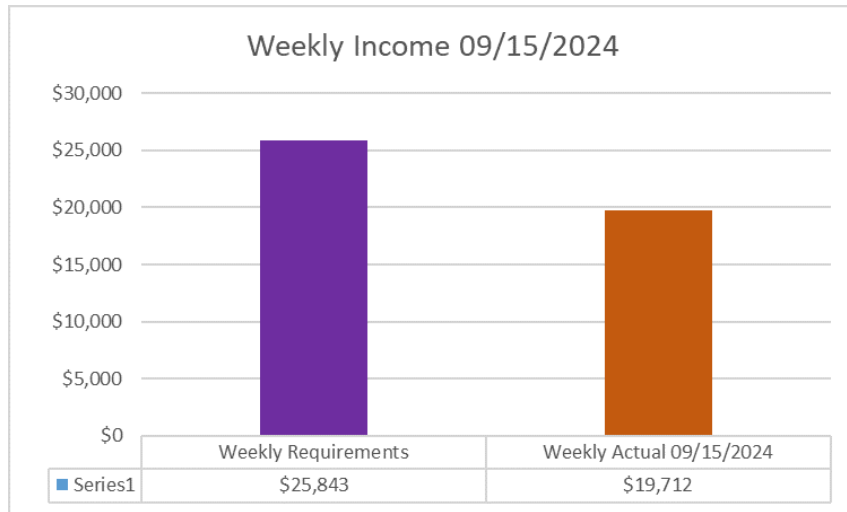
<https://www.facebook.com/hbclouisville.org>

**Streaming
Worship
Links**



Click Here for Church Signup Links

Financial Reports



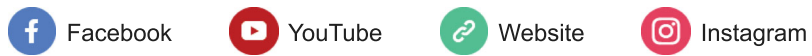
**To make a donation from your phone, text "give2hbc" to 502-747-1212
and open the link or use the QR code below.**





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.



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