



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church November 26, 2024

The Watch of Wondering Love: Advent 2024

**“TO PAY ATTENTION,
THIS IS OUR ENDLESS
AND PROPER WORK.”**

+ MARY OLIVER, “YES! NO!” (DEVOTIONS, P. 264)

Do you ever feel as if we have lost the wonder of Christmastime? In the hustle and bustle and busyness of the season, there seems to be no space for awe and amazement. Or, in the midst of all that is happening in the world around us, wonder might seem almost frivolous to us. Who has the time or capacity to really “wonder” these days? And yet, as writer Katherine May puts it, “I need a better way to walk through this life. I want to be enchanted again.”



Perhaps we need a better way to walk through Advent together, too. After all, without a sense of wonder, can we truly bear witness to the mystery of the Incarnation? That God is coming to be born – within us and within our weary world?

How might we approach Advent with awe and wonder this year? Or, with the “watch of wondering love” like the angels did on that first Christmas night, as we sing in “O Little Town of Bethlehem?” How can we give ourselves over more fully to experiencing the wonders of hope, peace, joy, and love this season?

We hope you will plan to join us for some of our special Advent festivities as we prepare ourselves for the coming miracle. This Advent, let's wonder together at "mysteries too marvelous to be understood," for "attention is the beginning of devotion" (Mary Oliver, "Mysteries, Yes" and *Upstream: Selected Essays*).

~ Mary Alice Birdwhistell



Voting on the 2025 Budget

We will vote on the proposed 2025 budget of **\$1,341,000** over the weekend of December 6-8. To see more specifics about the budget, [please see this packet of materials](#) from last week's Quarterly Church Conference. Voting will take place online via a link that will be emailed on

Friday, December 6. For those who wish, votes may also be cast by calling the church office on Friday between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Online voting will be accepted through 5:00 PM Sunday evening, December 8.

The budget was discussed at last week's Quarterly Church Conference. We are grateful to the Finance Ministry Group, Personnel Ministry Group, staff, and lay leaders who have worked diligently on the proposed budget for next year.

Christmas Donation Opportunities

The Mission and Justice Ministry Group invites you to join us in supporting [La Casita Center](#) and [Highlands Community Ministries](#) this Christmas season. We are able to do this through both the donations of items they have requested for their communities of care as well as donations of time.



La Casita is collecting household necessity items, rather than toy donations, so that parents have the ability to choose gifts for their own children with the money that would usually be devoted to necessities.

We have extended the deadline for collecting items for La Casita! You can bring items on Sunday morning or to the Hanging of the Green service that evening. [Here is the link to sign-up](#) for the items HBC has agreed to collect and donate. [They also have this Amazon link](#) where you can order items to be delivered directly to La Casita. If you choose this option, please be sure to still select and claim items that are on our HBC sign-up link above so that we can fulfill our commitment.

Highlands Community Ministries has requested throw-sized blankets and \$25 gift cards for Kroger, Target, and Walmart. We will collect these donations during the Hanging of the Green Service on Sunday evening, December 1.

Thank you for your generosity to our mission partners and our surrounding community this holiday season!

Advent 2024 Calendar

Sunday, December 1 ~ Hope Sunday

First Sunday of Advent Worship Service 11:15 AM

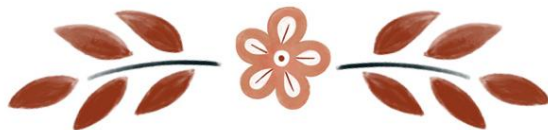
Join us as we begin a new liturgical year and this year's theme, *The Watch of Wondering Love*. Advent devotions inspired by the poetry of Mary Oliver will be emailed beginning this Sunday.

Hanging of the Green at 6:00 PM

We will gather to adorn the sanctuary for the season. You are invited to bring donations for Highlands Community Ministries (throw-size blankets and \$25 gift cards to Kroger, Walmart, and Target) or final La Casita donations. The service will be followed by a church-wide holiday reception in Fellowship Hall. Contact Marilyn Whisler at 502-262-2760 if you can bring finger foods for the reception. *Childcare provided for infants, toddlers, and 2s.*

Monday, December 2

Sorting Soiree for Families with Children and Youth and Young Adults at 6:00 PM at La Casita. All ages are invited to join. Contact [Justin](#) or [Renee](#) to RSVP.



Wednesday, December 4

On our last Wednesday night of regularly scheduled activities for the year, join Mary Alice and John Dickson for a dramatic reading of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, shortly after 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

Sunday, December 8 ~ Peace Sunday

Second Sunday of Advent Worship Services with Crosses on the Lawn at 11:15 AM

Peace Sunday is our time to remember those who have been killed in our city by acts of violence. We will read each name and place crosses on the front lawn as an act of remembrance and a call to action in our community.

Children's Advent Service at 6:00 PM

Children's voices and the ringing of bells are a highlight of the season! Join us for an evening of music from Highland's Carol Choir, Chorister Choir, and Children & Youth Handbell Choir—ages 3 through youth. *Childcare provided for infants, toddlers, and 2s.*

Wednesday, December 11

Families with Children are invited to gather for an outdoor hot chocolate bar and to enjoy the Christmas lights at Brown Park from 5:45-7:00 PM.

Sunday, December 15 ~ Joy Sunday

Third Sunday of Advent Worship Service at 11:15 AM

Join us for a morning of music and celebration with the Sanctuary Choir and Brass presenting Rutter's *Gloria* at 11:15 AM, with special music from the Brass of Highland's Orchestra.

Orchestra Christmas Concert at 6:00 PM

This delightful concert featuring fun and festive music includes special solos, duets, and Highland's Handbell Choir. *Childcare provided for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.*



Wednesday, December 18

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 loved one, a job, a relationship, a life transition - all are welcome to this quiet and reflective worship service one the longest nights of the year. *Childcare available [by reservation only](#) for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.*

Fridays, December 20 and 27

Join us as we sing the carols of Christmas at Friday Church at 7:00 PM! We will end the service on the 20th with candlelight.

Sunday, December 22 ~ Love Sunday

Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship Service at 11:15 AM

Justin Sizemore is our proclaimer.

Tuesday, December 24 ~ Christmas Eve

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 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! *Childcare provided for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.*

Sunday, December 29

Sunday Morning Worship at 10:00 AM - no Bible study classes that morning



2025 Commitment Season Update!

Last week at our Quarterly Church Conference, we learned more about our 2025 journey and what it takes to achieve our church goals. Unfortunately, we are still short in pledges of our budgeted target of \$775,000 in pledged gifts. As of this past Sunday, we had 123 pledges have been made toward our 2025 Ministry Fund totaling \$659,112. In addition, we are up to \$1,850,436 in pledges to the Sacred Space campaign. Thank you to all who have already pledged and please, if you haven't yet gotten your pledge in, please do so in the next few days.

We still have a goal of 100% participation, so if you haven't made your pledge yet please either:

- Electronically [make your pledge here](#)
- Contact Kathleen Gordon, our Financial Secretary by phone (451-3735) or [by email here](#)
- Turn in your pledge card in the offering plate or mailing it to the church

Thank you for all your generosity. Each of us doing our part makes it possible to do God's transforming work of love!

~ The Faithful Giving Ministry Group



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.

November Menu:

November 27: No Wednesday Evening Activities

December Menu:

December 4: Taco Bar, Black Beans, Mexican Street Corn, Chips, Salsa & Guacamole, Dessert

Ad Hoc Committee Accepting Nominations

At last Wednesday's QCC, the church voted to approve the Ad Hoc Committee comprised of 3 members from Personnel Ministry Group (Arlette Tinsley, Tanya Cornely, and Mary Burks), Chair of Deacons (Robin Ramsey Lee) and 3 members of the Deacon Body (Charlie Suer, Doris Hornbuckle, and Sam Potter). This group is currently seeking nominations for the 7-person Interim Pastor Search Committee. Nomination forms will be available on Sunday morning, or you can [email your nominations to Kathleen Gordon](#). All nominations are due by Monday, December 2. After reviewing the nominations, the Ad Hoc Committee will present a slate of individuals to the church for a vote.

Nominations for the Pastor Search Committee will be sought at a later date. Please be aware that anyone who is elected to serve on the Interim Committee will not be eligible to serve on the Pastor Search Committee.

Click Here for Church Signup Links

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>

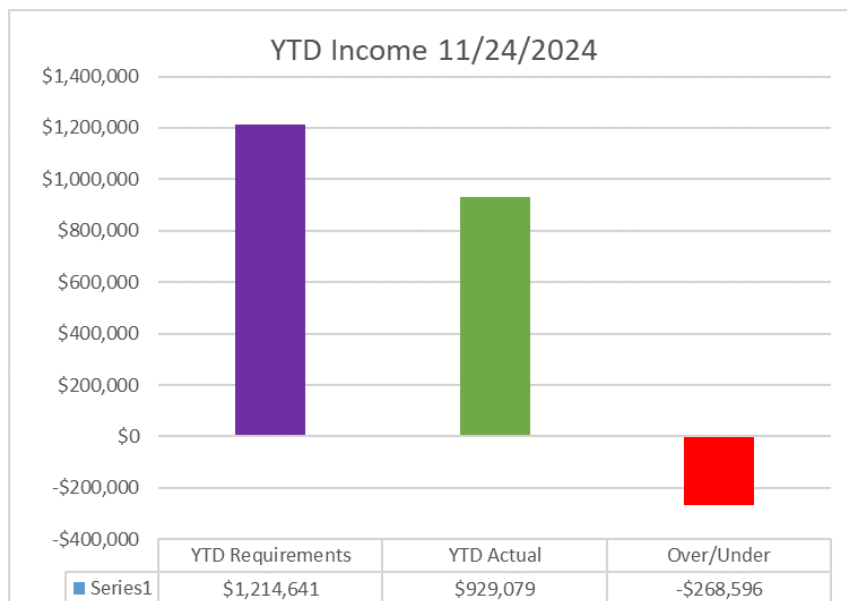
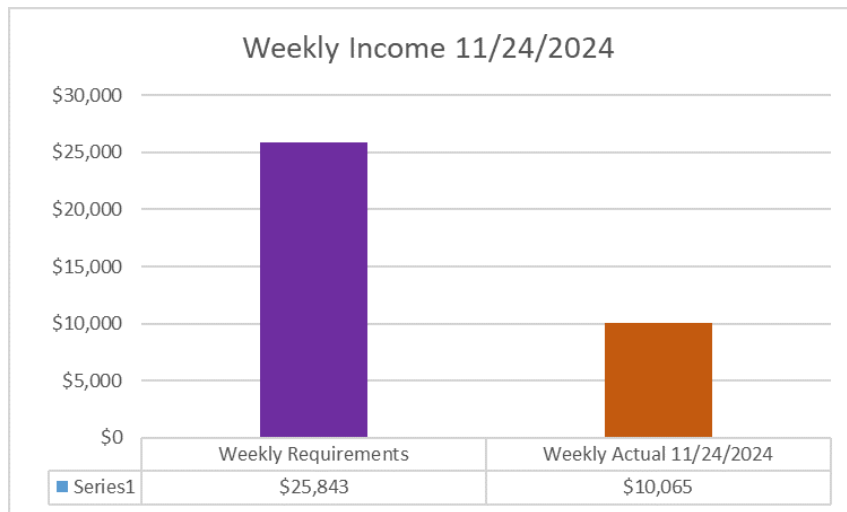
**Streaming
Worship
Links**



Looking Ahead

- November 27: No Wednesday Evening Activities
- December 1: Hope Sunday - Hanging of the Green Service, 6:00 PM
- December 4: Mary Alice and John Dickson share *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, 6:00 PM
- December 8: Peace Sunday and Crosses on the Lawn, 11:15 AM
Children's Advent Service, 6:00 PM
- December 11: Families w/Children Hot Chocolate in the Park, 5:45-7:00 PM
- December 13: Youth Adult Christmas Parties (see Justin Sizemore for more info)
- December 14: Youth Christmas Party, 6:00-8:00 PM
- December 15: Joy Sunday - Sanctuary Choir and Highland's Brass
present Rutter's *Gloria*, 11:15 AM
Orchestra and Handbell Christmas Concert, 6:00 PM
- December 18: Longest Night Service, 6:00 PM
- December 22: Love Sunday - Justin Sizemore, guest proclaimer
- December 24: Christmas Eve Services, 4:00 and 6:00 PM
- December 29: One worship service at 10:00 AM
- January 5: Mary Alice's last Sunday at Highland
- January 18-19: Weekend with Center for Congregational Health

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.**

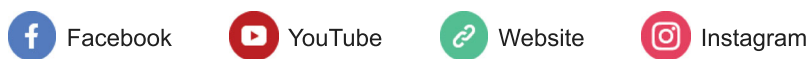




Louisville Homicides

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.

- Tariq Jabbar, 18, killed October 26
 - Ja'Mare Postell, 19, killed October 30
 - Cole Bullock, 18, killed October 31
 - William McPheeters, 36, killed October 31
 - Shane Spanjers, 44, killed November 10
 - Tyrell Miller, 44, killed November 10
 - Sayvon Howard, 22, killed November 14
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