



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church June 10, 2025

Celebrating Pride with Our Community



- **Pride Sunday on June 15** – We are glad to welcome Rev. Rachel Small Stokes as our proclaimer this Sunday! Rachel is the Pastor at Immanuel UCC here in Louisville. Pastor Rachel brings a deep spirit, an openness to all, and a sense of joy, creativity, and humor. She and her wife Les (a native Louisvillian) have two very energetic sons, Jack and Everett. They love being a rainbow family! 🏳️‍🌈



- **Kentuckiana Pride Parade on June 21** – We will once again march in the Pride Parade this year! [Sign-up is available here.](#) Please plan to join us for this fun day of celebrating our LGBTQIA+ community! One note, we will NOT have a booth at Pride this year. The True Colors Ministry Group decided to sponsor a Trans group that has wanted a booth at Pride for years and hasn't had the money to be present. This is one of the ways we can show up and support our community!

~ Justin Sizemore



Summer Youth Update

As y'all know, Eastern Kentucky is my home. This past week, I got to share one of my favorite places with some of our youth and adults here at Highland. To kick off our summer, the youth headed over to Red River Gorge for a day of hiking!



A huge thank you to our adults that traveled with us: Kathy Belcher, Molly Braun, Noah Cooksey, and Charlie Suer.

We hiked Natural Bridge, enjoyed the sounds of roughly a bajillion cicadas, and took in the views from the top of the bridge and surrounding areas. After a good hike, we made our way to Miguel's Pizza, a must for anyone that heads to the Gorge! We ate plenty of pizza and drank our fair share of Ale-8-1.

Our youth will gather for a handful of fun events over the summer! Here is the rest of our summer schedule:

- June 11 – Cookout at Sizemore's
- June 18 – Louisville Bats Game
- June 27 – Working at SOS
- June 30 – July 4 – PASSPORT Missions Camp (Chaperones Needed!)
- July 16 – Holiday World

~ Justin Sizemore

Highland Families with Children



🌈 Drag Revival and Racing Louisville Pride Night

This past week we kicked off Pride Month with two AMAZING events sponsored and led by Highland folk.

The 4th annual Drag Revival was a fabulous experience again this year. Hosted by our very own May O'Nays, the evening was full of music, drag, spirit, and fun! Our headliner, Hannah Mae shared stories about growing up in church and being excluded from sacred spaces because of who she loved. Her music was moving, healing, and fun!



On Friday evening, Highland joined with 15 other affirming congregations at Lynn Family Stadium to cheer on the Racing Louisville Football Club. A little rain couldn't keep everyone away! We cheered, danced, celebrated Pride, and watched Racing Louisville pull off the win!

Both of these events were a great way to kick off Pride month! I want to say a huge THANK YOU to all those who helped make these events happen. Our True Colors Ministry Group, Troy Burden for hosting Drag Revival at HCM, Andrew Schafflein for planning and putting together Drag Revival, and Alan Spade for his work in organizing and planning Pride Night at the soccer game.

~ Justin Sizemore

Join the Cream of the Crop for Lunch

Cream of the Crop is headed to the Whistle Stop Café in Glendale on June 18! Lunch will be served at 11:00 AM, and we will leave the church at 9:30 AM. Reservations are limited to 25, so call (502-451-3735) or [email Paul](#) to be placed on the list.



~ Paul Henderson

Journaling Group Continues



If you are a journaler, or have wanted to be, consider the possibility of sharing some journaling time with others. Vicki Runnion is facilitating a journaling group on Mondays through June 23 from 10:00-11:30 AM in room 200 (upstairs above church offices).

If you are interested, please contact Vicki at 502-396-3325 or [email her here](#).

Join Us for Trivia Night on July 12!



TRIVIA NIGHT

**WITH DESSERT AUCTION
FUNDRAISER**

**SATURDAY, JULY 12, 2025
7:00 PM**

**\$15.00 per person, teams of up to 8.
PLEASE PRE-REGISTER AT hbctrivianight@gmail.com**

**HAVE A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS
OR OTHER GROUP TEAM;
BRING YOUR FRIENDS; BRING YOUR TEAM;
COME HAVE FUN.**

**Contact Steve or Margie Brown with questions;
Contact Marilyn Whistler to donate a dessert.**

***///* A Journey for Every Season**



You are invited to complete a travel interest survey for travel opportunities with Paul and Kim Henderson, which can be found by [following the link here](#). The list will be available for a month and then an in-person session will be held in August to share some of the most popular suggestions.

- Offering both international journeys and regional getaways
- Experiences designed for our progressive community
- Options for various interests, timeframe, and budgets

~ Paul Henderson

Remembering the Early Days of AIDS

Dear Highland Friends,

I wrote this essay several months ago, hoping to find an audience for it in Memphis, which I was unable to do. It occurs to me that some within Highland might appreciate reading it, especially anyone who lived through the early years of the AIDS pandemic.

I'm proud to serve a church where all truly are welcome!

~ Chris Caldwell

As I was listening to a recently released podcast on the early days of AIDS in the United States, I thought back to 1986, when, as a senior at Rhodes College in Memphis, I watched a small number of gay men, along with social workers and doctors, try to figure out what AIDS was and how Memphis could respond. In these early days of the pandemic, no one in Memphis was paid to do this work. There was not yet an AIDS organization, and there were no grants, no clinics, no specialists.

Meanwhile, men and women were dying. Their deaths came swiftly, usually within months, and what AIDS did to their bodies was horrendous. There were no known treatments, and those caring for people with AIDS did all they could to comfort and to walk alongside the mostly gay men who were dying. The son of a close friend was dying of AIDS, and I went with the father to a meeting held at the Red Cross, where a small group was trying to organize some sort of response.

As I continued attending these meetings of ten or so people, I was usually the only straight person in the room, and so there I sat with all the stereotypes I grew up with in Nashville, unable to square them with the men I was getting to know. I watched as they faced the terror of how quickly their own lives might end, and yet rallied to do the one thing they could do: train volunteers to be “buddies” to those who were dying, so that no matter what else happened, no one would die alone. Over time, the clinics, the specialists, and the funding would come, but the groundwork for all of this was initially laid by these volunteers and by the activists who refused to remain silent.

Outside this circle, paranoia and judgmentalism reigned. Longtime partners were banned from hospital rooms and funerals. An affluent Presbyterian church in Memphis did not want a child with AIDS to be in the church nursery. As one who became a minister, my understanding of “church” would forever be

influenced by the contrast between the cowardice and apathy I saw in most churches, and the love for neighbors I saw gay men living out.

I decided one thing I could do was help to get the truth out about AIDS, and so I spoke with the Rhodes chaplain and a few professors about the possibility of putting together a “Teach-In” on AIDS at Rhodes. All supported my efforts, as did the men I had gotten to know in the gay community. I worked with these men to enlist speakers, who were, as I recall, a local physician, a scientist, and one of the leaders in the gay community.

I made signs promoting the event and put them up around campus. In short order, the signs were being ripped down. After a couple failed attempts at posting my signs, I went to Chaplain Musick. Steve asked me to bring him the next batch of signs. At the bottom of each sign, he wrote, “If you tear down this sign, I will have you kicked out of this college. -- Chaplain Steve Musick.” Perhaps what he wrote was more diplomatic than I recall, and more within his pay grade as chaplain, but whatever the exact words were, the signs stayed up this time. I was more successful promoting the event to those beyond the campus. A mention on local public radio was most helpful.

On the night of the event, a large lecture hall on campus was filled. I remember it as a helpful and informative time, and I was proud of my college for fostering open conversation in a time of hysteria, disinformation, and bigotry. I can’t recall much of what was said, but I do remember one moment clearly. Sitting on the dais, I had noted one large man with a suit and tie, and a wife who matched him and the suit well. As a progressive Baptist, I could spot a fundamentalist pastor at a hundred yards, and I figured this guy was trouble. Let’s call him Leroy. Sure enough, when the time came for comments and questions, Leroy stood up and began waving around a book called “The AIDS Cover Up.” He proclaimed to all in attendance that we could contract AIDS just by having someone with AIDS cough or breathe on us.

A few minutes later, a young man, who happened to be seated beside Leroy, raised his hand to speak. I had noticed him, too. He looked quite thin, and perhaps unwell. I only remember the first five words he said, which were, “Speaking as someone with AIDS.” Never has the look of fear brought to me greater pleasure than Leroy’s face at that moment.

I don’t know if there’s an audience for what I’ve written, but I hope the stories of those times are not soon forgotten. A college doing a simple but good thing is worth remembering. But more importantly, the gay men who lived love and hope, against a torrent of hatred and beneath a cloud of grief, must be remembered. They were valiant men.

[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>

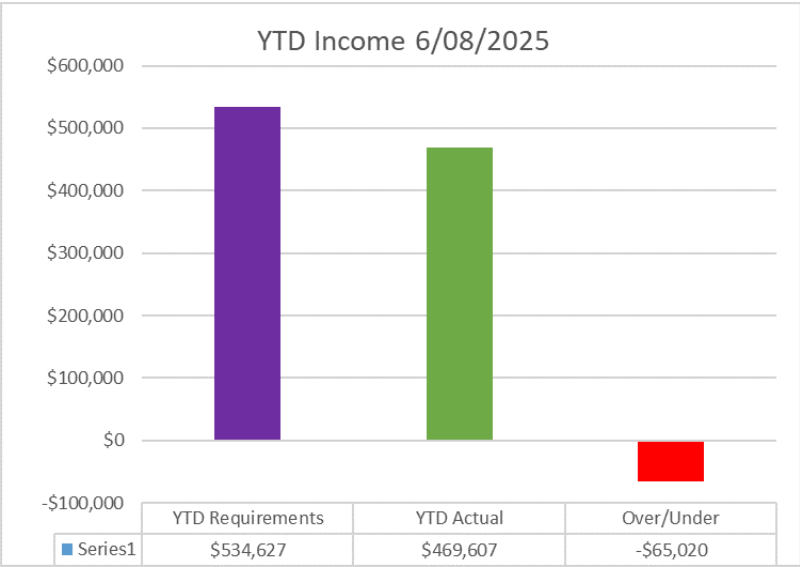
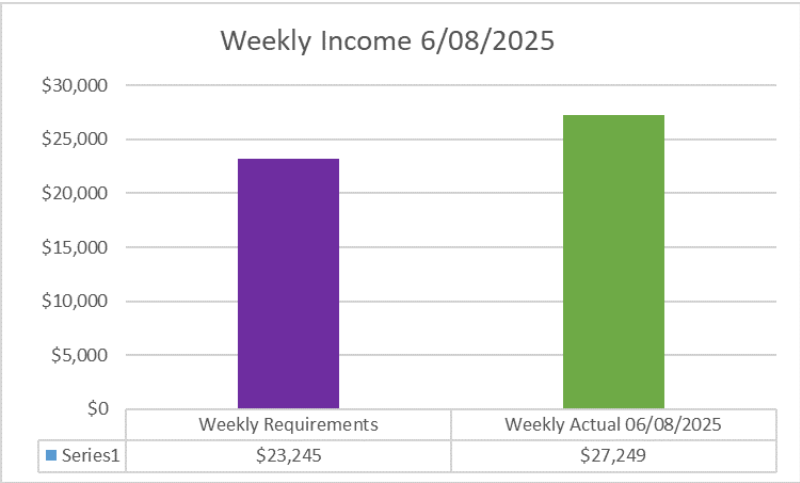
**Streaming
Worship
Links**



Looking Ahead

- June 15: Pride Sunday in worship, 8:45 and 11:15 AM
- June 18: Cream of the Crop trip to Whistlestop in Glendale, leave church at 9:30 AM
- June 21: Kentuckiana Pride Parade and Festival
- June 22: Quarterly Church Conference via Zoom, 4:00 PM
- July 12: Trivia Night & Dessert Auction for the Sacred Space Campaign, 7:00 PM
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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.

Thank You!

Ken and Rob Burke express their deep gratitude to Highland Baptist Church for the kind words, cards, and support following the passing of their father.



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