



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church July 22, 2025



Justin's New Call

Back in the day--a phrase people my age find ourselves using more and more--there was what one could have called a pipeline from youth or young adult ministry into the pastorate. Today, in the age of an increasing "[clergy shortage](#)," there are fewer people going into ministry, and far fewer willing to take on the leadership role of being the senior pastor or co-pastor of a church. As much as I loved being a pastor, even [I walked away from it](#) to teach college students.



And so, as much as we regret losing Justin Sizemore, we need to affirm him for being willing to take on the added pressures that will come with his new role. Justin is very well suited to meet the expectations that come with being one of the primary pastors of a church, but he's also smart enough to know what he's getting into by following this calling. He will do it very well, and he'll know blessings unique to the role of primary pastor, but we shouldn't take for granted his willingness to do it. Please pray for him and for Abby and their family as he takes this next step in ministry.

By the way, I hope you'll take a look at the links to [Baptist News Global](#) I've inserted into this column. As a longtime contributor and board member at BNG, I'm biased, but I believe it's a wonderful source of news and analysis for progressive Baptist Christians. It has published a few items on Highland down the years, which you can find [here](#).

After the 11:15 worship service on August 3, there will be a reception for Justin Sizemore in Fellowship Hall. Please stop by as we affirm Justin and celebrate his ministry among us!

The Personnel Ministry Group is also organizing a Love Offering for Justin. If you'd like to contribute, you can write a check to Highland or give online with "Love Offering for Justin" in the memo/designation. We also encourage you to write Justin a card or note of blessing that morning.

~ Chris Caldwell



Reflections on Discovery and Advocacy Camp

Power. It is something that is all around us and within us, and yet, we tend to only contemplate power when we do not have it or we see it being grossly misused—when the electricity goes out, when the power of a storm is destructive, when “the powers that be” make decisions that affect our daily lives or the lives of others.

Children's Discovery and Advocacy Camp



At this year's Discovery and Advocacy Camps, Highland's children had the opportunity to explore the concept of power through several lenses: affirmations, experiments, reflections, demonstrations, and more. In some form, these six statements wove together our exploration as we discerned between power that uses strength or force vs. power that influences others or influences how we feel.

- I am powerful.
- I can discover my unique power.
- I can notice the power(s) all around me.
- I can consider and choose how to use my power.
- I can use my power for good.
- Our collective power is powerful.

During Discovery Camp, we were inspired by the children's book *We Are the Builders*, written by Deepa Iyer. An immigrant who moved to Kentucky from India when she was 12, Deepa Iyer now works in the Washington D.C. area working for social change in society. Her social change ecosystem map has been used by teachers, professors, and others who believe in equity, liberation and justice to provide a pathway to involvement for all people. When I reached out to her to learn more about her story just before camp began, I never expected to hear back that she was in Louisville visiting this month! And miraculously, her schedule allowed her to come to Highland on the final morning of camp, meet our children, share her

personal story, and do a book reading with them. Together, we imagined what roles we might play in our communities using our unique power – as storytellers, guides, disrupters, weavers, and more. It was magical!

At Advocacy Camp, we were inspired by the children's book, *The Power Book: What Is It, Who Has It and What Do We Do With It?*, by Claire Saunders, et. al. On our third day of camp, we had moved through our theme for that day – I can notice the power(s) all around me – and to be honest, noticing the powers around us was more difficult for our children than I expected it to be. I wondered as I tried to help them see who held power in their worlds if they had ever thought of it in the way I was describing. Eventually, our list of those influencing how we could live and move and be was generated, and we went on to our next activities. We threw pottery on a wheel, and we witnessed our own power of creativity, force, restraint, gentleness and more create bowls and other shapes. But the most powerful moment came when I asked our children to create a play – part one would offer a story where power was used negatively, and part two would offer a second version of the same story where power was used positively. For whatever reason, our children created a scene at a fast food restaurant where a homeless person was in need of food. A passerby when into the restaurant and ordered food. Of course our children's personalities came out in all the ways in their acting, but the magic happened as we debriefed. One of the children shared how they had met a houseless person as they came to Highland each week; you may have seen them too. The child noted how their family has worked to truly see this person (as have other families at Highland, I know), offering food and other necessities they need and genuinely getting to know them a bit. The child knew the person's name and shared it with the group. Many of the children had noticed the person and their signs asking for help.

And so the next day, as the clock was ticking down to dismissal home, we worked to brainstorm a way that we, as a camp group, could be a part of using our power for good before camp was over. With only a few minutes to spare and after being stuck for quite a while, they finally landed on an idea. They asked, "Can we share our leftover snacks this week with someone [like the houseless person we talked about yesterday] who doesn't have food?" Together, we wondered what else was in the building we could use to pull together a bag. "Does the church have ziploc bags?" someone asked. And so the gathering began. Some granola bars, some goldfish we placed into snack bags, a few leftover apples, some bottles of water all came together to create small bags of snacks. Enough to solve hunger forever for our houseless neighbor? No. But a bit of using what we have to do what we can for someone whose face and name we've come to know, alongside others nearby? Yes. Something tells me our children will notice and experience power in a much different way as they drive to church next Sunday morning.

Many thanks to those who made our camp week possible, including Megan Fuller's behind the scenes work of gathering camp supplies, sign making and printing, t-shirt design as well as her artistic prowess behind the pottery wheel teaching our children, Ainsley Braun's willingness to join us for two weeks shepherding and encouraging children as we moved through activities, and Brooke Hasl's willingness to give up a week of her summer break from teaching to come alongside our Discovery Campers as they engaged a difficult topic. And thank you to the church who doesn't laugh me out of the room when I announce we are going to explore the concept of power with K-5th graders, and instead leans in with us

to learn and to grow. We are grateful!

~ Renee Purtlebaugh



Highland Welcomes New Member



Bill Carpenter joined Highland on July 18



Deacon Nominees

Continuing each Sunday, 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.

Those nominated are: Randy Biery, Diane Brewer, Mary Cooksey, Scott Gunter, David Hartley, Becca Jagers, Larry Marcum, Vicki Runnion, Becky Smith, and Tyler Swim.

We are excited about the gifts each of these individuals bring and grateful for their willingness to serve in this capacity. We will vote on these folks on Sunday, August 17.



SCOTT GUNTER

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, I grew up doing all the things that good fundamentalist Baptist kids do — Sunday school, Awana, Wednesday night church, youth choir, church musicals, and of course puppets. My love for all things weather eventually pulled me away from Alabama to Mississippi and Texas for college and gave me the opportunity to explore other expressions of faith where I could worship honestly and openly.

I moved to Louisville in August of 2020 (yikes!) to teach meteorology at U of L and immediately found Highland. One post-pandemic visit was all I needed to realize that Highland was a special place where I could learn to love myself and others more fully. God was doing a new thing and welcoming me back to my Baptist roots.

I've been an active participant in worship since joining Highland several years ago. I was welcomed into the handbell choir and orchestra, and have served on the worship ministry group. I am so excited (and honored!) to extend my participation to caring for this congregation that I love so much as a deacon.



BECKY SMITH

I was raised in the Southern Baptist Church in South Louisville. Both my parents were very active in "traditional" church roles. When I moved to the Highlands in 1971, I began attending the Presbyterian Church with my husband. My life "up-ended" in 1987 and I left the church completely. I lived a spiritual life but was unwilling to be involved in a church.

In 2014, my good friend encouraged me to attend Friday Church with her - and my life was changed completely. Having been away from church for years, I was a bit scared about attending. But I felt so comfortable from that first night and have been a regular since 2014.

I was honored to be ordained as a Deacon several years ago. Friday Church is a service where my friend JoAnn says, "We feel so close to God." I have the opportunity to use my skills as a retired social worker in a meaningful way. I am honored to serve as a Deacon in this progressive and affirming congregation that accepts diversity and change. We are "doers of the word - and not hearers only."

~ Robin Ramsay Lee, Deacon Chair

Coro Louisville Rehearses in London, Joining UK Singers

After a couple of days of getting acquainted with London, *Coro Louisville* is hard at work rehearsing for our concerts.



Sunday we rehearsed four hours and Monday we finished six hours of rehearsal with the esteemed Welsh conductor Paul Mealar! Today we travel to Windsor Castle, about an hour outside London, where we will rehearse and present our first concert at St. George's Chapel. It's sounding so beautiful!!



~ Paul Henderson

Last Week at Friday Church



Sermon Series Continues This Sunday

We'll continue our four-part sermon series: "Insightful Critics of the Church, and Bill Maher." In the first three sermons, we'll look at four people who know churches well, and we'll see what we can learn from their critiques. In the final sermon, I'll have something to say about Maher profiting from sloppy stereotyping and the need for the Church to know when to stand its ground.

In light of the criticisms, the sermons will also set forth practical ways the church can improve, as well as key parts of our theology we need to hold dear. In short, we'll learn from some folks who point out hazards and pitfalls, and we'll consider how we can do better, as we, like the Apostle Paul, aim for God's bullseye but know we'll always miss the mark.

- July 27 Barbara Brown Taylor: The Confining Church
- August 3 Mark Twain and H.L. Mencken: Church for the Sake of Church

- August 10 . . . and Bill Maher: Not Every Criticism is Valid

It's a pleasure serving you during this time of transition!

~ Chris Caldwell



Join us in celebrating “Gather Round” Sunday as we worship together and kick-off the fall semester! In worship, we will officially welcome our new Kindergarteners and recognize our 6th graders who have recently joined the youth group. After the 11:15 service, we will enjoy picnic lunches on the lawn. The cost is \$7 per person with a \$21 family maximum (you may pay online or at the event). You're also welcome to bring your own food for lunch. [Here's the link to sign up!](#)

“Know Your Rights” and Other Immigration Resources - For Worshiping Communities

August 5: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Highland Baptist Church (in the sanctuary)
1101 Cherokee Road Louisville, KY 40204
Registration: <https://tinyurl.com/HBC-KYR>



Cream of the Crop Sponsored Mission Opportunity



Here is a mission opportunity for everyone! Join Ginny Sims and others Monday, August 11 from 10:00-12:00 at [SOS – Health and Hope](#) to learn about this organization and sort supplies. SOS transforms discarded medical items into useable items for both local and international needs. SOS is located at 1500 Arlington Ave.

If you'd like to help, contact Ginny Sims [by email here](#) or phone (812) 987-2665 by August 9.



Highland Families with Children



[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**

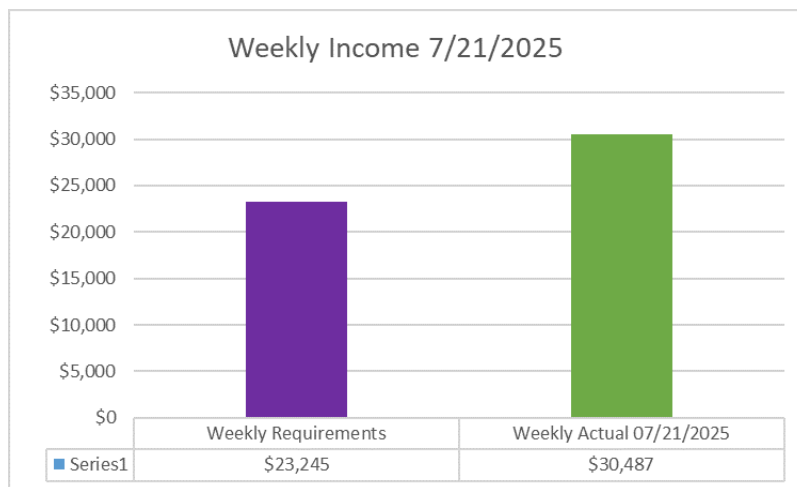


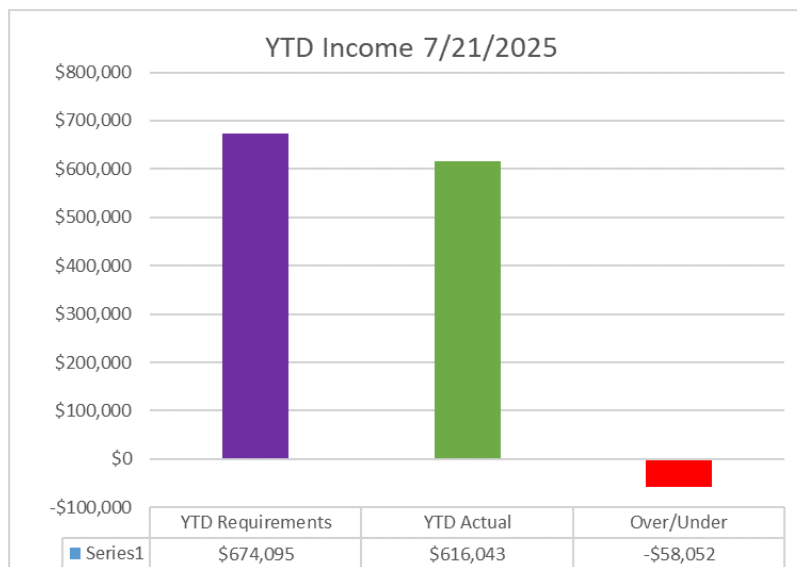
Looking Ahead

- July 17-24: England Trip, *Coro Louisville* including members of Highland's Sanctuary Choir
August 3: Justin Sizemore's Final Sunday with Highland
August 10: Gather 'Round
August 13: Wednesday Evening Activities Resume and Cloud of Witness
with Paige Harlow, Bruce Maples, Larry Marcum
August 17: Vote for Deacon Nominees
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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.



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