



The Weekly Newsletter of Highland Baptist Church September 9, 2026

Reminder: 11:15 AM worship only on Sunday, September 13 as we welcome guest proclaimer Rev. Dr. Paul Duke, who was Highland's pastor from 1982-1986. Bible study classes will meet at their usual time.

 Join Us for our Pastor Installation Service on Sunday!



You are invited to join us this Sunday, September 13 at 4:00 PM as Carol Harston is installed as our Senior Pastor. It will be a momentous occasion, as all the living Senior Pastors in Highland's history plan to return for this joyous day: Paul Duke, Phil Christopher, Joe Phelps, and Mary Alice Birdwhistell. After the service, we'll conclude the afternoon's festivities with a reception in Fellowship Hall.

*Care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers will be provided during the installation service **by reservation**. [Contact Megan Fuller](#) to reserve care for your child(ren) by Wednesday, September 9.

Rooted for What's Next: A Faithful Giving Story

I have been asked to share my story about how my faith life as part of our communal faith life here at Highland has played out by practicing generosity with my resources. We each have our own unique story. God's call on our lives to be a generous people helps us work toward creating a world where justice and love are abundant. I hope that my message will help remind others of why faithful giving is important.

For some background information, I have been a follower of Jesus Christ all my life. I first came to Highland with my husband, John Sims, in 1976 as a Quaker from the Religious Society of Friends. Some of you have heard parts of my story from past deacon testimonies. Most of us have a way in which we first

connected with Highland. When my husband and I first came to Highland we were looking for good Bible study classes, a good choir, and opportunities to serve. I connected with Highland because the congregation was mission minded and showed a willingness to wrestle with social justice issues.

Today, I wish to share how our faithful giving theme, Building Strong Roots for the future of Highland, is possible with our faithful giving practices.

The activities and programs that make Highland special, along with the beautiful facilities and grounds, do require people and materials that come at a cost. So in order to keep Highland healthy, we must care for it from the very roots.



Our theme from the Faithful Giving Ministry Group is three-fold

1. Planting seeds
2. Cultivating good soil
3. Fostering a culture of engagement

My first experience of planting seeds was my introduction to tithing a portion of our monthly income. We felt we were helping support the activities and programs that made Highland special. God's call to be a generous person has continued to be an important part of my spiritual journey that has grown and expanded over the years. An example of this is that after my husband died and I entered retirement I took ownership of my giving practices only to be surprised at the abundance that I could share here at Highland and with others.

When I think of cultivating good soil, I reflect on several past intentions and ministries that were significant. I intentionally guided my daughter by example to give back to her church when she was young, and I guided preschoolers in Mission Friends to be generous and care for others. Serving on many committees and groups with the intention of furthering Highland's ministries with our resources has continued to help cultivate good soil.

When I think of us fostering a culture of engagement here at Highland, I feel that one can better understand the resources that it takes to function and connect with people when one is actively engaged. Currently I am active with Jean Janes Group, Hospitality Group, Shawl Ministry, and Senior Adult Committee. Generosity is evident not only with our time commitments, but also our financial contributions.

So, whether our financial offerings are a little or a lot, every gift matters and every practice of generosity changes us and transforms us as a people.

~ Ginny Sims, spoken during Sunday Worship September 6



Pledge Brochures in the Mail This Week

The season is here for us to think about what we can contribute to Highland in 2027. Expect a brochure this week with a tear-off panel to fill out your pledge. You can donate by check, cash, credit card, or direct bank withdrawal. Auto-drafts are quick, easy, and fee-free! As our speakers highlight on Sunday mornings, giving generously is a valuable spiritual practice for everyone, regardless of gift size. Thank you for your support!

~ Faithful Giving Ministry Group

Thomas Bolton, Kelsey Grizzle, Drew Harston,
Tracy Holladay, Hollie Spade, with creative help from Dean Sipe

Highland and Its Pastors: Meeting the Challenges of the Day Together



Highland Baptist Church was founded at the instigation of a preacher and a laywoman. That was a fitting template for what followed over more than a century—a close collaboration between pastors and members. Each pastor has tried to meet the challenges of their day— rapid growth, a changing neighborhood, changing forms of ministry, struggles over war, civil rights, inclusion—and global pandemics a century apart. But they’ve taken on these challenges in partnership with the members. While each pastor’s tenure serves as a sort of chapter in the history of Highland, the members provide the continuity. Highland’s pastors and members surely had their flaws, but they did remarkable work and built a foundation for today’s congregation.

In the beginning, there was **Basil Manly Jr.**, a seminary professor and minister, teaming up with philanthropist **Juliette Norton Marvin** in the 1890s to launch HBC in the new residential neighborhood of the Highlands.

The church’s first long-term pastor, **B.A. Dawes**, oversaw a more than a tripling of membership in his 12

years ending in 1907. It wasn't just him: women founded missionary societies, the church sponsored a mission outpost that became Deer Park Baptist Church, and members expanded their Sunday School and youth training classes.

Paul Bagby, in his decade as pastor, led Highland through the dramatic years of World War I and the influenza epidemic, which included a monthlong shutdown. When he suffered breakdowns due to exhaustion, the church granted extended leaves and provided other care. Meanwhile the members pledged enough to build a larger sanctuary, still in use. One member, John Tucker, even provided the stones from his quarry.

J.B. Weatherspoon led another period of growth in the 1920s with both a revivalistic fervor and a sympathy with the social gospel of its time, something he shared with members such as Annie and George Eager.

When floods ravaged Louisville in 1937, members sheltered refugees in their homes and at the church itself. Pastor **T.D. Brown** guided the church back to regular programming after the waters subsided—programs that included elaborate musical presentations and other gatherings of the Baptist Training Union, Vacation Bible School and other lay-led initiatives. **Charles Maddry** had a short but important tenure guiding Highland during World War II.

In the 1950s, pastors **Hankins Parker** and **David Nelson** presided during a time of paradox: The Baby Boom was fueling growth at a time when many families were moving away to more distant suburbs. The church finally built a long-needed education building, which is still very much in use. At the same time, homes in the immediate neighborhood were increasingly being subdivided into apartments whose dwellers were less apt to come to church, despite earnest efforts.

In the 1960s, pastor **Nathan Cohen Brooks** applied his experience as president of the seminary-adjacent Carver School of Missions and Social Work. Members launched social-work outreaches to the increasingly elderly population of the church and neighborhood, and later helped sponsor a short-lived coffee house and a community center to meet people “where they are,” as one member described it. At Brooks' urging, Highland also received its first Black member, ending an unwritten but shameful policy of segregation.

Don Burke led Highland through the 1970s, helping restore a sense of normalcy after some turbulent years. He also oversaw the installation of Highland's cherished windows by artist Bob Markert, depicting ancient and modern saints—a “Cloud of Witnesses” motif that continues to inspire worshippers. In the 1980s under **Paul Duke**, Highland became a haven for seminarians and others dismayed by the rightward lurch in the Southern Baptist Convention and seminary. Even as those entities moved to restrict women's ministry roles, Highland began expanding them by ordaining women deacons. **Phil Christopher** guided Highland through a period that included the introduction of a new motto (“a thinking, feeling and healing community of faith”), informal worship and a new special needs ministry. The board of deacons transitioned from a de facto board of directors toward one focused more on spiritual counsel and service.

Under **Joe Phelps**, the church completed its separation from the Southern Baptist Convention while pursuing new relationships with progressive Baptists and historically Black churches. Highland also became openly affirming of LGBTQ+ members, affirmed same-sex marriage and launched the alternative Friday Church—initiatives undertaken with joint discernment and implementation by the ministry team, deacons, and members. Members helped newly arrived refugees and spoke out on gun violence, peacemaking, and other issues. Women increasingly served in ministry: At one point, five female pastors worked in associate roles with the male senior pastor—a reversal from historic trends. The choir continued Highland’s long tradition of outstanding music ministry.

Mary Alice Birdwhistell became Highland’s first senior woman pastor in the midst of the 2020 pandemic, preaching virtually in a nearly empty sanctuary for almost a year. She guided the congregation through the isolating period of shutdown and the subsequent reopening, along with a renewed focus on racial justice and reparations.

Now the baton is passed to **Carol Harston**, the first of Highland’s senior pastors to have grown up in the church, with a lived experience of its history and ethos. The next chapter is as yet unwritten, but as with her predecessors, she’ll work with Highland’s members to define and meet the challenges of the day.



Peter Smith was a member of Highland during his years in Louisville from 2000 to 2013, along with his wife, Holly Coryell Smith, and daughter, Estelle Smith. He was the author of “The Cloud of Witness: 110 Years of Faith: Highland Baptist Church, Louisville Kentucky,” published in 2005. He is a journalist based in Pittsburgh and covers religion news for The Associated Press. He previously covered religion for The Courier-Journal.

The Commons

Ever since I heard this poem back in 2018, I’ve come to love William Stafford’s language about the “thread” that runs through one’s life - a thread that is intangible yet vital to one’s sense of continuity. Even as life changes through the seasons, the idea that one steadfast component remains is essential to our

ability to flourish through life's many ebbs and flows.

*"There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.
You don't ever let go of the thread."*

This weekend's installation service is an opportunity to make tangible the thread that runs through Highland Baptist Church. That thread (God's incarnational presence among us, making Love flesh) holds us together as pastor and people. Together, we will affirm that we, these people whom God gathers at Cherokee and Grinstead, endure and persist through the many changes in our nation, city, and congregation. Together, we will commit to engaging with the world through hopeful action, to living with courage, and to humbly rooting our lives in God.

For this reason, we breathe more easily and live more bravely, for while we hold this thread, we cannot get lost. Whether you join us in person or via livestream this Sunday, know that I will value your presence as part of the larger Body of Christ as we gather in worship to praise our God, in whom the thread began and who remains with us as we follow it throughout the living of these days.

~ Carol Harston

PS. I met with Byck Elementary School's principal this past Friday to discuss the possibility of Highland meeting some of the Byck families who live in the Portland and Russell neighborhoods (needs include belts, shoes, diapers/formula for younger siblings, candy at the fall festival, yard work). We are gathering a group to visit Byck and learn more. Email me if you'd like to be added to the email list.

Ministry Council Nominations Open Now

Who will serve our church this year?

Each year, our congregation nominates members to serve on Ministry Council. Ministry Council attends to the business of the church and supports the work of its ministry groups. Ministry Council Representatives serve a three-year term. Our Ministry Council body is intentionally diverse: new members and longtime Highland families, younger voices and seasoned ones. The deadline for nominations this year is September 20.

How nominations work: You nominate up to six people using the yellow paper forms that are available during worship services. The Congregational Engagement Ministry Group reviews all nominations and then brings a proposed list to the full congregation for approval.

Need help or want to submit your nominations by phone? Call the church office at 502-451-3735.

Faith When You're Feeling Out of Sorts

Just as we've brought together our veterans and those caring for aging parents, Carol Harston is facilitating a conversation with those who are feeling out of sorts with faith - those who find themselves in a new life season where they don't "feel" faith as they used to, or who are frustrated that it doesn't come easily to them (compared to how they perceive it does for others). We'll gather Monday, September 21, 5:00-6:15 p.m. in the Commons. [All are welcome and encouraged to RSVP to Carol here.](#)

Wall Crew Appreciation

We recently had the honor of expressing our deep appreciation to everyone who has served on our Wall Crews over the past two decades.



Please pick up your gift sometime this month (located in Cheryl's office).

Wednesday Night Adult Class Schedule

We look forward to gathering with adults of all ages in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday nights, 6:00-7:15 p.m., for community prayer, faith formation, and faith expression.

- Tonight: Navigating HBC Finances with Finance Ministry Group (Congregational Life)
- September 16: Seeing with Bill Campbell (Faith and the Arts)
- September 23: Family Roots - More Than an Origin Story with Phil Collier (Faith Formation)
- September 30: No Wednesday Night Programming due to JCPS Fall Break

Upcoming Wednesday Night Adult Classes

September 9: Navigating Highland's Finances with Finance Ministry Group

Come learn about our HBC finances – income, expenses, and everything in between.

September 16: Seeing with Bill Campbell

Photography as a means for seeing more closely—seeing people, seeing God's world, and seeing God's light. Photographs will be used as an invitation for class discussion of how we see God's presence in the world around us and how we can better see "through God's eyes."

Wednesday Night Fellowship Dinners

We hope you can join us for Wednesday Night Fellowship Dinners! We ask everyone to make a reservation so that we have an accurate count for meal preparation. **Please make your reservations by Monday at 12:00 Noon for each week's meal.** You can make standing reservations or make them weekly by emailing [Leslie Morris here](#) or calling her at the church office, 502-451-3735. Meal costs are \$10 per person, \$5 for children, with a maximum of \$25 per family. Dinners can be [paid online here](#) anytime or by check or cash at the door. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this great opportunity for intergenerational fellowship!



September Menus:

September 9: Lasagna, Steamed Vegetables, Salad, Bread Sticks, Dessert

September 16: Meatloaf, Hash Brown Casserole, Steamed Veggies, Salad, Rolls, Dessert

September 23: BBQ Pork, Mac & Cheese, Baked Beans, Salad Dessert

September 30: Fall Break - no Wednesday evening activities

Volunteers still needed:

Please contact [Kathy Belcher here](#) if you can help!

5 dish dryers needed from approximately 5:45 to 6:45PM

- 2 for 1st week of each month
 - 1 for 3rd week of each month
 - 2 for 4th week of each month
-

Louisville Pride Festival



Join *True Colors*, Highland's LGBTQ+ ministry group, as we celebrate love, inclusion, and community at this year's Louisville Pride Festival on Saturday, September 12, from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Highland's booth will be open until 8:00 PM.

We're looking for friendly, welcoming volunteers to help staff Highland's booth throughout the day. Volunteer duties are fun and meaningful—you might be offering glitter blessings, chatting with festival-goers, or helping folks create their own custom buttons with our popular button maker!

Can't volunteer? No problem—come by, say hello, and show your support. Let's show up loud and proud for our LGBTQ+ family and help make this year's Louisville Pride celebration unforgettable!

[Sign up to volunteer here!](#)

Johnson Lecture Series September 19

William M. Johnson Lecture Series

COURAGE AND FAITH IN A TIME OF AUTHORITARIANISM



KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

**REV. PAUL
BRANDEIS
RAUSHENBUSH**

President of Interfaith Alliance

 **SEPTEMBER 19**

 **2:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

 **CRESCENT HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
2800 FRANKFORT AVE., LOUISVILLE, KY**

WITH GUEST PANELISTS



**MARK WINGFIELD,
MODERATOR**
Executive Director and
Publisher, Baptist News
Global.



**REV. DR. LAUREN
JONES MAYFIELD**
Executive Director,
Center for Interfaith
Relations.



DR. DARVIN ADAMS
Author and Professor
of Theology, Simmons
College of Kentucky
and Turner Theological
Seminary.

**REGISTER
HERE**



HON. GREG FISCHER
Entrepreneur and
Former Louisville
Mayor, 2010-2023.



PROF. DAN CANON
Civil rights lawyer,
educator, and writer.
Professor of civil
procedure, Louis D.
Brandeis School of Law.



Join the Youth in Collecting Donations for HCM



MAKING KITS FOR HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

TRAVEL SIZE ITEMS NEEDED:

- Small bottles of water
- peanut butter crackers
- granola bars
- fruit snacks
- hand sanitizer
- toothpaste
- Kleenex/wipes

**BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO
THE YOUTH ROOM NOW
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 23**

Mission & Justice Meeting for All Teams and Interested Individuals

On Friday, September 25, from 5:00 to 6:30 PM, we will gather in the Children's Commons to (1) hear from those already plugged into Mission Teams, (2) hear from those interested in getting involved in new mission efforts, and (3) wonder together about what it looks like for Highland to engage in hopeful action in our city, state, and world. We encourage all those already active in a Mission Team, as well as those interested in getting plugged in, to attend. If you can attend Friday Church at 7:00 PM, we'll order dinner for 6:30 PM before we worship together. To RSVP for the meeting, [please email Carol Harston](#).

Trivia Night Coming Soon!



TRIVIA NIGHT

WITH DESSERT AUCTION

FUNDRAISER



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 7:00 PM

Highland Baptist Church
1101 Cherokee Road

\$20 per person at the door or
\$120 for a table of up to 8, paid by Sept 21 at Venmo QR code below.
(please use this code rather than the 'events' one in the church newsletter)

Steven Brown
@Steven-Brown-1625



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.



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>

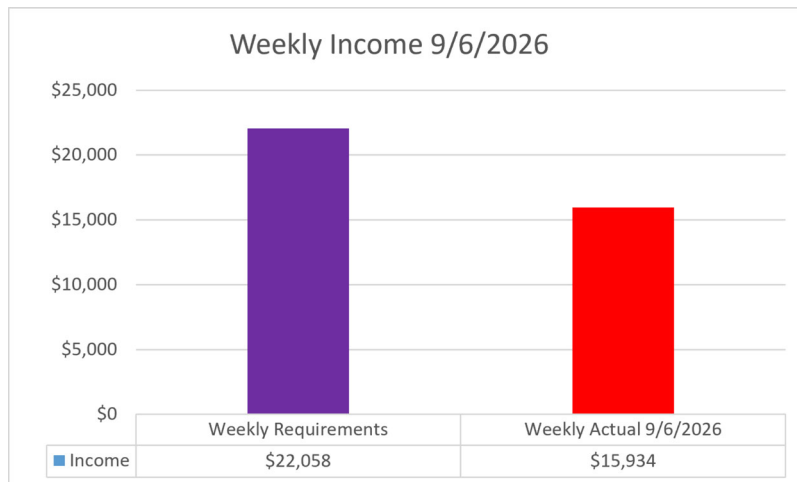
**Streaming
Worship
Links**

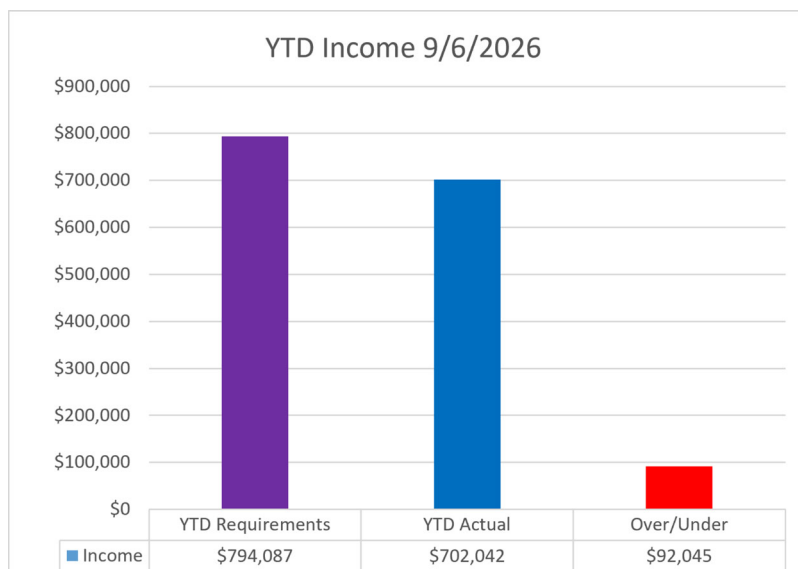




- September 13: Installation Service for Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Carol Harston, 4:00 PM, Sanctuary
- September 16: Seeing with Bill Campbell
- September 19: Veterans Group Gathering, 10:00 AM, Gary & Margaret Pennington's Home
- September 20: Pledge Sunday
- September 25: Missions and Justice Meeting, 5:00-6:30 PM, Children's Commons
- September 26: Trivia Night Fundraiser for Sacred Space, 7:00 PM, Fellowship Hall
- October 9-11: Women's Fall Retreat, contact Ginger Miller to sign up - 502-599-6569
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Financial Update





**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.

- Randall Moore, 58, killed February 26
- Iyanna Warr, 20, killed August 23

- Trinity Durham, 20, killed August 23
 - Eric Mann, 21, killed August 30
 - Dannady Greene, 16, killed August 31
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