



# Advent Beyond Imagination

You may say I'm a dreamer,  
but I'm not the only one.  
I hope some day you'll join us  
and the world will live as one.

~ John Lennon, *"Imagine"*

**HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH**

**SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**DECEMBER 10, 2023**

**8:45 AND 11:15 A.M.**

Gathering Music

arr. Doug Smith

*Carol of the Mistletoe Singers*  
Highland Woodwinds

Invitation to Worship

Justin Sizemore

Candelighter Processional

IL EST NÉ

*Light the Light, the Fire of Life*

*Light the light, the fire of life, let the candle reveal God's glory.  
Jesus Christ has come to earth and for us shall come again.*

*Light the candle of God's peace, light the light of angels singing,  
light the candle of God's peace, light the light that shone that night.*

The Lighting of the Advent Candle: Peace

Carol Hawkins and Fran White (8:45)  
The Schaftlein Family (11:15)

Opening Words

Marc Dowell (8:45)  
Lauren Blackwell (11:15)

Advent is the glorious affirmation that God creates newness in the world -  
in your life and mine;

***That something new is coming!***

But more often than not, the news of the day bombards us with the story  
of destruction, death, and devastation.

***How then, can we bring about a better story, oh people of God? Silence.***

Our Advent candle of Peace bears a small, stubborn light against this backdrop of despair.

***May the Holy One kindle our hope and provoke our imaginations***

so that we might become people who bear the light of peace in God's world.

***Oh come, oh come Emmanuel!***

## FOR THE GLORY OF THE LORD NOW O'ER EARTH IS SHED ABROAD

Processional Hymn (86) †

JEFFERSON

*Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*

Prayer of Expectancy †

Marc Dowell (8:45)  
Lauren Blackwell (11:15)

## BIDDING ALL TO TRUE REPENTANCE SINCE THE KINGDOM NOW IS HERE

The Gospel Lesson †

Mark 1:1-8 (Pew Bible page 34—NT)

Lauren Jones Mayfield

Prayer of Confession

Paul Henderson

God of peace and justice, we confess that we have failed to live into either.  
We have mistaken peace for comfortableness, and justice for retribution.

***We have tuned out the stories that cause us discomfort and have twisted justice  
to be a power play for those with privilege.***

Forgive us for not noticing those on the margins.

***Forgive us for deliberately ignoring the most vulnerable among us.***

Forgive us for not pursuing Your justice of reparation and restoration.

***Call us into accountability with one another and lead us through  
our uncomfotableness so we might truly live into Your ways that lead to peace.***

In the name of Christ, who was ridiculed and scorned, mocked and misunderstood we pray.

***Amen.***

Words of Assurance		Paul Henderson
Exchange of Peace †		Renee Purtlebaugh
Hymn (89) †		PSALM 42
	<i>Comfort, Comfort Ye My People</i>	
Faithful Giving/Offertory Prayer		Rob Thompson
Offertory		arr. Charles Torian
	<i>O Come, O Come, Emmanuel</i> Highland Woodwinds	

## SPEAK YE TO JERUSALEM OF THE PEACE THAT WAITS FOR THEM

The Hebrew Lesson	Isaiah 40:1-11 (Pew Bible pages 653-654—OT)	Mary Alice Birdwhistell
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Sermon	<i>Peace Beyond Imagination</i>
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## COMFORT THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS, MOURNING 'NEATH THEIR SORROWS' LOAD

Anthem	<i>Child of Peace</i>	Elaine Hagenberg
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O Holy Father I will be a child of peace and purity for well I know Thy hand will bless  
the seeker after righteousness.

A Time of Remembrance for Victims of Violence in Our Community		Lauren Jones Mayfield
	<i>Individuals and families are invited to take a cross to place on the lawn.</i>	

Recess to the Front Lawn †	
	<i>Please follow the ministers to the front lawn for the conclusion of the service.</i>

Benediction on the Lawn †		Mary Alice Birdwhistell
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† *For those who are able, we invite you to stand.*

In worship at Highland, we aim to sing music with a theology that reflects an expansive and inclusive God. Occasionally, our printed music may use language that limits God. When we are unable to re-print a more inclusive text, we encourage you to use language that better fits your image of God. Our ministers and choir will often replace “He/Him” with “God” or “Love” (1 syllable) and “Father” with “Parent,” “Holy,” or “Divine” (2 syllables). We would love to hear what creative language for God you might use in worship, too.

## Today in Worship

Highland's deacons (wearing identification name tags) are available at various locations for prayer, questions or information. Deacons are lay ministers of the church who have been called to a ministry of service.

Phrases from today's hymn, *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*, will guide us toward images that embody segments of our worship service—praise, confession, proclamation and response.

We express gratitude to Ed Bridge for providing thoughtful music during our Time of Remembrance on the lawn.

Listening Assist Devices are available. Please see our sound technician or an usher for assistance. Large print hymn sheets are also available upon request for visually impaired persons. An usher can provide a copy for you.

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## Notes and News for the Community of Faith

- **Children's Advent Service Tonight 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's Handbell Choir—ages 3 through 5th grade.

- **Longest Night Service on December 21 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 beloved family member or friend, a job, a relationship, a life transition - all are welcome to this quiet and reflective worship service on the longest night of the year.

- **Up Ahead:**

- ◇ **Tuesday, December 12:** La Casita Community Center Resource Day 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- ◇ **Wednesday, Dec. 13:** Families with Children Outdoor Hot Chocolate Bar at Brown Park, 5:45-7:00 PM
- ◇ **Friday, December 15:** Singing the Carol of Christmas at Friday Church at 7:00 PM
- ◇ **Sunday, December 17:** Third Sunday of Advent with Choir Singing Bach's Magnificat; Orchestra Christmas Concert at 6:00 PM
- ◇ **Thursday, December 21:** Longest Night Service at 6:00 PM for those experiencing loss
- ◇ **Friday, December 22:** Singing the Carols of Christmas at Friday Church at 7:00 PM
- ◇ **Sunday, December 24:** Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship at 10:00 AM (no Bible study)  
Christmas Eve Services at 4:00 and 6:00 PM—We gather to sing the carol of Christmas in a more casual and family-friendly service at 4:00 PM. Lessons and Carols, the centuries-old English tradition, tells the Christmas story through Scripture, carols, and music by the Sanctuary Choir at 6:00 PM. Both service end with candlelight to mark the joy of Christ's birth!
- ◇ **Sunday, December 31:** Online worship—no in-person services or activities



## HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH

*A thinking, feeling, healing  
community of faith*

*Our Mission...* God's Love compels us to cultivate a safe, welcoming community of faith where all are challenged to discover, grow, and serve, as together we boldly live out the worship that is our very lives.

**David Bannister**  
MINISTRY COUNCIL CHAIR

**Jerre and Frank Bassett**  
CUSTODIANS

**Mary Alice Birdwhistell**  
PASTOR

**Fred Bogert**  
MUSIC DIRECTOR  
TO FRIDAY CHURCH

**Don Burke**  
PASTOR EMERITUS

**Cheryl Davis**  
OFFICE MANAGER

**Megan Fuller**  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY  
MINISTRY ASSISTANT

**Kathleen Gordon**  
FINANCIAL SECRETARY

**Paul Henderson**  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF MUSIC  
AND WORSHIP

**Robert Lee**  
ORGANIST AND MUSIC ASSOCIATE

**Lauren Jones Mayfield**  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR CARE  
AND JUSTICE

**Walter McWhorter**  
CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

**Renee Purtlebaugh**  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR TO CHILDREN  
AND THEIR FAMILIES

**Justin Sizemore**  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR TO YOUTH  
AND YOUNG ADULTS

**Tyler Swim**  
DEACON CHAIR