



Too late for second-guessing
Too late to go back to sleep
It's time to trust my instincts,
close my eyes and leap
It's time to try defying gravity
I think I'll try defying gravity
And you can't pull me down!

~from *Defying Gravity*
by Stephen Schwartz in the
Broadway musical, *Wicked*

HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH
FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
FEBRUARY 2, 2025
11:15 A.M.

Invitation to Worship

Justin Sizemore

PRAISE TO GOD, THE CROWN OF HONOR WAITS FOR ALL

Prelude

Samuel Coleridge

Taylor Impromptu No. 2

Call to Worship - adapted from 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Andrew Schaftlein

We gather bound by faith,
faith that Love is patient and Love is kind.
We gather bound by hope,
hope that Love bears, believes, and endures everything.
We gather bound by Love,
Love that never ends and knows us fully.
Come, let us worship God together.

Processional Hymn (366) †

THAXTED

O God Beyond All Praising

Prayer of Praise †

Andrew Schaftlein

Glory to the Creator †

MEINEKE

***Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Spirit, One.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.***

SET ASIDE THE SIN THAT STRANGLES

A Lesson from the Psalms

Paul Henderson

Psalm 71:1-6 (Pew Bible page 521 – OT)

Prayer of Confession

Renee Purtlebaugh

Holy One, you are our refuge and our strong fortress, our rock and our trust. When we forget to lean into your shelter and stability, call us back to You. You are the one who hears our cries and who comes alongside us. When we forget to listen in return or notice you are walking in step with us, lift our eyes to the hills. Bring us again into that sacred space where longing, confession, repair, second chances, and hope dance. Through Christ we pray, Amen.

Words of Assurance

Hymn (278) †

BEACH SPRING

We Are Travelers on a Journey

JESUS' OPEN ARMS RECEIVE US EVERMORE WITH HIM TO REIGN

The Hebrew Lesson

Mary Alice Birdwhistell

Jeremiah 1:4-10 (Pew Bible page 685 – OT)

Choral Anthem

Craig Courtney

Be Not Afraid

Be not afraid: for I have redeemed you; be not afraid: I have called you by name. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you pass through the floods, they will not sweep o'er you; when you walk through the fire, you will not be consumed; you are mine, you are precious in my sight. My love for you is everlasting, my love for you shall have no end.

Sermon

Mary Alice Birdwhistell

It's Time to Try Defying Gravity

**LET US FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS,
CHRIST THE AUTHOR OF OUR FAITH**

Hymn of Response (630) †

EVANGELINE

Look, You Saints, the Cloud of Witness

The Celebration of Holy Communion

Mary Alice Birdwhistell

Invitation to the Table

Exchange of Hope †

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer*

Words of Institution

Reception of the Bread and Cup †

*Everyone is invited forward to receive bread and cup. All bread served is gluten friendly.
Deacons will receive tithes and offerings in the offering plates as you return to your seat.*

Offertory Prayer

Bob Cunningham

News for the Community

Justin Sizemore

*In response to your decision, **we welcome you! We covenant to be the family of God for you in this place. We hope to learn from you, give to you, and receive from you, as we journey in faith together.***

*For the ministries that shape the life of our community, **thanks be to God.***

Presentation and Gifts for Mary Alice

Vaughn Bell

Doxology †

TALLIS' CANON

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One, Amen.***

Benediction †

Mary Alice Birdwhistell

Postlude

Samuel Coleridge

Taylor Impromptu No. 1

† *For those who are able, we invite you to stand.*

*In worship at Highland, we aim to speak and sing a theology that reflects an expansive and inclusive God. As we begin the Lord's Prayer today, we will use the words "Our Creator, Our Mother, Our Father..." to offer a fuller image of who God is. Within the prayer, some of us use the word "kingdom" and others prefer the word "kin-dom" to refer to the beloved community of God. We invite you to join us in using your own creative and intentional language as you pray, knowing that no single word will ever capture the essence of who God is.

Today in Worship

Phrases from today's hymn of response, *Look, You Saints, the Cloud of Witness*, will guide us toward images that embody segments of our worship service — praise, confession, proclamation, and response.

The flowers for today's service are given in celebration and gratitude by the ministers who served with Mary Alice Birdwhistell during her tenure at Highland: Kathy Collier, Bob Cunningham, John Dickson, Perry Dixon, Sally Evans, Carol Harston, Paul Henderson, Lauren Jones Mayfield, Walter McWhorter, Erin Phelps, Renee Purtlebaugh, and Justin Sizemore.

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.

Worship care is available for infants, toddlers and preschoolers during worship. Our greeters are available to help you navigate our building. A Worship Cart with activities to engage children in the pew is located in the Commons.

Nearly 65% of people at Highland use online giving to make financial gifts to the church. We invite you to be one of them! Scan the QR code in the section below to be directed to our online giving page.

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Notes and News for the Community of Faith

- **Our Quarterly Church Conference is today at 4:00 PM via Zoom.** In addition to the usual reports, we will hear updates from the interim pastor search committee, the strategic planning team, and vote on a new trustee (Arlette Tinsley) and a new member of the Personnel Ministry Group (Rebecca Jagggers). The Zoom link, agenda, and other materials were emailed on Friday. We hope many of you plan to attend so we can meet our quorum requirement!
- **Worship in February** — We will resume our regular schedule next Sunday morning, February 9: 8:45 Worship, 10:00 Bible Study, 11:15 Worship. Our proclaimers for the rest of February are: Bob Cunningham (Feb. 9), Justin Sizemore (Feb. 16), and Sally Evans (Feb. 23).
- **Wednesday Nights: Moving Faith Forward** — On Wednesday, February 5, Carol Harston will conclude her sessions on Moving Faith Forward. Since leaving Highland's ministerial staff in 2021, Carol has been deepening her traumatizing theology research by wondering what it looks like for people to move past their beliefs and grow into spiritual maturity. Carol's vision is a future in which people can live at peace with the past, confident in their ability to face whatever life brings, and open to a revived spirituality that evolves as life changes. We will meet shortly after 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Upcoming Events:**
 - Today: Mary Alice's reception following worship; QCC at 4:00 PM on Zoom
 - February 9: Regular Sunday Schedule returns: 8:45 Worship, 10:00 Bible Study, 11:15 Worship
 - March 5: Ash Wednesday
 - March 7-9: Women's Retreat—contact Ginger Miller for more information
 - March 15: Jean Janes Yard Sale



**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.

Jerre and Frank Bassett
CUSTODIANS

Cheryl Davis
OFFICE MANAGER

Tracy Holladay
INTERIM STAFF COORDINATOR

Margaret Pennington
MINISTRY COUNCIL CHAIR

Lauren Blackwell
INTERIM MINISTRY COORDINATOR

Megan Fuller
CHILDREN AND FAMILY
MINISTRY ASSISTANT

Robin Ramsay Lee
DEACON CHAIR

Renee Purtlebaugh
ASSOCIATE PASTOR TO CHILDREN
AND THEIR FAMILIES

Bob Cunningham
INTERIM ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Kathleen Gordon
FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Walter McWhorter
CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Justin Sizemore
ASSOCIATE PASTOR TO YOUTH
AND YOUNG ADULTS

Paul Henderson
ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF MUSIC
AND WORSHIP

Joseph Parr
ORGANIST AND MUSIC ASSOCIATE