

## Introducing Senior Pastor finalist: Rev. Dr. Carol Harston

The Pastor Search Committee is honored to recommend Carol Harston as your new Senior Pastor.

The committee worked diligently to find the right candidate for Highland's present and future. When we narrowed a strong list of candidates to the final three, we knew Highland would have capable leadership no matter which candidate rose to the top. Because of the high quality of applicants, the final decision did not come easily. However, it became clear following many months of interviews, discussions, questions, and prayers that Carol was an exceptional candidate—and person—who rarely comes available at the right time and place.

Though Carol was born into the church, many of you may not have met her or may only know her casually. You are not alone. At the onset, some members of the search committee did not know Carol either. We are excited for you to get to know her as the committee did. If you have known Carol for many years, you still need an introduction. The ten-year-old Carol Collier, as delightful as she may have been, is not the same as Rev. Dr. Carol Harston in 2026. If you knew her as the Minister to Youth from 2007 to 2016, or as the Associate Pastor of Faith Formation and Congregational Engagement from 2017 to 2021, we believe you will be even more impressed by *this* Carol.

Her life experiences and her understanding of God's promise continue to expand. She has performed important work in not only understanding the ways the Church has harmed its people, but also the ways in which the Church can and should help in healing. When her husband Drew accepted a foot and ankle orthopedic fellowship at the Duke University School of Medicine in Durham, Carol attended Duke Divinity School, where she graduated as a Doctor of Ministry with a focus on Christian leadership. Her thesis was titled: "Traumatizing Theology and the Healing Church: Sharing Stories, Recovering Agency, and Finding Fellow Pilgrims on the Journey."

Carol most recently served as a consultant with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Thriving Congregations Initiative. She worked with churches in Louisville and Florida. She has served for nearly five years as a trustee for BSK Theological Seminary; she has chaired the trustees since 2024.

Carol brings a powerful combination of pastoral care (she loves people and isn't afraid to say it), preaching ability, and leadership. She is a visionary who also respects and honors the history and traditions of HBC. In an era when churches increasingly compete with non-church organizations for the talents of outstanding ordained ministers, we are fortunate. The church—*this* church—is where Carol wants to serve.

Carol and Drew have three sons: James, 15; Collier, 12; and Walter, 9, who are active in many Highland programs.

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