

Highland Baptist Church Strategic Planning Committee

Core Values Refresh and SWOT Analysis Executive Summary DRAFT

May 20, 2025

Core Values Refresh

Our Strategic Planning team has developed a draft refresh of our Highland Baptist Church core values. Please see below, which we will discuss and ask for feedback at the Congregational Meeting on June 1st. We have aimed to organize the core values into 3 themes and reduce the number from 10 to 6 so they are easier to digest and remember.

Current 10 Core Values

1. We value **being doers of the word**, living out what Jesus taught: showing hospitality to strangers, confronting injustice, giving voice to those who have been silenced.
2. We **value all people**, not in spite of, but precisely because of all that makes each one unique.
3. We value a **courageous, progressive theology** whose relevance extends from the pew to the street, that engages both the mind and the heart, and that welcomes everyone from the skeptic to the devoted.
4. We value **a healthy community**, where honest relationships provide all people safety, encouragement, acceptance, and healing, and challenge us to practice gentleness, forgiveness, and continued growth.
5. We value a **deeply spiritual, Christ-centered faith** that opens us to life, equips us to serve, and calls us to action.
6. We value **broad and deep worship** that invites us into the mystery of a loving God.
7. We value **growing together across the lifespan**, through multi-generational and intergenerational relationships and ministries.
8. We value **being good stewards** of all we have been given, discerning together how best to use our financial, physical, human, and spiritual gifts to follow Jesus and carry out our mission.
9. We value **embracing challenge and change**: naming hard things, asking questions, and leaning into tensions and ambiguity.
10. We value being rooted in our **distinct and radical heritage** that compels us to breathe new life into bedrock Baptist principles.

Proposed Changes to Core Values

We have refreshed the values and organized them into 3 themes:

- Spirituality (What We Believe)
- Community (Who We Are)
- Faith in Action (How We Make a Difference)

Spirituality (What We Believe)	Community (Who We Are)	Faith in Action (How We Make a Difference)
We value a courageous, progressive theology rooted in Baptist principles whose relevance extends from the pew to the street, that engages both the mind and the heart, and that welcomes everyone from the skeptic to the devoted.	We value all people , not in spite of, but precisely because of all that makes each one unique. We are committed to growing together across the lifespan , through multi-generational and intergenerational relationships and ministries.	We value being doers of the word , living out what Jesus taught: showing hospitality to strangers, confronting injustice, and amplifying voices that have traditionally been silenced.
We value a deeply spiritual, Christ-centered faith that opens us to life, equips us to serve, and calls us to action. We express that faith through broad and deep worship .	We value a healthy community , where honest relationships provide all people safety, encouragement, acceptance, and healing. We embrace challenge and change : naming hard things, asking questions, and leaning into tensions and ambiguity.	We value being good stewards of all we have been given, discerning together how best to use our financial, physical, human, and spiritual gifts to follow Jesus and carry out our mission.

SWOT Analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Areas of Opportunity, and Threats)

Our Strategic Planning team has developed a SWOT analysis to define what we believe are Highland Baptist's key strengths, weaknesses, areas of opportunity and threats. This is one of the inputs into creating a more detailed strategic action plan in coming weeks. We will review and ask for feedback during the Congregational meetings on June 1st.

Strengths

- Quality- "What we do, we do well"
- Worship experience and outstanding choir
- Lay-led / talent in church-" Strong lay community doing a lot of great work of the church with many talents to offer"
- Diverse age range
- Engaged, consistent, strong community
- Physical location (also noted as a weakness)

- Welcoming and comforting spirit
- Haven for wounded Christians
- Willingness to show up for social justice
- Progressive theology with “blended” liturgy
- Exceptional sermons/ messages
- Embrace curiosity, openness and flexibility
- Relative lack of drama
- Variety and depth of bible study classes
- Strength of children and youth ministry

Weaknesses

- Location
- Parking
- Capacity and space limits
- Accessibility /bathrooms
- Maintenance costs
- Hubris / Pride / ‘Echo Chamber’- are we open and diverse to other views/opinions
- Communication
- Sometimes too siloed
- Administration challenges
- Complexity and time for high quality services
- Lack of Diversity- ethnic diversity
- Friday night vs Sunday experience- how do we look for more purposeful interaction
- Finances
 - Lack of endowment
 - Debt/ high interest rate
- Challenging to engage everyone who wants to serve
- Organizational complexity
- Lack of balance in momentum and visibility in ministries
- Disconnect between “Baptist” and “progressive” church

Areas of Opportunity

- More FUN and casual time to be together as a community
- Create a safe space in this political time
- How to include families /children more often

- Keep HBC in public consciousness through media/ storytelling
- Communication ministry group
- 501c3 / creative fundraising ideas
- Use of space
- Be a voice for or within community and for social justice

Threats

- How do we look forward, not backward
- Maintaining and growing regular attendance
- Today's culture / reduction in new joiners
- Relevance- secularization
- Christian nationalism
- Financial anxiety
- Cultural anxiety
- Government chaos
- History of staff loss
- Burn out of staff
- Ability for equity- how do we champion equitable employee practices with limited resources?
- Need to reach Gen Z