



What's Happening at *Highland*

JANUARY 2021

Sanctuary Work and a Word from Pastor Alan

Highland is beginning construction work in the sanctuary in January, expanding the chancel steps and replacing floor coverings throughout the sanctuary. These improvements are all to enhance the worship experience in the sanctuary, though they will also enhance weddings, concerts, musical performances, and community gatherings. Highland's Trustees approved the work at their December meeting and a generous grant from the Endowment Committee will fund the materials and construction (an estimated \$40,712).

The top step of the chancel area (in front of the communion rail) will be expanded from three feet to six feet deep, with the steps expanded to two feet deep each. This will include two sets of steps with double handrails for improved access to the communion rails. Existing carpet will be replaced and the flooring in the entire chancel area up to the front pew will be replaced with LVT (a laminate flooring that looks like hardwood). Changes will not affect the lectern, pulpit, altar, or choir loft. The first two rows of pews will be removed and the front modesty rail moved back accordingly. We will also expand the area being served by the

hearing loop to include the full center and right pew sections.

The changes have several benefits: improved handicap access to the chancel area; larger chancel area for musical performances and corporate acts of worship; improved access to the ramp in front of the choir loft; replacing carpeting approaching 25 years old; upgrading the chancel to flooring that will prevent stains from communion elements and function better for acoustics.

The design work was completed by Lay Leader Ryan Lockett and the step construction will be completed by Bob, the same gentleman who did such beautiful woodwork building the new stage in Bradley Hall. Highland's staff and Trustees agreed that this is an ideal time to undertake such disruptive work while the space is not required for weekly worship services. We look forward to having the work completed when we are able to resume in-person services.

Many thanks to folks who gave expertise and generous use of their time to plan this project: Tom Lamb, Kevin Quick, Ryan Lockett, David Beam, Gail Flowers, Earleen Barnes, and Debbie Carroll.

Christ's work through the church continues. Highland has never closed, but we have been doing ministry in different ways.

We are undertaking construction work while we are in a time of physical distancing and streaming our worship services, and so it will be complete when we are able to come back together. The repair work being done in the breezeway is simply a reflection of its age. The work being done in the sanctuary will improve that worship space to greatly enhance the quality of our worship services.

Some people may wonder how we are able to continue to do renovation work when our budgetary giving is so tight. The reason is the Endowment Fund. We have a number of funds that have been established for specific purposes. None of those funds can be used for our operating budget needs.

Your regular giving enables so much of the work of Jesus Christ at Highland. We continue to maintain and improve our facilities, but I also ask that you consider increasing the amount you give to our annual budget so we can put these beautiful facilities to full use for the glory of God. We look forward to the day we can gather in person again, but we continue ministry however we can.

Grace and Peace, *Alan*

Financial Update

As we approach the end of 2020, our financial news regarding current year income and expense is...well...OK...not great, but pretty fair given the challenges we have faced.

First, the good news:

- Through November, we have slightly exceeded the minimum giving benchmarks the Finance Committee adopted at the beginning of the pandemic.
- Our operating deficit at November 30 is \$66,000 less than it was at this point last year. (It is even \$53,000 less than it was at 11/30/18.)
- December giving is always strong at Highland, and, so far, through the first week of the month we seem to be

keeping pace with last year, or even slightly surpassing it.

- Assuming our PPP loan is forgiven (and we believe it will be), we should finish 2020 well in the black.

All of this is good news, especially given what we have experienced this year! But we also need to position ourselves for strong support of mission and ministry moving forward into the new year, and we face some challenges there. For example:

- We do still have a very large deficit at the moment (more than \$80,000), and we need to continue our strong December giving trends through year-end,

Financial Standing (12/2020):	Year-to-date (Nov. 30)	2020 Annual Budget
Pledged & Unpledged Offerings	819,264	985,259
All Other Income (excluding PPP funds)	168,523	261,116
Total Income	\$987,787	\$ 1,246,375
Total Expenses	\$1,070,565	\$ 1,246,375
Net Income (excluding PPP funds)	\$ -82,778	\$ 0

when typically quite large offerings are received. (See detailed numbers below)

- Stewardship: compared to this point in last year's annual stewardship campaign, we have 16 fewer pledges for 2021, and the total amount pledged is \$62,000 lower.
- As far as we know at this point, there will be nothing like a PPP Loan program available to us during the new year.

So what to do?

- As always, pray!
- Prayerfully consider your year-end giving plans and keep HUMC in mind.
- Turn in your pledge - yes, there is still time.
- And even let us know if your own financial situation has changed and you are unable to pledge or give at this time, which will help us in our planning, knowing that you are in our prayers.

Endowment News

At its November 12 meeting, the Endowment Team approved these grants:

Amt. Awarded	Recipient	Category/Purpose
\$2,500	New Life Ministries Christmas for Orphans	Missions
\$6,600	CASA Affordable Housing	Missions
\$1,252	Trustees: Organ tuning and pipe replacement	Music
\$2,000	Trustees: New timpani & stool	Music
\$20,268	Trustees: Courtyard canopy steel repair	Capital Projects
\$40,712	Trustees: Sanctuary chancel steps and chancel improvements	Capital Projects

Please note that these awards were made from funds that can only be used for the stated purpose. The Committee chose not to make awards from funds that can be used for other purposes.

Since inception in 1983, Highland's endowment has made total grants in these amounts:

Capital Projects	\$1,328,911
Music	\$251,672
Ministry	\$61,200
Missions	\$192,373
Other	\$53,943
Total	\$1,888,100



Advent at Home:
 This year saw us celebrating the season more from home. "Advent in a Box" gave families the materials, crafts, and resources to prepare for the Christmas celebration from home.



Please address questions to Endowment Chair George Deaton, (919) 851-1255 or gdeaton@att.net.

Christmas Eve Food Drive

Highland collected another minibus full of food for the Interfaith Food Shuttle with the help of our surrounding community on Christmas Eve. Thanks to the Wood/Atkins family, the Lockett family (pictured below), and James Myers for helping with drop-off that day.



Remembrance Tree

What a blessing to know that over 350 lights shine on our front lawn honoring and remembering our loved ones this holiday season! O'Dell and Amy Massey have sent letters to a vast number of our United States, Canada and emailed letters around to world to our friends from Guyana - each sharing our church's name, our mission to help others, and your love for the honoree during this Christmas Season. Together, we raised a net donation of \$3,270 for The Promise Family. A copy of the Honoree Listing can be found in the window near the tree or on our website. Many thanks to Amy & O'Dell for leading this annual holiday ministry.



Rise Against Hunger

Highland successfully hosted a socially-distanced meal packing event with Rise Against Hunger on Saturday, December 5. Forty-five volunteers packed over 6,200 meals! In addition, we met our fundraising goal to pay for these meals and additional meals that will be packed by other Rise Against Hunger volunteers.



January Birthdays

Grace Keough	01/01	Pam Blomquist	01/17
Charles Noneman	01/01	Don Carroll	01/18
Carter Wray Simpson	01/01	Benjamin Franklin	01/19
Fred Alphin	01/02	Jonathan Marchi	01/19
Mike Pate	01/03	Will Prevatt	01/19
Sharon Johnson	01/04	Rosalind Thompson	01/19
Wilder Prevatt	01/04	Susan Rawls	01/20
Peggy McCants	01/05	Martha Robinson	01/20
Barry Smith	01/05	Ellen Tucker	01/20
Kathryn Thornton	01/05	Hannah Chapman	01/21
Ruth Coble	01/06	Joyce Walker	01/21
Lou Davis	01/08	Tom Pace	01/24
Lisa Shaffer	01/09	Richard Poole	01/24
Hunter West	01/10	Laurel Kreisel	01/25
Carneal Downey	01/11	Robert Schurtman	01/25
Mary Keough	01/11	Amanda Blomquist	01/27
Elizabeth Sandling	01/12	Jack Penny	01/27
Carson Ray	01/13	Jackson Melton	01/28
Davis Ray	01/13	Pamela Goss	01/29
Chris Coker	01/14	Don Sides	01/31
Mike Mizelle	01/14		
Marcia Nance	01/14		
Sean Richards	01/14		
Harriet Grand	01/15		
Mary Yarborough	01/15		
Collin Heiler	01/16		

Sympathies

We lift up those who have lost loved ones in the last month. The Highland family offers its deepest sympathies to:

- Sympathy to Diane Racey and family upon the death of her sister Linda Gross on Monday, November 30.
- Sympathy to Julie Driggers and family upon the death of her mother Alice Goode on December 2.
- Sympathy to the friends and family of Hazel Jenks upon her death on December 5.
- Sympathy to Carlyle Teague and family upon the death of his wife Martha on December 23.



LOOKING TO 2021

Outdoor Worship

We begin the new year with an outdoor worship service in Highland's parking lot, led and organized by some of the college-age young adults at Highland. Our youth group will participate, but the whole Highland family is welcome to come and worship at 4 PM on Sunday, January 3.

Youth Group Continues

Our youth group met through the fall months outdoors at Highland, sharing dinner together and finding creative ways to continue in ministry together while practicing pandemic precautions. They wrapped up with a Christmas party on December 13 including making gingerbread houses (picture right & above). Weekly youth group resumes January 10, meeting on Sunday afternoons, 2 - 4 PM, to enjoy the warmest part of the day through the winter months.

