



# RIDGE RIDER



Dear Friends,  
Have you done it yet? The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) would like to hear how you think things are going at Highland. Your input matters. It can be a couple of sentences, or a couple of pages. But please send your

thoughts to Lee Smither at [lee.smither@yahoo.com](mailto:lee.smither@yahoo.com). Each year the Lead Pastor delivers to the Charge Conference a “State of the Church” summary, which includes an account of pastoral ministry. I wanted to share it with you. In a turbulent year which included an historic General Conference, this report covers attendance, giving, leadership, inclusion, pastoral care, staff leadership, and an invitation to voice your thoughts.

### Attendance

Kevin Quick supplied the attendance data comparing in-person attendance from Jan- June in 2022, 23, and 24. I came to Highland in June 2022. Since the beginning of my tenure, total in-person worship has increased from 138-198, a 43% increase over a two-year period. We wait until the year’s end for full-year comparisons. Attendance at the Connection has more than doubled in two years. The 11:00 service gained 19 in 2023 and lost 10 in 2024. Deaths and disabilities seem to take a heavier toll on the 11:00 service.

Jan.-June Averages	9 AM In-Person	11 AM In-Person	In-Person Total
2022	33	105	138
2023	62	134	196
2024	74	124	198

### Giving

The financial information below compares General Fund pledges for those same three years, showing a 34% increase over the two-year period. This year we also ran an \$80,000 surplus through the summer, a first.

**2022: 120 pledges for \$749,799**  
**2023: 151 pledges for \$911,735**  
**2024: 169 pledges for \$1,006,553**

### 5-Year Plan and Leadership Development

I asked the Council to approve a “Joel Committee,” which is a five-year planning team with multiple sub-groups for each ministry area. Meaningful, faithful, forward-looking plans are being generated primarily through a lay-led process.

### Inclusion

As pastor of a Reconciling Ministries congregation, I asked the Council to include an LGBT+ sub-committee to create a 5-year plan for our ministry with LGBT+ people and their supporters, and to create an LGBT+ small group. This sub-committee did a great job. The original plan was more aggressive than some of our congregants were comfortable with, and I worked to help the two groups find common ground. Our Co-Lay Leader also wrote a letter of explanation to concerned parents.

Currently, we are forming a permanent LGBT+ ministry work area whose chair will have a seat on Church Council. I have also worked with this group to form a monthly LGBT+ fellowship group called Stonewall Fellowship.

We now have an excellent plan for increasing inclusion, which is sensitive to the desires of those who don’t want to move too quickly. However, this process of compromise has angered some of our more progressive leaders. Please let SPRC know your thoughts, as requested by Chair, Lee Smither, in recent E-news announcements.

### Pastoral Care, Outreach, Bible Study

Visiting the sick on weekdays as well as weekends, is one of the great joys of ministry for me, although the need always outstrips the time available. I give leadership to our church’s Outreach including 120,000 postcards to our community, attempting to contact every first-time visitor, and keeping up with the progress of newcomers. I lead worship monthly at Springmoor Retirement Community. This Fall, I teach a weekly Bible study at Waltonwood on Mondays and at Church on Wednesday nights. I also work to help coordinate the ministries you read about below.

The Rev. Janet Baucom is a part time pastor with full-time impact. She leads multiple small groups and administers our lay-visitation ministry. She supports Sunday School, gives joyful leadership at both worship services, and is the pastor who meets with our Mission Team. Janet is also an integral part of our Reach Team. Perhaps most importantly, she co-led our Confirmation Class with Neil Smith and many wonderful Confirmation Mentors.

The Rev. Kevin Quick continues to expand our excellent music program as he leads the Connection Band, Handbells, Choir, Orchestra and other special music events. That is a lot of dedicated and talented volunteers, and he leads them well. One of the best things he and I have done together is to put together a plan for choral scholars, giving a stipend to student singers at our 11:00 services. As part of our pastoral staff, Kevin and Janet make hospital visits when I cannot.

Amy Takahashi, who directs our Children's Ministry, seems to outdo herself every year. For the past two years she has given leadership to our Wednesday evening meals, often preparing the meals herself with wonderful volunteer help. She has created multiple events for families with children including the Earth Day Festival, Fall Festival, VBS, Sleepout to End Homelessness, Movie Nights, Advent Workshops, and more. On a weekly basis, she provides a great Children's Sermon at both services, teaches Sunday School, and has Chapel Time for HCC children.

Neil Smith, our Youth Director, is appreciated by everyone. Youth, parents, and volunteers like him, admire him, and respect him. He has reinstated a Youth Bible Study on Wednesday nights which has been significant. He has given leadership to multiple mission and worship events including City Servants, and Highland Service Project. His Youth Program on Sunday evenings consistently draws 20-25 young people. As mentioned, he gave great leadership to our Confirmation Class this year.

Tom Lamb continues to make our facilities run smoothly. He is so good at this he makes it look easy. It isn't. We have two parsonages and a huge facility used by myriad groups every week. Major parts of our plant range in age from about 10 years to 70 years old. Tom is worth his weight in gold. Assisting him are our custodians Tung and Cing. This huge place is always clean and well-kept inside and out. These faithful Christians are the reason why.

Perhaps the most beautiful change to our facility this year has been the transformation of the Narthex. With cooperation from Tom and the Trustees, this lay-led group took it upon themselves to "do something" to make our Narthex more welcoming. They raised the money themselves, and they gave our congregation a beautiful gift!

Deanna Clack is our full-time business manager, administrating over two million dollars in revenue and expenses for our total operations annually. Always helpful, kind, and conscientious, our finances are managed with skill and probity.

Gretchen Shaffer is Director of our Highland Children's Center. HCC has the coveted 5-Star rating from the North Carolina Division of Child Development. Our HCC staff have worked together at Highland over 175 years combined. With a waiting list of over 350, this ministry led by Gretchen Shaffer and Judy Sprout is admired state-wide.

Stephenie Sanders is our three-quarter-time Director of Communications. If you have noticed how beautiful our Ridge Rider, website, E-News, postcards, and videos are, she is star of that show. This is an important part of our Reach to members, newcomers, and inquirers. Always fun to work with, her heart is in the ministry of this congregation.

Karen Winters is our part-time Administrative Assistant. Since coming aboard, she has worked with Janet Baucom to transition our database from ACS to Realm, which is a lot more complicated than anyone would expect. She has also navigated the preparations for Charge Conference and Consecration Sunday while keeping all the "regular" things flowing.

Our Missions Ministry continues to find and uplift some of the neediest people in our city and state. Our award-winning garden supplied over 1,700 pounds of food for local needy families. Using support dollars from you, Cullen Whitley led an intrepid group to the mountains a few weeks ago to aid hurricane victims. Flood Buckets have been prepared and taken to the Merci Center, and over 100 pounds of candy was delivered to Waynesville UMC from you, for their Trunk or Treat.

But the real star of all these ministries is YOU. Without your loving support, your faithful giving, and your enthusiastic work, none of this would be possible. Thank you for making Highland United Methodist Church a shining light on a hill through your commitment to LOVE, SERVE, and SHARE.

Highland United Methodist Church is set for another great year of ministry as 2025 dawns. But for a sound future, it is important to make sure everyone's voice is heard. So please do send a brief message, or a long letter, to our SPRC chair, Lee Smither at [lee.smither@yahoo.com](mailto:lee.smither@yahoo.com). We really do want to hear from everyone. How do you think our church is doing?

Blessings,



Pastor John



## Pancake Supper & Talent Show to Support Our Youth Mission Trip to Costa Rica

Sunday, November 3, 5 PM, Bradley Hall

In Summer 2025, our high school youth group and college students will travel to Costa Rica for a mission trip! We will fly out on July 19 and spend the week serving in San Isidro with CRMP (Costa Rica Mission Project). We'll do several service projects while there, including construction, repairs, VBS, and other services where our gifts are needed. Join us on November 3 for a Pancake Supper and Talent Show! Your act is welcome in the show, and proceeds raised at the supper support the trip.



## Women's Bible Study

Mondays beginning November 4, 10 AM, Room 209

All women are invited to join us for our next study, Acts: Catching Up With The Spirit by Matthew Skinner, beginning November 4. The Women's Bible Study meets on Mondays, 10:00 - 11:30 AM, in room 209. Interested? Contact Rev. Janet Baucom for more information ([janet@highlandumc.org](mailto:janet@highlandumc.org)).

## A Time and Place to Pray on Election Day

Tuesday, November 5, 9 AM-7 PM, Conference Room

Highland is hosting a prayer labyrinth in the Conference Room on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, to allow a time and space for prayer and quiet reflection. Walking a prayer labyrinth is an ancient Christian tradition that encourages meditation, slow movement, and deep breathing. All are welcome!

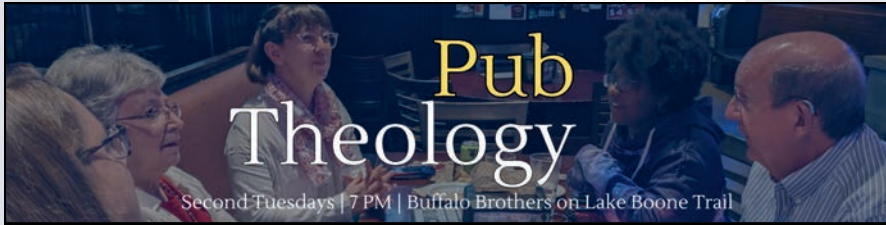


## Pizza & Movie Night

Friday, November 15, 5:30 PM Pizza, 6 PM Movie, Conference Room

Families are invited to join us for our next movie night. We'll start with pizza followed by a family-friendly movie. There is no charge for the movie, donations to help cover the cost of pizza are welcome. Please RSVP by noon on Friday, November 15 to [amy@highlandumc.org](mailto:amy@highlandumc.org).

# FAITH & FELOWSHIP



## Pub Theology

**Tuesday, November 12, 7 PM, Buffalo Brothers**  
Join us for faith-filled conversation, pizza, and a pint! All are welcome. Let Rev. Janet Baucom know you're coming and she'll save you a seat: [janet@highlandumc.org](mailto:janet@highlandumc.org).

## UMM Breakfast

**Saturday, November 9, 10 AM, Bradley Hall**  
Join us for breakfast and Duane Reaugh's annual "Technology and Gadget Review." Contact Scott Loftin for more info: [s@theloftins.net](mailto:s@theloftins.net).



## Highland United Methodist Men

*Breakfast*

Second Saturdays  
8:30 AM

## Mommies Group

Saturday, November 16  
10 AM  
*Childcare available*

## Mommies Group

**Sat., November 16, 10 AM, Conference Room**  
We're moving to the third Saturday for November! We'll have coffee and snacks and childcare! We'll share ideas, concerns, and encouragement. All Moms are welcome. If you can come and need childcare please contact [amy@highlandumc.org](mailto:amy@highlandumc.org).

## Highlanders Senior Adult Fellowship

**Tuesday, November 19, 11:30 AM, Bradley Hall**  
This month's gathering will be a Poinsettia Delivery and Christmas Card Signing Day - regular luncheon at 11:30 am in Bradley Hall, catered by Neomonde.



*Highlanders*

HUMC Senior Adult Fellowship  
Third Tuesdays, 11:30 AM

This will be a fun meeting of signing cards for all of Highland's "In Crowd," enjoying holiday music, and sharing a devotional message as we prepare for Advent. [Note: Instead of a December luncheon, Highlanders will enjoy the Circle 7 UWF Christmas Dinner.] Call the church office or sign up at the reception desk by Sunday, November 17. Heads up--our December gathering will be a special holiday outing to see

**THE STONEWALL FELLOWSHIP:  
A NEW LGBTQIA+ GROUP AT HIGHLAND  
FOURTH TUESDAYS | 7 PM | PARLOR**

## The Stonewall Fellowship

**Tuesday, November 26 | 7 PM | Parlor**

As a Reconciling Ministries congregation, this new group will continue in the affirmation of and outreach to this community and their allies. All are welcome! Contact Mark Cox for more information: [markmarkcox@aol.com](mailto:markmarkcox@aol.com)

## From the Finance Office

We continue to operate with a significantly positive net income thanks to your continued support and dedication to Highland's ministries.

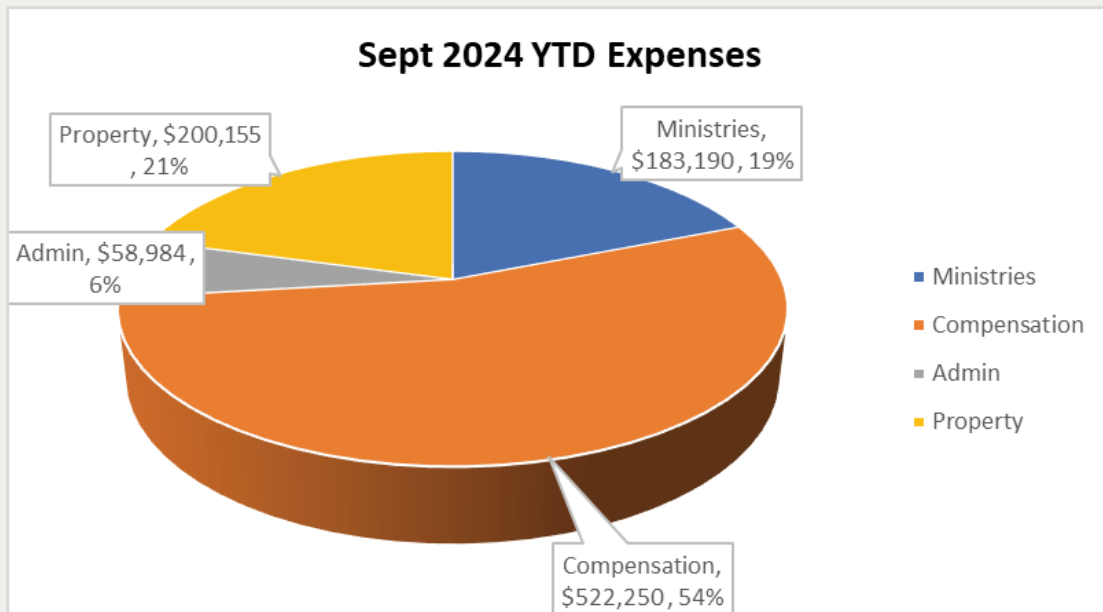
On October 27, we celebrated Consecration Sunday as we dedicated our gifts to the work of God through Highland together. It was a wonderful time of worship and fellowship. We are grateful to everyone who worked hard to make this day possible and for everyone who participated.

If you have not yet submitted your 2025 Estimate of Giving, please do so at your earliest convenience. The Finance Committee is in the final stages of crafting the 2025 budget, and knowing your estimate will help us wisely allocate our funds to do the best ministry we can together.

Pledges can be emailed to Deanna Clack, submitted in-person or via mail with an Estimate of Giving card, or you view instructions to pledge online at [highlandumc.org/giving](http://highlandumc.org/giving).

Thank you for your commitment to supporting the work of God through Highland United Methodist Church!

Income	
Gen Fund Contributions	\$769,890
Other Income	\$271,579
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,041,469</b>
Expenses	
Ministries	\$183,190
Compensation	\$522,250
Admin	\$58,984
Property	\$200,155
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$964,579</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$76,890</b>



**GIVE ONLINE**

*Your giving makes ministry happen!*



### Questions about Finances?

Contact Finance Manager, Deanna Clack:  
[deanna@highlandumc.org](mailto:deanna@highlandumc.org) or  
 919-787-4240 ext 108



## Food Drive

Sunday, November 3, 2-5 PM

Bring canned goods and non-perishable food items to the front entrance between 2-5 or bring them with you to church on Sunday morning. Donations will be taken to the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.



## Food and Clothing Donations for Centennial Campus Middle School Students in Need

Highland's missions team is sponsoring an ongoing food and clothing donation drive for Centennial Campus Middle School. Non-perishable food (granola bars, Pop Tarts, ramen soup, canned pasta like ravioli or beefaroni, and cans of fruit or soup are favorites) and clothing are accepted. Donations can be dropped off in the marked box outside the church offices. These items are currently of particular need: Hoodies (all sizes, including Youth large and XL) Leggings/sweatpants (Youth Large-Adult XL) granola bars, deodorant.

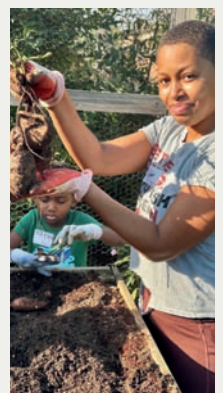


## Victory Garden -15th Season-

Join Highland's Community Garden crew as we celebrate the 15th season of this beautiful garden.

The garden is going strong and heading into the fall season--get ready for some serious squash! This is a great way to get outdoors, meet new friends, and give back to your community!

The garden crew meets every Saturday at 9 AM, and you're invited! Questions? Contact Donna Wolcott: [donna.wolcott2@gmail.com](mailto:donna.wolcott2@gmail.com).



Over 1,700 pounds of produce donated so far in 2024!

# ADVENT PREVIEW



Advent Wreath  
Workshop & Potluck  
5 PM



Christmas Cantata  
10 AM  
Journey to Bethlehem  
Living Nativity  
5 PM



Moravian Love Feast  
7 PM



Bluegrass Service  
10 AM  
Christmas Luncheon  
11 AM



Christmas Eve Services  
5 & 7 PM

## Remembrance Tree

The Remembrance Tree is a way of remembering friends and loved ones during the holidays by purchasing a \$10 light in honor or memory of that special person in your life. A letter from the church will be mailed to your honoree or to their family acknowledging that a light is lit in their honor on our tree.

Our 2024 Remembrance Tree will be lit from December 1-31 on the HUMC lawn. Lights may be purchased through November 30th.

All proceeds will be given to UMCOR to assist with the needs of survivors of Hurricane Helene.

Send your check to HUMC Business office marked "Remembrance Tree" or give online and select the "Remembrance Tree" fund.

Purchased by \_\_\_\_\_  
In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
Letter of recognition mailed to \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Poinsettias

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory or honor of a special person and have it placed in the sanctuary during Advent, order forms will be available in the narthex at Highland and online at [highlandumc.org/advent](http://highlandumc.org/advent).

Please return the order form and payment to the church office or call Becky Wood (919-247-8202). Plants are \$10 each. Checks should be made payable to Highland United Methodist Church or give online and select the "poinsettias" fund. Deadline for ordering is Sunday, November 24. Poinsettias will be available for collection after the Christmas Eve service.

Missions Team  
Sponsoring Gift  
Collection for Pride  
for Parents



# CHURCH FAMILY





# CHURCH FAMILY



## AUTUMN @ HIGHLAND

Fall is a beautifully busy time of year for our church.

Above, you'll find memories from:

- Youth and the families working hard to unload pumpkins for the Pumpkin Patch. The proceeds benefit our vibrant and active Youth program.
- Our 4th Annual Fall Festival where we welcomed lots of folks from the wider community, assembled flood buckets for Hurricane Helene victims, raised funds for our Disaster Relief Team and the Youth Costa Rica Mission Trip. AND we had a great time doing it!
- Storytime in the Pumpkin Patch--we welcomed lots of new faces to our campus for this family event!
- The Highlanders' outing to the State Fair together for Senior Day. Free admission and free Bojangles' with church friends? Can't beat it.
- Highland racking up another solid round of ribbons at the State Fair...including a blue ribbon for our Bunny Potato!
- Delivering flood buckets to MERCI in Goldsboro, NC.
- Highland's Disaster Relief Team deploying to Spruce Pine, NC for hazard tree work. They also distributed prayer shawls to folks affected by the storm.

 Love. Serve. Share. *With Us.*

# CHURCH FAMILY

## November Birthdays

11/01	Augie Rocha
11/02	Murray Downs, Bill George, Lea Bross
11/03	Elizabeth Hudgins
11/05	Duane Reaugh, Dawn Bryant, Steve Bryant, Kathryn Dove
11/06	Susan Phelps
11/07	Wesley Coble
11/09	Claire Taylor
11/10	Pat Scott, Mike Bawden

11/11	Effie Ann Clayton, Billie Poole, Ty Hicks
11/12	Cing Cing
11/13	Sarah Costea, Elizabeth Ray
11/14	Kendall Myers
11/15	Scott Loftin
11/17	Marietta Gray, Jeanne Vodicka
11/21	Henri Braun, Jane Gray, London White
11/23	Wendell McKenzie

11/24	Jean Shelly, Judy Abee, Noelle Hagen
11/25	Toni Downey, Diane Racey
11/27	Elaine Capriglione, Amanda Nunn, Channing Stuart
11/28	Matt Atkins, Jane Webb, Judy Schmidt
11/29	Bob Kruger, Frank Taylor, Phyllis Edwards, Jeremy McPherson, Jacob McPherson
11/30	Jackson March

## Please Remember In Prayer

Mark Adamson  
 Nang Dik Tuang  
 Bonnie Anderson  
 Melva Armstrong  
 (Amy Massey's cousin)  
 Susan Bailey  
 (Doris Kruger's daughter)  
 David Beam  
 Brady Beck  
 (Bev and Keith Beck's son)  
 Paul Blomquist  
 Paul Braun  
 Marcia Brugger  
 (Jamie Pierce's mother)  
 Teresa Burt  
 Jonathan Chapman

Archie Clark  
 Vance Clayton  
 James Cornell  
 (Amy Massey's son)  
 Beth Deaton  
 Linda Edwards  
 Phyllis and Alex Edwards  
 Cleo Flowers  
 (Kevin Flowers' mother)  
 Margie Ford  
 Ben Franklin  
 Dennis Goodson  
 (Brenda Hudson's brother)  
 Walter Harvey  
 (Grace Haven's brother)  
 Mark Haven  
 (Grace Haven's son)

Doug Hoffman  
 Betsey Huber  
 (Doris Huber's daughter-in-law)  
 Glenda Johnson  
 Doris Kruger  
 Jeanine Lueke  
 Amy Massey  
 Cliff McCowan  
 Georgie McKenzie  
 Dennis McLain  
 Mary McLeod  
 Dot McGee  
 Linda Moran  
 Brenda Murphy  
 (Joyce Hicks' sister)

Kenley Myers  
 Robin Pendleton  
 Billie Poole  
 Betsy Pridgen  
 John Robinson  
 Harriet Roland  
 Bob Sexton  
 Jeanne Shorter  
 Janet Stuber  
 Carlyle Teague  
 Jane Webb  
 Conor and Sarah  
 Mann Willcox  
 Cathy Zachary

**We pray for peace, we pray for wisdom for world leaders, we pray for the people of Ukraine, Gaza, and Israel, and we pray for all those impacted by war.**

**Please also remember in prayer those serving in our military:** Erich Dix, James Noneman, Matthew Bawden, Ryan Shorter, Margarita Shorter

### Holding In Prayer Those Who Mourn

Our sympathy to Larry Wilson and family upon the death of his wife Judy Wilson on October 11.

# NOVEMBER EVENTS

## AT-A-GLANCE

### Charge Conference

November 3 | 2 PM | Sanctuary

### Food Drive

November 3 | 2-5 PM | see p. 6

### Youth

November 3 | Pancake Supper & Talent Show Fundraiser for Costa Rica Mission Trip  
November 17 | Youth Group  
see p. 3

### UMM Breakfast

November 9 | 8:30 AM | Bradley Hall  
see p. 4

### Pub Theology

November 12 | 7 PM | Buffalo Bros.  
see p. 4

### Family Movie Night

November 15 | 5:30 PM | see p. 3

### Mommies Group

November 16 | 10 AM | Conference Room  
see p. 4

### Highlanders

November 19 | 11:30 AM | Bradley Hall  
see p. 4

### Stonewall Fellowship

November 26 | 7 PM | Parlor | see p. 4

### Community Victory Garden Workdays

Every Saturday | 9 AM | see p. 6

# CONTACT US

Main number: 919-787-4240

Pastor: **Rev. Dr. John Tyson**

john@highlandumc.org | ext. 103

Minister of Discipleship: **Rev. Janet Baucom**

janet@highlandumc.org | ext. 105

Minister of Music: **Rev. Kevin Quick**

kevin@highlandumc.org | ext. 102

Director of Children's Ministry: **Amy Takahashi**

amy@highlandumc.org | ext. 104

Director of Youth Ministries: **Neil Smith**

neil@highlandumc.org | ext. 109

Director of Communications: **Stephanie Sanders**

stephanie@highlandumc.org | ext. 122

Director of Finance: **Deanna Clack**

deanna@highlandumc.org | ext. 108

Facilities Manager: **Tom Lamb**

tom@highlandumc.org | ext. 107

Office Administrator: **Karen Winters**

karen@highlandumc.org | ext. 106

## Pastoral Emergencies

During church office hours, please call the church office to contact one of our ministers. If you are unable to reach a pastor or if it is after hours, contact the Rev. Dr. John Tyson at 919-787-4240 ext. 103 and leave your message. He will contact you as soon as possible.

## Spread the Word

Please submit content for the website, the Ridge Rider, and the weekly E-News to Stephanie Sanders at stephanie@highlandumc.org.

## Let's Get Social!

Make sure you're following us on our social media platforms and liking, sharing, and commenting on our posts. We depend on you to help spread the word about the good work of Highland to the community!



@humcraleigh



@highlandraleigh



@highlandumc-raleigh

## Don't Miss the Deadline!

**E-News Deadline**

Tuesdays at Noon

**November Ridge Rider Deadline**

November 21

## Don't Fall Prey to Scams!

Highland Staff will NEVER send you an email or text asking you to purchase gift cards on their behalf. These messages are from scammers impersonating people you know. Any such messages should be ignored and reported to the FTC.



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Raleigh, NC 27607

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

