

The Highland Messenger

November 2011

FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

Ecclesiastes 3 tells the people of God that there is “a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.” Highland Church, I believe, is experiencing the truth of these words quite intimately. While fully aware of weeping and mourning, I first invite us to observe reasons for laughing and dancing.

Any where you look at Highland, you see vital ministries being offered to this community and beyond.

We offer three services of worship, trying to reach those who meet God through tradition as well as those who meet God through newer experiences of worship. We seek to broaden and enhance these experiences by sharing in worship with students from Virginia State University.

The mission ministry of Highland continues to grow, with the image of the table being central to our missions. Wednesday Night Community Suppers, Backpack Blessings, covenant relationship with the Colonial Heights Food Pantry, and working in Petersburg with Downtown Churches United are all ministries central to the call and the identity of Highland Church. We are also blessed to partner with Elderhomes, assisting our neighbors in need by way of building wheelchair ramps at their homes. We have also begun a shuttle bus ministry for the residents of Fort Lee, providing transportation between South Park Mall and Fort Lee, hoping to provide not only transportation but at the same time to provide a continuing invitation to be a part of this community of faith. As these ministries are offered, we at the same time continue in relationship with the Tri-Cities Domestic Violence Task Force, supporting in various ways this agency of advocacy for those suffering domestic violence.

I am grateful for growth of small group ministries at Highland. We currently have three small group studies occurring in the homes of church members, and though I believe this ministry to be accomplishing great things now, I expect this to be a ministry that becomes even richer.

**BLESSINGS
FROM
GOD**

Sunday Morning Schedule

8:30 am Worship
9:45 am Sunday School
11 am Worship
(Sanctuary)
11 am The Compass
(in the Fellowship Hall
Casual dress)

Office Hours
Monday – Thursday
8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Friday
8:00 am – 1:00 pm

Sr. Pastor's Article

We at Highland are about to launch Kids' Konnection, a ministry offered for Children and families, an age appropriate ministry to help children and families during the 11am worship hour.

In the area of hospitality, we offer a coffeehouse and talent show, as well as participate in the city's Safe Community's Night and Halloween in the Park. We will again offer an open house during the city's Christmas Parade, and seek to add to the this experience.

Again, I rejoice in these ministries, believing to be a faithful response to God's call of and claim upon Highland Church, and believing such ministries to be of blessing to those in need.

While I rejoice in these ministries, I at times discern that members of Highland may not embrace these ministries as deeply as I wish they would. I hope in the coming year that we will grow in our embrace and celebration and support of these ministries.

I am also aware that though these ministries offer great reason for rejoicing, they do not address some practical concerns of the church. Namely, membership and finances.

During the past year, we have experienced a decline in worship attendance and financial giving. The decline in worship attendance has occurred, I believe, because of deaths, moves, and members who have left the church due to unhappiness with the ministries of the church and decisions of leadership, especially the senior pastor.

I grieve the loss of these persons, and am especially troubled by the loss of those who have decided to leave this community of faith. I am troubled simply because I do not see those differences between us as differences substantial enough to bring about the decision to leave the church.

Borne of this time of mediation, with the Rev. Mike Shirley earlier this year, we have identified a set of Core Values for Highland, as well as identifying the need to address attendance and membership issues. With this in mind, we have a called Administrative Council meeting set for Oct. 29.

Despite significant cuts to the budget for 2011, we are behind in our apportionments and at great risk of failing to meet these financial obligations for the first time in memory. The budget for 2012 reflects further cuts.

Throughout my time at Highland, I have been blessed to work with gifted and committed leadership at Highland. This leadership has responded with tremendous commitment and devotion during some tough times at Highland, and I am comforted knowing that such leadership will continue to bless this church.

It appears that we are at an unsettled time in the life of Highland Church. While I confront the evidence of declining finances and declining attendance, I also cannot help but notice that Highland is set at a time and a place in which we may offer a life changing and powerful witness to the presence of God in the midst of darkness and pain. In other words, not every church is positioned to make the difference and the impact that Highland Church is. And while we confront the troubling reality and finances and attendance, I pray that we give faithful attention as well to the vital ways in which we are serving Jesus.

Sr. Pastor's Article

Ultimately, as disciples of Christ, we are a resurrection people. We serve a living God who each day gives new life. We serve a God who brings light to dark places, gives hope in the midst of despair and speaks good news in the midst of the most unlikely of circumstances. I believe Highland serves this God well, and will continue to serve him well.

Grace and Peace,

Keith Ritchie

FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Greetings Highland Church.

There is so much that has happened in the last month! I am very excited about all of the new ministry developments that have been happening around the church, and in the neighborhood surrounding the church.

During the past month, the *Compass service* has had an average of thirty worship participants each week. We have started a worship planning team that meets bi-weekly to plan and implement experiential elements and contemporary music that fits planned worship themes. The planning team has adopted the following mission statement for the *Compass service*: The mission of Highland United Methodist Church's *Compass Worship service* is to create a welcoming environment for non and nominally religious people to be introduced to and grow in their relationship with God, and to gather together in the worship of God through culturally relevant, authentic worship experiences. The planning team is also in the process of redesigning our worship space to effectively communicate different thematic elements of worship, and become more accessible for visitors to the service. We will be setting up and breaking down the worship space on a weekly basis to allow for more universal use of the fellowship hall and more flexibility in how the space is set up from week to week.

We are beginning a new worship series in *Compass* on November 6, called "It's Not Easy Being Green: Making the Most of God's Gifts." We will highlight ways in which we can be good stewards of our bodies, our planet, and our financial resources. In addition to this series, there will be two special worship services in the month on November. On November 13, the VSU praise choir Avodah will be doing the music for *Compass*, and the 11:00am Sanctuary Service will be joining us in a joint service in the fellowship hall. Then on November 20, the *Compass Service* will be joining the 11:00am Sanctuary Service in celebrating Youth Sunday, where the Highland youth group will lead us in worship.

Highland's Middle School and High School youth groups participated in both a service project and fellowship event in the month of October. On October 1st, the youth helped build a wheel chair ramp for one of the neighbors of the church through the Elder Homes project. There were 8 youth in attendance for this event. Then on October 23rd, we went on a fellowship trip to the Chesterfield Berry Farm. There were 21 participants for this trip and everyone had a great time!

Continued – Page 4

Associate Pastor

There are several awesome event come up for the youth group. On November 6, there will be a youth group planning meeting at 4:30pm in the fellowship hall. All are invited to help plan and organize fellowship events and service projects for the youth group. Youth Sunday is November 20th. The youth will be in charge or designing and leading worship for both the 8:30am and 11:00am Sanctuary Services. I ask that all the youth be available to plan and participate in this worship service. On December 11th, the youth group will go ice skating at the Ice Zone in Richmond. If you are interested in participating in any of these events, please contact Pastor Mike @ pastormtolbert@gmail.com.

The Highland small groups continue to meet and will be wrapping up their studies during the month of November. Each of the three small groups have had anywhere from 8 to 13 participants regularly attending the meetings, and have gone incredibly well. The “Why: Making Sense of God’s Will” group talked about difficult issues of faith and discussed ways to understand God’s will in the world around us. The “Christianity’s Family Tree” group discussed the different denominations that exist in our Christian family. The group experienced different types of worship elements that are central to other denominations, and discussed differences and similarities between these denominations and Methodism. The “Faith Questions” group studied the major religions of the world. The group had clergy and laity from other religions come and speak to the group about that particular religion. The group then discussed differences and similarities between those religions and Christianity.

We are looking for both participants and leaders to begin Advent small groups at the end of November. If you are interested in leading or being a participant, please email me at pastormtolbert@gmail.com.

Thank you to all the people who help with Compass, Youth, and Small Group ministries! These areas of ministry are seeing tremendous success and it is all because of the phenomenal lay leadership and involvement that are involved in them from week to week. You are all laying the foundation for the future of our church and I am incredibly grateful for your support! Please continue to pray for our church and serving God with such fervor.

In the Love of Christ,
Pastor Mike

WINTER COAT DRIVE

The Sisters-In-Faith Circle will be collecting new and gently used winter coats during the month of November.

A collection box is located by the glass doors next to the lower elevator door.
Coats will be distributed to the Prince George Clothes Closet and Ettrick Elementary School.
All sizes are needed. Thank you for your support!!

Mission Trip

The James River District is sponsoring two trips to Haiti this year. Each team will be comprised of ten persons. We will be working on a yet to be determined construction project on the island of La Govave near Anse-a-Galet. The dates are January 11-18 and 18-25. The cost for the trip will be approximately \$1200. This includes all transportation, room and board. A \$200 deposit is due as soon as possible. If interested contact Nathan Decker at pastorndecker@gmail.com or 804-898-1258.

Listed are our Shut-in's –Give them a call, send a note let them know you care and they are in your prayers (Those with asterisk would enjoy visits).

Larry & Mary Amiss	*	2 Dunlop House – 235 Dunlop Farms
Betty Bands	2	Colonial Heights, VA 23834
Virginia & Fred Barker	*	4 Brighter Living – 5301 Plaza Drive,
John Brockwell	*	Hopewell, VA 23860
Bruce Branton	*	5 Dinwiddie Nursing and
Evelyn Dail	5	Rehabilitation Home – 46 Diamond
Jackie Fenderson	7	Drive, Petersburg, VA 23860
Mary Ferguson	6	6 Tyler's Retreat at Ironbridge – (New
Barbara Kellam	*	Nursing Home – Rt. 10) 12001
Clyde Long	1*	Ironbridge Road, Chester, VA 23831
Bea Mann	*	
Edythe Martin	2	7 Golden Living Center – 287 South
Peggy Picardat	*	Blvd., Petersburg, VA 23803
Nancy Price	*	
Lillian Ross	*	
Betty Story	6	
Marty Thorne	2	
Clarence Wells	*	
Ann Webb	*	
Martha Woolfolk	*	
Joyce Westfall	5	
Alex Westmoreland	*	

ALL SAINTS' DAY

“All Saints’ Day” will be celebrated at Highland November 6th. In preparation for this service, you are asked to bring in photographs of loved ones whom you wish to remember. These photographs will be projected as part of this service. Please attach name and the way in which the loved one is connected to you. Pictures will be returned.

Out of State

Helen Moore -332 Buna Vista Avenue,
Arnold, MD 21012

Legend - 1 **Colonial Heights Health Care Center**
831 E. Ellerslie Avenue, Colonial
Heights, VA 23834

Upper Room Devotional Books are available in the Sunday School area located in the Upper Room Rack. **Cost:**
.70c Regular print \$1.00 Large print



Highland Kids' Church begins November 13 during the 11 am worship hour!

Place in the offering plate after completion.

Yes! I will attend!

Name: _____

ph: _____ email: _____

Preferred communication: ___ phone ___ email

- I am currently a Sunday School teacher or volunteer.
- I am interested in being a part of the Highland Children's Ministry.
- I will volunteer for Kids' Worship during the 11 am worship hour.
- I will help with the Volunteer Brunch.
- I will pray for the Highland Children's Ministry.

**HIGHLAND – IVEY – WESLEY
UNITED METHODIST MEN**

POTATO DROP

Saturday, November 12, 2011

7 to 11 am (or until finished)

Wesley UMC Parking Lot

45,000 pounds of potatoes from
The Society of St. Andrew
Baggers needed from Highland, Wesley and Ivey

Potatoes for Tri-City Area Recipients
Food banks and church food closets

JOIN US, WE NEED YOU!!! ☺

FEEDING MINISTRY

We will serve food on Thursday, November 10 at Gilfield Baptist Church (Downtown churches united).

Menu

Ham
Scalloped Potatoes
Stringbeans
Carrot Cake/Cream Cheese Frosting
Rolls
Coffee and Orange Drink

We need volunteers to make Carrot Cake. All monetary donations are appreciated to help offset the purchase of the food.



Saturday, December 3

New Time this year 9:30 - 11:00

Santa arrives about 10 am

\$8 per child, \$4 per adult

Child's ticket also includes picture with Santa and goodie bag

Contact any Circle of Agape member for tickets...

Debi Carper, Debbie Marshall, Sharon Murdock, Diane Yates, or Donna Goulder

For tickets or more information contact Debi Carper, 536-1364 or carpers4@msn.com

BACKPACK BLESSINGS

Help with backpack blessings! We welcome help with: bringing in food items and/or donations, packing the backpacks (anytime Wednesday or Thursday – let church know of your availability,) and delivering backpacks to Lakeview and North Elementary Schools. Again, let church know – Thanks!!!!

Highland UMC Van Ministry

In an effort to reach out to military personnel stationed at Fort Lee, Highland United Methodist Church is beginning a Free shuttle service to base soldiers, beginning Saturday October 15 from 6:00pm – 9:00pm.

South Park mall is a popular off duty destination for military service members stationed Fort Lee. Many soldiers, new to the base and without transportation, spend upwards of \$30 per person on taxi fare for a one way trip from the base to the mall.

Highland UMC would like to reach out to these young service members by offering a Free shuttle service from the mall entrance at the food court to the front gate of the base. We will begin this ministry on October 15, and continue to offer this service one Saturday every month. We need volunteers to make this Van ministry a success.

If you would like to volunteer to drive the church van, act as a greeter/host to riders, or just make an offering for gas money, please contact Pastor Mike at pastormtolbert@gmail.com.

This ministry will be a great way to show our appreciation for the service that these young men and women provide to our country, as well as offer an opportunity to invite new membership to our church. Please show your support by volunteering your time.

Financial Up-Date September 25 – October 16, 2011

2010 Budget	\$388,385.00
Amount needed each month	32,365.42
Amount received (9/24 – 10/16)	31,601.80
Amount needed Year-to-date	
42 weeks @ \$7,468.95 per week budgeted	313,695.90
Amount collected year-to-date	295,117.47
Amount needed each Month for Building/Capital Improvement	
Loan Payment	3,997.41
Amount received Building/Capital Improvement (9/25-10/16)	2,310.50
Memorials received 9/25 – 10/16	50.00

In Memoriam

Anne B. Burgess – October 26, 2011



-
- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 01. Cindy Barfield | 24. Velma Davis |
| 02. Linda Coleman | Roger Spinner |
| 03. Zachary Murdock | 25. Jim Schutt |
| Suzanne Wells | 26. Kimberly Guy |
| Joe Whitmore | Brent Lucie |
| 04. Kathryn Britton | 27. Kathy Merchant |
| Betty Voss | |
| Paul Laube | 28. Carley Cornett |
| 05. Jennifer Courtney | 28. Tommy Rawlings |
| 08. Jacob Drumheller | Ryan Small |
| Christine Harrington | 29. Elaine Hackney |
| Ryan Lester | 30. Erick Yarchin |
| Nathan Nicholas | |
| Sam Watkins | |
| 09. David Lorentz Jr | |
| 10. Margaret Jackson | |
| Tim Klein | |
| Leslie Kreicar | |
| Jimmy Love | |
| Adam Morris | |
| Keith Ritchie | |
| 11. Matthew Armstrong | |
| Brandon Tucker | |
| 12. Lisa Walker | |
| 13. Brittany Lorentz | |
| Kilyna Nguyen | |
| Ben Smith | |
| Charles Thompson Jr | |
| 14. Bill Rawlings | |
| 15. Kelli Helmer | |
| 17. John C. Kollman III | |
| 18. Matthew Mims | |
| Elyse M. Richey | |
| 19. Charles Carper | |
| Brenda Eunice-Hargrave | |
| 20. John R. Kibler | |
| Heather Vance | |
| 21. Helen Arnold | |
| Debbie Marshall | |
| 22. Abigail Richey | |
| 23. Ruth Walker | |