

Highlands News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | HIGHLANDS CHURCH | AUGUST 2026 | VOLUME 30 | ISSUE 8

Back to School Celebration & Blessing of Backpacks

As a new school year begins, Highlands Church invites students, teachers, school staff, homeschool families, college students, and lifelong learners to join us for a special Blessing of the Backpacks on Sunday, August 9, during the 10:00 AM Traditional Service.

Bring your backpack, briefcase, tote bag, laptop bag, or other school and work essentials as we take time to pray for God's guidance, protection, and blessings in the year ahead. Whether you're heading into a classroom, teaching students, supporting a school, or continuing your own learning journey, we want to celebrate and pray for you.

Following worship, everyone is invited to the Fellowship Hall for sack lunches, ice cream sundaes, games, and fellowship. Kids Worship will not meet that morning, and children will participate in the backpack blessing during the service.

This is a wonderful opportunity for our church family to encourage those beginning a new academic year. Everyone is welcome, whether or not you have school-aged children.

To help us prepare for lunch, please sign up at the table in the Gathering Area by August 2.



Under-Shepherd Udderings

I'm certain that many of you have reflected on God's hand of blessing upon our nation as we celebrate her 250th anniversary. My recent sermon series, "America, God Shed His Grace on Thee (and His Mercy)," touched on many miracles from the Lord that shaped our country for His useful purposes as the Divine Potter shaped the USA like clay in His hands. Let me share a little bit more about God's grace poured out on our country.



In the July 6, 2026 of Good News, Mike Powers shares some of the wonderful truths in the song America the Beautiful. First, Mike recalls its origins: "Katherine Lee Bates was inspired to write the poem America the Beautiful after a visit to Pikes Peak in 1893 in a covered wagon with fellow teachers from Colorado College." Then, Mike explored the theological ramifications of the stanza:

"America! America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!"

The heart of Mike's articles is this: "If we genuinely desire to experience the grace of God and responsibly, as stewards, express our desire to be a & brotherhood" (an authentic, healthy, growing, loving community), it begins by having the heartbeat and mind of Christ, who came to serve and not be served. Such humility gives leverage to grace in the daily stuff of life, beginning with our loved ones who are close and extending across our spheres of influence. God's grace is shed generously through the Christlike attitude of valuing all others above ourselves. Another adage, popularized by President Harry Truman, goes: "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." (<https://goodnewsmag.org/spiritual-leverage/>)

I hope and pray that our nation, especially the Christians in America, approach the Lord with humility to give Him all glory and praise for His grace upon us. Truly, the nation is blessed whose God is the Lord. Count your blessings during this 250th year and continue to pray for America.

Grace and Peace

Pastor Rick



Prayer Ministry News

After worship on Sunday, July 26 there was an open house to present the newly remodeled prayer chapel and reintroduce it to the congregation. In July the chapel underwent a transformation with new paint (it's no longer yellow!), new furniture, wall graphics, and more, to change it from a functional and somewhat institutional looking room to a much more inviting and friendly chapel.

It offers a smaller, more intimate space than what our sanctuary does without the distractions that may be present in our sanctuary. There is a prayer rail that was originally part of the prayer rail in the sanctuary, comfortable seating, soft lighting and is an ideal spot for quiet reflection and prayer.

If you were not able to attend the open house, we would encourage you to please take a moment the next time you're in the building to visit the chapel to see the changes and while there maybe spend a few moments enjoying the peace and quiet or in prayer. During the week the chapel is open whenever the office is, but its door is always open, so feel free to stop by before or after worship on the weekends.

We hope you like the changes that have been made, but more importantly, we hope you find your way back to the chapel again and again and take advantage of the space to spend some time in reflection or in a quiet conversation with God.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7 (NASB 95)

HGMC Prayer Ministry Team



Church Library News

I hope most of you have taken notice of our church's library which has a wonderful selection of books, CDs, reference materials, a few jigsaw puzzles, free bookmarks, etc. The library committee will periodically provide an article in the church newsletter to update you on what's new, what's been on the shelf but is still relevant, and what authors are popular for our church family members. We don't have fines, and you won't be put on a wait list. Recently, beautiful children's books were donated, added to our selection in the Annex, and are ready for check-out. We would love to know who your favorite authors are as well as your favorite books, so leave us a note in the library or with Amey in the church office!

This month, we are highlighting a book from the history/biography category: Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail.

(The book's cover has a lovely summary from which parts are used here.)

"Emma Gatewood told her family she was going on a walk and left her small Ohio hometown with a change of clothes and less than two hundred dollars. The next anybody heard from her, this genteel, farm-reared, 67-year-old great-grandmother had walked 800 miles along the 2,050-mile Appalachian Trail. And in September 1955, having survived a rattlesnake strike, two hurricanes, and a run-in with gangsters from Harlem, she stood atop Maine's Mount Katahdin. Grandma Gatewood, as the reporters called her, became the first woman to hike the entire Appalachian Trail alone..." Want to know the rest of the story? Check out the book and find out more about this amazing woman!

Blood Drive Results

Our July 15th Blood Drive donation goal as set by the Community Blood Center of the Ozarks was 24 donors. The number of potential donors signed up prior to the Drive was 23. That's within our usual pre-Drive sign up of 20-25. However, what was missing this time were the walk-in donors that can easily number 6-10. That didn't happen this time. From two sources, including the CBC/Ozarks, it's speculated that the highly advertised Drive conducted at a local Merchant's location in early July could have reduced the availability of donors for subsequent drives. Others have reported shortfalls, too. There were 90 donations made at that drive.

In discussing this with our CBC/Ozarks representative, we have been given assurance that if there is to be a similar plan in place in 2027, Highlands Church's 3rd (July's) Drive will be conducted in advance. Our actual successful donor result for this Drive was 18. Remember, we were missing 6-10 opportunities.

Thank you to all who tried to donate and to all who were successful donors. Your time, effort and commitment to our community, our hospitals, and their patients is never recognized enough.... until one becomes the receiver of your donation. THE GIFT OF LIFE!

Our Highlanders Representative administering this Drive was Jeff August who did his very best by donating every drop that the CBC/Ozarks would take. Thank you, Jeff. We know that you donated a day of golf, too. Also, a big 'ol thank you to the guys (and girl) that assisted in the set-/clean up. It didn't look like there had ever been a Blood Drive in the place when you left!!!

Our next Blood Drive will be on Wednesday, September 16, 10:00-3:00 with Larry Bassett carrying the HGMC Highlanders flag!



GriefShare is a grief recovery support group where you can find help and healing for the hurt of losing a loved one. Our next 13-week session begins Thursday, August 6, from 1:00–3:00 PM in the John Classroom. Participant workbooks for this session are \$20 and payable to the church at your first meeting. Past participants are welcome to repeat the class or pick up where they left off. Contact the church office to sign up.

Care & Share Thrift Store

Volunteers from Highlands Church are needed to work at the Gravette Care & Share Thrift Store the week of August 18-22, from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. Online signups have begun, or contact the church office for assistance. For details, contact our coordinator, Connie Kiefer.



Operation Christmas Child

We are already collecting items for this year's Operation Christmas Child shoebox ministry! A collection bin is located near the Nursery for your donations. This year, we are focusing on gifts for boys and girls ages 5-14, so please keep that age range in mind as you shop. For more details, contact Sara Sherman.



9th Annual Highlands Charity Car Show

As you have probably heard, the 9th Annual Highlands GMC Charity Car Show will be taking place this year on Saturday, September 19 from 10 am – 2 pm.

Over the last eight years this event has raised, and distributed, **\$115,000** to the three charities it supports through our church's outreach efforts. The only way this has happened though is because of the very generous physical, moral and monetary support from our Highlands family. That support, coupled with contributions from individual, retail, and corporate sponsors has made all of this possible and allowed us to give generously to these three local charities:

Samaritan's Feet - *shares a message of hope and love through washing the feet of children and providing a free new pair of socks and shoes for back-to-school for nearly 200 Gravette students each year.*

Snack Packs for Kids - *furnishes food packs for around 135 food insecure Gravette students to take home each Friday during the school year.*

Bright Futures - *helps meet the needs of Gravette students by helping families with emergency expenses, school supplies, clothing, emergency dental and medication expense and many other basic needs.*



Car show T-shirts are available for order now with a cut-off date of Sunday, August 23. We plan to have volunteer sign-up sheets & online sign-up available in mid-August. Car Show lunch tickets will again be sent out to the congregation around mid-August and more information will be provided on those closer to that date.

In 2025 we had rain, rain and more rain on the original show date of Sept. 20 and we moved the show to the following Saturday Sept. 27. While the change did affect the turnout a little we still had a great show with almost 130 vehicles participating, an estimated 500 people in attendance and almost 400 meals were served.

The show is free for both spectators and participants and it runs from 10 – 2 with lunch served from 10:30 – 1:30. We will once again have the bounce house and other activities for the kids, Bella Vista Strings with their always great rock and contemporary music and a variety of collector cars, trucks, hot rods, motorcycles and more to admire.

One of the best ways of promoting the show is by word of mouth. Please let your friends and neighbors know about the show and if you know of anyone with an interesting vehicle, or just see one somewhere, please tell them about the show and ask them to consider participating. There is no registration fee and there is no judging, just a good time for all. Show flyers are available on the information counter and our website www.hgmcbbv/car-show has a lot of information on it with pictures from previous shows as well.

If you have any questions about the show, volunteering, showing a car or anything else, please contact Greg Snyder, Mike Maginness, Flip Smith, Billie Hall or Roger Lawrence.

Thank you for your continued support for this show and for our church's outreach work that it supports, it is greatly appreciated by everyone involved and those it helps.

Highlands Youth Discipleship

SEEN – Known by God – Connected to Others

Highlands Youth Discipleship (ages 11+) continues to meet Sunday mornings from 9:00–9:45 AM for Bible study, real-life conversations, and video-based lessons. Our current study focuses on "Justice in Action" and we are looking into the Old Testament and Jesus' ministry to see God's heart for people, and for those who are hurting or have been mistreated. As God's children, we can display his justice by caring for those that the world may try to forget. Our youth are also putting their faith into action by supporting Clarence, a deaf student at a Christian school in the Philippines, through our weekly offering.

LESSON 11 - REMEMBER VERSE

"Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed."
Isaiah 1:17a

LESSON 12 - REMEMBER VERSE

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and
judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."
Proverbs 31:8, 9

Games & Grub Update

Youth, youth leaders, and parents had a great time at our July Games & Grub Lake Party. A special thank you to Flip and Kathy Smith and everyone who helped make it such a fun evening. (photos of the event on right)

Looking Ahead

All children, students, and their families are invited to join us for The Great Passion Play in Eureka Springs on Saturday, August 29. The Youth Fund will provide the buffet dinner and show tickets for children ages 4 through high school seniors, while adult family members may attend for the discounted group rate of \$40. Please RSVP through the church office so we can reserve enough tickets. If you know a child or teen in the Bella Vista or Gravette area who might enjoy our Youth Ministry, we'd love for you to invite them!



Children's Center

"START THE CHILDREN OFF THE WAY THEY SHOULD GO AND EVEN WHEN THEY ARE OLD THEY WILL NOT TURN FROM IT." PROVERBS 22:6



Parents and Grandparents:

In August, the Kids' Discipleship class will be learning about Jesus' parables. NOTE: There will be NO Kids' Discipleship class on August 9. MARK YOUR CALENDARS! "Blessing of the Backpacks" will take place during the Sunday morning service at 10:00 AM on August 9, 2026. Children (or anyone who is going back to school) will receive a special blessing. There will be a sack lunch served immediately after church, with carnival games to follow. All are welcome, including students, former students, future students, and anyone who knows a student, but reservations are requested. Sign-ups will be available on weekends

of July 26 and August 2 in the Gathering Area. The menu includes a PB&J or a meat and cheese sandwich, chips, a cheese stick, and an ice cream sundae bar. Children ages 5-10 are welcome at Kids' Discipleship. We meet from 10:30 AM to 11:00 AM following the Children's Sermon. We do not meet on the first Sunday of the month. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (479) 619-8654.

In God's Love, Kitty Knight

August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1– No Celebration Worship
2– Combined Worship at 10AM – First Sunday Cookies	3	4– Compassionate Care Meeting	5– Fellowship Team Meeting	6– GriefShare Support Begins	7	8
9– Back to School Celebration & Blessing of the Backpacks	10	11	12– Gravette School Starts	13	14	15
16	17	18– Care & Share Volunteer Week	19– Choir Resumes Reg Rehearsals	20– Library Meeting	21	22
23	24	25– Finance Mtg	26	27– Care Group Leaders Meeting	28	29– Youth Ministry Trip to Eureka Springs
30– General Trinity Conference Begins	31					

Pray for the 2026 General Trinity Conference

The 2026 General Trinity Conference of the Global Methodist Church will be held August 30 through September 5 in Johannesburg, South Africa. During this important gathering, leaders from around the world will come together to worship, pray, discern God's direction, and conduct the business of the church.

Pastor Rick invites our congregation to join Christians around the world in praying for this conference, its delegates, and all who will be participating. A **14-day prayer guide** has been provided to help focus our prayers in the days leading up to the conference.

[Click Here](#) to access the daily prayer guide and join us in praying for God's wisdom, unity, and guidance throughout the conference.

Thank You Notes!

Thank you for your cards, texts, love, support and prayers for a successful knee surgery and healing.
Blessings, Sara Sherman

On behalf of Dru and myself, I would like to thank this wonderful congregation for the prayers and cards showered upon us. Your notes of encouragement, love and support have really touched our lives and we are eternally grateful. God is good and His love is really flowing with you all.
Bless you! John Matthews



HIGHLANDS CHURCH

A Global Methodist Congregation

5:30pm Saturday Celebration Worship
10:00am Sunday Traditional Worship

First Sunday Combined Worship @10am
(No Saturday Service)

Office News

CHURCH OFFICE EMAIL: office@hgmcbv.com
OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Thursday, 8:30am—4:00pm
Friday, 8:30am—Noon

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: The deadline to submit content for the September Highlands Newsletter is 12:00 PM (noon) on August 20. Please send all submissions, comments, or questions to the church office at: office@hgmcbv.com

OFFICE HOURS: The church office will be closed on September 7 in observation of the Labor Day Holiday.

CHURCH T-SHIRTS: T-shirts are available to order year-round for \$20 each. If you would like to purchase a shirt, please contact the church office for ordering info.

Church Staff

RICK SITTON, *Senior Pastor*
JOHN MATTHEWS, *Director of Music Ministries*
PAM MEYER, *Celebration Worship Leader*
JEANNINE WAGAR, *Organist*
JOYCE SHELTON, *Chimes & Bells Director*
CELIA CHERNOTA, *Nursery Attendant*
AMEY BURKETT, *Office Admin*
DRU MATTHEWS, *Business Manager*
MONICA REDMON, *Custodian*



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Operating Budget Report - June 30, 2026

	YTD Budget	June Actual	YTD Actual
Income	238,620	32,063	225,755
Expenses	238,620	34,971	224,533
Net	0	(2,908)	1,221

Thank you for your continued support.

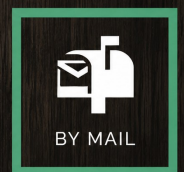
3 ways to give
to Highlands Church



ONLINE



IN-PERSON



BY MAIL

for details visit... | hgmcbv.com/give

THE POWER OF
ONE

Drop a folded dollar into the offering plate to support our Outreach Ministry.



Highlands Church, 371 Glasgow Road, Bella Vista, AR 72715, (479) 855-2277, www.hgmcbv.com