

# Highlands News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | HIGHLANDS CHURCH | DECEMBER 2023 | VOLUME 27 | ISSUE 12



## Christmas Cantata

The Highlands Chancel Choir will present their annual Christmas Cantata to the congregation and public on Saturday, December 16 at 5:30 pm and Sunday, December 17 at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary of Highlands Church. Under the direction of John Matthews, the Chancel Choir will sing "Christmas Dreams" - by Heather Sorensen and Joseph Martin. This wonderful Cantata will be accompanied by pianist Pam Meyer, and organist Jeannine Wagar. All are most welcome to attend either worship service. No reservations or tickets needed.



Photos of 2022 Christmas Cantata and Luncheon

## Christmas Luncheon

Join us for a Christmas Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, December 17, following the Cantata (approx 11am). The lunch will be provided by The Fellowship Committee and will be \$15 per person. The menu will be Christmas chicken served on a bed of rice, garden salad, cheesy potatoes, green beans, dinner roll, jello cake and tea/coffee/water. Tickets sales have begun and will be available on December 2/3, and 9/10. Contact Linda Uttley for more information.

# Pastor's Pen by Rev. Robert Cloninger

December is a big month for the Highlands Church congregation. The events we have here for this Season have become traditions in and of themselves. We have the Cookie Walk, worship services for the Advent season, the Cantata, and the Christmas Eve service. All of these markers throughout Advent help prepare us for Christmas and grow closer to one another. December this year has another event to celebrate because it is during this month that we become part of the Global Methodist Church. Our time through disaffiliation has been trying, but fruitful, and it cannot be forgotten that this process took well more than half of this year to complete. However, the process is over, the meetings are over, and we are together as a congregation with an amazing future ahead of us.

So what is next? That's a good question! First, we go through Advent and enjoy the reminder that Christ has come once to save us and He will come again to make all things new. Second, we enjoy these wonderful events that we do as a church and take the time to truly enjoy them. And third, we look to the future and our emphasis for the coming year. The way I see it now we need to focus on two things with maximum intensity in the year to come: prayer and education.

We have one prayer group going currently and we had two great prayer training sessions. I cannot emphasize enough that this is not some basic discipline that can be ignored. Prayer is the fuel for Highlands Church; it is giving energy to our ministry. A praying church sticks together and a praying church stays true to the Scriptures, the Gospel, and Jesus Christ. This means that much will need to be spent in prayer and learning about prayer. I need everyone on board with this. It is too difficult a time in our world and nation not to have a furnace of prayer burning hot and it is up to us to get that done. Keep up the minimum of five minutes a day in prayer for the church and continue to add to your own prayer ministry if you have not.

Christian Education is going to be another key part of the year and into the future. I personally am going to be teaching more and will be trying to keep a church wide class going the majority of the year. And there are other educational opportunities that will arise. I firmly believe that we must be as Biblically and theologically literate as possible. Studying the things of God fulfills the Scriptural call to know God and this intense study becomes a form of prayer. How is it prayer? Because you cannot study the things of God intensely without prayers naturally forming in your heart. The definition of prayer that is commonly understood doesn't cover the breadth of the topic. Prayer is much bigger than we often think and goes hand in hand with study. I am always interested in what you as a congregation would like classes taught on.

I pray that you have a joyous Christmas season and find new blessings each day. I pray for your health and the health of your families. And I ask God to give hope to your hearts, that you might know the excitement of all of the promises fulfilled in Christ our Lord.

Blessings,

Robert



***Pastor Robert's office hours are:***

**MONDAY - THURSDAY**

**9AM—NOON ... AVAILABLE IN OFFICE**

**1PM—4PM ... AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT**

# Holiday Food Drive at Highlands Church

Bright Futures is always looking at ways to make the holidays a little brighter for those in need. They are looking to put together holiday meal bags for families to pick up when they come to the Food Pantry in December and hope that we can help them reach their goal of making 75 holiday meals. Thank you for your prior donations to Bright Futures Thanksgiving meal boxes! Let's keep the holiday food drive going and help fill Christmas meal boxes. Place your donated items in the marked bins located at all entrances to the church for delivery to the Gravette School Food Pantry. For more information, contact Sara Sherman.



## Letter from Food Pantry Parent

*Amanda Kelly, of Bright Futures, received the letter below from a parent who comes to the pantry and we wanted to share it with you. As we hit one year doing this, we have grown and it continues to help so many families. We are excited to see what will happen in the coming year!*

I cannot fully express just how much the Gravette food pantry has helped my family in recent times. Adjusting to the higher cost of living in Northwest Arkansas has been a struggle. At times it has felt impossible to provide even life's basic necessities on a single educator's income for a family of four. The food provided from the pantry provided stability and nourishment for my wife and children in those difficult times. It relieved my stress in those moments and allowed me to not only focus more on my daily duties but also increased my general well being. If the pantry was able to provide me enough aid to get by, I can only imagine what it is doing for other families in our area. I am so grateful for the generosity of Bright Futures, and the Highlands Church as well as the kindness of the Gravette community.

## Library News

The church library committee is working on cleaning out old books and reorganizing for 2024. In the process, we discovered that many books have been checked out as far back as 2018 but have never been returned. We are all busy and it is easy to forget. We would appreciate it if you could check for any "overdue" books you may still have and return them as soon as you can. If a book has been out for more than six (6) months, you may get a friendly call as a reminder.

Also, if you borrow a DVD or an audio book on CD, and you find a disk missing, a disk skips, or it does not play correctly, please attach a note when you return it. That way, we will know it is defective and will remove it from the shelf. If you check out a book and find it inappropriate for our library, please let us know.

As always, we welcome any wonderful books you may have finished reading, and would like to donate, so that others can enjoy them as well. If you are new to our church, just a reminder that we have three (3) locations where you can go in and browse. Fiction hardcover books are in the room to the right of the Sanctuary; paperbacks, non-fiction, DVD's, CD's and children's books are located in the Library Annex, to the left of the Sanctuary; and religious books/Bible resource materials are in the Luke classroom, down the hall from the church office in the Ministries Activity Center.



Library Annex



Fiction Library Room



John Wesley Resource Room (Luke)

# Combined Worship for December

**Special Combined Worship:** To commemorate the affiliation with the Global Methodist Church (GMC), we invite you to join us in a combined worship service on Sunday, December 3, 2023 at 10:00 am. After the service, we will gather for refreshments and fellowship, celebrating not only our 35th birthday but also our new affiliation. This is an opportunity for our congregation to come together in joyous fellowship, expressing our unity, love, and shared hope for the future. There will be no Celebration service on December 2.

**Christmas Worship:** We will have a family Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service on Saturday, December 24, at 4:00 pm in the Sanctuary. This will be a combined service; there will be no Celebration service on December 23 and there will be no morning service on December 24. Plan to enjoy the special tradition of ending the Christmas Eve service with a candlelit rendition of Silent Night.

**New Year's Eve Weekend:** A Combined Worship Service is planned for the weekend of December 30 & 31. Join us for one service on Sunday, December 31 at 10:00 am. There will be no Celebration service on December 30.

## Care & Share Thrift Store

Volunteers from Highlands Church are needed to work at the Gravette Care & Share Thrift Store the week of December 12 - 16, from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. See the Weekly Update to sign up online, or contact the church office for assistance. For more information, contact our coordinator, Connie Kiefer, at 479-876-6324. Thank you to all those who have volunteered thus far in 2023! We appreciate you!



Photo of Volunteers from Sept 2023



GriefShare is a grief recovery support group where you can find help and healing for the hurt of losing a loved one. The next 13 week session begins on Thursday, January 18 from 1:30 to 3:00 pm in the Luke classroom. Free workbooks are available while supplies last. Class size is limited. The GriefShare Leader will be Nancy Noyes. Pick up a flyer at the Information Station. For more information, contact the church office.

**HIGHLANDSCHURCH**  
**THANK YOU**  
FOR VOLUNTEERING TO RING!



If you signed up to ring, don't forget your shift!

WE'RE RINGING  
× DEC 6-9 & ×  
DEC 13-16

*Highlands Church*  
**Angel Tree**

*Thanks*  
FOR SIGNING UP

**Please return  
gifts to the  
church by  
Dec 7 at noon**



# HIGHLANDS METHODIST WOMEN

## December HMW Meeting - Jesus is the Reason for the Season

Are y'all gettin' ready for Christmas? The Highlands Methodist Women are! And we would like to invite the Women of Highlands Methodist Church to a Christmas Tea. We are going to have a Christmas Tea provided by the women from The Jane Store! The cost to you will be half or \$15.00 per person and the Highlands Methodist Women's group will pick up the other half, plus the tip. This should be a fun treat for all of you hard working women of the church! Seating is limited so sign up early in the Gathering Area, as all reservations and payments must be made by December 8. The HMW Tea will be on Monday, December 18, 10:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. Wear your hat, boa, gloves, 'ugly' Christmas sweater or shirt, or whatever and we'll have a FUN and Festive time!



## Highlands Women Christmas Tea

Fellowship Hall  
December 18 @ 10:30 am

# HIGHLANDS METHODIST MEN

## No December Meeting — New Meeting Day in January

Our next Highlands Methodist Men meeting will be on **Saturday, January 6, 2024 at 7:45 am**. Please mark your calendars and make plans to join us in the new year.

The HMM will be assisting with the Cookie Walk in December and with the busy season, we are going to wait to meet until after the Holidays. Starting in January, we have decided to move our monthly meeting to the first Saturday of the month. This is a chance to meet with your Christian brothers and better understand what we are planning for 2024. Please be sure to **sign up by December 31, 2023** in the Gathering Area so we are prepared to serve breakfast for all those attending. Wade is working on a speaker to join us that morning.

Garry Benedict and Wade Stewart

## EXERCISE PROGRAM



Highlands Church  
Bella Vista, AR

Mark your calendar! The next 10 week session of Flex 'N Stretch starts Monday, January 1, 2024. We meet Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 7:30 am - 8:30 am, in the Peter classroom. The 10 week session will end on Friday, March 8. This well-organized exercise program teaches all participants how to do the exercises easily and safely, including seniors. Benefits include increased range of motion, coordination, strength, balance and agility, all of which improve the quality of life and lead to longer independent living. Come, join the fun and experience the benefits! Newcomers are welcome to stop by and give it a trial run. No signups required. Pick up a flyer at the Information Station and invite a friend. Contact Donna Williams for details.

## Office News

Amey & Lori: [office@hgmcbv.com](mailto:office@hgmcbv.com)  
Newsletter: [newsletter@hgmcbv.com](mailto:newsletter@hgmcbv.com)

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 4:00pm

**HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS & DEADLINES:** In observation of the Christmas holiday, the church office will be closed on December 22, 25 and 26. The advertising deadline for bulletins and email that weekend will be Monday, December 18 at noon. Also, we will be closed on January 1 for the New Year's holiday.

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:** The Deadline for the January Highlands Newsletter is 12:00 (noon) on December 15 (early). Please send all newsletter submissions, comments and / or questions to this email address: [newsletter@hgmcbv.com](mailto:newsletter@hgmcbv.com)

## Family News

### NEW CONTACT INFORMATION:

Andy & Joyce O'Neil  
3873 E Farm Rd 132 Villa #129  
Springfield MO 65802  
[andynjoyce129@gmail.com](mailto:andynjoyce129@gmail.com)  
Andy- (479) 644-7719  
Joyce- (479) 644-0989

### OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO:

Carla Lemmeyer, for the loss of her brother,  
Jimmie Grimes, 10/13/23  
Dick & Pat Steck, for the loss of their daughter,  
Linda McCarthy, 11/1/23  
Glen Whiting, for the loss of his wife, Patsy  
Whiting, 11/14/23

## Notes from the Finance Office

**Looking towards the future of Highlands Church,** we are beginning December with all our obligations for the UMC met and in good standing. A small surplus will give us a cushion to begin anew with the GMC.

**A budget of \$56,562 was approved by the Ad Council for the month of December.** This budget covers our recurring expenses of utilities and incidental maintenance, renewal of liability insurance policy, regular mortgage payment, December salaries, end-of-year accounting (statements and W-2, etc.), and setting up streaming for the traditional service. This budget is well within our reach.

**We have a fifth Sunday in December for loan reduction.** We trust you will continue to give a little extra that Sunday toward our mortgage. Our loan interest rate is 4.3% until the next renewal in 2027. By the end of this year, the balance will be under \$200,000. We hope to continue to make additional loan principal payments to end this loan before the next renewal date.

**Many of us have an IRA and are required to take an RMD annually.** A qualified charitable distribution such as a gift to Highlands Church, can be taken each year. This reduces your Adjusted Gross Income by the amount given, thus avoiding federal income tax on the gifted amount. Please consider Highlands Church when taking your RMD.

### Thank You - Trunk or Treat

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Trunk or Treat on October 29! It was a cold evening but we still gave away tons of candy and had a great time. Those who hosted a trunk were... Sue & Dave Benson, Robert & Betsy Cloninger, Doug Fowler, Jeff & Kim Hale, Angie Hansen, Sue Kenny, Arleen Miller & granddaughter Olivia, Nancy Noyes, Darleen Olson & daughter Jody, MaryLeigh and Rayford Poole, Rick & Linda Uttley and Barb Zillmann. Thank you for being such troopers! We really appreciate all those who made candy donations to make this such a successful event.



# December 2023

| Sun  | Mon                                       | Tue                                 | Wed   | Thu                             | Fri               | Sat  |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|--|
|  |   |                                     |   |                                 | 1                 | 2- No Celebration Service<br>- Cookie Walk                 |
| 3- Communion<br>- Advent Begins<br>- Combined Worship at 10 am | 4- Methodism Is Not a Denomination class  | 5- Prayer Group every Tuesday       | 6- Fellowship Meeting<br>- Bell Ringing Dec 6-9                   | 7- Angel Tree gifts due by noon | 8                 | 9  |
| 10   | 11- Methodism Is Not a Denomination class | 12- Compassionate Disciples Meeting | 13- Stitches Meeting<br>- Blood Drive<br>- Bell Ringing Dec 13-16 | 14                              | 15                | 16- Cantata  |
| 17- Cantata<br>- Christmas Luncheon                            | 18- HMW Christmas Tea                     | 19- Admin Council Mtg               | 20- Kitchen Cleaning  | 21- Library Meeting             | 22- Office Closed | 23- No Celebration Service                                 |
| 24- Christmas Eve Service Combined Worship at 4pm              | 25- Office Closed<br>- Christmas Day      | 26- Office Closed                   | 27  | 28                              | 29                | 30- No Celebration Service<br>- Scrapbooking & Card Making |
| 31- Combined Worship at 10 am<br>- Fifth Sunday Loan Reduction |   |                                     |   |                                 |                   |  |

WRAP UP THE YEAR

## Give Blood

at Highlands Church



# BLOOD DRIVE

# DEC 13

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

**FREE BLANKET**  
for all donors!

While supplies last.





**COMMUNITY BLOOD CENTER**  
OF THE OZARKS  
not-for-profit organization

## Snack Packs—Mission Ministry

# VOLUNTEERS

# NEEDED TO HELP WITH SNACK PACKS

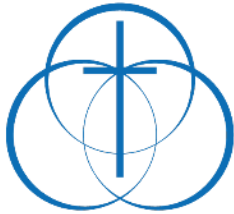
Our next packing day is December 6, 10:00 am — 11:30 am, at Samaritan Community Center, 2910 S 8th Street in Rogers. Snack Packs are distributed to food insecure Gravette School students each Friday. We will be packing Snack Packs the first Wednesday of every month. If you are interested, please join us! No signups required. Contact Sara Sherman at 870-550-0339 if you have any questions!

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# EVERYONE WELCOME!

SATURDAY CELEBRATION - 5:30 PM

SUNDAY TRADITIONAL - 10:00 AM



## HIGHLANDS CHURCH

A Global Methodist Congregation

### Church Staff

REV. ROBERT CLONINGER  
*Senior Pastor*

LORI HEALD  
*Office Administrator*

AMEY BURKETT  
*Administrative Assistant*

DRU MATTHEWS  
*Bookkeeper /Treasurer*

JOHN MATTHEWS  
*Director of Music Ministries*

PAM MEYER  
*Celebration Worship Leader*

JEANNINE WAGAR  
*Organist*

JOYCE SHELDON  
*Chimes & Bells Director*

LAURIE PEARSON  
*Nursery Staff*

MIKE & JUDY PAYNE  
*Custodians*

### Operating Budget Report - October 31, 2023

|          | YTD<br>Budget | Oct<br>Actual | YTD<br>Actual |
|----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Income   | 427,310       | 38,211        | 407,641       |
| Expenses | 427,310       | 40,452        | 409,391       |
| Net      | 0             | (2,241)       | (1,750)       |

Thank you for your continued support.

3 ways to give

to Highlands Church



Online



In-Person



By Mail

for details visit... [hgmcbv.com/give](http://hgmcbv.com/give)

THE POWER OF  
**ONE**

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



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[instagram.com/hgmcbv](https://instagram.com/hgmcbv)

