

# Highlands News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | HIGHLANDS CHURCH | JUNE 2025 | VOLUME 29 | ISSUE 6

## Highlands Youth Group

### Coming Soon!

Highlands Youth Group Welcomes Middle and High Schoolers to a Journey of Faith Launching June 1! On Sunday, June 1, at 9:00 am, the Highlands Youth Group is excited to kick off an inspiring new initiative, “Donuts and Discipleship”, designed for middle school and high school-aged youths. This unique program invites young people to come together, deepen their relationships with Jesus, and form meaningful connections with one another—all while enjoying delicious donuts!

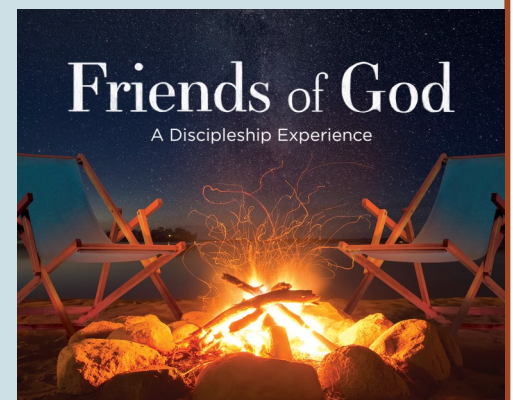
The program will take place in the Youth Room, located on the lower level of the classroom wing. With a warm, welcoming atmosphere and group activities planned, “Donuts and Discipleship” aims to create experiences that nurture both spiritual growth and lasting friendships.

#### What to Expect

- Engaging Discussions: Dive into thoughtful conversations about faith, life, and building a solid foundation in Christ.
- Interactive Activities: Participate in creative sessions that connect biblical teachings to real-world challenges and joys.
- Community Building: Meet other teens who share a passion for growing in their faith and creating meaningful relationships.
- Delicious Donuts: Sweet treats to begin the morning with energy!

### Why Join?

“Donuts and Discipleship” is more than just a program—it’s a space where young people can feel supported, inspired, and equipped to navigate life’s journey through the lens of faith. Whether you’re looking to strengthen your relationship with Jesus, meet new friends, or simply enjoy the camaraderie of a vibrant youth community, this is the perfect opportunity to take a step forward. Together, let’s embark on a journey filled with faith, fun, and fellowship.



# From Bro. Jim's Desk

You are going to be hearing a lot more about Bands from me. No, not the musical kind, but the small groups Wesley started that lit a spark among the early Methodists. The Global Methodist Church is interested in us rediscovering our spiritual roots through these groups and help us grow spiritually strong.

What is a band? A band is a discipleship group of three to five men or women who meet weekly to engage in transformational questions and pray for one another, aiming to become the love of God for each other and the world. If you would like in-depth information about bands, go to [discipleshipbands.com](http://discipleshipbands.com) for more information.



I have coordinated with pastor Rick about my starting a women's band and a men's band to get the effort moving at Highlands Church. He was excited to hear that we are lighting that fire and I know will be intimately involved with encouraging the congregation to grow through these small groups. If you would like to know more about Wesley's understanding of why we need bands, Seedbed has put together an informative video that I commend you watch. [If viewing this online, CLICK HERE to view or download the video.](#)

I look forward in the time I have with you to the excitement of launching these bands, and to hear about their multiplication through the church.

In the meantime, you know that I will be in Mexico on mission May 25-31. I thank those of you who have helped by donating supplies, given money for books and for bibles to distribute. I look forward to showing you all a slideshow in a few weeks of our activities, and how God was with us in this work.

I hope you will also be praying for pastor Rick as he closes up his ministry in Bryan, Texas and begins the arduous task of moving his family into his home here in Bella Vista. I pray his transition here will be seamless and that God's hand continues to move powerfully in our worship and praise.

Blessings, Bro. Jim

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## Pastoral Transition & Welcome Events

We're preparing for an important transition at Highlands Church in the coming weeks. Bro. Jim Benfer, our Interim Pastor, will conclude his time with us the weekend of June 21–22. We'll honor him with a luncheon following the Sunday service on June 22.

Then, on Sunday, June 29, we will joyfully welcome Pastor Rick Sitton as he leads his first Traditional Service at 10:00 AM. A reception will follow as we celebrate this new chapter together.

Please note, there will be no Celebration Service on Saturday, June 28 so that our entire congregation can gather on Sunday to greet Pastor Rick.



Pictured above are Pastor Rick and Karen Sitton, along with their grandson, Jacob Sitton.



# Summer Choir Is Here!

It's that time of year when the choir eases into a more relaxed summer rhythm. Our **Chancel Choir's summer schedule** has officially begun! The **Summer Choir** will meet for just **three rehearsals** this season: **May 28, June 25, and July 30 at 4:00 PM** in the choir room.

We'll be singing easy-to-learn anthems, so even if you miss a rehearsal, you can still join us on Sunday mornings. This is a great opportunity to try singing with the choir family while still enjoying worship seated beside your spouse, friend, or significant other. We sing the anthem during the offertory, then head into the sanctuary for the sermon. **No robes required, and casual dress is encouraged!**

Summer is the perfect time to give the Chancel Choir a try—or as we like to say in the Midwest, a "look-see." If you have questions, feel free to email John Matthews at [jmatt0952@gmail.com](mailto:jmatt0952@gmail.com).



**Fifth Sunday Loan Reduction:** At Highlands, we have a long-standing tradition of turning our attention to mortgage reduction whenever a month includes a fifth Sunday. These special offerings go directly toward the principal on our church loan... not the regular monthly payment, which is covered by our operating budget. Every donation marked for Loan Reduction helps shorten the life of our loan and saves us a significant amount in interest. On average, we're able to put an extra \$10,000 to \$15,000 toward principal each year through these Fifth Sunday gifts. Join us in this ongoing effort on June 29. Many small gifts truly do make a huge difference!



## Children's Worship Center

The children have been collecting our quarters each week for our offering and they wanted to give it to a special project. We want to support Brother Jim and his mission to Mexico. We presented Bro. Jim the offering during a Children's Sermon time on a Sunday morning in May. This offering will contribute to help buy Bibles for the kids in Mexico.



Children's Worship will continue during the summer. Our lesson theme will be Favorite Bible Stories.

Children are welcome in the Nursery (ages 0–4) during the 10:00 AM Traditional Worship Service on Sunday mornings. For more information, contact Laurie Pearson (Nursery) at 479-256-4452 or Sue Benson (Kids Worship) at 620-960-9185.





HIGHLANDS METHODIST  
MEN

### Highlands Methodist Men on Summer Break

The Highlands Methodist Men (HMM) group is on summer break and will resume regular meetings in September. HMM typically meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:45 AM, from September through May, for breakfast, fellowship, a devotional message, and a guest speaker. HMM is a Christian brotherhood committed to serving both our church and the wider community. Each year, they support over a dozen local and national charities through hands-on service and financial giving.

Enjoy your summer, and stay tuned for fall meeting details as we prepare for another season of faith and service together.

### May 25 Blood Drive—Thank You!

Our May Blood Drive was a wonderful success with 26 donors, including 3 first-time donors! What a blessing to see our church family come together in such a meaningful way.

A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who volunteered and gave. When you donate blood, you share the healing power God has placed within you—it's a beautiful gift of life and love.



### Office Schedule Update—Amey's Vacation

I will be out of the office on vacation **June 13 and June 16–20**. During that time, our wonderful Office Angels will be helping out by answering phones, welcoming visitors, and handling daily tasks. Dru will also be available during my absence. Please note that we'll have reduced office hours from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM during those days, except for June 19, when the office will be closed for the Juneteenth holiday. Thank you for your understanding, and special thanks to the volunteers (and Dru) who will keep things running smoothly while I'm away! :) ~Amey

### Adult Sunday School



Join us on Sunday at 8:30 am in the Mark classroom and explore the foundations of the Bible where it all began in Genesis. Our new study is **Genesis - The stories that unfold in this extraordinary book grapple with some of our deepest questions**. We are a caring group of learners, and we'd love to have you join us. Questions? Call Brad Krug at 719-210-6124.



# HIGHLANDS METHODIST WOMEN

## 2024 Flea & Boutique — Thank You!

Thanks to all who supported the Flea this year. It was a great success and we think everyone had a good time.

To all of you who: donated items, unpacked, priced and displayed items, worked as cashiers and baggers, baked delicious goodies, assisted shoppers and endlessly rearranged tables to make room for all the items, brought snacks and lunches for the Flea workers, and packed up the unsold items in record time, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!! And to everyone who shopped and brought their friends to shop, you made this a great success.

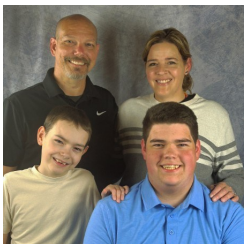
The men were amazing. These guys picked up and delivered furniture, set up tables, moved tables and chairs, and then put it all away again. They packed up the "leftovers" and loaded the Care & Share truck, not to mention carrying boxes up all those stairs and then carrying them back down again when the Flea was over. We couldn't do this without them.

Sue Benson, Flea Chairperson

## New Members



**Tom and Sharon Duff** became members on May 17, during the Celebration Service. Sharon and Tom are originally from Ankeny, Iowa, and moved to Bella Vista in 2022. Sharon worked in banking for 40 years, and Tom was a produce manager at Hy-Vee. Both are now happily retired. Tom enjoys golf, while Sharon enjoys quilting, crafts, and walking. They have two sons and three grandchildren.



**John and Kelly Fruin** became members on May 17, during the Celebration Service. John and Kelly moved to Bella Vista in 2023 from Michigan. John is originally from Ludington, Michigan, and serves as the Operations Director at Energy Group, Inc. based in Detroit, MI. Kelly, originally from Milo, Iowa, is a stay-at-home mom and homeschools their two sons, Gabe and Gage. As a family, they enjoy activities such as fishing, hiking, and traveling. Fun fact - Kelly is the daughter of Rick and Linda Uttley.



**Liz Widner** became a member on May 4, during the Traditional Service. Liz moved to Bella Vista around Christmas 2024 from California to assist with her father's health as her mother's illness progressed, leading to her passing. Liz has a twin sister, Sarah Garcia, who still lives in California with her husband, Jose Garcia. Liz is a member of choir and handbells and she enjoys music. She also has two guinea pigs, Sonny and Sebastian, whom she loves caring for. Liz is currently training to become a CNA. Liz's father, Ron, is also a member of HGMC.



**Ron Widner** became a member on May 4, during the Traditional Service. Ron and his late wife relocated to Bella Vista from California in January 2021. He is a retired executive from Benjamin Moore Paint, where he spent his entire career. His wife, a retired band director, passed away on February 8, 2025. Ron's daughter, Liz, is also a member of HGMC.



# Mission Ministry Opportunities



consider joining us for this special outreach. The joy on the children's faces when they receive their shoes is a blessing you won't forget.

The **Samaritan's Feet Shoe Event in Gravette** will be held on **Saturday, July 26**, from **10:00 AM to 12:30 PM** at the **Gravette Middle School Cafeteria**. Highlands Church is once again providing **200 pairs of shoes** for students in the Gravette School District. **Volunteers should arrive by 8:30 AM and plan to stay until 1:30 PM.** A signup sheet is available at the Information Station. Volunteers are needed to register students, run shoes, wash children's feet, and help fit them with new shoes. We hope you'll



Photo of Volunteers in 2024



A POSITIVE CHANGE IN ONE KID'S LIFE, CAN CHANGE THE WORLD...FOR GOOD!

#### COMMUNITY SERVANT LEADERS:

**Please Volunteer from: 8:30 AM-1:30 PM on Sat. - July 26<sup>th</sup>** to support this annual, Back-to-School Shoe distribution, made possible by Highlands Church.

**From 10AM to 12:30 PM - 7/26**, approximately 200 Local Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, **and their older siblings**, will receive new sneakers, new socks, "Hope Totes", snacks, love, hope & encouragement, from our dedicated community volunteers.

**VOLUNTEER TIMES:**  
**Saturday, July 26th**  
**8:30 AM to 1:30 PM**

**GRAVETTE MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA**  
607 DALLAS ST. SE  
GRAVETTE, AR  
72736

**A VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP LINK WILL BE AVAILABLE IN JUNE**

## Care and Share Volunteer Opportunities (Summer & Fall):

- June 10–14
- July 29–August 2
- September 9–13
- October 28–November 1



## Summer Food Pantry Needs:

With school out for the summer, many families in the Gravette School District are feeling the added pressure of providing extra meals and snacks at home. We're continuing to collect non-perishable food and toiletry items, especially those that are easy for kids to prepare... think microwavable meals, cereal, snack packs, and juice boxes.

Please place donations in the marked bins at each church entrance. All items go directly to the school's food pantry. This outreach is co-sponsored by the Celebration Worship Team and Highlands Methodist Women. Thank you for your continued support! (Note: Egg cartons are not needed at this time.)

## Looking Ahead:

Our Highlands Church 8th Annual Car Show is scheduled for **Saturday, September 20**. Registration begins at 9:00 AM, and the show runs from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. More information to come soon. Contact Greg Snyder if you have any questions.



# June 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1– Combined Worship at 10am	2	3– Compassionate Disciples Meeting	4– Fellowship Committee Mtg	5	6	7– Jane Rowland's Celebration of Life
8	9	10– Care & Share Volunteers Begin	11	12	13	14
15	16– Reduced office hours this week 10am - 3pm *see note on pg 4	17– Kitchen Cleaning	18	19– Library Mtg – Office Closed for Juneteenth	20	21
22– Bro. Jim's last Sunday, luncheon to follow	23	24	25– Summer Choir Rehearsal	26	27	28– No Celebration Service – Scrapbooking & Card Making
29– Fifth Sunday Loan Reduction – Pastor Rick's first Sunday, reception to follow	30					

## Care & Share Thrift Store

Volunteers from Highlands Church are needed to work at the Gravette Care & Share Thrift Store during the week of June 10-14, from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM.

To sign up, check the Weekly Update email for the link or contact the church office for assistance. You can also reach out directly to our coordinator, Connie Kiefer, at 876-6324.



## Thank You Notes

### Thank You from the Kiefer Family

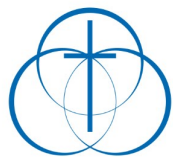
Thanks to all who prayed, sent cards and words of comfort, memorial gifts and support since Merlyn passed away. Highlands Church is such a loving compassionate congregation. I don't know how I'd have coped without all of you. A special thanks to Bro. Jim and Amey for their support during this time. Thanks again to all.

Connie Kiefer and Family

### Thank You!

We just want to say a big thank you to our Highlands Church family. Your prayers, kind words, and support have meant so much to us. It's a blessing to be part of such a loving and thoughtful congregation.

Allen & Judy Beaman



# 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

Amey Burkett: [office@hgmcbv.com](mailto:office@hgmcbv.com)

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

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:** The Deadline for the July Highlands Newsletter is 12:00 (noon), on June 20. Send all newsletter submissions, comments and/or questions to Amey at [office@hgmcbv.com](mailto:office@hgmcbv.com)

**NOTES OF CONDOLENCES:** Alice Balzer for the loss of her husband, Lee Balzer, on May 11, 2025.

## Operating Budget Report - April 30, 2025

	YTD Budget	April Actual	YTD Actual
Income	143,580	42,741	143,497
Expenses	143,580	34,352	140,609
Net	0	8,389	2,888

Thank you for your continued support.

## Church Staff

JIM BENFER, *Interim Pastor*

RICK SITTON, *Pastor*

AMEY BURKETT, *Office Administrator*

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*

MONICA CLARK, *Custodian*

**3 ways to give**  
to Highlands Church

 Online

 In-Person

 By Mail

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



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