

# Highlands News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | HIGHLANDS CHURCH | DECEMBER 2025 | VOLUME 29 | ISSUE 12



## 36th Annual Cookie Walk

It is a long-standing Highlands tradition; the 36th Annual Cookie Walk is Saturday, December 6, 8:30–11:00 AM. Our whole church family is invited to provide cookies, sweets, and goodies. We request 20 dozen cookies if possible, but any amount is appreciated. Volunteer signups continue in the Gathering Area; pick up pans if you still need them.

- **Sweet Shoppe drop-off: Mon–Thu, Dec 1–4, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM** so we can package items
- **Cookie drop-off: Thu–Fri, Dec 4–5, 9:00 AM–1:00 PM**
- **Soups-To-Go:** sign up in the Gathering Area; prepare soups in 42 oz Rubbermaid Take Along containers; if freezing, leave a quarter-inch at the top

Event assignments will be posted on the kitchen door Wednesday, Dec 3. On event day, workers please park in the back lot and wear Christmas-themed attire. Proceeds support ministries in Northwest Arkansas through Highlands Mission Ministries and Highlands Methodist Women. Questions, contact Darleen Olson (479-936-1814) or Pat Lehman (479-876-1985).



**Our Annual Church Conference** will be held in the Sanctuary on **Wednesday, December 10 at 6:00 PM**. All members are invited and encouraged to attend.

# Under-Shepherd Udderings

Howdy Highlands Church Family,

The advent season stirs our hearts to celebrate the birth of our Savior. I love this season. I also love making new friends and getting to know my brothers and sisters of Highlands Church. I'm excited to share that CARE Groups will be reconstituted, reinvigorated, and resume in January of 2026. The Henkels and Stones are busy organizing the CARE Groups for 2026.

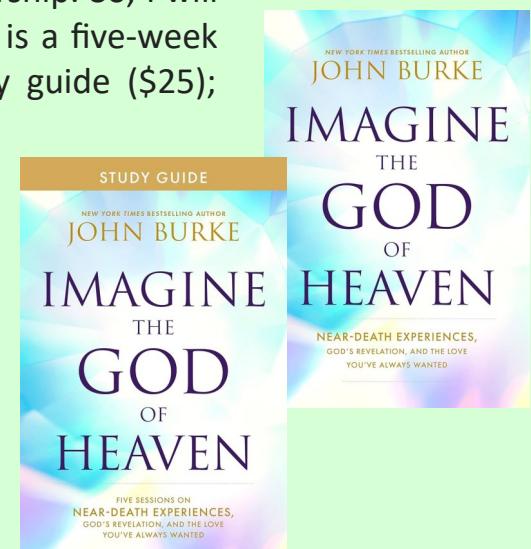
I have one big ASK. We need Care Group Leaders and co-leaders. If you are willing to shepherd a group or assist, then let Katy Henkel know. E-mail Katy at [katycruise@cox.net](mailto:katycruise@cox.net). I HOPE and PRAY that every member will participate in a care group so that you can get to know one another, truly demonstrate God's love for one another, and enjoy fellowship in Christ. If you are not physically able to participate, the Compassionate Care Team will be shepherding a CARE Group that you can be a part of in 2026. The leaders of the Compassionate Care team will be including you in a group because we want everyone to know they are cared for and loved. Soon, you will be hearing about who is in your group and who your group leaders will be. I'm excited about his discipleship ministry. My wife, Karen, and I have signed up to be shepherds for one group, and are grateful that we will draw closer to Christ and to you through this ministry.



I've recently led a study on Rev. John Burke's book *Imagine the God of Heaven*. The focus is understanding the nature of God from the bible as well as from those who have died and returned to their body to share their Near-Death Experiences (NDE). Three decades of research have gone into this book. The stories you hear from those who died and caught a glimpse of what heaven is like will leave you amazed. The Saturday afternoon study was so well-received and life-changing that I want to offer it on Sunday mornings. However, I don't want to detract from those going to Discipleship studies that meet before worship. So, I will lead the study from 11:20 am to 12:15 pm on Sundays. This is a five-week class and requires the purchase of the book and the study guide (\$25); couples can share the books. To make your reservation for class, please [email Amey](mailto:email Amey), and she will order your books for you to pick up on the first day of class. You can pay anytime. We will meet in one of the classrooms in the Ministries Activity Center (the MAC) beginning January 11. We will meet every week for 5 weeks, and conclude the study on February 8.

Grace and Peace

Pastor Rick



# Merry Christmas from Highlands Church!

## Christmas Cantata

Experience the beauty of the season as the Highlands Chancel Choir presents “The Glory of Christmas” by Lloyd Larson. Directed by John Matthews, this inspiring musical offering features pianist Pam Meyer, organist Jeannine Wagar, and soprano soloist Kim Hale. The Cantata will be presented twice in the Sanctuary—Saturday, December 13 at 5:30 PM and Sunday, December 14 at 10:00 AM—and all are welcome. Invitation postcards are available at the Information Station if you’d like to share this event with friends or family.

## Christmas Luncheon

Join us for our annual Christmas Luncheon on Sunday, December 14, immediately following worship (approximately 11:15 AM). This year’s meal features a country-style Christmas dinner catered by Bubba’s BBQ, with marinated chicken, potato salad, baked beans, corn-on-the-cob, dinner rolls, and dessert. Tickets are \$15 per person and may be purchased in the Gathering Area through November 30. Hosted by the Fellowship Team, this special gathering is always a warm and festive time of food, friendship, and celebration.

## Christmas Eve Service

Celebrate the joy and wonder of Christmas at our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service on Wednesday, December 24 at 4:00 PM in the Sanctuary. This family-friendly service includes worship, Communion, and our treasured tradition of singing “Silent Night” by candlelight. Children will receive light sticks so they can join in the glow. Bring family, invite friends, and begin your Christmas Eve with this meaningful time of worship and reflection.



## New Year—New Happenings

### First Sunday Cookies Beginning January 2026

For years, Highlands has enjoyed Third Sunday Cookies, a simple tradition of staying after worship to share cookies and fellowship. Beginning January 2026, we’re shifting this gathering to the First Sunday of each month. The change launches on January 4, which will be a Combined Worship Sunday, giving the entire congregation the chance to enjoy cookies together. The time remains the same—right after worship—and we look forward to starting each month with sweet treats and even sweeter fellowship.

### Matthew Discipleship Class—Sundays at 9AM

Beginning Sunday, January 4, 2026, Highlands will offer a second Adult Discipleship Class—called the Matthew Discipleship Class. It will meet Sundays in the Matthew Classroom from 9:00 to 9:45 AM. Allen Lovell will be the coordinator and will teach for the first few months. The first few sessions are titled “Bible 101”, in which we’ll examine topics such as the Bible’s history, how it’s organized, and how to study it effectively. Following this, we will begin a study of the Gospel of Mark. If you are interested, please sign up for this new class at the Info Station.

# Outreach Opportunities - December 2025

Our next Snack Pack project will take place on Wednesday, December 3, from 10:00–11:30 AM at the Samaritan Community Center in Rogers. No signups are required.

As we enter the Christmas season, please also remember holiday canned or boxed food donations for the Gravette School Food Pantry; collection tubs are available at all entrances of the church.

We will continue outreach throughout the month with Salvation Army Bell Ringing at Allen's Grocery on December 11, 12, 13 and again on December 18, 19, 20. If you signed up to ring, don't forget your shift!

Thank you all for supporting our newest outreach opportunity through your prayers and donations toward postage fees, clothing, hygiene items, toys, and more for the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child "Shoebox Ministry." On November 18, we packed 74 boxes, which will be sent to the OCC Dallas Distribution Center for further processing. Blessings, Sara Sherman, Outreach Chair



## Flex 'N Stretch Needs Your Support

After 20 years, our Flex and Stretch program is struggling and may not be able to continue without additional participation. We are looking for 12 people to sign up for the upcoming winter session, which begins January 5 and runs for 10 weeks. Classes meet on **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00–9:00 AM.** You may choose 30 lessons for \$45 or 15 lessons for \$30.

If we are unable to reach 12 members, the program will be suspended. Thank you for your support over the years and for helping us keep this ministry going. A sign-up sheet will be available in the Fellowship Hall beginning November 22. For questions, contact Donna Williams at - [donnaandthekids@gmail.com](mailto:donnaandthekids@gmail.com) or 479-659-2658.



**GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays** will be held on Thursday, December 11, from 1:00–3:00 PM in the John Classroom. This one-day seminar offers comfort, practical help, and hope for anyone grieving during the holiday season. A Holiday Survival Guide is available for \$10, even if you can't attend. All are welcome. For more information or to RSVP, contact the church office.

# Notes from the Finance Office

As we look toward the coming year, we're reminded that stewardship is more than a financial decision—it is a spiritual practice rooted in gratitude. Everything we have comes from God, and we are invited to use those gifts faithfully for His work in the world.

We had an excellent response on Stewardship Sunday—more than 70 commitment cards were dedicated and more than 50 “Go Serve” forms were turned in. If you haven’t done so, you can still complete your financial commitment for 2026 and indicate your willingness to serve. If we each do our part, the many ministries of Highlands Church will be funded for next year.

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.

May we approach the coming year with open hands and grateful hearts, trusting that God will multiply our gifts and guide our steps.

## Highlands Youth Discipleship

**WE ARE LEARNING MORE ABOUT BEING DISCIPLES OF JESUS AND FRIENDS OF GOD.  
CURRENTLY, WE ARE FOCUSING ON “ABIDING IN JESUS.” SO, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15: 5

Jesus is not asking us to try harder. Jesus wants us to stay connected to him. We watched a short video about grafting one kind of apple tree into a stronger-rooted apple tree. This amazing metaphor showed in detail what happened to that grafted connection: the most delicious, beautiful apples!

We took another step to pray about our own fruit-producing discipleship adventure. The plan turned into an out-of-the classroom experience throughout Highlands Church to bless our leadership. Apples were purchased and placed in gift bags with encouraging notes and scripture. Jesus is so generous with us, and he is leading us to bear fruit of generosity.

All middle & high school students are invited to join us Sundays at 9 AM in the Youth Room. Don’t forget our next Games & Grub night is scheduled for Sunday, December 14, from 4-6 PM. For more details, contact Wanda Krug.



## 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**



**Kids Discipleship Class** (ages 5–10) meets in the Children’s Center on Sundays from 10:30–11:00 AM following the Children’s Sermon; there is no class on the first Sunday of each month.

**Nursery** (ages 0–4) is open in the Children’s Center on Sundays during the 10:00 AM Traditional Worship Service and from 9:00–10:00 AM for parents attending a discipleship class.

**In December, Kids Discipleship will continue their study of “Jesus’ Birth and Childhood” in preparation for the Christmas season.**

**December Lessons:** December 14, The Angel’s Good News; December 21, Mary Visits Elizabeth; December 28, Jesus is Born



# THE HIGHLANDERS METHODIST MEN



## December Highlanders Meeting

To celebrate the season, the Highlander's Men will be meeting for a free catered breakfast on Tuesday, Dec. 2 at 8:45 am. There will be an extensive selection of breakfast items provided by Papa Mike's catering with something for everyone. We have committed to at least twenty meals but can easily arrange for more if needed, as long as you sign-up before Monday Nov. 24.

In keeping with the season and Highlander's tradition our program will be more spiritually oriented with presentations from Pastor Rick Sitton and from Nat Collis. These will be followed by a brief business meeting.

It is also election time for officers of the Highlanders Men for 2026. If you would like to add your name to the list of nom nations for any of the positions, President, Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer please contact Greg Snyder. We currently have no nominations for the very important position of Vice President and would encourage anyone with an interest in filling this position, or questions about the duties of VP, to contact any board member for more information. Voting will take place at our meeting on Dec. 2.



The Highlands Church Blood Drive is hosted by the Highlanders.

To schedule a blood drive appointment, visit our website or contact our coordinator, Jerry Snyder, at 763-639-2597.

Your donation truly saves lives—thank you for giving the gift of hope this Christmas season!



## HIGHLANDS METHODIST WOMEN

### December HMW Meeting—Potluck & Gift Exchange

Calling ALL Ladies of Highlands Church! Join the Highlands Global Methodist Women on Monday, December 8, at 11:00 AM for a Potluck and Dirty Santa Gift Exchange. Your gift should be new, cost no more than \$20, and come prepared to have FUN! There will be a signup sheet at the Information Station, including space to note the food you will be bringing. We'll enjoy a fun and lively time together with good food and great fellowship. We encourage you to wear your ugly sweaters or something Christmassy!

### HMW Book Club—Begins January 19

Please join the Women of Highlands on Monday, January 19, 2026, at 10 AM in the Matthew Room. ALL women and friends are invited as we discuss *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus* by Lee Strobel. Is there credible proof that Jesus of Nazareth really is the Son of God? In *The Case for Christ*, Strobel—former legal editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and New York Times bestselling author—retraces his own spiritual journey from atheism to faith and builds a compelling case for Christ's divinity. After reading the book, we'll listen to one of his talks on YouTube if time permits. We'll have coffee and cake while we enjoy good conversation! No sign-up is necessary. For more information, call Sue LaHood at 479-855-0937.

# December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2– Highlanders Meeting – Compassionate Disciples Meeting	3– Fellowship Team Meeting	4	5	6– Cookie Walk – No Celebration Service
7– Combined Worship at 10AM	8– HMW Potluck & Meeting	9	10– Blood Drive – Stitchers – Annual Church Conference	11– GriefShare “Surviving the Holidays”	12	13– Cantata 5:30PM
14– Cantata 10AM – Christmas Lunch – Games & Grub	15	16– Kitchen Cleanup	17– Choir Christmas Party	18– Library Mtg	19	20
21– 3rd Sunday Cookies	22	23	24– Office Closed – Christmas Eve Service 4PM	25– Office Closed – Christmas Day	26– Office Closed	27– Scrapbooking & Card Making
28	29	30	31	Jan 1– Office Closed	Jan 2– Office Closed	



Begin each morning centered on the love of Jesus through the Word of God. Wake-Up Call, from Seedbed Ministries, offers daily encouragement to help us slow down and refocus on Christ. Each devotion includes a short Scripture, reflection, prayer, and a few simple questions that help reorient our hearts and homes around the transforming love of Jesus.

#### Prayer of Consecration

Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.

Jesus, I belong to you.

I lift up my heart to you.

I set my mind on you.

I fix my eyes on you.

I offer my body to you as a living sacrifice.

Jesus, we belong to you.

Praying in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen.

Subscribe today to receive the Wake-Up Call devotional in your inbox every morning. Wake up each day to the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bill Williams, Lay Leader

**Note from Pastor Rick:** Please keep praying for your church each day during your prayer time. I hope you are receiving the Wake-up Call devotion each morning in your email so we may share in that spiritual discipline together as the body of Christ. Sign up here: <https://seedbed.com/wakeupcall/>

For those who like a daily devotional in print, the church has ordered an excellent devotional that is scripturally based and theologically sound. This devotional, called **Our Daily Bread**, is beloved by some of you already.



# 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, Amey Burkett: [office@hgmcby.com](mailto:office@hgmcby.com)**

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

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:** The deadline to submit content for the January Highlands Newsletter is 12:00 PM (noon) on December 17 (early). Please send all submissions, comments, or questions to the church office at: [office@hgmcby.com](mailto:office@hgmcby.com)

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED:** The church office will be closed December 24, 25 & 26 for the Christmas holiday and again January 1 & 2 for the New Year's holiday. #weareblessed

## Operating Budget Report - October 31, 2025

	YTD Budget	Oct Actual	YTD Actual
Income	365,003	33,450	373,198
Expenses	365,003	32,173	355,214
Net	0	1,277	17,984

Thank you for your continued support.

## Church Staff

RICK SITTON, *Senior Pastor*

JOHN MATTHEWS, *Director of Music Ministries*

PAM MEYER, *Celebration Worship Leader*

JEANNINE WAGAR, *Organist*

JOYCE SHELDON, *Chimes & Bells Director*

CELIA CHERNOTA, *Nursery Attendant*

AMEY BURKETT, *Office Admin*

DRU MATTHEWS, *Business Manager*

MONICA REDMON, *Custodian*

**3 ways to give**

to Highlands Church



Online



In-Person



By Mail

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

THE POWER OF  
**ONE**

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



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