

ADVENT RESPONSE Christ Be Our Light Farrell
**Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light! Shine in your Church gathered today.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we have heard Mary's song, we still seek security in pride and power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the costs of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world. We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you, turn our apathy into acts of love and service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen.

(Silent Confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

THE WORD

WORDS WITH OUR YOUNG CHURCH Jen Jammer

OLD TESTAMENT READING Micah 5:2-5a

Anthem Beautiful Star of Bethlehem arr. Fettke
Clay Johnson, soloist

GOSPEL READING Luke 1:39-56

Message The Inn, week 4: A Room with a View (Love)
Rev. Chip Stapleton

RESPONSE

†AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Apostles' Creed pg. 14 Blue Hymnal

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell. The third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY One Small Child arr. Doran

†DOXOLOGY #592

**“Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him, above Ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.”**

†PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SENDING

†CLOSING HYMN #41 O Come, All Ye Faithful

†BENEDICTION

†POSTLUDE Pat-A-Pan arr. McLean

†All who are able, please stand



*Betty and Marshall Howie will celebrate their
70th Wedding Anniversary on December 22nd.*

Worship Leaders

Rev. Chip Stapleton, Senior Minister
Pam Langston, Dir. of Music Ministries
Jen Jammer, Dir. of Children's Ministry
Chris Jackson, Dir. of Youth Ministry

HPC Session Highlights

December 7, 2021

*Approved the baptism of Parker and Harrison Kiser, children of Thomas and Kelly Kiser for January 16, 2022, at the 9:00 Second Mile Service.

*Approved the baptism of Harris Haithcock, son of Will and Lauren Haithcock to be held in the sanctuary at an undetermined date.

*Approved the wedding of Wallace Cameron and Jeffery Petroski to take place in the sanctuary of Highland Presbyterian Church on July 9, 2022, at 4:00pm with the Rev. Chip Stapleton officiating.

*Approved request of Lauren Reames for Dr. Ernie Johnson to officiate along with Rev. Chip Stapleton at her wedding on June 25, 2022.

*Approved request for Dorothy Davis and Dr. George Kroliek to wed in the chapel of Highland Presbyterian Church at a date between December 27 and December 30, 2021, with Rev. Chip Stapleton and Dr. Jay Coker officiating.

*Received the following report from Ginny Breece, Highland Learning Center Board Chair: had hired Diana Bunton as the new director of the Learning Center; had finalized the new Learning Center playground to begin around April 2022; were getting an estimate for redoing the front playground; were able to give the Learning Center staff a raise with the grants they had received.

*Approved the worship services on December 26, 2021, to be combined into 1 unified service to take place at 11:00am. This would allow Sunday School to take place at its usual time of 10:00am.

*Approved the 2022 dates for communion at the Traditional 11:00 service as proposed by the Traditional Worship Committee.

*Approved the re-allocation of designated funds in the missions' program as presented by the Missions Committee.

*Received report from Warren Way, Facilities Use Subcommittee Chair, that the lease for the rental space by a Service Source employee had been presented and is waiting for the signature of the appropriate person.

*Approved the membership of the congregation being informed of the three COVID cases among the staff through the church emails.

~~~PASTORAL CONCERNS~~~

We ask that you keep our home-bound in your thoughts and prayers.

P.W. and Martha Jessup
Jean Robinson
Lisa Hitt
(daughter of Gayle McDonald)
Charlotte Ingram

Norman Blakely
Steve & Orion Gaynos
Madie Rae Locklear
("Grandma" to the Guy Family)
Lib Yarborough
Bill Johnson

Please let us know if you have concerns that you think the church should know about. Please limit to close-extended family. We will put their names (and relation to you if you desire) in the email update. The names will be removed after a few weeks unless requested otherwise. Thank you.

Kelli Lujan 401-0928 or email kellilu@gmail.com

Announcements for December 19 - December 25, 2021

A note from your Pastor...

Hello Highlanders,
I don't know about you, but I have had the Christmas music on at every opportunity for a couple weeks now and I am definitely getting into the spirit of the season...I found myself aimlessly singing 'it's the hap, happiest time of the year...' as I sat down at my desk this morning. Thankfully there was no one near enough to be subjected to my singing!

That sentiment, that it's the happiest time of the year, is one that I think most of us believe is how we are 'supposed' to feel during the Christmas season. Sometimes we do - and that is wonderful - but there are other times, because of life circumstances, a bad night sleep, or any number of other reasons, when those words would ring hollow were we to say them.

Too often we think that these less festive feelings and emotions are somehow invalid, or even unfaithful, especially at this time of year. But in reality, these feelings are an unavoidable part of life and our living in a broken world. And more than that, they are exactly why Christ came at Christmas.

Christ, the light of the world, came into the world because of the darkness that only he could overcome. Acknowledging that we don't always feel like it is the 'happiest time of the year' is not some failure of our faith and it doesn't mean we are Scrooge or the Grinch, it just means that we are experiencing a moment of awareness about how much our world - and how much we - need Jesus.

Thinking of Christmas songs, not all of them are quite as saccharine as 'It's the most wonderful time of the year'. This week I read an article talking about the importance of sad songs, especially at Christmas. The author said, 'Sad songs are important to us, working against our tendency toward unrealistic exuberance. They feel true-to-life rather than packaged in sparkly paper. Sad Christmas songs counterbalance the merriment and revelry the holiday season tends to induce. Even the contemplative "Silent Night" helps us deal with hyperactive numbers like "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

Emmanuel means that God is with us. It doesn't mean that the world is perfect or that everything is always wonderful, but it does mean that good or bad, happy or sad we are never alone. It means that we can trust that in the darkest of nights, the dawn is coming. It is precisely because of Jesus that we don't have to pretend that everything is perfect. Because of Jesus, no matter the circumstance we can say with hope and confidence that 'it is well'.

Sharing God's Love,
~Chip

GENEROSITY

Please go to hpchurch.org/pledge to access our online giving form.

Important notice to those of you who currently have recurring giving set up online. If you are submitting next year's pledge and wish to change the amount of your recurring gift, please indicate this information on your pledge card and we will reach out to you shortly to ensure that this change is made starting in 2022. Your current online gift amount will continue into 2022 unless we are otherwise notified or you cancel the gift online yourself.

Please email finance@hpchurch.org or call 401-0924 with any questions.



Celebrate Christmas Eve with us - December 24th

4:00pm - Christmas Eve Family Service

8:00pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

While it's not required, we ask that if you and/or your family plan to join us that you please make a reservation. This is so that we can better plan for both services. You will not have to check-in. Please go online to hpchurch.org/christmas-at-highland to access the reservation form.

Or you may call Keely at 401-0929 or Kelli at 401-0928.

LESSONS & CAROLS

Join us on Sunday, December 26th at 11:00am in the Sanctuary for our Unified Service of Lessons & Carols. Sunday School will still meet at 10:00am.



Holiday Hours for HPC

Friday, December 24 - Offices are closed half-day at 12:00pm

Monday, December 27 & Tuesday, December 28 -

HPC Building/Offices closed

Wednesday & Thursday, December 29-30 - Open for regular hours

Friday, December 31 - Building/Offices closed half-day at 12:00pm

Monday, January 3, 2022 - Building/Offices closed

We will reopen Tuesday, January 4, regular business hours

YOUTH INFORMATION

If you have travel plans over the holidays, no fear of missing out on Youth activities. We will be taking a break until January 9 with one very important exception:

YOUTH LOCK-IN

Some of you are not traveling, why not make the most of time off from school and pull an all-nighter doing something fun, so we will be holding a Lock-in on Wednesday night, December 29 from 7:00pm-7:00am Thursday.

You guys have been asking for it, so I'm looking forward to a night of crazy fun, and too much food, and not enough sleep (ok, maybe not excited about that part)

~Chris Jackson || 910-309-3030

DECEMBER 19, 2021

11:00am



**HIGHLAND
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

PRESERVICE MUSIC

GATHERING

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

PRELUDE Bring A Torch, Jeannette Isabella arr. Penna

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Not in the mighty places of power,
but in little Bethlehem, in a room out back;

All: The Messiah is coming.

One: Not born in nobility and wealth, but of Mary and Joseph,
who pondered and planed wood:

All: The Messiah is coming.

One: Not announced by prophets, priests, and kings,
but by two women, who were the first to know.

All: The Messiah is coming.

One: Nothing will be impossible for God, but when and
where we least expect it, look among the straw and the stars:

All: The Messiah is coming.

OPENING PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN #13 **Prepare the Way**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING MacNab Family

Reader 1

Reader 2

Reader 1: The Love of Christ be with you!

Congregation: And also with you!