

Annual Committee Reports 2023



**Highland Presbyterian Church
Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Pastor: J. S. Randolph Harris

Associate Pastor: Debbie Layman

Associate Pastor: Courtney Stevens

Pastor Emeritus: Steve McCutchan

Director of Music: Chris Gilliam

Organist: Chris Heckman

Director of Christian Education: Heather Ferguson

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Christian Education Committee

Highland's Christian Education Committee, comprised of Children's Ministry and Adult Christian Education Teams, had an exciting, albeit challenging, 2023.

Children's Ministry

The effects of the pandemic still linger in the form of lower attendance for our families with young children (birth-5th grades). In addition, we have experienced dips and surges in the demographics of children with 2 four-year-olds, 1 second grader, and 2 fifth graders on the low end and 6 two-year-olds, 6 kindergartners, 6 first graders and 6 fourth graders on the high end.

Alternatively, the number of young children in Highland's Nursery has been growing – a wonderful sign for our future. On January 22, 2023, we hired childcare professional Judy Parro to oversee the Preschool Nursery alongside our amazing volunteers.

Early in 2023 the Children's Ministry Committee decided to share the Sunday morning education hour with the Children's Choir which was being led by volunteers. At this time the children gathered for Godly Play from 9:30–10:15, followed by Children's Choir from 10:15–10:45. In November 2023, Haley Chapman was hired as Highland's Children's Music and Handbell Director.

Vacation Church School (June) participation this past summer was probably the starkest example of the pandemic remnant effects with only 5 children registered. We had a wonderful group of adult volunteers and therefore were able to do some exciting things that we would not have been able to do with more children (Visiting the Greensboro Science Center and a morning outing to Miller Park to plant a tree). It was an enriching experience for all involved, however, we will be considering some creative alternatives to the traditional 3-day, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. schedule with the hopes of involving more families.

We had several events introduced in 2023 including kicking off the new Children's Ministry theme, *God's Good Neighborhood*, which included the Preschool Sunday morning class using God Loves Me curriculum and a new version of the former *faith.net* program incorporating the Godly Play curriculum.

The year in Children's Ministry culminated in a wonderful version of the Christmas Eve family-oriented worship service, The Living Nativity. We hosted a lively array of costumed characters (children, youth, and adults). It was truly an intergenerational experience, and many congregation and community members were present for the service.

Adult Christian Education

2023 ACE Sunday Morning Offerings

- Term 4 (Winter 2023): What Kind of Christianity (HEART Force); The Present Word; The Ridiculous Journey (The Lectionary Café)
- Term 5 (Lenten Season): Learning to Walk in the Dark (Lenten Book Read); The Present Word; The Lectionary Café
- Term 6 (Spring): Wait – Is this Racist?; The Present Word; Outdoors with God (The Lectionary Café)

In the fall of 2023, we added a special classroom for parents to gather on Sunday mornings for coffee and conversation in Room 126. On the first Sunday of each month, we have a special video or speaker to join this group to discuss parenting issues. (Parents' Coffee and Conversation)

We also introduced the Highland Faith Formation Academy (HFFA), a three-year series of classes designed to equip Highland officers and members with the tools and knowledge needed for maturing faith and discipleship.

- Term 1 (Fall 2023): The Unfolding Drama of the Bible Pt. 1 (HFFA); Beguiled by Beauty; The Present Word; The Lectionary Café
- Term 2 (Fall 2023): The Unfolding Drama of the Bible Pt. 2 (HFFA); Caring for Our Earthly Home Part 1; The Present Word; The Lectionary Café

- Term 3 (Advent Season): Hope: A User's Manual (Advent Class); Caring for Our Earthly Home Part 2; The Present Word; The Lectionary Café

Opportunities through the Week

Though the ACE Committee has little or no role in organizing the opportunities offered through the week (the staff generally organize these offerings), they are educational and therefore fall under the ACE Committee purview.

- Faith and Film
- Poverty Book Group
- Listening to Black Voices
- LGBTQ Book Group
- Men of the Church Bible Study
- Lunch & Learn
- Thursday A.M. Women's Study
- And the newest addition, Laughter & Lamentation

Men's and Women's Retreats

Both the Men's and Women's Retreats in 2023 were very well received with 24 attending the Men's Retreat and 42 attending the Women's Retreat. These were the first such retreats since the beginning of the pandemic.

ArtRageous, the intergenerational creative arts week at Highland had a very successful restart following a three-year hiatus. We had as many or more participants and teachers as ArtRageous has ever seen.

For the Christian Education Committee we have much to celebrate at the close of 2023: the joy felt in relationships built, the hope heard in the laughter of babies and children, and the love that continues to grow as we gathered to learn more about ourselves, one another, and God.

Written by Heather Ferguson, Presented by J Grady Elliott, Committee Chair

Community Service Committee

Highland Presbyterian Church congregants and this Committee support many organizations within Winston-Salem. Through our works and our financial gifts, we supported 25 local non-profit agencies in 2023. These agencies provide services including those related to housing, mental health, food insecurity, and children. Through our donations, we serve adults of all ages and stages, as well as children. We serve persons with disabilities, prisoners, those needing home goods, and those who need legal services. While congregants may only see a few outward signs of the service they do through pasta sauce, food donations, and Christmas giving, they are serving much greater needs in our community through their financial contributions to HPC.

As a committee, we are grateful and overwhelmed by the generosity of the members of Highland Presbyterian Church. Here are some of the ways that you provided much needed support in 2023. For March Madness, we collected 909 pounds of pasta sauce for Crisis Control with NC State winning this year! In March we were also excited to host the Mission Fair for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic and had 20 agencies participate, as well as strong support from the congregation.

In April, you generously supplied the Moore and Ashley elementary school teachers with homemade desserts for Teacher Appreciate Day. We also held a Helping Hands Day in April, with approximately three dozen volunteers participating in projects for four agencies—Trellis, Habitat, Riverwood, and Shepherd's Center.

In May we learned from Chaplain Hinchel from Forsyth Jail & Prison Ministry who provided an overview of their program to our committee. We also had our annual Diaper Drive; this year the donations went to support the Clemmons Food Pantry and the Shalom Project.

In the summer we stayed busy with our documentary series, the films were: (1) *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*; (2) *State of Change* – a PBS documentary on environmental issues in NC; and (3) *Lead Me Home*, a look at poverty and the lack of affordable housing. These were all extremely well received, with at

least 40 in attendance for two of the films and over 80 for the environmental event. We also collaborated with some of the other congregations including Temple Emanuel and Parkway United Church of Christ and local environmental groups for the *State of Change* presentation.

In August our committee met to discuss the book *Wait, Is This Racist?* to see if we want to change the criteria for the agencies we support. We agreed that is something that needs to be addressed, and a task force will be formed in 2024 to determine how best to implement our ideas.

In October we had an additional Helping Hands Day; the number of volunteers was significantly lower, so we will evaluate how to approach Helping Hands in 2024. The fall also had us busy updating the committee with agency reports and needs for the upcoming year.

In December, your support again came into play with the Shepherd's Center Dinner, at which we served 80 guests and had approximately 16 volunteers from the congregation. We also collected 225 desserts for the Samaritan Ministries for their Christmas Eve dinner, as well as gifts under the Christmon Tree for Forsyth Jail & Prison Ministry.

In addition we collected a total of 1589 pounds of pasta sauce for Crisis Control in 2023! We greatly appreciate your generosity and continued support in 2023!

Respectfully Submitted by Betsy Spencer, Community Service Committee Chair

Congregational Care Committee

In 2023, the Congregational Care Committee supported our Highland family by reaching out with love, care, and generosity in many different capacities. We brought most Highland events and celebrations back to in-person, which was well received by all.

Our small team graciously supported the Highland congregation by serving in numerous capacities, such as providing meals, flower deliveries, caring cards, birthday cards, birthday phone calls to members 65 years and older, special birthday deliveries to members ages 90 and above, and baby books and rose delivery to families with new additions.

Here are the other ways that we showed our love and support to our congregation:

- In February, we sent all thirty-three college age Highland youth electronic Valentine's Day cards with a special personalized message and a \$10 Amazon gift card.
- In March, we partnered with our Highland preschoolers to deliver their beautiful artwork and special messages in the form of St. Patrick's Day cards to over 25 of our elder Highland members.
- In April, we delivered Easter lilies to over 20 Highland members.
- In May, with the help of Gidget Payne, who created custom cards for our parents of young children, we announced an afternoon of babysitting to come in the following month. The cards were delivered alongside bags filled with special treats for parents and kids alike.
- In June, we held the previously mentioned afternoon event of babysitting services for our young parents. Highland children enjoyed engaging in interactive play together while their parents had some special time to themselves.
- In November, we hosted the ages 80+ birthday celebration in the Activity Building, featuring special decorations, a guest speaker, music, birthday cake and lemonade.
- In December, we shared the love and joy of the season by delivering beautiful poinsettia plants to congregational members. Unfortunately, the severe weather delayed and downsized our initial plans for Christmas Caroling, however we were able to send out small groups the week after Christmas to spread the holiday cheer.

In Conclusion:

We deeply appreciate all the support and immense talent from the Prayer Shawl Committee and the Caring Friends, as they continued to play a huge role in caring for our church members alongside the Congregational Care Committee.

We also extend our most sincere praises and appreciation to Debbie Layman for giving so much of her heart and soul to help guide our committee. She is our unsung hero who was always present with great inspiration, wise advice, and heartfelt prayer.

Yet another special thanks to Gidget Payne for her amazing creativity in the design of our cards, as well as her speedy assistance in pulling names, addresses, birthday lists, and mailing cards, and always done with an enthusiastic smile!

Our committee this year consisted of: Elaine Minton (Chair), Emma Link (Vice Chair), Mary and Caroline Mendenhall, Diana Smyrl, Becky Reynolds, Patricia Murphy, Judy Bass, Carrie Scott, Lucy and Jim and Lancaster, Sue Sevin, Missy Carroll, and JoAnn Mintz.

Respectfully Submitted by Elaine Minton, Congregational Care Committee Chair

Fellowship and Communications Committee

The Fellowship and Communications Committee hosts gatherings and fellowship events to connect church members with one another and build a community of faith.

This year's events, initiatives and gatherings included:

- Fellowship Lunches for the congregation following worship
- Lemonade in the Shade
- A Winston-Salem Dash baseball game outing
- All-Church Picnic at Bolton Park (A special thank you to the Milams and John and Katie Paterson for leading the sub-committee to plan this event)
- Advent Fellowship Event in the Gathering Place.
- Revival of the small dinner groups for Highland members - Judy Bass and Sarah Mixon organized this effort. The Meet and Eat dinner groups began meeting in Fall 2023.
- Coffee for Sunday morning in the Gathering Place after 8:30 a.m. worship (Thank you to Ralph Burroughs for coordinating in the spring.)

This year we partnered with other committees and ministers for the following:

- Intergenerational square dance and spaghetti dinner
- Welcome back celebration for Randy following his sabbatical
- Reformation Sunday: shortbread and lemonade on the patio following worship
- Fellowship Lunch coordinated with the Global Service Committee

The Committee also provided support for Directory photo sign ups and distribution, our first pictorial directory in seven years!

The Committee developed an event planning checklist that can be used by the Committee to plan future events and serve as a resource for other committees who may be planning events.

To expand the kinds of activities offered, the Committee considered ways to engage Highland members in outdoor activities. We look forward to many in 2024!

Many thanks to committee members Ralph Burroughs, Alice Milam, Jud Milam, Lyndon Bray, Sullivan Bray, Jess Kirkman, Alice Michalove, Steve Moore, Marty Moore, Elizabeth Skinner, and Wendy Hoge. They brought creativity, energy, and joy as well as organizational and baking skills to this work. The Committee also extends thanks to Michael Serosky for his dedication and hard work to support Fellowship and Communication events. Thank you to Debbie Layman for her leadership and support this year.

Peace, Cheryl V. Walker, Chair, Fellowship & Communications Committee

Finance Committee

During 2023, the Finance Committee was responsible for the ongoing review and oversight of the annual budget and expenditures, as well as the preparation and presentation of the 2024 Asking Budget to the Diaconate and Session.

During the year, the committee monitored 2023 giving as compared to the budget. In 2023, our actual donations received were \$1,199,683, compared to \$1,173,568 in 2022. While our actual income was \$5,827 short of our goal, we also underspent the 2023 budget. Our total expenses for 2023 were \$1,174,772, which is \$30,738 less than the budgeted amount of \$1,205,510. This gives us \$24,910 in excess revenue for the year. This excess revenue will be incorporated into our 2024 budget, enabling us to fund our 2024 ministry more fully.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and larger macro-economic conditions, Highland is in good health. In 2023, with approval from the Diaconate and Session, the Finance Committee moved forward with the continued exploration of a Ministry Fund to provide support for the long-term financial stability of the Church. Funds for the creation of the account were from a special undesignated gift to and excess income from multiple previous years.

The 2023 committee consisted of Bill Kay, Patrick Simpson, Debbie Patton, Cathy Shaffner, Robin Spainhour, Robbie Grier, Chris Gottfried (Chair), Erin Doyle (Vice Chair), Neil Gargis (First Year Deacon), Miles Abernethy (Treasurer), Randy Harris (Pastor), and Joy Hohmann (Business Manager). My sincere thanks to each member for their service and the entire congregation for their generosity and continued support of our programs and ministry at Highland.

Respectively submitted, Chris Gottfried, Committee Chair

Global Service Committee

The mission of the Global Service Committee is to support mission work and ministry as well as members of the international community here and abroad. We help our church connect with others in the US and around the world in times of hunger, poverty, war, or natural disasters. We educate the congregation about the needs of people through Moments for Mission, coordinating Special Offerings, Highlights articles, organizing an Intergenerational Book Club, and Crop Walk organization.

Committee members this year included Dorothy Barrett, Jim Gallaher, Terry Sink, Sue Kent, Sue Sevin, Janny Gauss, Judy Noll, Kim Fontenot, and Debbie Layman.

In 2023 this is how we endeavored to fulfill our mission:

We collected Five Cents a Meal the first Sunday of each month. We used straw baskets which were passed by the church members from one pew to the next. Starting in October, children began assisting us in passing painted oatmeal containers, which the children decorated themselves, to collect these gifts.

We started putting Climate Corner articles in Highlights. Almost all these articles were written by Janny Gauss though other committee members contributed too.

In March we received the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering which supports efforts of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People, In May we received our denominational Pentecost Offering, with 40 percent of our funds going to support the local non-profit Project X which works with at-risk young people in our community. On June 16 we received our annual Children's Offering to support Children's Hope Alliance.

In July our committee sponsored the Summer Intergenerational Book Group in which participants discussed the book *Thirst* by Varsha Baja, a book for young readers focusing on the water crisis in India.

In September Global Services sponsored the El Buen Pastor Offering. The committee also helped World Relief with setting up a home and working at their warehouse. The Committee also read and discussed Chapter 7 of *Wait, Is that Racist?*

In October our committee sponsored the documentary *Plant Based Nation* with discussion led by Alison Gardner. We also sponsored the Peace and Global Witness offering; we allocated 25 percent of our offering to support the local program *Forsyth Wins* which focuses on gun violence in our community. On October 8, Jim Gallaher provided our committee's Moment for Mission to encourage Crop Walk. Each Sunday this month. Crop Walk tables were maintained by Judy Noll, Janny Gauss, Sue Sevin, Sue Kent, and Jim Gallaher. Later in the month our committee was joined by many Highland members participating in the CROP Walk. Highland raised about \$10,719 for this cause in 2023.

In November Terry Sink organized a Bread for the World letter writing initiative after worship one Sunday for people to write letters to our US District Representatives and Senators in Congress asking them to support legislation related resources to help alleviate hunger in our communities.

In November and December, we planned and implemented an Alternative Giving opportunity. This year we focused on hunger providing three options through the PCUSA (Moringa Seeds, family of chickens, and family nutrition starter pack) and local option White Flag Shelter Program through City with Dwellings. For people who donated, we offered painted okra ornaments with tags describing the gift. The okra was provided by Natalie Sevin from her farm and painted by Sue Sevin and Sue Kent. Gidget Payne prepared the tags with the gift descriptions.

At our December meeting the committee allocated available funds to make grants supporting missionary work: hunger relief, in Gaza through UN World Food Program, and Ukraine through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance; assistance through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to Sudan and Malawi; assistance through UN World Food Program to Democratic Republic of Congo and Venezuela. In addition, we set aside funds to help provide assistance to Maggie Collins, a Highland Young Adult Volunteer with the Presbyterian Church at the United Nations.

Submitted by Jim Gallaher, Committee Chair

Long-Range Planning Committee

The 2023 Long-Range Planning committee consisted of John Bain, Alice Milam, Les Preston, Randy Shields, Scott Templeton, Ed Parker, Randy Harris, and Skip Pickett.

The committee handled several items in 2023 including:

- The committee started "checking in" with the committee chairs about needed policy and procedural manual updates, if any.
- We were the host committee for our joint planning meeting March 14. With the Matthew 25 initiative in mind, we had 8-foot tables covered with brown paper where thoughts were written down and then condensed down to ideas for the committees and other appropriate folks to consider this year.
- Early in the year the church was approached by a construction company doing work at Baptist Hospital about using our back lot and building for potential storage. The company did not end up pursuing us further, but it prompted us to get Habitat for Humanity to straighten up and consolidate their inventory in the back building. For several years now Habitat has been using that building and it had become a bit messy. They paid for a large dumpster to be brought in, and they promptly took care of the issue.
- Highland's 75th anniversary will be in November 2024. The LRP has formed a subcommittee to handle the planning of the celebration.
- The Technology Committee is a subcommittee of the LRP, and they meet periodically throughout the year establishing inventory and baseline data as well as needed tech updates with input from the staff.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee as well as Randy, our staff representative. This has been a great committee to work with, and I feel like we had a productive year.

With gratitude, Skip Pickett, Committee Chair

Membership Committee

The Membership Committee's primary focus is recognizing and welcoming visitors to Highland Presbyterian Church (HPC) and then shepherding them through the membership process.

New Members

The Membership Committee proactively focused on potential new members by:

- Assigning a Visitor Greeter stationed in the Narthex each Sunday who is responsible for recognizing folks who may be visiting and specifically greeting and offering assistance
- Seeking out and welcoming visitors during church services
- Making phone calls or sending emails to visitors based on visitor card information
- Hosting new member classes in March and May
- Welcoming groups of new members who joined HPC in March and May
- Hosting a new member luncheon in March
- Assigning Fellowship Friends as connectors to help new members integrate into church activities, Sunday school, book groups, etc.
- Sending emails to new members inviting them to specific events such as the annual church picnic or Meet and Eat groups
- Displaying photos of new members on hallway bulletin board
- Based on input and suggestions from the Joint Leadership Meeting held in February, the Membership Committee developed QR Codes for visitors that are topic specific to a particular visitor profile (ex. A visitor with a young child would scan and find nursery links). The QR codes were combined on a single card and were printed by the church office. Laminated cards are now in the pews and paper copies in the Narthex on the visitor greeter table.

Social Events/Celebrations

- The Membership Committee provided a New Member Luncheon on March 12 in the Ardmore Room following 11:00 worship. It was attended by 42 people (a combination of new members and Membership Committee members).
- The Membership Committee, along with all committees, has been charged with contributing to the church's 75th Anniversary. We have begun to brainstorm how we will add to the celebration as it relates to Membership.

Name Tags, Greeters and Visitor Outreach

Throughout the year the Membership Committee was responsible for the following weekly functions:

- Greeting at the Narthex door before the 11:00 Sunday service;
- Providing name tags for the first Sunday of the month and for special events;
- Following up with visitors based on visitor card contact information.

Membership Committee changes following return from pandemic:

- The Friendship Pads were removed during the pandemic, and after multiple discussions across meetings, the Membership Committee voted not to return to using the Friendship Pads for a number of reasons including:
 - The Deacons would no longer be collecting the Friendship Pad pages after church services, and it would become a weekly duty of the Membership Committee.
 - No committee member was willing to organize or manage a collection team, nor were there enough members interested in committing to weekly collection.
 - Debbie Layman reported that the Friendship Pad provided minimal information regarding new or recurring visitors.
- Visitor Greeter Training was held since we have several committee members who had not greeted before. Supplies were located and replenished.
- The Membership Committee Notebook was converted into a digital format and updated so that forms such as reaching out to new members for events could be easily retrieved and revised.

Summary of the 2023 Membership Statistical Report:

- 773 active members as of January 1, 2023
- 18 gained new members
- 8 transferred to other congregations
- 10 members transferred to the Church Triumphant
- 52 transferred to the inactive roll
- 715 active members as of December 31, 2023

Committee members included: Pam Webb, Chair; Margaret Sehon, Vice Chair; Jim Lancaster, Secretary; Phil Payne, Katie Paterson, Susan Burroughs, Kathy Black, Peggy Dunlap, Myra Hannah, Lyn Hux, Gordon Jenkins, Alice Milam, Kathleen Hansen, Margaret Pendrich, Jamie Blankinship, and Barbara Whitley, with Debbie Layman, ex-officio.

Respectfully submitted by Pam Webb, Committee Chair

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is charged with nominating church members for election as Ruling Elders and Deacons. The committee also nominates people to serve on program staff search committees, elected by the congregation as needed. It is the only church committee that is mandated by the *Book of Order* and whose membership is clearly defined. The number of congregational members is always greater than the number of active officers on the committee. At Highland, the committee is composed of three active Elders, one active Deacon, and five congregational members. These congregational members serve staggered three-year terms and are elected at the annual meeting of the congregation. The Pastor serves as an ex-officio member.

We met in February of 2023 to begin discussing the process for compiling our slate of officer candidates for the class of 2026. To fulfill this responsibility the committee:

- solicited and received suggested names from the congregation,
- compiled a slate of candidates willing to be placed in nomination,
- developed an informational brochure about the candidates to share with the congregation,
- requested the Session call congregational meetings to place in nomination and to elect the slate of officers as listed below:

Deacons, Class of 2026

T.R. Bowers
 Pam Collette
 Andy Cundiff
 John Halverson
 Jon McKinney
 Roberta Powell
 Summer Riley
 Carol Tash

Elders, Class of 2026

John Barksdale
 Scott Miller
 Terry Mixon
 Nancy Payne
 Margaret Pendrich
 Diana Smyrl
 Scott Templeton
 Scott Walker

Randy Harris, Pastor, conducted officer training classes in the Fall of 2023. Officer candidate examinations and approval were held on December 12, 2023.

Other responsibilities completed by this committee in 2023 included:

- Assigned committee positions for all new officers
- Appointed Jeff Reynolds to serve a 3-year term on the Permanent Fund Committee
- Nominated Corporate Officers who were elected by the Session at the December meeting (Margaret Sehon, President; Melanie Adams, Vice-President; John Bain, Secretary; Miles Abernethy, Treasurer).
- Nominated Tony Kummer to fill the unexpired term of Deacon Steve Barton (Class of 2025) who resigned as he plans to move to Raleigh. The Nominating Committee presented their recommendation to the congregation at a Congregational Meeting on December 31, 2023 with a vote to approve. (Of note, as Chair of the Nominating Committee, Tony recused himself from discussions regarding the recommendation of the Nominating Committee and the Session vote to call a Congregational Meeting.)

At the Annual Congregational Meeting in January, 2024, the committee will place in nomination the names of two members from the congregation to serve a three-year term on the Nominating Committee, ending in 2026: Spencer Ayscue and Martha Neely.

Committee members, 2023:

Officers: John Loftis (Vice-Chair), Melanie Adams (1st Year Elder), Jeff Patton (Diaconate Representative); At-large members: Kathy Black (2023), Lucy Lancaster (2023), Katina Barksdale (2024), Roberts Bass (2025); Becky Reynolds (2025), Randy Harris (ex-officio)

Respectfully submitted, Tony Kummer, Committee Chair

Permanent Fund Committee

The Permanent Fund Committee met quarterly via Zoom to review the investment performance and asset allocation for the six funds shown below. A summary of the results of these funds are listed below:

Fund Name	12/31/2022 Balance	Income/Loss Earned	Donations Bequests	Disbursed Funds	12/31/2023 Balance	2023 Annual Return
Permanent	853,242	96,184	25,000	-	949,426	11.27%
Global Service	78,192	10,715	-	-	88,907	13.70%
Education/ Scholarship	12,180	1,948	-	-	14,128	15.99%
Eleanor Weeks (Choir)	26,626	2,312	-	-	28,938	8.68%
Bus Fund	80,889	12,406	-	-	93,295	15.34%
Charles Gunn Fund	23,346	3,793	-	-	27,139	16.25%
Ministry Fund	208,958	33,136	-	-	242,094	15.83%
In All Funds: Aggregate benchmark with target allocation of 60% equities and 40% bonds/fixed incomes.						
In November, the Fund received a bequest from Teeny Paxton of \$25,000.						

As of December 31, 2023, the fund floor amount was \$747,943, which provides \$201,483 to be available for disbursements for ongoing capital projects of Highland. The available amount fluctuates due to additional donations and bequests and market changes.

We are most thankful for the donations and bequests made by our church family in 2023. The committee also extends its gratitude to: 1) John Hunt for his continued guidance over the years and for providing our fund performance reports, and 2) Randall Tuttle for his dedicated and faithful service over the last three years.

2023 Members:

Patrick Simpson, Chair, At Large
 John Loftis, Elder Representative
 Randall Tuttle, At-Large

Chris Gottfried, Deacon Representative
 Roberts Bass, At-Large
 Randy Harris, Ex-Officio

Personnel Committee

As a committee of our Session, the Personnel Committee works closely with our Pastor as Head of Staff to establish and implement the personnel policies of Highland Presbyterian Church. We endeavor to encourage and support each of our staff members as they serve the church in ministry. Each committee member is assigned to a staff member in the role of Advocate, charged with keeping in regular contact with that staff member and relaying to the Committee ways that we can offer support throughout the year.

Other tasks achieved by the Committee in 2023:

- Redefined and expanded the job descriptions for both Joy Hohmann and Gidget Payne to represent more accurately the broad scope of tasks handled by both; adjusted their salaries commensurately.
- Approved the hiring of Chris Heckman as Organist, welcoming him in February;
- Added an additional at-large member to the Committee;
- In February hosted a casual evening of fellowship for our staff, as a delayed Christmas party;
- Prepared for Randy Harris's sabbatical from Memorial Day through Labor Day, making plans to offer additional support to the rest of the staff during his absence;
- On September 10th hosted a BBQ lunch (along with the Fellowship and Communication Committee) to celebrate both Randy's return and his 15th anniversary at Highland;
- Provided the staff with a breakfast buffet, gifts, and notes of thanks to recognize Staff Appreciation Month in October;
- Welcomed Haley Chapman as Director of Children's Music and Handbells in November;
- Began discussions of how to update Highland's current leave policy to reflect a new Family Leave policy adopted by the Presbytery;
- Recommended adjustments to the compensation packages for Highland's staff for 2024 in recognition of increasing cost of living, and in appreciation of their dedication and hard work.

Highland is blessed to have such a dedicated, talented, and creative staff. It is the great pleasure of the Personnel Committee to work with them and support them as they strive to bring their best to their jobs. We thank God for the gift of Highland and the family of ministry that we are together!

Elders Miles Abernethy, Judy Bass and Garry Russ; at-large members Shelly Cobb, Kristine Elliott and Cathy Shaffner; and staff liaison Randy Harris

Respectfully submitted, Highland Personnel Committee 2023

Property Committee

"The mission of the Property Committee of Highland Presbyterian Church has been to glorify God through the care and protection of God's house, and to be responsive to concerns of the congregation we serve. In so doing, we honor a facility that is a physical representative of our Lord in our community; and those of First Presbyterian, Winston-Salem and others, who, in 1949 established the Highland community of Christians, and in 1955, gave us the beautiful facility in which we worship today. Our goals include responding responsibly to the needs and being accountable for treating God's physical gifts to us with respect and conscious good judgment."

This year the Property Committee shepherded the following projects:

- New fence installation around the HVAC in the playground area;
- Construction of the bluestone patio;
- The installation of flashing crosswalk signage between the Education and Activity Buildings;
- Spring & Fall Clean Up days;
- The addition of a little free library in conjunction with the Temple by the Magnolia entrance;
- Replaced lighting in the sanctuary and on the patio;
- Replacement of boiler expansion tank for the Education Building;
- Met with the contractor about replacing the remaining damaged and / or deteriorating windows;
- Reinstated a Highland security team, helpfully guided by Jamie Blankenship;
- Compiled a list of major maintenance projects for future reference.

Respectfully Submitted by Natalie Sevin and Justin Plaisted Property Committee Co-Chairs

Stewardship Committee

In 2023, the Stewardship Committee membership included Chad Archer (Chair), Joyce Griner (Vice Chair), Kyle Hansen (First-year Deacon), Jim Gallaher (Member At-Large), Scott Walker (Member At-Large), and Randy Harris (Staff Liaison).

Early in the year, the committee spent time reading and discussing the book *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, by Henri J. M. Nouwen. Some of the salient points made by Nouwen that we noted are:

- Stewardship (*fundraising* in Nouwen's usage) is about proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission.
- Stewardship is about inviting people into a new relationship with their resources; if the gifts that are given are only good for those who receive, then we are missing an opportunity to deepen the faith of those who are giving.
- When we ask people to share of their resources, "it means we are offering a new fellowship, a new brotherhood, a new sisterhood, a new way of belonging. We have something to offer – friendship, prayer, peace, love, fidelity, affection, ministry with those in need – and these things are so valuable that people are willing to make their resources available to sustain them. [Stewardship] must always aim to create new, lasting relationships" (p. 50).

This discussion led us to our Stewardship theme for 2023–24, *Your Treasure, Your Heart*, from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:19–21.

September is always a big month for the Stewardship Committee, as we finish our plans for the season and share our theme with the congregation. We did this through a variety of means: articles in *Highlights*, a series of Moments for Mission, and a special mailing. We also continued our recent practice of including letters of gratitude with Highland's quarterly giving statements.

Our Moments for Mission included both joyful and serious reflections on the importance of our generous sharing to support the fullness of the church's ministry. We also enjoyed moments of fun, including Mark Queen's enlisting the help of the Chancel Choir for his message about the gift of music in the life of the church, and Grady Elliott's message about the expanded role that technology currently plays in our ministry (made possible by some of Highland's younger "digital native" members), which was playfully interrupted by Esther Buzzard, who reminded him – and all of us – that Highland's older adults have been on the cutting edge of much of the use of technology in the church.

We celebrated Stewardship Dedication Sunday on November 12, encouraging everyone to share the treasures of their monies, time, and talent as an expression of the fullness of their hearts. In December we followed up with members of Highland who had returned a pledge in the past, but who had not yet responded in 2023. Per our report to the Diaconate/Session: as of December 31, we have received 117 Time and Talent Forms with many commitments to different parts of our ministry; and 178 pledges, totaling \$847,850.

Respectfully submitted by Chad Archer, Stewardship Committee Chair

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee continues to oversee multiple aspects of our weekly worship services as well as special services throughout the liturgical year. We schedule Elders for communion duties, prepare, and set up the elements for communion, and schedule and train acolytes for every Sunday as well as for special services. We also oversee the scheduling of flowers for worship (including Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies), and ensure that the Sanctuary is suitably decorated for these special seasons.

This year we have continued our practice of serving communion with the congregation walking forward. The return of cold and flu season and additional Covid diagnosis helped us make that decision.

We welcomed multiple guest preachers while Randy Harris enjoyed a long-overdue sabbatical, several of whom are congregational regulars here at Highland.

Our Arts and Worship Team outdid themselves with banner production this year! They were charged with creating all (10) the banners for our Reformation Sunday which celebrated our confessional heritage. They also created new Advent banners for this year as well.

We continue to strive to provide a welcoming space in the Sanctuary for all who worship with us. We are forever grateful for the wonderful support from our staff and members of the congregation:

Pat Kirkman (Chair), Kay Chalk (Vice Chair) and Betty Jones (Secretary); Susan Burroughs, Phyllis Clemmer, Miriam Davie, Wendy Guerry, Leslie Kamtman, and Sara Smith; Randy Harris, ex officio

In service, Pat Kirkman, Chair of the Worship Committee 2023

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Committee

Committee members for this year included Megan Bryant, chair; Mark Queen, vice chair; Robbie Grier, first year elder; at-large members Sarah Mixon, Megan Ayscue, and Katina Barksdale; and youth members Christopher Layman, Luke Archambault, Heidi Gillis, and Ellie Scott.

The committee works with Courtney Stevens, Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults, in all aspects of youth and young adult ministry. The committee met monthly to plan and support activities.

Overview

Our committee's focus this year was to continue rebuilding youth ministry in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, while remaining aware of and responsive to the unique challenges and pressures faced by our youth. We celebrated opportunities to bring back important elements of youth ministry, including several overnight trips and the return to Sunday afternoon youth fellowship (with slight schedule modifications). In particular, the return of the January Mystery Trip was an incredible success, proving to be transformative for the youth who attended and setting the tone for the year.

At the start of the year, our committee established our primary goals of creating youth opportunities for faith growth, service, fellowship, and sharing the love of God. Mindful of Courtney's many responsibilities, we also resolved to find ways to support her, particularly to free her up for more pastoral care to our youth and young adults. To that end, we launched Youth Action Teams to give youth (with the guidance of an adult mentor) leadership opportunities to plan certain activities and events.

As we continued to increase youth programming, our committee decided that we would benefit from additional advance planning (ideally with a 12-18-month lead time). In 2023, we met in August to map out youth programming from September 2023-August 2024. We decided to meet in March 2024 to plan September 2024-August 2025. We also strove to include youth and families at every stage of our planning, welcoming their input and feedback to ensure that we met their needs (from both scheduling and faith-growth perspectives). Sunday school offerings have been structured to address any pandemic-related lapses in Biblical learning for middle school youth, while incorporating schedule/start time flexibility for overextended senior high youth.

An ongoing challenge for the committee is that our youth face many demands from secular organizations and activities that continue to encroach on traditional church times. These organizations often offer little flexibility, putting our youth under extreme pressure. While we continue to address this challenge, we've decided that flexibility, understanding, and acceptance are some of the most important ways we can serve our youth in this moment, offering unconditional love and grace that may not be as present in other areas of their lives.

Finally, our committee explored several suggestions from Highland leadership that arose from brainstorming at the March Officer Planning Meeting. We were encouraged to see that many of the suggestions incorporated existing aspects of Highland's youth programming. We look forward to strengthening bonds within our faith family through more intergenerational offerings and increased outreach to Highland adults. We continued to work on finding new ways to "tell our story" so that our Highland family stays informed about our vibrant, active youth and the many ways in which they are growing in their faith and serving God.

Youth Highlights:

Spring 2023

- Mystery Trip
- Souper Bowl of Caring
- Mystery Monday (a new daytrip offering on President's Day inspired by the success of the Mystery Trip)

- Care packages for 33 college-aged young adults
- Youth Sunday: Twelve senior high youth led worship on the theme of “Finding Our Peace”
- Confirmation Weekend: Seven Confirmands were presented to the Session on May 19 and welcomed by the congregation on May 21

Summer 2023

- Graduate recognition and reception
- Montreat Youth Conference
- Senior High Service Trip to Logan, West Virginia
- Middle School Service Week
- Quest for the Best: informal fellowship with opportunities to check in and explore faith practices throughout the summer (many milkshakes were consumed in dedication to this cause)

Fall/Winter 2023

- The return of Sunday afternoon Youth Fellowship, including a casual monthly lunch
- Kickoff Breakfast for youth and their families
- Trunk or Treat event for Highland families
- Bed and a Book service opportunity and fellowship lunch

New and Ongoing Initiatives

- Development of Youth Time & Talent Sheet and outreach to committees about youth participation
- Comprehensive list of opportunities for our Highland family to connect with youth
- Encourage Confirmation mentors to stay in touch with their Confirmands after Confirmation, especially during stressful times of high school/college
- Youth Action Teams

Young Adults

Highland’s thriving Young Adult group continues to organize frequent opportunities for service and fellowship for themselves and has needed minimal support from the committee this year. In 2024, the Young Adults plan to revisit their scheduling and content offerings.

The Youth and Young Adult Committee is grateful for the support of the congregation and staff as we partner to nurture our young people through this formative time in their lives and faith development.

Respectfully submitted, Megan Bryant, Committee Chair