



# HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

DECEMBER 17, 2023

10:30 A.M. SERVICE



*For unto us  
a child is born*

The bulletin cover is a mural of the Nativity, painted by the children of Highlands as a part of a Vacation Bible School project in the early 1990s. The painting was conceived and organized by Marie Jeff and her daughter Leslie Davis. The mural hangs in the Church School Building hallway opposite the Choir Room and is part of a collection of murals throughout the church that include the Creation story, the Prodigal Son and the Journeys of Paul.

Today's Christmas Pageant has evolved over many years and was originally written by longtime Highlands' staff member, Allie Norton Forte, and published by Abington Press as *The Story of Christmas*. Pageant costumes were designed by Suzy Baker, Gayle Douglas, Marie Jeff, and Mary Elizabeth Neal.

*This Advent & Christmastide, the following are given to the glory of God*

**Sanctuary Chrismon Tree:**

In honor of Ben and Alice Thistle, and Marion, Roe, and Frances Jacques, given by their grandparents, Renee Peacock & Steve Bair.

**Front Lawn Christmas Tree:**

Given by PJ & Steve Ellis

**Sanctuary Advent Wreath:**

In memory of John & Ann Roberts, given by Valerie & Warren Nash and family

Given by Scott & Laura Williams

**Greenery in the Chancel and over the High Altar:**

In memory of Robert & Carol Forrester, given by The Forrester family

In memory of our parents, Barbara & Jim Short, given by their family

In memory of our parents, Bobbie & Wayne Smith, given by their family

In honor of Jack & Lisa Reed, given by The Forrester family

In honor of Rick Phillips and The Choir given by Dr. Brian L. Bellenger

In honor of Mary Elizabeth Neal, Lindsay Dawson, and Polly Dawson, given by Don & Kelley Neal

In honor of Mary Elizabeth Neal, Lindsay Dawson, and Polly Dawson, given by Les & Mitchie Neel

Given by Kathy Burdette, Jeff & Celia Davenport, and Mark Chambers & Joy McPherson

**Wreaths in the Sanctuary:**

In honor of Reggie Holder and PJ Ellis, given by Suzanne Hoye

Given by Mark Chambers & Joy McPherson

**Wreaths on Exterior Doors:**

In memory of Judy Mills, given by The Soong family

In memory of Dr. Charles Tyndal, given by Tutter Tyndal

In memory of Abigail L'Eplattenier, given by Dick & Lynn L'Eplattenier

In honor of Nancy & Eric Barkemeyer, given by Dan & Nancy Hill

In honor of Mary Elizabeth Neal, Lindsay Dawson, and Polly Dawson, given by Les & Mitchie Neel

In honor of the welcoming congregation of Highlands UMC, given by the Five Points Business

Alliance and Five Points South Neighborhood Association

**Poinsettias:**

In memory of Jimmy Lennon, given by Dinah Hughes

In memory of Betsy Smith Watson, given by Winston, Tyra, Neal & Madora Pirtle

In memory of Thomas Neal Johnson, given by Winston, Tyra, Neal & Madora Pirtle

In honor of Kathi Ash, given by Betsy Mackin

In honor of Sarah and James Darby, given by Matt Darby

In honor of Ms. Nancy Harris, given by The Soong family

Given by Cinda York

**Additional Greenery:**

In memory of Kenneth Heath, and Ann & Michael Shacka, given by Sonya Heath Shacka

In honor of Bess, Reed, Mack, and Sam Forrester, given by Tate & Kirk Forrester

In honor of Mary Elizabeth Neal, given by the Highlands Children's Program

In honor of Lauri Soong and the Atrium Catechists, given by the Highlands Youth Program

Given by Ann Day Hunt and Denise Williams

# ORDER FOR MORNING WORSHIP WITH HOLY BAPTISM

PREACHING – REGGIE HOLDER  
LITURGISTS – THE REVEREND MIKAH HUDSON  
CHOIRMASTER AND ORGANIST – RICHARD PHILLIPS  
VERGER – BRIAN BELLENGER

**\*Congregation please stand. Words in bold are spoken or sung by the congregation.**

*Serving for Altar Guild:* Valerie Nash • *Serving as Ushers:* Mark Chambers, Michael Lalor  
*Serving as Lay Reader:* Michael Lalor  
*Serving as Acolytes:* Amelia Rathmell, John Marshal Rathmell, Will Soong  
*Sacred Dancers for the Advent Season:* Camille Baxley, Elizabeth Baxley, Polly Dawson,  
Emmalynne Hudson, Ann Harper Nash, Estelle Sides, Julia Stowe, Millie Taylor

PEALING OF THE TOWER BELLS

*Kara Cargile, chimer*

WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP

The Reverend Mikah Hudson

PRELUDE

**Air**  
*From Orchestral Suite No. 3 - Movement No. 2*  
*BWV 1068*

*Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)*

\*HYMN IN PROCESSION 220

**Angels from the Realms of Glory**

REGENT SQUARE  
*Organ Improvisation: Noel Rawsthorne*

\*THE INVITATORY & GLORIA PATRI 70

MEINEKE

*O Lord, open our lips. And we shall declare your praise.*  
*We praise you, Lord. Your holy name be praised.*  
**Glory by to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.**  
**As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

*Fantasy on* **PERSONET HODIE**  
*The Sacred Dancers*

*Phil Lehenbauber (b.1960)*

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

*Musical Setting: Charles H. Webb (b. 1933)*

INTRODUCTION

*Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy Church. We are incorporated into God's mighty acts of salvation and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.*

PRESENTATION

Samuel Benjamin Bishop  
*Child of Chris and Michelle Bishop*

## RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

*On behalf of the whole Church, I ask you: Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? I do.*

*Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? I do.*

*Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the Church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? I do.*

*Will you nurture Samuel Benjamin in Christ's holy church that by your teaching and example he may be guided to accept God's grace for himself, to profess his faith openly, and to lead a Christian life? I will.*

*Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? We do.*

*Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life, include Samuel Benjamin now before you in your care, and surround him with a community of love and forgiveness? We will.*

*Let us join together in professing the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.*

*(All stand.)*

*Do you believe in God the Father?*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

*Do you believe in Jesus Christ?*

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

*Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?*

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

*(All sit.)*

## THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

*The Lord be with you. And also with you.*

*Let us pray. Eternal Father: When nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water. After the flood you set in the clouds a rainbow. When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. Their children you brought through the Jordan to the land which you promised.*

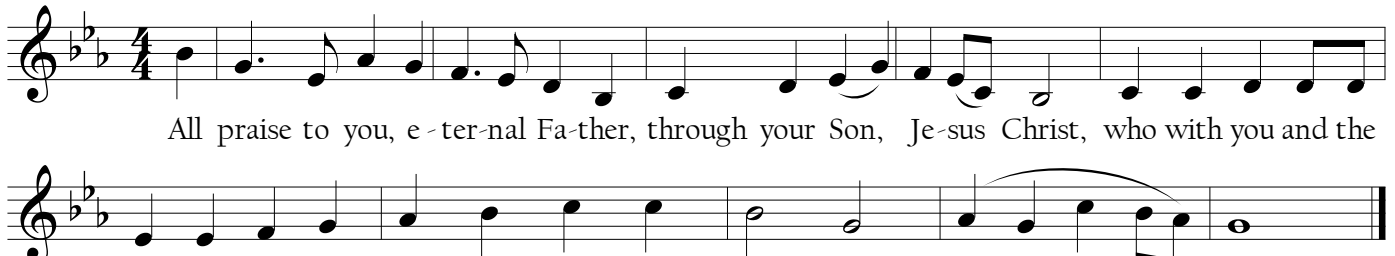


*In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb. He was baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. He called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations.*



De - clare his works to the na - tions, his glo - ry a-mong all the peo - ple.

*Pour out your Holy Spirit to bless this gift of water and this child who receives it, to wash away his sin and clothe him in righteousness throughout his life that, dying and being raised with Christ, he may share in Christ's final victory.*



All praise to you, e - ter - nal Fa - ther, through your Son, Je - sus Christ, who with you and the  
Ho - ly Spir - it lives and reigns for - ev - er. A - men.

#### BAPTISM WITH LAYING ON OF HANDS

*Samuel Benjamin, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*The Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit, you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.*

*As a child of God, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever. Amen.*

#### COMMENDATION

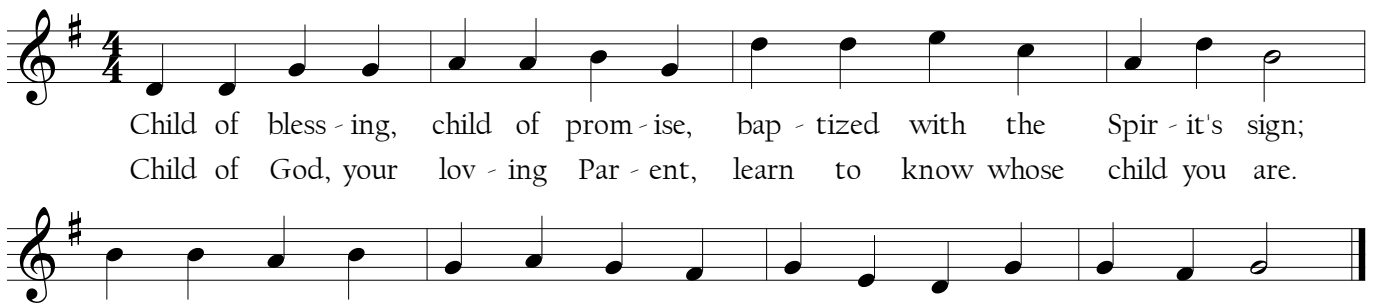
*Members of the household of faith, I commend to your love and care Samuel Benjamin, whom we this day recognize as a member of the family of God. Will you endeavor so to live that he may grow in the knowledge and love of God, through our Savior Jesus Christ?*

**With God's help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that Samuel Benjamin, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.**

#### HYMN OF BLESSING

#### Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

STUGGART



Child of bless - ing, child of prom - ise, bap - tized with the Spir - it's sign;  
Child of God, your lov - ing Par - ent, learn to know whose child you are.  
with this wa - ter God has sealed you un - to love and grace di - vine.  
Grow to laugh and sing and wor - ship, trust and love God more than all.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### COLLECT OF THE DAY

*The Lord be with you. And also with you.*

*Let us pray: Almighty God, You chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son and made known through her your gracious regard for the poor and lowly and despised. Grant that we may receive your word in humility and faith, and so be made one with Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

*Amen.*

### THE LESSON

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

*May these words reveal Christ to us. Thanks be to God*

### THE HOMILY

Reggie Holder

### THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Reverend Mikah Hudson

### GREETING AND PARISH NOTICES

### GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Phil Amthor

### OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*Away in a Manger*

*The Choir*

*Esther Roestan, violin*

*Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.  
The cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes;  
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.  
Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray;  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and take us to heaven to live with thee there.*

*Arranged by Walter L. Pelz (b. 1926)*

*Text, Traditional American*

### \*DOXOLOGY WITH ALLELUIAS 94

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

## THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

### HYMN

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

*Congregation*

ADESTE FIDELES

*O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;  
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

*The Prophecy*

HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

*Congregation*

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*The Annunciation*

HYMN

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

ES IST EIN ROS

*Congregation*

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as those of old have sung.  
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

*The Visitation*

HYMN

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

W ZLOBIE LEZY

*Congregation*

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging, angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing:  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

*The Birth of Jesus*

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

*Congregation*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

*The Prophecy Fulfilled*

HYMN

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

*Congregation*

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

*The Shepherds and the Angels*

HYMN

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night  
*Congregation*

WINCHESTER OLD

While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around.

*The Visit of the Magi*

HYMN

We Three Kings  
*Congregation*

KINGS OF ORIENT

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

REFRAIN: O star of wonder, star of light, star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign. REFRAIN

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh,  
Prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high. REFRAIN

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes of life of gathering gloom;  
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb. REFRAIN

Glorious now behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice:  
Alleluia, Alleluia, sounds through the earth and skies. REFRAIN

*Finale*

HYMN

Away in a Manger  
*The Children's Choir*

AWAY IN A MANGER

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.*

HYMN

Let There Be Peace on Earth

WORLD PEACE

*Children's Choir: Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth the peace that was meant to be.  
With God our creator, children all are we.  
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.*

*All: Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.  
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.  
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.*



Children will remain in place until the conclusion of the voluntary for photographs.

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WE WELCOME OUR GUEST MUSICIAN TO HIGHLANDS!

Esther Roestan, *violin*

### *Christmas Pageant Cast*

Angel Gabriel: Mack Forrester

Gabriel's Heralds: Tristan Prewitt, Lucas Starnes

Mary: Adelia Arnold

Elizabeth: Elizabeth Baxley

Joseph: Broughton Davenport

Inn Keeper: Jack Boliek

Donkeys: Hailey Smith, Piper Smith

Sheep: Libby Nash, Sam Forrester

Cow: Anna Amthor

Shepherds: Sol Bajalich, James Darby, Wes Hudson, Jackson Neale

Angels: Loula Gaskin, Rory McKinnon

Star Bearer: Camille Baxley

Magi: Whit Hudson, Luke Nash, Estelle Sides

Tiger: Charlotte Slay

Camel: Polly Dawson, Alex Boliek

Elephant: Julia Stowe, Millie Taylor

Narrators: Amelia Rathmell, John Marshall Rathmell

Director: Mary Elizabeth Neal



# ★ Advent and Christmas at Highlands ★★



Artwork by Richard Long

## December 17 – The Third Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m. Morning Worship featuring the Children's Christmas Pageant

## Tuesday, December 19, 2023

Children's Advent Service Project – 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Children age 4 and older are invited for an afternoon of service projects for our church family and community, seasonal snacks, and fun together in the Fellowship Hall. RSVP to Lauri Soong at [laurisoong@hotmail.com](mailto:laurisoong@hotmail.com).

## December 24 – The Fourth Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve

10:30 a.m. Children and Family Service of Holy Communion

*This service is designed especially for young children and families – brief, beautiful, and filled with the joy of the Christ Child.*

4:30 p.m. The Music of Christmas Choral Concert

5:00 p.m. Service of Holy Communion and Candlelighting

*A nursery is available for children age 4 and younger, starting at 4:15 p.m.*

*Nursery RSVPs requested at [www.highlandsumc.net/links](http://www.highlandsumc.net/links)*

## December 31 – First Sunday of Christmas

9:00 a.m. Community New Year's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall

10:30 a.m. Service of Lessons and Carols for Christmas

*– There will be no Sunday School, Atrium, or Nursery. –*



# WELCOME TO HIGHLANDS!

## ALL ARE WELCOME



A Reconciling Congregation with the Reconciling Ministries Network – [rmnetwork.org](http://rmnetwork.org)

Highlands United Methodist Church is a community of disciples of Christ; a beacon of hope, inviting all to become new persons in Christ to be sent into the world to share the Gospel and to serve our neighbors; and a sanctuary for those in need of God's love and grace.

Highlands United Methodist Church affirms that nothing can separate anyone from the love of God. We invite all to worship, wonder, and discover God's grace as we aspire to create a safe space for all to participate fully in the life of this community of faith. We are called to shine as a beacon of hope, grace, belonging, and respect for all people. Regardless of age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family, financial status, nationality, physical or mental ability, past or future, there is room for you at Highlands.

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### INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

The message of the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, Paul, and the early church was always a message of welcome and inclusion for all. The image of God's kingdom is of something small and insignificant growing into something larger and of great significance. The oppressed, the alien, and the outcast were all welcomed, included, and cared for. In this sense, our faith is built upon the idea of gracious hospitality. Followers of Jesus are not about walls of exclusion but bridges of grace and acceptance. Ours is a faith of invitation, for all to come to know Jesus as the living Christ who overcomes all brokenness, sin, and even death, offering a way to make all things new. This invitation extends to you. If you desire to explore what this means for you, please speak to a member of the clergy after the service or sometime this week. We welcome the opportunity to visit with you.

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### OFFERING

#### Cash or Check Giving:

- Giving envelopes are available in the pew racks.  
Checks may be made payable to HUMC.

#### Electronic Giving:

- Text GIVE to 205-900-3040. A link will be provided for a simple, quick way to give with one click.
- Visit [www.highlandsumc.net/giving](http://www.highlandsumc.net/giving) to give using a debit, credit card, or bank account.

#### Sustainable Giving:

- To set up automatic monthly bank drafts, contact financial manager Tyra Johnson-Pirtle at [finance@highlandsumc.net](mailto:finance@highlandsumc.net).



SCAN THE CODE WITH YOUR MOBILE  
DEVICE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT'S  
HAPPENING AT HIGHLANDS!

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