

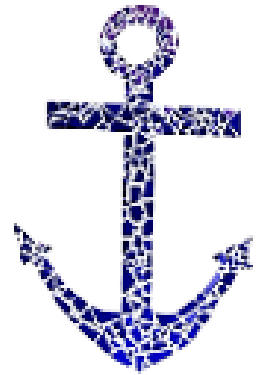


ANNUAL REPORT 2024

HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Jacksonville, Florida

HIGHLANDS UNITED

**ANCHORED IN CHRIST
ANCHORED IN COMMUNITY**



Highlands is a multi-generational church glorifying God by connecting people with Christ through worship, study, service, and fellowship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	FROM OUR PASTOR & HEAD OF STAFF
5	FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION
6	MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT AND AGENDA
	CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITY
8	Meeting Minutes - January 28, 2024
10	Meeting Minutes - December 15, 2024
11	CLERK OF SESSION STATISTICAL REPORT
	COMMITTEE REPORTS
13	Worship
14	Christian Nurture
16	Preschool Advisory
18	Member Care
19	Mission
22	Fellowship
24	Resources and Management
25	Building and Grounds
	FINANCIAL REPORTS
27	Treasurer's Report
28	NOMINATING REPORT
	CONNECT
30	Staff & Leadership
31	Get Involved

FROM OUR PASTOR

THE REV. DR. OLIVE MAHABIR

Dear Church Family,

As I reflect on one year serving alongside you, I am grateful for the way you have welcomed me as part of this community. It is a privilege to see the Holy Spirit move among us in powerful ways through our various ministries and programs.

Throughout 2024, we continued to hold fast to our mission statement: “*Anchored in Christ, Anchored in Community.*” We have live out our mission statement through joyful worship, continuing spiritual education and stimulating study, and making God’s love real.

Joyful worship: We are continually introducing creative elements to worship so that we can express our faith in worship. Our church family was involved in leading services, offering music, sharing in the sacraments, and prayer.

Spiritual Education and Stimulating Study: We continue to offer Christian education opportunities to a wide age range on Sunday mornings but have also expanded to the Second Cup weekly bible study. With the hire of our new Director of Faith Formation we hope to expand our spiritual education for all age groups.

Making God’s Love Real: We showed our care for one another in providing meals, sending cards, and pastoral visits. We cared for our county, and continue to fight hunger through the Micah’s Backpack program.

There have also been some staff transitions, and there will be more to come. Staff changes and transitions are crucial for a church to continue to be sustainable, and a cohesive staff is essential for successful ministry.

Anneliese Robbins, our Church Administrator, has submitted her letter of resignation as of December 31, 2024, but is graciously continuing until the position is filled. Anneliese has served us well for almost 10 years, and we thank her for her continued service.

We welcomed Brooke Tucker, our new Director of Faith Formation, and look forward to a revitalization of children and youth programs and activities in 2025, and a return to the loved tradition of attending the Montreat Youth Conference. Brooke and I are also looking forward to add more study/ activities for adult members.

I will also begin my service with the Presbytery of St. Augustine by serving on the Committee on Representation, and as the commissioner of the Synod of South Atlantic.

Together let us hold fast to our trust in God as we reflect on this past year and open ourselves up to the opportunities before us. May God’s grace and peace be with us all.

Yours in the Lord’s Service,
Pastor Olive

Hello Highlands United Presbyterian Church Family,

What a blessing to be starting a new year in a new position with a new title!

While I have only been a staff member at Highlands for a few short weeks, I already feel at home here and I thank you all for going the extra mile to make me and my family feel a part of the Highlands Family from the moment we walked through the sanctuary doors.

This church is a testament to your love for the Lord and your willingness to follow His will. I am thankful to all the friends and members of this church who have built and maintained such a strong foundation of programs and activities that support the greatest commandments to love God and love others. I have thoroughly enjoyed attending many different activities and programs in my first month as a staff member and I am excited to build on what is already in place.

I was relieved when Pastor Olive had suggested the change in title for my position from Director of Christian Education to Director of Faith Formation. While I enjoy teaching about God and the Bible, I do not consider myself a Biblical scholar. I believe that our faith is constantly changing. We are learning, growing, searching and seeking for our whole lives. Faith is knowing that God is with us everywhere and at every moment. Our faith is being formed during every age and every stage of our lives. I am honored and blessed to be called to lead you all in learning more about God, growing in faith, searching for our direction in God's path and seeking God in everything we do.

I will end with one of my favorite prayers by Thomas Merton:

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust You always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear for You are ever with me, and You will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

– Thomas Merton, Thoughts in Solitude, page 79. A Prayer of Unknowing

This prayer to me is what living a life of faith is all about, trying our best and letting God do the rest. I look forward to learning, growing, searching, seeking and loving God with you all in 2025.

Blessings,
Brooke Tucker
Director of Faith Formation

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The annual meeting of the congregation and corporation of Highlands United Presbyterian Church will be held on Sunday, January 26, 2025 in the sanctuary immediately following worship.

The annual meeting may consider such business as electing officers, hearing reports of the Session along with plans for the coming year, and transacting other business as appropriate, including a vote on proposed changes to the church bylaws.

Agenda

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Call to Order

Approve Minutes for Congregational Meetings:

- January 28, 2024
- December 15, 2024

Old Business

- Questions welcome

New Business

- Receive Annual Reports
- Receive Treasurer's Report
- Hear the Report of the Congregational Nominating Committee for:
 - 2025 Congregational Nominating Committee

Closing Prayer



CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITY

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 28, 2024

Members of the congregation of Highlands United Presbyterian Church met on Sunday, January 28, 2024, in the sanctuary following the worship service. Rev. Dr. Olive Mahabir called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m. Stated Clerk Sharyn' Going stated that a quorum was present. Dr. Mahabir then opened the meeting with a prayer.

Dr. Mahabir reminded the congregation that committee reports had previously been sent out to the congregation. She asked the chairpersons of the committees to come forward, and she asked the members if they had any questions for a specific committee. A question was asked regarding the amount of funds donated to mission projects, and this was answered by Treasurer Mark Morrison. Dr. Mahabir said the reports will be accepted as information, and she thanked all the committee chairpersons for all their hard work during the past year.

Dr. Mahabir then called on Elder Alan Robbins to moderate the meeting of the Corporation. Elder Robbins called the meeting to order and informed the members of the proposed slate of corporate officers for 2024. They are: President – Alan Robbins, Vice-President – Mark Vanderberg, Treasurer – Mark Morrison, and Secretary – Sharyn' Going. Elder Robbins asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he called for a vote. The proposed slate of officers was accepted unanimously. He then called Treasurer Mark Morrison to come forward and discuss the budget.

Elder Morrison first mentioned some of the missions that are supported by Highlands, and he added that he will provide a detailed accounting of this for the members. He added that Christina Trombley will be assisting him in his role as Treasurer for this year. Elder Morrison then presented five essential points regarding the budget. Information regarding the 2023 and 2024 budgets had been sent out previously to the members.

Point #1: Regarding the 2023 budget, estimated revenue was \$358,200. Actual revenue was \$377,800, which exceeded expectations. Estimated expenses were \$376,300, but actual expenses were \$393,900. A portion of the increase in expenses was due to the addition of leadership staff to raise the quality of our music and worship experience. Other expenses included emergency spending for repairs to office security, communication, data and video equipment damaged from lightning strikes.

Point #2: For the 2024 budget, estimated revenue is down slightly (\$376,500) due to the loss of ten giving units and lost revenue. This loss is reduced by increased pledges from 40 members of the congregation. The Preschool also increased its contribution by \$16,700. Expenses for 2024 are increased as well, mostly relating to the possible hiring of an additional staff member this year, which would leave Highlands at an operating loss of \$18,300. Elder Morrison said he would call this another investment year at Highlands.

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 29, 2023 - CONTINUED

Point #3: Elder Morrison said this has to do with growth. He added that the Session has made the decision regarding the hiring of a staff member supporting education, youth, and families in our church. He said this plan is critical for our church to grow and for the future of Highlands. We are blessed to have our senior church members, but the time has come to add younger family members and children. This can best be accomplished by adding a qualified resource to our new and fantastic staff.

Point #4: Elder Morrison said that Highlands' cash position and financial reserves can sustain these investments over the next several years. The church is currently holding almost \$290,000 in unrestricted cash reserves.

Point #5: Elder Morrison stated that the Preschool, past and present, is currently making a considerable financial contribution to the church side of our operations. In 2024, contributions by the Preschool to the church will reach \$50,000, and it is impossible to ignore the importance of the Preschool to the church. He added that the church exists for the Preschool, and the Preschool exists for the church. By the end of 2024, Elder Morrison hopes to consolidate the financial operations of Highlands and the Preschool. President Alan Robbins then closed the meeting of the corporation.

Dr. Mahabir then continued with the meeting of the congregation. She called Elder David Bauerlein, the Chair of the Nominating Committee, to come forward. Elder Bauerlein presented the names of four members who have been nominated for the Elder Class of 2026. They are Don Hall, Lori Smith, Tom Sweeney, and David Bauerlein. He then asked if there were any nominations from the floor. None were given, and Elder Bauerlein provided some brief information about the nominees. He then requested a motion to approve the nominees. Elder Reed Whitney made the motion, which was seconded by Elder Eva Skipper. The motioned was approved unanimously by the congregation. Elder Bauerlein also thanked Elders Nancy Hart and Alan Robbins, who will be rotating off the Session in February.

Elder Bauerlein then presented the nominees for the Nominating Committee for 2024. Previous committee members were himself, Kendall Starkweather, and Eva Skipper. This year's nominees are David Bauerlein (Chairperson), Kendall Starkweather, and Mary Beth Yutzy. Elder Bauerlein made the motion on behalf of the committee, and it was seconded by Elder Eva Skipper. The motion was approved unanimously. Dr. Mahabir thanked everyone for agreeing to serve. She added that there will be a training period for the new Elders. Also, the two new Elders will be ordained and installed during an upcoming worship service. They will begin serving on the Session at the meeting the end of February. Dr. Mahabir announced that the business of the meeting of the congregation has been concluded. She asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was given by Elder Art Richard and seconded by Elder Mark Morrison.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m. with a prayer by Dr. Mahabir.

MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 15, 2024

The members of Highlands United Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville, Florida, met on Sunday, December 15, 2024 in the sanctuary. Moderator Rev. Dr. Olive Mahabir called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. and opened the meeting with a prayer. Stated Clerk Sharyn' Going reported that a quorum was present.

Dr. Mahabir told the congregation that the purpose of the meeting today is to hear the report from the Nominating Committee regarding nominees for the Elder Class of 2027. She asked Elder David Bauerlein, Chair of the Nominating Committee, to come forward. Elder Bauerlein first thanked the members of the Elder Class of 2024 for their three years of service. They are Candy Cole (Fellowship Committee), Donna Wilson (Mission Committee), and Audrey Regnier (Christian Nurture Committee, Pastor Nominating Committee, and the Director of Faith Formation Search Committee).

Elder Bauerlein then asked if there were any nominations from the floor for the Class of 2027, and none were given. He then listed the nominees for the Elder Class of 2027. They are Vic Stewart, Christina Trombley, Gail Peluso, and Chad Sambito. Elder Bauerlein also gave reasons why these individuals had been nominated. Elder Chad Sambito currently serves on the Session as Chair of the Church Resources and Management Committee, and he is being nominated to serve for another term.

Dr. Mahabir asked for a motion to approve the slate of nominees for the Elder Class of 2027, and this was given by Ginny Morrison. It was seconded by Connie Ritter. She asked if there was any discussion, and there was none. Dr. Mahabir called for the vote, and the motion was approved by acclamation.

Elder Bauerlein also encouraged the members of the congregation who are not already serving on a church committee to consider doing so. Dr. Mahabir thanked the members of the Nominating Committee for all their hard work over the last several months. In addition to Elder Bauerlein, the other two members of the committee were Mary Beth Yutzky and Kendall Starkweather.

The business of the meeting was concluded, and Dr. Mahabir asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was given by Alan Robbins and seconded by Art Richard. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m. with a prayer by Dr. Mahabir.

CLERK OF SESSION STATISTICAL REPORT

New Members

4

Transfer Certificate: 0
Affirmation of Faith: 0
Confirmation: 0
Reinstatement: 4

Average Worship Attendance

85

In Person - 72
Online - 13

Membership Losses

101

Transfer Certificate: 2
Deaths: 6
Removed from Rolls: 27
Moved to Inactive List***: 66

Baptisms

1

Infant/Children: 1
Youth or Adult: 0

Active Members

129

December 31, 2023: 226
2023 Net Change: -97
December 31, 2024: 129

Marriages

0

Members: 0
Non-Members: 0

Age Distribution of Members & Children

25 & Under	37	22.8%
26 - 40	10	6.2%
41 - 55	11	6.8%
56 - 70	33	20.4%
Over 70	71	43.8%

***In 2024, the Session implemented a more formal and consistent membership review process. Each December, the membership lists will be reviewed. Members that have not chosen to participate in the church's worship and fellowship during the previous 2 years will be moved to the Inactive list. They will be informed of this move and encouraged to participate. If there is no participation during the next 2 years, members will be removed from the Membership Rolls. If a member resumes participation during that 2 year window, the member will be added back to the Active Member list. Only the Active Member List will be reported to the PC(USA) in our Statistical Reports.



COMMITTEE REPORTS

In March, Mike Sutherland took over Worship and Music Committee as the new chair. Alan Robbins helped bring Mike up to speed on managing this committee and provided valuable tips on keeping the committee organized, manage worship supply inventory, prepare the sanctuary for worship, report writing and meeting with Session.

For most of 2024, this committee met every month to collaborate with Pastor Olive on worship themes, colors and decorations. Music leader Thomas Lyons kept an accurate written report of the committee's budget. This committee stayed several thousand dollars under budget.

Many notable highlights for 2024 are:

- March 10, Pastor Olive's Service of Installation took place. The committee prepared signs and parking lot marshaling for the guests. The color theme was purple.
- March 28, Maundy Thursday dinner, worship and Holy Communion.
- March 29, Good Friday service. The committee set up the sanctuary black-out curtains and Tenebrae nail cross. The black sash was attached to the outside main campus cross.
- March 31, Easter sunrise and Easter service. The committee moved out the nail cross, black-out curtains and set the vine cross into place. The white sash replaced black sash on the main cross. After Easter service, the purple sash replaced the white sash on the outside cross for the remainder of the season.
- October 5, Blessing of the Animals took place in the courtyard. This was a Highlands first and it was a good turnout.
- November 9, Handbell Clinic brought several handbell choirs from churches to practice their skills and finished with a concert.
- December 24, Christmas Eve candlelight service and Holy Communion. The committee prepared the sanctuary for Advent by spending a Saturday decorating.

Some notable numbers of this committee: Holy Communion took place 17 times. The average in person attendance for a church service was 75. The smallest number of in person church service was 47 on July 7th while the largest number for in person church service was 160 for Christmas Eve service.

In conclusion, the Worship and Music Committee which consisted of Mike Sutherland (Chair), Thomas Lyons, Tom Douget, Debbie Douget, Alan Robbins, Eva Skipper and Ricky Regneir. The committee gets projects accomplished and for the most part, works well together.

Sincerely,
Mike Sutherland

COMMITTEE REPORT

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

Your Christian Nurture Committee soldiered on this year, continuing to foster intergenerational relationships through our many programs and activities. Our biggest goal became the search for our newest staff member, what would eventually become the Director of Faith Formation (formerly the Director of Christian Education position) – more on that later. First, our committee - David Bauerlein, Laura Sambito, Jenna Whitney, John Morrison, Don Hall, Hannah Laughlin, and Audrey Regnier - would like to extend a huge and not nearly big enough thank you to everyone who participated in, donated to, or volunteered for/at events, Sunday School, activities, or any other CNC endeavor this year. One of the most common things we hear around campus is that we want more youth and young families, and it's only through volunteers and your generous hearts that we can make that happen, so we truly are grateful. Dr. Olive has provided endless support for our ideas and we deeply appreciate her willingness to let us "do our thing" while also being game to participate in whatever silliness we came up with.

Highlights

L.I.F.T.

Living In Faith Together is our Wednesday night monthly program that is our intergenerational meal, bible study, and activity. We took a short break over summer of course, but then came right back to it and have been filling bellies and hearts every month. If you haven't had a chance to check it out, you're missing out on the chance to make some real connections - all are welcome, from 1 to 100.

Sunday School

This year we tried a new model, at the request of some of our adult Sunday School attendees. We now begin with a prayer with all ages in one room to kick off the Sunday School hour, before everyone goes to their respective spaces. We also have new teachers on board, which is very exciting - so we're able to have a dedicated class for middle and high school, a class in a FLC room for our older elementary kids, and then for our younger children in their room in Harris Hall. Our adult class continues like the tides - steady and reliable!

PYC (Presbyterian Youth Connection)

Our middle schoolers and high schoolers have had, and will have, a full year of programming this year. They enjoyed Trick or Treat for canned goods to collect donations to support Arlington Community Services. The following month they then led the charge, with the generous support of the Highlands Precious Gifts Preschool families and our wonderful congregation, to pack Thanksgiving baskets to donate to ACS for families with food insecurity at the holidays; it even worked out that our youth and their strong young backs were able to assist unloading some heavy items for Micah's Backpack the same day, so win-win! Our high school PYC kids had a blast at their first-in-many-years Progressive Dinner Christmas party - which was only possible due to the incredible hospitality of the three host families, and our new Director of Faith Formation, Brooke Tucker, who led them through the evening with games and snuck in a lesson or two also.

COMMITTEE REPORT

CHRISTIAN NURTURE

They're going to be "going up the mountain" with Brooke, her parents, and another chaperone to stay at a house and experience the majesty of God's creation and the magic that is Montreat this summer, so stay tuned for details on what is sure to be an awesome trip.

JOY Sunday

All youth continue to participate in and help lead Joy Sundays, which remain the 4th Sunday of the month. With Brooke on board now, this will slowly start looking a little different as the older youth start taking more ownership of the elements of worship, but we have and will continue to enjoy having all children of all ages in worship with us every Sunday.

Director of Faith Formation, Brooke Tucker

Finally, the biggest accomplishment for the Christian Nurture Committee this year was the Search Committee's finding and hiring of Brooke, who we feel very strongly was led to us, as we were led to her. Already her creativity, energy, drive, and fresh perspective are breathing new life into our perfectly acceptable and functional programs to give them a "power boost" that should and will not only expand our message into the surrounding community and bring in new families, but also further solidify our relationships with preschool families and further enhance programs here for our current members and families. As a lifelong Presbyterian and former DCE, Brooke brings institutional knowledge along with a passion for education and helping children and adults grow in their relationships with Christ. Needless to say, your CNC is very excited to have her on board as we go into 2025.

2025 Goals

Our goals for 2025 are to work with our new DFF to help implement her ideas and vision for our Christian Nurture programs, and to support her work in whatever way we can, while continuing with our successful traditional activities. One specific goal is to have confirmation class for all youth at or past confirmation age, as Covid and our Pastor/DCE searches have left us with a large gap - currently we count at least 8 youth needing confirmed ASAP. The other specific goal we have identified is to bring back Vacation Bible School; what that looks like, how large it is - all depends on how many volunteers we have willing to help us execute this goal, but we are very serious about making it happen this summer.

Respectfully submitted,
Audrey Regnier, moderator

COMMITTEE REPORT

PRESCHOOL ADVISORY

The Preschool Advisory Committee includes Dr. Olive Mahabir (Pastor), Anna Serrano (Preschool Director), Jenna Whitney (Session Member/Moderator/Preschool Employee), Bill Hart (Treasurer), Jen McCullough (Church Member/Preschool Parent).

The vision of Highlands Precious Gifts Preschool (HPGP) is to be the premier church-based preschool provider for children ages 12 months thru 5 years in our community. HPGP provides a developmentally based, literacy-focused, educational environment for the children, regardless of family or religious background. Our staff encourages positive social and emotional development in an environment that incorporates Christian values. Using an approach that focuses on the whole child, HPGP wishes to enrich all our students intellectually and physically. By creating a fun and exciting early educational experience, we hope to foster in our students a sense of healthy curiosity and a life-long desire to learn.

Highlights of 2023

- All classes had full enrollment with waitlists in some cases. Our Summer Camp provided peace of mind for parents knowing that they had a safe place for their little ones.
- The children love the new and improved playground equipment! Purchasing the new items was made possible through parent-led fundraising and monies awarded through a \$6,000 Classroom Materials Provider Grant. This grant also made possible purchases of new riding toys, a new playhouse, and learning tools for the classrooms.
- HPGP is committed to bringing opportunities to our staff for higher learning. All staff members took part in a variety of continuing education programs. Our program now has a bilingual Spanish-speaking VPK teacher on board, which helps break down a language barrier from time to time with families.
- The Music and Movement program with all students continues to grow. Twice a week you can hear the students sing, clap, march, dance, and play with a variety of musical instruments in the Lee Family Life Center.
- At various times throughout the year, HPGP has unannounced visits from Florida Department of Children & Families, Early Learning Coalition, Cintas Fire Protection, and City of Jacksonville Fire Marshal. We are very pleased to report that we have passed all inspections thanks to the diligence of our staff and support of Highlands United Presbyterian Church.
- A high priority goal in 2024 was met when we began to offer employees of the preschool an attractive benefits package. Bill Hart met with employees to present the benefits that were available to them on May 1, 2024.
- Increased tuition fees continued to ensure financial security enabling the preschool to meet the budget goals while offering a competitive wage rate
- Late summer hurricanes and stormy weather conditions were not kind to the phone and internet systems in our building. Outages were persistent. For the safety of children and staff the Preschool closed the school for a few days in July and September following the HUPC protocol to close when DCPS school close.

COMMITTEE REPORT

PRESCHOOL ADVISORY

Goals for 2025

The vision for HPGP is to become our area's premier church-based preschool provider. The following goals for 2025 will continue to move us in that direction.

- Create a cooperative working relationship and direct line of communication with the new Director of Faith Formation. This will be an asset for preschool families and HPGP staff.
- Continue to create opportunities for ongoing training and staff retention to stay on top as a premier church-based preschool in Jacksonville.
- Look for ways to foster intergenerational relationships between church members and our preschool.
- To fill the much needed position of Assistant Director for preschool daily operations.
- Implement a Parent Teacher Organization to foster relationships between families and the preschool, which will actively solicit ideas and input from parents about the program and help to engage volunteers.
- Outsource the accounting functions along with similar functions for the church.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenna Whitney, moderator

Responsibilities of the Member Care Committee include:

- maintaining and distributing the Prayer List
- coordinating the Shepherd Program
- supporting Supper/Lunch Clubs
- coordinating provision of in-home meals for families during times of need
- sending birthday and anniversary cards
- assisting with transportation
- managing prayer blanket ministry
- updating church membership directory
- providing ongoing visitation and contact with members
- providing These Days devotional booklets for members who are shut-in or in facilities
- managing Medical Equipment Closet.

Accomplishments in 2024 include:

- Every member has a Shepherd as of October 2024
- Monthly visits to local nursing homes (often including communion)
- Support lunch/supper clubs
- Meal Ministry serves members during times of need
- Continue the distribution of These Days devotional booklets to members who are shut-in or in facilities
- Members received greeting cards (birthdays, anniversaries, get-well, and sympathy)
- Distributed two prayer blankets and one baptism gift

Goals for 2025 include:

- Help members utilize the HUPC Breeze website and app
- Add members' photos to Breeze to create a pictorial directory
- Conduct quarterly Shepherd meetings
- Determine Interest In continuing Supper/Lunch Clubs
- Maintain all monthly responsibilities

Committee members include Sandy Pruitt (Moderator), Clara Whittaker, Kevin McNorton, and Ginny Morrison, Nan Thomas, Gail Peluso, and Louise Cook.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Pruitt, moderator

Committee Members: Donna Wilson (moderator), Bonnie Vanderberg, Carolyn Starkweather, Mike Sutherland, Paul Wubbena

Our mission is to glorify and serve God with all the resources that God has made available.

Micah's Backpack

Micah's continues to pack food for food-insecure children every week school is in session. Packing occurs at 3 pack sites every Thursday evening and volunteers deliver the bags of food to the schools early Friday mornings. Micah's Backpack outreach began in 2015 with 5 children in one school. Currently, they are packing for 12 elementary schools, which include nine public, one Catholic, one charter, and they recently added Arlington Middle School.

Since 2023, grants were requested from the Community Foundation of Jacksonville and also the Presbytery of St. Augustine. A grant for \$10,000 was approved by the Community Foundation of Jacksonville and gratefully received. This grant is to allow Micah's to add one school and an additional 30 children.

Micah's continues to grow, thanks to a strong volunteer base and financial support from Highlands and the community. Both volunteer force and funding for Micah's are approximately 45% Highlands and 55% community-based.

In October, when an impending severe storm was heading our way, a team of volunteers was pulled together to pack for 205 children who received food to have during that time, thanks to their dedication to these children.

Micah's receives a shipment of 2750 meals from Hunger Fight every month. This allows Micah's to pack two extra family-size Hunger Fight dinners every week for every child. Restocking of Micah's pantry occurs every 4 to 5 weeks. Food is purchased primarily from SAM's and BJ's and the food order is now \$5,000-\$6,000 every month.

Micah's Board of Directors plan to submit the application for the 501 c3 status to the IRS soon.

The focus for the new year is to end the weekend hunger-gap for children in our community.

Family Promise

Since HUPC began supporting faith-based Family Promise in 2006, we, along with other local churches, have helped make a difference in the problem of homelessness, one family at a time. Approximately 80% of the families sheltered find housing. ¼ of people experiencing homelessness are children. Homeless children go hungry two times more often than other children. Our faithful Highlands volunteers continue to fill the need for homemade dinners, snacks, and hygiene and household supplies. In 2024, we hosted Family Promise three times- in February, June and October. An online sign-up process was established in 2023 and was very positively received and is working efficiently. We hosted a total of 9 families in 2024. This project is a wonderful way to involve our entire congregation to help the homeless in our community.

After many dedicated hours of service to HUPC's involvement with the Family Promise, Sue Heckler stepped down as coordinator of the program. Donna Wilson will take over the responsibility at least until next year.

Our focus is to prayerfully and successfully supply and host this wonderful ministry for homeless families three times in 2025.

Sarai's Closet

HUPC supported this ministry until August of 2024 when the non-profit began having problems meeting their monthly rent and moved the project home until they could regroup. Meanwhile, they are still working through their home and their church to fill their much-needed donations to unfortunate families. At that time, the Mission Committee decided to check other avenues we could donate to that would focus on helping small children in need. We discontinued our donations to Sarai's Closet at that time.

Family Promise Toddler Closet

Since we had established a successful relationship with Family Promise in 2006, the committee met with Beth Mixson of Family Promise to find out if they have specific needs for small children. She said they did have needs for the toddler-age children and would be interested in possibly partnering with HUPC in this ministry. She discussed this with her staff, and they were very enthusiastic about the idea of this project being specifically for small children. We began communicating through the HUPC newsletter that we will be supporting this ministry in place of Sarai's Closet going forward. After a few months, it seems to be running smoothly. Each month, we will continue to have the needs listed in The Highlander to let the congregation know the items that would be most appreciated at that time.

Our goal is to learn more in 2025 how we can shine our light in support of these toddlers in the future.

Meals on Wheels

Mike Sutherland was the team Coordinator or the Meals on Wheels delivery team for the second year. This amazing team consists of dedicated and loving people who passionately serve in this ministry. These friends are: Art Richard, John & Vicki Lennon, Candy Cole, Connie Ritter, Lee & Lori Perdew, Sandy Pruitt, Nancy Hart, Vohn Williamson, Vic Stewart and Anne Shumaker (First Baptist Church of Jacksonville). Our team delivered 1586 meals for the whole year. We traveled around 3840 miles. There were challenges, such as delivering in adverse weather and bringing extra food to stage for hurricanes that we navigated around. Clients that we serve passed away while we gained new clients. Our volunteers also had health challenges and yet, everyone pulled together as a team and we delivered love to those who are in need.

Our hope and mission for the Meals on Wheels team for 2025 are of a spiritual nature. First and foremost, Mike Sutherland would like to grow the team so that there is a presence of Jesus experienced with every client. Second, that each individual on the team knows that they matter and that each client matters.

Arlington Community Services

HUPC's congregation has been generously supporting ACS for years with donations of food, toiletries, T-shirts and other needs in support of those in need in our community. The items ACS needs can be found in The Highlander each month. There are several fund raisers during the year including the Souper Bowl of Caring, and White Gifts are still donated, wrapped and delivered during the Christmas holidays.

The focus for 2025 is to continue and grow our congregations' generous support.

Special offerings

One Great Hour of Sharing-April, to support Hunger, Disaster and Development.
Pentecost -June, to support children at risk, youth and young adults
Peace and Global Witness - October, Peacemaking and Reconciliation
Joy- December, to support Church Leaders, past, present and future

JEMM

This offering is also called 2 cents a Meal and is collected the 4th Sunday of each month. These funds are sent to the Presbytery of St. Augustine to support their Jamaica Ecumenical Mutual Mission.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Wilson
Mission Committee Moderator

Committee Members in 2024:

Becky Bridell, Sharyn' Going, Sue Heckler, Gail Peluso, Connie Ritter, Nancy Taylor, Lori Smith, and moderator, Candy Cole.

Highlights for 2024:

As always, Highlands enjoys fellowship in the dining hall following each Sunday worship. We provide homemade cookies and lemonade, coffee and tea. We also provide a luncheon following memorial services for our members at the request of the family. We provided 4 luncheons during the year for families of departed members. Families may donate to our committee to help cover expenses, but it is not required.

We anticipated celebrating the installation of our new minister, Dr. Olive Mahabir when the Presbytery gave us a date. The installation of a new dish sanitizer was welcomed, as well as new paint on the walls and ceiling. This followed the installation of new cabinets after our ceiling leak in the fall. When the kitchen was repainted by members, the wall around the small 'dish' window to the kitchen was also repaired and repainted.

We began January by planning our yearly calendar of events. Our annual Chili Cookoff was set for the first Saturday in February. The chili cookoff has been the kickoff to fellowship activities for the past 40 years. On February 22, our committee provided and served lunch to the Five Star Veterans Center. Pulled pork, baked beans, slaw, rolls and deviled eggs were served to about 50 people. Many inhabitants were not in the building as they have progressed and are able to have jobs. That is a major goal of the facility. They returned to a hearty dinner that evening.

We began preparing for Dr. Mahabir's installation planned for Sunday, March 10th. It was well attended by the Presbytery, our congregation and several Presbyterian church pastors in the area. We provided a light supper consisting of sandwiches, various salads and a lovely cake. The dining room was festooned with purple tablecloths and a huge bouquet provided by the church.

Maundy Thursday followed a couple of weeks later with a potluck dinner and the washing of feet by our newly installed Dr. Mahabir. Sunrise service was followed by a hearty breakfast of egg casseroles, grits and fruit. Cookies and root beer floats were served following worship. New plates were donated by the Coles as the plates were getting too heavy for the kitchen cleanup crew to lift.

Our committee elected to have no Fellowship following worship on Mother's Day and Father's Day so our congregation could be with family.

Pentecost came quickly and red treats were provided along with red punch in a dining hall decorated in red tablecloths and red balloons.

COMMITTEE REPORT

FELLOWSHIP

Donations were made to our committee from several families in the congregation and were much appreciated. Our committee also began to take home the recycle bin that the preschool fills each week. We feel this helps our community in some small way and we discovered it went hand in hand with the Horizon's Bible study the Highlands Women adopted to follow in the fall.

The committee elected to have a pork roast in October. Sides were provided by the congregation. Music was provided by several in the congregation and it was a lighthearted evening. Unfortunately, it was a very windy evening, so we had to move indoors for eating. We had to forego the firepit.

Our year ended with discussion of holding a kitchen shower in the new year. Skillets are among several items high on our list of improvements for the kitchen.

The group will have a new moderator in January, but the committee is in excellent hands. This is a most dedicated group and won't miss a beat in moving on in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,
Candy Cole, moderator

COMMITTEE REPORT

RESOURCES & MANAGEMENT

Members: Charles Grabill, Charles Goodyear, Helen Middaugh, Mark Morrison, Chad Sambito, Kendall Starkweather, Tom Sweeney, Mark Vanderberg

The Resources & Management committee works to care for and manage all that God has given us - our time, talents, and financial resources. Our goal is to provide recommendations to the session about the use of these many resources to drive the vision of our church and serve our community and members.

2024 saw several initiatives and milestones for HUPC:

- Stewardship is an important time of year where we identify the time, talents, and financial gifts that the members pledge to support our church. “The Measure of Love” was our Stewardship theme for 2024. We switched to a digital Pledge card & digital Time & Talents Sheet. This allowed for easier response by members who may not be able to attend in person but still want to support the efforts of our ministry.
- Our Highlands Precious Gifts Preschool is an integral part of our mission outreach at the church. There have been years in the past where the Preschool has needed financial support from the church when times were tough for our community amidst the changing dynamics of working parents and economic slowdowns. We now find our church & preschool in a strategic partnership where it is able to provide financial support to help our church.
- Staff transition was a continued theme in 2024. We evolved our former Director of Christian Education (DCE) role into our new Director of Faith Formation (DFF) with the hiring of Brooke Tucker. She has brought an energy that we have been seeking and we look forward to her continued work. We also made the difficult decision that our Minister of Music role no longer fit our staffing & church needs. We thank Thomas Lyons for his time here at Highlands & the work he brought to our music programs.
- The R & M committee saw two longtime members end their tenure serving this group & our church. We want to thank Kendall Starkweather & Helen Middaugh for the time, dedication, & thoughtfulness they brought to our committee. While we will miss their presence on the committee, we wish them all the best in their future endeavors and thank them again for their faithful service to our church community.

We are looking forward to an exciting 2025 and the opportunity to serve HUPC!

Respectfully submitted,
Chad Sambito, moderator

COMMITTEE REPORT

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Again, 2024 was a busy year for Building and Grounds. As noted last year, one issue that was a focus of significant effort was lightning protection. All electronic interfaces with either incoming power or cable lines have now been protected with grounding devices. Also, both the incoming power and cable lines grounding have been tested and verified. If we continue to have issues the next step will be to hire a lightning protection company to come in and provide any further actions that should be taken.

Another project, still in process from last year, is the improvement of the lighting in the courtyard for not only the aesthetic, but also for security.

The big project in 2024 was the replacement of our church sign, which has stopped working and is beyond reasonable repair. A new sign has been designed (see below) and the engineering drawings have been completed along with an installer being under contract. The required paper work to the city has been submitted and currently awaiting approval so the sign can be ordered. The goal here is to improve the church's visibility in the neighborhood with the goal of attracting people to see what Highlands has to offer them as a church home.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Sweeney, moderator





FINANCIAL REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORTS

TREASURER'S REPORT

HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 2024 FINANCIAL RESULTS AND SUMMARY BUDGET 2025

(All \$ In thousands)	2024 BUDGET	2024 ACTUAL	2025 BUDGET
REVENUE	\$376.5	\$382.2	\$386.2
EXPENSE	<u>394.8</u>	<u>386.8</u>	<u>434.2</u>
NET ORDINARY INCOME (LOSS)	(\$18.3)	(\$4.4)	(\$48.0)

NOTES ON FINANCIALS:

2024 **REVENUE:** Exceeded plan by \$5.7k . Total contributions attained 99% of plan. Had a positive year with investment income, as Equities, CD's, and Money market accounts earned \$14.0k which was \$9K better than planned.

EXPENSES: Generally well managed as spending was \$8.3k less than budgeted. Most of this spending benefit was the result of postponing the hiring of the Director of Faith Formation until December 2024 versus a budget which anticipated hiring the position beginning in July 2024. Severance costs of \$13k for the Director of Music were recorded in December 2024.

2025 **REVENUE:** 2025 will be a challenge year for our congregation. The results of our stewardship campaign reflect a \$46.3k reduction in year over year contributions, largely due to the loss of 8 giving unit members who passed or moved during 2024. We have propped up the contribution line budget with a "faith" line of \$25.0k in anticipation it will come from church growth and additional generosity from existing members. We are blessed to have the pre-school contribution to the church which for 2025 will total \$84.0k, \$26.5 greater than 2024.

EXPENSES: Unsurprisingly expenses are rising 16.4% from 2024 levels with \$61.3k more spending compared with 2024. Inflation is accountable for some of this, but the major line items of Insurance and Personnel costs makeup most of the increase. There is not much we can do to contain insurance costs as most folks know Florida is an "at risk" State for insurance providers. We are fortunate just to be renewed. On the personnel side it is clear we are making investments for future growth by onboarding a well-qualified Faith Formation resource. Additionally, the position of Minister of Music and Worship was eliminated and in its place a part-time Director of Music Ministry was included in the budget which substantially reduced the cost as compare with the previous full time Music/Ministry position.

RESERVES: Church reserves continue quite sound as we hold a total of \$561.9k in cash, marketable securities, CD's and money market accounts at year end. Now \$122.9K of this amount are earmarked for Mission, Youth, and Other supporting church programs, leaving \$439.0k unrestricted and available for Operations and Capital procurement projects.

SUMMARY: 2024 is now in the rear view mirror. Successful financially yes, but, as we look forward to an exciting 2025 it is not without some consternation. I am confident we have reserves which can withstand many years of operating losses, but ultimately, we need to grow church revenue to a level which sustains the indefinite life of our church. Placing a growth line item in the 2025 budget is an easy thing to do. Making it happen is something else. Only with real joy, real planning, real actions, real timetables, and real commitment from all of us, and of course with God's help we will shine for generations to come.

Respectively Submitted-- Mark Morrison -- Treasurer

NOMINATING REPORT

SLATE OF OFFICERS

The Nominating Committee is charged with prayerfully building a slate of members to fill elected offices, including Highlands' Ruling Elders, Treasurer, Corporation Officers and Secretary.

The 2024 Nominating Committee was comprised of David Bauerlein, Mary Beth Yutzy, and Kendall Starkweather, with Rev. Dr. Olive Mahabir as ex-officio member.

This year, the Nominating Committee received nominations from members at large and considered a number of members who have demonstrated commitment to the congregation, its mission and its values, and who have the capacity to make faithful, effective decisions on behalf of the church.

For the Class of 2027, the following members were approved by the Congregation on December 15th: Gail Peluso, Chad Sambito, Vic Stewart, and Christina Trombley.

Per the Highlands Bylaws and Book of Order, the Session shall be comprised of at least 12 ruling elders, divided into three classes of 4 elders each. One class shall be elected each year at the Annual Meeting for a term of 3 years. Ruling elders shall not serve more than six consecutive years, and a ruling elder who has served six consecutive years shall be Ineligible for election to the same board for at least one year.

The Nominating Committee will present its nominees for the 2025 Nominating Committee at the Congregational Meeting on January 26. The nominees are Don Hall, Art Richard, and Mary Beth Yutzy.

Per the Highlands Bylaws, the Nominating Committee shall be comprised of one ruling elder currently serving on Session who shall act as the Chairperson of the Committee, and two members at large. The pastor shall be a member ex-officio, without a vote.

Nominations to supplement this slate may be made from the floor of the Annual Meeting.

Respectfully,
David Bauerlein, Chair



CONNECT

2024 Session

Class of 2024

Candy Cole
Audrey Regnier
Chad Sambito
Donna Wilson

Class of 2025

Sandy Pruitt
Mike Sutherland
Clara Whitaker
Jenna Whitney

Class of 2026

David Bauerlein
Don Hall
Lori Smith
Tom Sweeney

Moderator: Rev. Dr. Olive Mahabir
Clerk of Session: Sharyn' Going

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. Olive Mahabir
Head Pastor
pastor@hupcjax.org

Thomas Lyons
Minister of Worship & Music
music@hupcjax.org
(through December 29, 2024)

Brooke Tucker
Director of Faith Formation
FaithFormation@hupcjax.org

Laura Sambito
Communications Consultant
LSambito@gmail.com

Anneliese Robbins
Office Administrator
hupcA1967@gmail.com

Eileen Blackmon, Nursery Attendant

Sam Sewell, Sexton

Matthew Phan, Accompanist
(through July 2024)

Highlands Precious Gifts Preschool

Anna Serrano
Preschool Director
msanna.hpgp@gmail.com



HIGHLANDS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

10900 McCormick Road
Jacksonville, Florida 32225
(904) 641-9264
www.HUPCjax.org

Follow us:
@HUPCjax



Serve

If you would like to be more engaged and active with the church, we invite you to consider serving on one of our committees.

- Church Growth
- Worship
- Mission
- Fellowship
- Christian Nurture
- Preschool Advisory
- Resources and Management
- Member Care
- Building and Grounds

To learn where your skills may be best put to use or where openings may exist, please contact Rev. Dr. Olive Mahabir at (904) 641-9264 or email pastor@hupcjax.org.

Volunteer

Do you want to connect with others at Highlands? Show your commitment to putting your faith into action? Highlands is always seeking volunteers to fill a wide variety of roles and there is a place for you to get involved no matter your availability or skillset.

Current opportunities to volunteer include:

- Worship Liturgist (leading liturgy, reading scripture passages, leading prayer, sharing announcements)
- Worship AV Crew (help run our live-stream during worship. Don't worry, there is training!)
- Worship Usher (greet & pass out bulletins prior to worship, record attendance, assist in worship as needed)
- Elementary Sunday School Teacher (join a 3-week rotation for leading our K-5 Sunday School class)
- Handy Helpers (lend a hand assisting in maintenance projects around the church)
- Volunteer Coordinator (help get people plugged into committees and/or volunteer roles that can use their skillsets)

To learn about new volunteer opportunities, check the monthly Highlander Newsletter.

Support

When you make financial contributions to Highlands, you are supporting our ministries which seek to support and transform the community around us. In this time, there are several ways in which you can contribute, including:

- Online donations via credit card or bank transfer
- Mail donations to the church office
- Church Drives (such as for Micah's Backpack or ACS)