



## New Global Partners:

We are pleased to share that Mike and Laura Ryan have been called to pursue a global partnership opportunity in the Middle East this fall! The Ryan family has been a part of Highlands for many years, and Mike is the immediate past Chair of the elders. The Ryans will be greatly missed, and we bid them Godspeed and God's blessing on this new endeavor. There are many details that are yet to be worked out, so we encourage you to be in prayer for Mike and Laura and their family. If you desire to be a prayer partner with the Ryans, please contact them directly at [michial.ryan@gmail.com](mailto:michial.ryan@gmail.com).

# Elder Newsletter

*April 1-June 30, 2025*

Brothers and sisters, greetings from our elders. We're happy to share our quarterly elder report for April – June 2025 so that our members:

- Better understand the church's ministry and administrative affairs
- Know how to pray for our church, pastoral staff and elders
- Have a clearer sense of potential ministry opportunities

## **ELDER COMMITMENTS**

At each elder meeting, we review one of the following commitments to refresh the elders' focus on our shepherding responsibilities:

1. Lord, we commit, with the help of your Holy Spirit, to shepherd well every person who you bring to be part of Highlands.
2. Lord, we commit to following you and helping your people to follow you. We commit to remain diligent in the study, teaching, and application of your Holy Word.
3. Lord, with your help, we will continue in our commitment to implement measures to protect all who attend Highlands and to prevent abuse of leadership, authority, and power.
4. With your help, Lord, we commit to thoroughly investigate and respond biblically where there is evidence of misconduct at Highlands.
5. We commit to pray for your people, that every person who comes through our doors or who participates in ministry here would find a safe place to worship, and that they will grow deeply in their relationship with you through the various ministries of this church.

## **ALL ARE INVITED**

The elders want to remind everyone that they are welcome to attend any elder meeting. The public portion of the meeting starts at 7:15 p.m. The meeting is held on the third Tuesday of each month (except August). The meeting is held in Room 270.

## **MEMBER SHEPHERDING PILOT PROJECT**

Over the past nine months, the elders have conducted a Member Shepherding Pilot Project to learn how we as elders can better know and care for our members. Two teams consisting of one or more elders and several deacons/deaconesses were assigned to specific members, based on geographical proximity, and the teams were responsible for completing intentional check-ins with their assigned members.

The pilot project has now been completed and the elders have received an initial report from the pilot team. The team will also be sending out a survey to the members who participated so that we can learn from their experience in the pilot project. Finally, the project team will review their key learnings with the staff and make a recommendation to the elders. Thank you for your

continued prayers to help us learn and become more faithful as elders in shepherding the people of Highlands!

## **ELDER NOMINATIONS**

This fall, we will invite our members to prayerfully nominate elder qualified men (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) to serve on our elder board. As we prepare for this process, we have three encouragements for the members of our church. First, we encourage all members of our church to pray and begin considering whom they might nominate to serve in this capacity. If you know a man who meets the Scriptural requirements for an elder, is a member, and is actively shepherding God's people at Highlands, we encourage you to nominate him later this fall. Secondly, we encourage all members of our church to grow in spiritual maturity and the character traits which Paul uses to describe elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Finally, we encourage the men of our church to prayerfully consider if God is calling you to aspire to this noble work of serving God's people as an elder.

If any member has questions about this process, we encourage you

to contact our elder chair, Dana Rekow ([danar@highlandsc.org](mailto:danar@highlandsc.org)), to learn more. In all of this, we trust that our Good Shepherd will provide qualified and servant-hearted men to continue shepherding our congregation!

## **PASTORAL STAFF UPDATE**

By God's grace and through your generosity, Pastor Nate and Courtney are on a well-deserved sabbatical, which ends in mid-August. The elders are pleased that our church can support Pastor Nate and his family in this way, and we trust that the Lord will refresh them and renew their heart and calling for continued ministry to our church and its members.

We're also pleased to welcome Mark Heilman and Nathan Betts to our pastoral staff. Mark will serve as Executive Pastor of Ministries, and Nathan as Discipleship Pastor. We thank God for His provision of qualified men with excellent character, outstanding gifting, and decades of ministry experience. Please join us in welcoming Mark & his wife Diana, as well as Nathan & his wife Brittany and their four children (Sam, Saskia, Curtis, and Sabrina) to Highlands!



Nathan Betts

Welcome  
Pastor Nathan &  
Pastor Mark!



Mark Heilman





### **WELCOME BABY SOFIA!**

Congratulations to Pastor Josh, Kristin, and Judah Lewis as they welcomed Sofia Kate Lewis into their family on June 3, 2025! We are thrilled for the Lewis family, and we are also grateful for the generosity of our congregation which enabled Highlands to support the Lewis family with a grant through our partner Lifesong for Orphans, a Christian organization dedicated to helping families overcome the financial burden of adoption. Thank you for your faithful giving which helps families in our congregation demonstrate the beauty of the Gospel through adoption. We also encourage other member families who are pursuing adoption to apply through Lifesong for a matching grant of up to \$5,000. If you are a member of our church and would like to learn more, please make a confidential inquiry to Pastor Ben Menenberg at [benm@highlandsc.org](mailto:benm@highlandsc.org).

### **MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY**

During our last Member's Night on May 1, we were excited to announce that our new membership photo directory has come out. The directory will be a very useful tool for the elders and pastoral staff as they "devote [themselves] to prayer and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:4). As members, we also want to remind you and encourage you of your calling to pray for the members of our church, and we trust that this photo directory will be a useful tool toward that end. If you have not yet received a photo directory, please contact [info@highlandsc.org](mailto:info@highlandsc.org) and we can help you to get one.

### **NEW MEMBERS**

This past quarter we joyfully received 15 people as new members of the church. These new members are:

Scott and Amy Erickson  
Kathy Sawrey  
James and Dani Yorkston  
Olivia Murphy  
Ian Owen  
Priya Richardson

Dave and Gretel Newburn  
Rachel Coleman  
Nathan Betts  
Dave and Ruthe Hall  
Mark Heilman

Each new member has fulfilled the requirements for membership, including giving a credible testimony of their personal faith in Jesus and confirming their agreement with and commitment to our Statement of Faith Membership Covenant. Our elders give thanks for each of these members and have happily approved them for membership in our body.

### **SOUTHEAST EDUCATION WING REPAIR UPDATE**

As discussed in our last newsletter, the elders have approved a general plan to replace the brick wall on the east side of the FLC, as well as repair the smaller and less-damaged brick wall on the NW side of the building. Lord-willing, we also plan to address some other needed areas, including re-modeling the 3rd floor restrooms, adding HVAC to the forum and one of our classrooms, and adding natural light to the Worship Center. We are excited to see this process unfold as we work with our architects. We will continue to update you as we learn more information about this plan and the associated cost.

### **CONCLUDING PRAYER REQUEST**

Please pray for our elders, staff, and members as we labor to serve the Lord together.

***"Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice."  
(Romans 15:5-6) (CSB)***