



# Elder Newsletter

January 1-March 31, 2025

Dear brothers and sisters, greetings from the elders! We are happy to share with you our quarterly elder update for the period of January 1-March 31, 2025 so that our members will:

- Better understand the ministries and administrative affairs of the church;
- Know how to pray for our church, our pastoral staff and elders; and
- Have a better sense of ministry opportunities that may exist from time to time.

## MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Join us for Members' Night on May 1, a special evening of fellowship and encouragement. We'll share in a meal together, hear testimonies of God's faithfulness, lift our voices in worship, and receive important ministry and financial updates. This will be a time to celebrate what God is doing in and through our church family. We hope you'll be there!

## ELDERS FOR 25/26

We praise God for calling the following men to serve on our elder board and provide shepherding at Highlands in the coming fiscal year:

Dana Rekow, Chairman	Nate Edmondson	Dan Kellogg
David Lyon, Secretary	Nate Garvin	Ben Menenberg
Larry Maison, Treasurer	Mark Hanson (Elder Candidate)	Mike Ryan
		Scott Sawrey

Please join us in praying for each of these men and their families. In particular, pray that they will faithfully keep watch over themselves and the flock which the Holy Spirit has appointed for them to oversee.

## Short-Term Missions Trips:

### EURASIA TEAM

During April, Highlands was privileged to send out two short-term missions teams. The Eurasia Team hosted a conference in Turkey dedicated to caring for and encouraging our global partners serving in Eurasia. The team included Pastor Nate, Courtney, and their children; Pastor Ben & Laura Menenberg; Pastor Simi & Cecilia Bilti; Norm & Kathy Hummel; Eugene & Olena Citrisky; and Doug & Alicia Fiess.

### EUROPE TEAM

In addition, the Europe Team went to Romania and visited with our church and other local partners working along the Ukrainian border.

This team included Dave & Drea Lyon and Eugene Citrisky. During their visit, they preached the Word, encouraged communities, and equipped the next generation through youth computer training camps.

Please continue to pray that God will strengthen the faith of our partners and renew their calling to make disciples and shepherd God's people in their local churches.



## **ELDERS' PRAYER MINISTRY**

In accord with the admonition in Acts 6:4, the elders are committed to pray for our church, its ministries, and our members. Our elders pray in a variety of ways, including at our Sunday Morning Prayer Gathering at 8am and after each Worship Gathering on Sunday mornings. In addition, the elders join the staff in individual prayer for needs expressed by the congregation each week on the Connect Cards, and our elders pray for individual members of our church at each monthly elder meeting.

You can help our elders more effectively pray for you! If you have not already had your photo taken, please contact Avery ([averyf@highlandsc.org](mailto:averyf@highlandsc.org)) to set up an appointment (for example, on a Sunday morning). We are planning to distribute Member Photo Directories at our upcoming May 1 Member night, and we want our members to see your smiling faces!

## **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.

## **ELDER MEETINGS**

The elders want the members of our congregation to know that all are welcome to attend any elder meeting. Elder meetings are typically held on the third Tuesday of each month. Starting with the month of April, the elder meetings will begin with a private, executive session at 6:30 pm during which sensitive topics will be handled. The public session will start at about 7:15 pm (at the end of the executive session). Elder meetings are held in Room 270.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

The elders interviewed and welcomed 11 individuals into membership this quarter. We praise God for the testimonies of His work in each member's life, and we thank Him for their contributions to our community. Please join us in praying that each of these members will continue to be known, loved, and equipped for ministry here at Highlands.



Julie Arneveck  
Jonathan &  
Avery Fink  
Michael & Mei  
Atangan

Karl Karlsson  
Mary Barbee  
Rich Murdy  
Curtis & Nicole  
Boydston  
Zake Zaki

## **FINANCIAL**

Each month, the elders prayerfully review a financial report to ensure that our church's resources are being used faithfully and in alignment with the priorities of our budget. We seek to steward God's provision wisely for the ministry He has entrusted to us. A copy of the financial report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, is available [here](#). We are deeply grateful for how the Lord continues to meet our financial needs through your faithful generosity. Thanks to your giving, we finished the 2024-25 fiscal year ending in March 2025 in a strong position, with giving closely tracking to budget and expenses coming in under budget.

## **NEW BUDGET APPROVAL**

Thanks to the consistent and generous giving of our congregation, our elders approved a new budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year which is very similar to the budget for the previous fiscal year. This budget includes a 4.1% increase in general contributions and flat budgeted expenditures. We plan to share more details of this budget during

the forthcoming May 1 Member's Night. [Here is a link to the budget](#).

## **MINISTRY STAFFING REPORT**

Pastor Nate will be taking a much-needed sabbatical from his Lead Pastoral responsibilities from May 26-August 18. During this sabbatical, Pastor Nate and his wife Courtney will focus their attention on their family, marriage, and personal devotion and prayer under the guidance of an experienced sabbatical coach. To help with the needed separation from his ministry roles, Pastor Nate and Courtney will be worshipping at other churches in the Seattle area during their sabbatical. During this time, Pastor Ben and the Lead Team will oversee day-to-day ministry activities. Pulpit teaching will be handled by other members of our preaching team, as well as several guest preachers. Pastor Nate plans to return to the pulpit on August 31.

Nathan Betts has been hired as Discipleship Pastor. He will start on a part-time basis in April, and full-time in June. Nathan has a very strong background in Christian Apologetics, and we look forward to him contributing to intentional discipleship across all of our ministries. Nathan and his wife Brittany have four children, and we are excited to

welcome their entire family to Highlands.

We are interviewing several good candidates for the position of Executive Pastor of Ministry, who along with Pastor Ben, will assist Pastor Nate to overseeing our staff and ministry efforts.

## **SOUTHEAST EDUCATION WING REPAIR UPDATE**

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. The elders have retained an architectural firm to prepare construction plans for the extensive repair and restoration which will be required. Please pray for the elders and the task force as they oversee this process. As we learn more information about these plans and the cost, we will invite our congregation to join in giving to support this effort.

## **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)*