

HIGHVIEW NEWSLETTER

JULY 1, 2025

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?



PENTECOSTAL MEDITATION



HIGHVIEW HISTORY



FAITH IN FLIP-FLOPS



ARTICLES AND REFLECTIONS BY

Yvette
Pastor Amy
Abigail
Lou Ann



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✦✦✦ ✦✦✦ SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Spring has sprung, and so have the Highview gardens! Every year, Highview blooms into new life as the flowers and plants push through the earth and emerge to soak in the sun's rays. As they begin to flower, they attract bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and all other sorts of God's creatures to Highview's property.

The Highview property wouldn't be nearly as beautiful, though, without the help of a few key individuals. Every year, Connie Jones helps transform Highview from its winter hibernation to its blooming summer beauty. She takes care in picking out the perfect plants and flowers to accent Highview's country appeal. She plants all the flowers in the planters around the property as well as tends to the perennial gardens, such as the ones around the Old Rugged Cross and the Rain Garden. Highview wouldn't have the same summer buzz if it weren't for all her hard work and dedication to planting and tending the Highview gardens.

Connie doesn't do it all alone, though. The Thursday Men's group helped Connie clean out the brush guarding the ground of last year's Rain Garden from the harsh winter, so it could come into its full beauty again. They were out there with shovels, rakes, and gloves cleaning up the dead so new life could once again bring color to the land.

Thank you for all your help in keeping Highview beautiful!



WHAT ARE OUR ENDOWMENTS?

YVETTE MEALMAN

Yvette Mealman here, I want to tell you about the endowments. We are lucky to have 4 at Highview Christiania. I serve on the Endowment board with 5 other members. We are responsible for distributing funds from these accounts. They include the Library endowment, the Cemetery endowment, the Historical Maintenance endowment, and the Norman and Pauline Danielson Endowment.

The Cemetery endowment uses its funds to continue maintenance in the cemetery. The Library endowment was created with a bequest from Wesley and Bev Best. Bev was our long-time librarian. The funds from this endowment support the library. The Historical Maintenance endowment was created to help financially support renovations to the church (like roofing and siding) according to National Register regulations. The money in this endowment was raised by various fundraisers held in the past. This endowment also accepts individual contributions for the historical maintenance of Highview.

The Danielson Endowment was created with a bequest from Norman and Pauline Danielson. This endowment is to be used for youth Christian education, youth Christian activities, and support of youth Christian activities in Central America. The endowment board distributes about 3 percent of the fund annually. In 2025, that amounts to over \$16,000. Recently, this endowment has been used for WAPO Camperships, Vacation Bible School, the Seder Supper, high school graduate scholarships, and supporting the ILAG school in Guatemala. It has supported youth members in our congregation to be involved in Christian activities abroad. The endowment board accepts grants from our mission board or the board of education that have been approved by the church president. The board then decides if the request falls within the parameters of the endowment. This endowment has allowed our church to continue to support youth education and activities for our children and children in the neighboring community, and support of ILAG in Guatemala.

I feel our church is so blessed to have these endowments, which allow our church to spread the word of the gospel through youth education and support services within our church. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact Dave Tonsager (chair), Rick Schmidt, Vince Mako, Marilyn Suter, Lisa Oeltjen, or Yvette Mealman.



CAMP WAPO

Hello from the Board of Education!

We have been busy planning some fun summer activities and getting prepared for the new Sunday School season.

This month, we were blessed to be able to send 14 kids to Camp Wapo! 12 of these kids went for their week-long camp, and 2 did the weekend camp. Camp Wapo is located on Lake Wapogasset in Amery, WI. This year's camp theme was Breathe!

Highview has a long-time relationship with Camp Wapo, which is near and dear to many. It is a place of spiritual and personal growth for youth as they unplug and immerse themselves in outdoor ministry.

Here are a few comments from our youth who attended this year's camp:

"I really enjoyed Wapo. I made tons of new friends, learned many new songs, like Days of Elijah, and I learned new ways to praise God. In the morning, we have grace, and eat breakfast, then we have Chapel, which is when we sing, and learn the theme of the day. Then we have field games. After that, we have grace and eat lunch. After lunch, we have quiet time where we stay in the cabin for about an hour. Then we have free time where we can go to the canteen and play games. Finally, we say grace, eat supper, go to the cabin, do a devotion, and go to bed." ~Karlie Fischer

"I really enjoyed camp this year. I was there for almost a week, and I feel like my faith in God really grew almost every day we sang songs in Chapel and Campfire, and we did Bible Study. We also played a lot of games. My favorite games were Chip Noodle Challenge and Air Square. While we were there, we started our mornings with something called First Word, where our counselor would read a Bible verse to us to start our days." ~ Kaylee Fischer

The May Monthly Mission goes towards camperships, which help to reduce costs and make camp accessible to all. This, along with the Danielson Endowment, supports the children and allows them to attend at a very low cost. You can continue to donate to Wapo Campership year-round by writing Wapo in the memo line of a check or making a note on the giving envelope.





PASTOR AMY JOHNSON

FAITH IN FLIP-FLOPS: SACRED RHYTHMS OF SUMMER

Recently, during a staff meeting, I reached for a devotional titled “Find Your Priorities.” I thought I was turning to that day’s reading, only to realize I was actually a month ahead—July 18 instead of June. But as I read the words, I couldn’t help but wonder: Maybe this devotion came early for a reason. Maybe it came right on time.

The reflection pointed out something striking about Jesus, how he sometimes walked away from the crowds. He didn’t heal every person or stay in every village. He regularly made time to step away, to be alone with God. He had his priorities straight.

It asked, “What are your priorities?” and then provided some examples:

- God comes before everything else.
- People come before things.
- Family comes before work.
- Work comes before pleasure.
- The authentic comes before the artificial.
- The natural comes before the man-made.
- The simple comes before the complicated.

That list stopped me in my tracks. Because sometimes, in the life of a pastor, or really, in the life of any of us, it can feel like everything is a priority. If we don’t know what our priorities are, we lose focus. We start saying yes to the wrong things. And if we try to be everything to everyone, we may end up being nothing to no one. Don’t try to do everything; choose what you do in line with your priorities and choose your priorities in line with God’s Word.

In early May, I carved out some time to get away with my daughter and grandson. Just the three of us, driving south through green hills and winding roads, all the way to the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. One of the first things my daughter said as we pulled away was, “Yippie, we get all your undivided attention and love!”

Five years ago, I might not have heard those words. Honestly, I might have heard the opposite. That one little comment revealed a deeper truth, something I had longed for, even prayed for—even if I hadn’t yet named it out loud. Because like many of us, I often jump to the next thing at the ring of a phone or the knock at the door. And too often, those closest to me get what’s left of me instead of the best of me.

That week away reminded me of something sacred: the people God has given us deserve our presence—our full attention. Not just our doing, but our being.

During the trip, I finally checked something off my bucket list—visiting Dollywood! But more than that, I had the joy of attending Sunday morning worship at the Robert F. Thomas Chapel, tucked right inside the amusement park. The simple Appalachian-style church, with its exposed wood beams, hardwood floors, and quilts that told the story of Jesus, was a quiet, holy space in the middle of roller coasters and cotton candy.

Dr. Robert F. Thomas, the mountain doctor who delivered Dolly Parton, had brought both medicine and the Good News of the Gospel to the people of Eastern Tennessee.

The service opened with these words:

“We are here in this place this morning because God has called us here. We are the Church, gathered from all corners of the world to worship God. We come from different traditions and expressions, but we have all come to celebrate God’s living presence in our midst.”

And let me tell you, I felt it! In the music, in the sermon on listening for God’s voice, and in the diverse gathering of people crammed inside and overflowing outside the little chapel. A reminder that the voice of Jesus calls us each by name and claims us as God’s own, whether we’re in a sanctuary, a theme park, or a quiet walk at dusk.

Summer is often a time when routines loosen. Schedules shift. Flip-flops replace work shoes. But that doesn’t mean our faith takes a vacation. In fact, these sacred rhythms of summer—rest, play, presence—can become holy opportunities to listen for God.

So, here’s a gentle encouragement for you:

Let this summer be a season where you name your priorities again. Where do you notice God in the garden, the grocery store, the campfire, or the call from an old friend. Where you dare to believe that rest and joy, and simplicity are part of the good and faithful life.

Here at Highview, we’ve been growing in quiet but powerful ways. From kids returning from camp changed and inspired, to community moments, to the shared gift of Sunday mornings in a more relaxed summer rhythm—God is doing something among us. Something steady. Something good. Thank you for being part of that. For showing up. For planting seeds of kindness, generosity, and grace. Whether you’re traveling or staying close to home, I hope you feel the voice of Jesus calling you, just as I did from that little mountain chapel, reminding you that you are loved, you belong, and you are part of this church family.

Wherever your summer takes you, may your feet be light, your heart be full, and your spirit open to God’s surprising, gentle presence. Whether you’re in flip-flops, garden gloves, hiking boots, or bare feet in the backyard, may this season lead you to God’s quiet rhythms of grace.

With gratitude and grace,
Pastor Amy



A/V AND LIVESTREAMING UPDATE

In the fall of 2023, an A/V team was formed to explore ways to enhance both our in-person and online audio/video experience. The team successfully implemented several upgrades to improve sound quality and provide a better livestream experience. By April 2024, a new camera system and related equipment were installed. However, we quickly discovered that our existing DSL/Ethernet internet connection could not support the demands of livestreaming worship services on both Facebook and YouTube simultaneously.

Shortly after, we learned about the Broadband Line Extension Connection Program through the State of Minnesota. Created by the Office of Broadband Development (OBD) during the 2022 Legislative Session, the program provides grants to extend broadband infrastructure to locations without adequate wired internet.

Highview was awarded one of these grants and, thanks to this support, received a fiber optic internet connection to our church building in the fall of 2024.

For some time, a dedicated group of volunteers had already been working behind the scenes to improve our system's reliability. With guidance from the Board of Worship (which now oversees the A/V team), Ken Olstad, Loren Mohn, Dan Siebenaler, and the Thursday Men's Group invested their time, research, and hands-on labor to strengthen our connection. Once it was determined that the best solution was to run a direct connection between the office and the church building, they got to work laying the necessary wiring. This allowed for the installation of an additional Wi-Fi access point in the sanctuary, significantly boosting our connection and positioning us to begin researching dual-streaming platforms.

This project has truly been a team effort, made possible through generous financial contributions and the tireless efforts of many. It has been a long time coming, and we are excited that our final goal is now within reach!

Enhancing our livestreaming capabilities is an important part of our ministry, especially for those who rely on Highview Christiania's online outreach. We remain committed to reaching as many people as possible each Sunday, whether in person or online.



A PENTECOSTAL MEDITATION

ABIGAIL NACHREITER

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10

On the day of Pentecost, we read Acts 2:1-21. In this teaching, "...a tongue of fire rested on each of them..." Later on, when the crowd accuses the Apostles of being drunk, as they are speaking in tongues, Peter speaks out and says they are not drunk and instead recounts what the prophet Joel said, "...God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh..."

Thinking about those words, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*. God is telling us he is giving us each a piece of him to go in and out and through the world with. He gives not just the Holy Spirit but His Holy Spirit to guide us through our mortal world.

While feeling this, knowing this, take some time to reflect on the Psalm at the beginning of this article, *Be still and know that I am God...*

When you take time, slow down, and connect with God, you are also connecting with yourself. You are connecting with the piece of His Spirit that he has blessed us with to remind us we are never alone and can always turn to Him. God is there for every action we do, say, and think, regardless of whether it brings about good or harm. His spirit does not abandon you for making a poor choice; instead, God's flame burns as strong as ever to remind you of the path he has lit, that there is always time to return to.

So take some time during Pentecost and be still, familiarize yourself with how God's Spirit speaks to you, and what it may be calling you to do. Connect with yourself because through connecting with yourself, you are also connecting with the Trinity.



HIGHVIEW HISTORY

LALIBELA CROSS

BACKGROUND PROVIDED MARLYS SHIRLEY

The Lalibela Cross is a special item here at Highview. It was a gift from an Ethiopian Church in Soyama in 2004, but wasn't officially presented to the congregation until 2005. Its journey from Ethiopia to Highview was set in motion by the introduction of one individual to Highview Christiania Lutheran.

Hanna Petros Overlund fled Ethiopia due to political harassment and other dangers. She made her way to Minnesota, pursuing a Master's degree in public health. During her time in Minnesota, she became affiliated with the Southeast Asian Ministry in St. Paul, and later, through the mutual connection of the two ministries, with Highview.

Hanna grew fond of Highview, and Highview grew fond of her, especially the youth. Through her studies and the help of Highview members, Hanna eventually made a trip back to Ethiopia, where she became involved with the Ethiopian Church in Soyama. As an appreciation for Highview's connection to Hanna, the Ethiopian Church gave Hanna a Lalibela Cross to present to Highview.

The Lalibela Cross is a processional cross that has significant historical, cultural, and religious meaning in Ethiopia. It is most frequently used at Baptisms, which are times of major celebration. However, it is also used for other special services. The cross is also to be covered during Holy Week during a special service of Tenebrae.

Hanna also gifted the congregation a smaller, blessing version of the cross, which is displayed in the entry showcase in the back of the church. There you will also see a little Ethiopian wooden carved nativity scene, which was a gift from Hanna to the Shirley family.

We are very grateful and blessed to have such wonderful artifacts in our church, and we are happy to share the story of how they traveled the world to be with us.



FROM THE TREASURER

LOU ANN WEFLEN

Hello. My name is Lou Ann Weflen, and I have the privilege of serving as Highview's treasurer. I also work with our financial secretary, Amy Tonsager. I am a lifelong Lutheran, baptized at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Waverly, Iowa, and confirmed here at Highview. Gary and I were married at Farmington Lutheran Church, and our three sons (Andrew, John, and Joseph) were baptized and confirmed there.

I want to say thank you. Thank you for your generous giving. Thank you for lending a hand when something is needed at the church. Thank you for the food you bring on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings. Thank you for being a good neighbor. Thank you for pitching in on clean-up days, serving on the church council, being a Sunday/Wednesday School teacher, making quilts for others, and doing chores around the church. All these actions from you help Highview to survive and even thrive.

Highview Christiania Lutheran Church relies on your financial gifts to pay our bills. We do not receive outside assistance. Rather than get monetary aid from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we contribute financial support to the ELCA, which is used to strengthen seminaries, global outreach, and mission churches.

Our total income for 2025 is budgeted to be \$170,000, and our expense budget for 2025 is \$183,500. This results in an expected net shortfall for the year of \$13,500, which will require us to use our cash reserves. The accompanying chart shows the relative size of our expense categories.

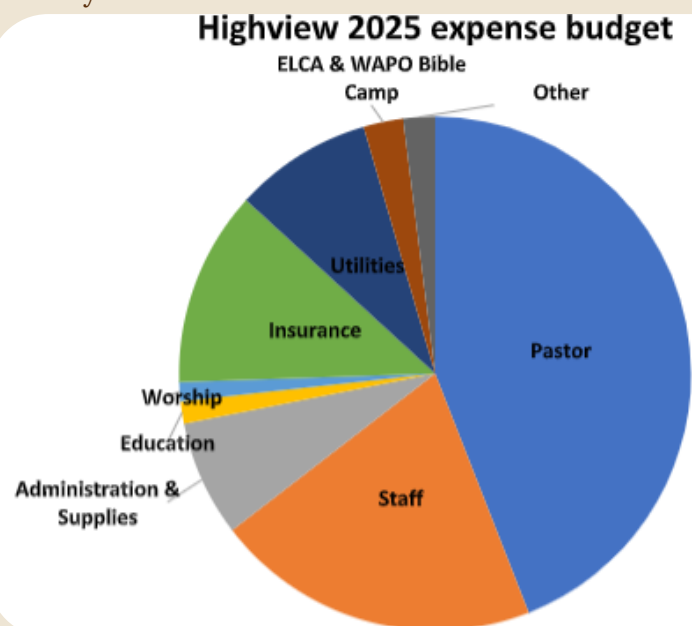
As you can see in the chart, our discretionary or flexible expenses are a small portion of total costs. Staff and pastor expenses are more than 64% of our annual budget, while insurance and utilities are another 21%.

Every dollar you contribute to Highview enables us to continue to offer programs and services and keep the lights on while heating and cooling our buildings. I thank you for your generosity. We want to acknowledge your financial gifts, whether you give electronically, by check, or with cash. Highview's goal is to provide you with quarterly giving statements. To do this, we need your help.

If you put your offering in the collection plate on Sunday and use the envelopes in the pews, make sure your name and giving number are on the envelope. You can email or call the church office to get your number. When we receive cash in an envelope with no name or number, we can't credit your gift, and it won't be included on your giving statement.

Again, thank you for all you do for Highview, and remember 2 Corinthians 9:7. God loves a cheerful giver!

See you in church.



QUARTERLY ATTENDANCE & GIVING

Every Sunday, Highview Ushers keep track of service attendance. This helps staff determine how many bulletins to print, helps inform communion preparations and supply orders, as well as determining our average weekly attendance, which goes into the annual report.

Month/ Date	Service	Attendance
April 2	Lent Service	38
April 6		67
April 9	Lent Service	51
April 13	Palm Sunday	87
April 17	Maundy Thursday	75
April 18	Stations of the cross	11
April 18	Good Friday	43
April 20	Easter	
April 20	9:00am	123
April 20	11:00 am	44
April 27		54
May 4		60
May 11		45
May 18		45
May 25		44
June 1		60
June 8		58
June 15		46
June 22		46
June 29		48

GIVING

You can stay up to date on giving information by clicking the *Meeting Minutes and Financials* button at the bottom of the *Highview Happenings*!

	GENERAL COLLECTIONS	
	2024	2025
March	\$10,842.62	\$28,721.16
April	\$8,984.62	\$13,007.06
May	\$10,157.62	\$9,110.16

Ways to Donate:

- Personal Check
- Cash in an envelope marked with your name or envelope number
- Vanco Mobile App (scan QR code)



Quarter 2 Average Sunday Attendance	
April	75
May	50
June	52

UPCOMING EVENTS

Outdoor Worship: July 13th

Highview will be having Outdoor Worship on July 13th at 9:00 am.

Community Corn Feed: August 13th

Highview's Community Corn Feed is going annual! Starting last year, the Corn Feed was a hit! This year, the community gathering will be making its return, along with the dunk tank. This year, we will be adding a classic car show, miniature pony rides, a DJ, a race car, and gift baskets. This year's dunk tank proceeds are going to the Farmington Police Department to support their K9 program and their newest addition of K9 Moose. We are thrilled to be hosting this event again and can't wait to see you all there!

Twins Game: August 14th

Highview will be attending a Twins game on August 14th at 6:40 pm for Lutheran night! The Twins will be facing off against the Detroit Tigers. Highview has 30 seats in section 107. Tickets are \$55 a person. Sign-ups can be found in the church basement or in the *Highview Happenings*.

If you have already registered, you can submit payment directly to Abigail in the church office or by placing an envelope with your name on it in the Sunday offering marked "Twins Game." Payments are due July 20th.

As a part of Lutheran Night, those who are interested can join in singing the National Anthem. You will need to be at the field by 5:40 pm and meet a group outside the stadium at gate 6. For more information, please email the church office at highviewlutheran@gmail.com

Backpack Blessing: September 7th

On September 7th Pastor Amy will be blessing all those returning to school as well as their backpacks, so remember to bring your backpacks to worship!

God's Work, Our Hands: September 7th

On September 7th we're participating in the ELCA's *God's Work, Our Hands*. It's an opportunity for churches to take part in an annual day of service for their communities.

HIGHVIEW CONTACTS

Church Staff

Pastor: Amy Johnson

email: pastoramy.hclc@gmail.com

Parish Administrator: Abigail Nachreiner

email: highviewlutheran@gmail.com

phone: (952) 469-2722

Custodian: Wally Franklund

Music Director: Karla Miller

Church Officers (Two-Year Term)

President: Glen Shirley (Term ends 1/26)

Secretary: Nichole Fredrickson (Term ends 1/27)

Financial Secretary: Amy Tonsager (Term ends 1/27)

Treasurer: Lou Ann Weflen (Term ends 1/26)

Board of Administration (Two-Year Term)

Chair: Barb Swenson (Term ends 1/27)

Simon Tyler (Term ends 1/26)

Gary Weflen (Term ends 1/26)

Board of Education (Two-Year Term)

Chair: Bethany Fischer (Term ends 1/26)

Kailey Bell (Term ends 1/26)

Kathy Mosher (Term ends 1/26)

Board of Missions and Services (Two-Year Term)

Chair: Yvette Mealman (Term ends 1/26)

Diane Wiese (Term ends 1/26)

Vickie Tyler (Term ends 1/27)

Board of Property (Two-Year Term)

Chair: Loren Mohn (Term ends 1/26)

Wally Franklund (Term ends 1/27)

Bruce Young (Term ends 1/26)

Board of Worship (Two-Year Term)

Chair: Ken Olstad (Term ends 1/26)

Kellie Ouradnik (Term ends 1/26)

Lori Young (Term ends 1/26)

Cemetery Board (Three-Year Term)

Al Peterson (Term ends 1/28)

Wally Franklund (Term ends 1/28)

Dave Paulson (Term ends 1/27)

Rick Schmidt (Term ends 1/27)

Dave Tonsager (Term ends 1/26)

LouAnn Weflen (Term ends 1/26)

Endowment Board (Three-Year Term)

Yvette Mealman (Term ends 1/28)

Dave Tonsager (Term ends 1/28)

Vince Mako (Term ends 1/27)

Lisa Oeltjen (Term ends 1/27)

Marilyn Suter (Term ends 1/26)

Rick Schmidt (Term ends 1/26)

Memorial Committee

Chair: Connie Mealman (Appointed)

Loren Mohn

Lori Young

Yvette Mealman

Bethany Fischer

Barb Swenson

Updated 2025 printed directories, Christ in Your Home, and Lutheran Message booklets are available in the magazine rack outside the church library as well as the table at the main entrance to the sanctuary.