



A Word from Pastor Larry “Building a Place of Refuge”

So much is happening in Highland's life lately! We're truly grateful that the Lord has been so faithful in providing us with wonderful opportunities to serve Him through missions and ministries. We often wonder why He entrusts us with responsibilities, but we hold onto gratitude for every chance to grow and serve. With events like Vacation Bible School and summer mission trips, there's always an opportunity to make a positive difference and deepen our faith.

Coming this month, I will be starting a sermon series on the Letter of James. This series will extend through the summer months and conclude in the fall season. It is important to recognize the contextual background of the Book of James; the church was experiencing persecution, and James advises believers to seek the Lord for divine wisdom. Through this earnest seeking, the Lord establishes His church as a refuge.

With this thought, the following question arises, “What ways can the church be a place of refuge?”

1. The church is a place of refuge that directs people to the gospel during fear and guilt: People genuinely need a safe space where they can hear the truth. And the truth is clear: “there is no other name under heaven in which men may be saved (Acts 4:12).” We're all sinners, in desperate need of a Savior who will both save and support us. If Jesus isn't both our Savior and Sustainer, then He's not the Messiah. Thank goodness that He does save and sustain us! It's important that we don't settle for a diluted gospel that leaves people trapped in their sins. When we share the gospel, we honestly acknowledge our imperfections and then point to Christ's perfect, enough sacrifice. On the flip side, a dangerous place would be one filled with lies, half-truths, pleasing words, or a watered-down gospel that's missing altogether.

2. Be a church that is hospitable to sinners: This point isn't about wanting or expecting the guilty to remain in their ways, but about welcoming the sinner with open arms, no matter their background. When the Holy Spirit moves, it can draw someone to Jesus in such a powerful way that, after hearing the true gospel, they might either choose to leave and never return or experience a radical transformation. As the apostle Paul reminds us, “Darkness and light are, in the words of the apostle Paul, “unequally yoked.” (2Co 6:14) This isn't just about marriage; it's about recognizing that we, as the church, are called to be welcoming and hospitable to sinners, while also guiding them away from sin and toward God's truth.

3. Be a church that abolishes the façade of spirituality: One of the most harmful aspects of worship within the local church is when hypocrites try to hide their true selves. Remember, we are all imperfect sinners on a journey of sanctification. As Martin Luther beautifully expressed, we are Simul Justus Et Peccator — “simultaneously justified and sinner.” The righteousness of Christ is a gift from God, received through faith, and it's entirely outside of ourselves—out of this world, if we truly belong to Christ. So, let's gently set aside the self-righteous language, stop pretending to be super-spiritual, and instead, aim to be humble sinners who have been saved by Jesus. Honestly, most of us can see through the masks anyway.

It is because of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross that one can find true refuge and a dwelling place. The dwelling place? The dwelling place is actually not a place but a person. This dwelling is in Christ Himself. Jesus said *“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (Joh 15:5).*

JUNE '26

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| | 10 AM: Kards Ministry 1 | 9 AM : CEC Camp 6:30 PM: Deacon Meeting 2 | 9 AM : CEC Camp 6pm: Foundations 7 PM: Choir Practice 3 | 9 AM : CEC Camp 6:30 PM: MIA 7:30 PM: Youth Bible Study 4 | | 8:30 AM: YAH Breakfast 6 |
| 9 AM: Bible Study 10:30 AM: Worship 11:30 AM: VBS Prayer Walk 7 | | 9 AM : CEC Camp 9 | 9 AM : CEC Camp 6pm: Foundations 7 PM: Choir Practice 10 | 9 AM : CEC Camp 11 | VBS 12 | VBS 13 |
| 9 AM: Bible Study 10:30 AM: Worship VBS 14 | ATS CAMP 15 | ATS CAMP 16 | 6pm: Foundations 7 PM: Choir Practice ATS CAMP 17 | 7:30 PM: Youth Bible Study 7:30 PM: Missions Meeting ATS CAMP 18 | ATS CAMP 19 | 20 |
| 9 AM: Bible Study 10:30 AM: Worship 21 | FUGE 22 | FUGE 23 | 6pm: Foundations 7 PM: Choir Practice FUGE 24 | FUGE 25 | FUGE 26 | 9 AM: Women's Bible Study 27 |
| 9 AM: Bible Study 10:30 AM: Worship 28 | | 29 | 30 | | | |

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- Sunday June 14

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