



highrock 2023

LOOKING BACK WITH **GRATITUDE**,

LOOKING AHEAD WITH **ANTICIPATION**

A Letter from Pastor Dave

Dear Church,

Whenever people ask how my family is doing, I always reply that in a family as large and diverse as ours, it's "the best of times and the worst of times... all the time!" No matter

when you ask, someone is floundering while others are flourishing, but in both cases, God is at work to lead us to new life.

That's also true in a church as large and diverse as ours, this year in particular. We've experienced both unprecedented challenges and unprecedented triumphs... and I've seen God working through both to lead our church and our church members to new life.

Like a lot of other communities in the world, we've experienced financial insecurity, and many families and individuals have been honest about crises in their marriages or with their mental health. We aren't unusual in that regard.

What IS unusual is how our community, centered around Christ, has dealt with them. We've engaged more deeply in prayer, and have established rhythms of worship nights. Our Daily Devos and sermons have kept us in God's word. We've had honest conversations about sin and God's amazing grace. Instead of closing ranks under stress, we've grown in ethnic and economic diversity more than we could have dreamed of in the past.

Meanwhile, many of our ministries have exploded in both participation and spiritual depth. For example, the youth ministry! Actually... maybe I should start with the Japanese ministry. Or Theology Lab. But I also want you to hear about how we're including people with disabilities, and the beauty of Highrock Beyond Bars, and more. Wow—there are too many inspiring examples for me to pick just one!

I'm eager to share these stories with you because whenever I get discouraged, all I need to do is walk through Kidsrock, Christmas concert Choir practice, Momsrock, or the middle school youth group, or read emails about your transformational encounters with Jesus in the moments you needed it most, and I'm reminded again that God is creating abundant new life all over our church!

In the pages that follow are just a few of the highlights of what the Holy Spirit is doing among us these days. As you read it, I hope you are as encouraged as I always feel when I get to see Him in action. Our God is changing lives by bringing new honesty, healing, and hope—and by your praying, volunteering, and financial giving you are playing an essential role in all these stories.

So thank God, and thank you for your partnership in this ministry. I count it a great privilege to pastor this beautiful community.

Blessings,



PASTOR DAVE SWAIM

Mission, Vision & Values

Everything we do at Highrock is driven by our mission to create communities that encourage questions & inspire each other to love like Jesus. This can be summed up in three simple words: **Community. Curiosity. Compassion.**

WE LIVE THESE WORDS OUT BY:

Connecting to God Personally
Connecting to God's People
Connecting to God's Purposes



highrock ARLINGTON 2023 Overview

We have been celebrating our first ministry season in Arlington's new building!

It has been bustling with activity ever since the doors opened in May.

Every week small groups meet to encounter God in the Scriptures and encourage one another in the faith. We have hosted numerous gatherings for worship and prayer to deepen our love for Jesus and our dependence on the Holy Spirit.

If you come in on a weekday morning you are likely to find our Cafe space filled with Momsrock groups, ESL for our Japanese neighbors, or other community hangouts where people can make meaningful connections. And we haven't even opened up the Cafe for business yet!

Sundays have been sensational as we have seen more people gather together than at any other time since the pandemic. Our neighbors are eager to connect with God and become a part of a spiritual community, and we have welcomed scores of newcomers this fall.

God is at work!

2023
highlights

Feb 11 - Locked in Solidarity Conference

Mar 5 - Highrock Family Fun Day

One of the hallmarks of Highrock MetroWest is our weekly SoulFood meal,

where worship continues over laughter, heartfelt conversations, and slowing down from the hectic pace of life to savor fellowship together!

These tables are the perfect places for newcomers to be welcomed, as more and more have been joining this fall, including some who are just beginning to follow Jesus.

Throughout the week, Highrockers are gathering in their homes to pick up where they left off on Sunday.

We constantly celebrate how these weekly small group gatherings produce profound life changes as Highrockers become more honest with God and one another and experience the power of God's grace in significant ways.

There is a problem with the MetroWest Middle School Youth Group though... their meeting room is becoming too small! More and more students have been joining to ask questions, dive into the Bible together, and just have fun. That is the kind of problem we'll take any day of the week!



 **highrock**
METROWEST

2023 Overview

2023
highlights

Mar 12 - Theology Lab hosts David Brooks & Jim Wallis

Apr 9 - Easter Celebrations

May 14 - Highrock Arlington Grand Opening



2023 Overview

Highrock Cambridge has often been a very transient community, but that is beginning to change.

One of the things that has been drawing people deeper has been an increased desire for prayer. Highrockers in Cambridge want to experience more of the Holy Spirit and are setting aside time for monthly prayer meetings, praying in their small groups, and offering space for prayer ministry on Sundays.

As Highrockers are encountering God in new ways, making meaningful spiritual relationships, and being activated to remarkable service and mission, more and more of them are choosing to stay instead of move. This community is too good of a thing to give up!

It might be easy to assume that these spaces are for “spiritual insiders,” but they have become great access points for friends and neighbors who are yearning for a rekindled faith, but have distrust for the church. Highrock Cambridge members have extended hospitality and modeled humility in a way that is compelling, invitational, and helps others to find new life in Christ.



2023 highlights

Jun 26-30 - Summer Blast

Jul 14-18 - Middle School Summer Service Trip

Aug 11-14 - Family Getaway



Highrock Online continues to be the front door to Highrock for many across the country and across the world.

Some of the newcomers that have joined our in-person congregations have checked us out online first, been moved by how our church loves the Scriptures and the stories of transformation that we share, and taken steps to attend in person.

Others are faithfully participating in our community from afar, even without ever setting foot in one of our buildings.

Hundreds of households from around the world engage with our services, Daily Devotionals, and other digital resources every single week! We are resourcing leaders of localized communities who gather in alternative ways and use our services and content for worship, discipleship, and mission.

God has been moving through our community in ways that we never could have imagined!



Sep 10 - Fall Launch

Oct 13-15 - Highrock Cambridge Retreat

Nov 10-12 - Highrock High School Retreat



Ministry Spotlights



Spotlight: Japanese Ministry

One of our church's greatest joys is to share the Good News of Jesus with people who have never heard it before.

Members of the local Japanese community have been blown away by the hospitality they have experienced at Highrock, and often ask why strangers would love them so much.

To answer this question, Pastor Kim invited them to a Christian Story class. Now twelve Japanese women are learning about the love of Jesus for the very first time!



Spotlight: Highrock Beyond Bars

Dozens of Highrockers have joined together to write letters to incarcerated people, tutor those who are pursuing degrees in prison, and mentor returning citizens. This fall, Pastor Joe Marcucci and Carolyn van Oloo had the new opportunity to gather at MCI Shirley with a group of incarcerated men, where they bring the hope of Jesus to bear on issues of trauma and pain.

Pastor Joe says, **“I love these men. I love their courage. I love the way they receive from God. I love their hunger for God and I love the excitement they have to be with Him and with one another. I cannot say that I am happy after our times together. It hurts when I go back to my home and my family while I watch the men walk back to their blocks. But I am privileged and honored to partner with Carolyn in following the Holy Spirit as we seek to bring a measure of healing to these dear brothers.”**

Join us in praying for these men and the others we are stepping into solidarity with.

Spotlight: Theology Lab

This year's Theology Lab focus is on God & Money.

One participant reflected: **“Our household intentionally moved from a double-income home to single-income this year, and before we started the Theology Lab, I noticed that I was more anxious and self-protective. I didn't want to do anything, I didn't want to have people over— I was so nervous about money running out. After engaging with the lectures, sharing in our small group, and trying the spiritual practices every month, I find that I am actually less anxious and feel compelled to be more generous! We have decided to have people over for dinner every week to offer the same hospitality we have received from God.”**

We thank God for changing hearts and lives through the work of Theology Lab!

NextGen Ministry



What do you do in New England during the winter when you want to have fun with a few hundred Highrockers? You go to the beach of course!

The Next Gen team kicked off 2023 with an indoor beach party to help foster connections between families, host spiritual conversations for parents, and play some amazing beach games to remind our kids that Highrock sees and loves them.

Fast forward to the summer when we hosted Summer Blast in the new Highrock Arlington building. We welcomed a whopping 134 kids and 110 volunteers for a week of learning what it means to be “Ready and Set to Move” for Jesus!

The Summer Family Getaway was also a hit, and one of the most exciting parts of it was how the event was executed by our intern team. 31 high schoolers and 2 college students spent their summer investing in kids, pulling off all kinds of skits and games, and building on their own foundation of faith.

Throughout the year, high school ministries at both Arlington and MetroWest explored innovative ways to foster community, curiosity, and compassion. Arlington students formed groups centered around common interests like cooking, sports, crafts, and video games. Monthly potluck dinners engage students and leaders in meals and meaningful conversations. Our Bible studies have sparked thought-provoking discussions about cultivating a Christ-centered community.

Additionally, the MetroWest Overnight Campout provided students with a profound opportunity to deepen connections, worship, enjoy great food, and foster a closer relationship with God.



More to Come!

It feels like we have barely scratched the surface of what God has been doing at Highrock this past year.

We didn't even have space to share about our incredible Easter celebrations, or the remarkable partnerships with organizations like Neighbor 2 Neighbor, Misión de Caridad, and Kisoboka Uganda, or the baptisms that have been happening across our congregations, and so much more. Beyond that, we are filled with anticipation at what is coming just around the corner!

Members from all of our congregations are busy preparing for the return of our Highrock Christmas Benefit Concert. This year we will be able to welcome more people than ever before to hear the beautiful, hope-filled story of Christmas, God with us.

We are in the final stages of opening The Mill Cafe, a space that is going to show our neighbors a picture of God's hospitality that is unlike anything they have ever seen.

On March 9th we will be hosting a Marriage Workshop to support and strengthen these significant relationships.

After four years of running in the winter, The Jog 4 Joy is moving to June! You can start getting ready now for a 5k run/jog/walk/saunter to benefit the mental health of teens in our community.

God has been moving through regular people to accomplish remarkable things. We are so thankful for each and every one of you and for all of the ways that you partner together to bring the Good News of Jesus into our lives and the lives of those around us. Truly we are better together.



Financial Overview

As you may know, this has been a challenging financial year for our church. Since we have shared about some of these challenges, our community has responded in amazing ways and we are so grateful.

The first quarter of our fiscal year, July 1-September 30, came in very strong. The second quarter, October 1-December 31, is underway and historically is our strongest giving period. However, it is too soon to tell whether or not we are on track to meet our budget. Our staff are continuing to work to keep expenses low while still maintaining missional movement. We've been amazed to see what God has done so far, and we are filled with hope for the future!

Operations & Ministry Budget
\$1,576,535

Staff Compensation & Benefits Budget
\$3,463,000

Subtotal: FY24 Highrock Church Budget (w/o SPM)
\$5,039,535

Strategic Partnerships Budget
\$705,535

Total Highrock Church Budget
\$5,745,070

Financial Invitation



As 2023 comes to a close, would you consider:


1 How has our community helped you and those close to you connect with God, God's people, and God's purposes this year?

2 How have you been encouraged and inspired by other Highrockers this year?

3 What makes you excited and hopeful for the coming year?

In light of all this, would you be willing to make a **generous, sacrificial year-end gift** to help us continue creating communities of curiosity and compassion in 2024 and beyond?

You can see ways to give by visiting
highrock.org/giving



“Jesus Christ is the same
yesterday and today and forever.”

- Hebrews 13:8

THANK YOU FOR BEING
A PART OF HIGHROCK!

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