April 2020

Looking Upward, Growing Inward, and Serving Outward...

All Worship Services including Easter Services will be online until further notice

You can access our services at: Pines Presbyterian on Facebook or on our website at www.pinespc.org

Holy Week Schedule:

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 7:00 PM online Good Friday, April 10, 2020—we are working to bring you something on this date. We will keep you updated on if we will have an online service.

Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020 at 10:45 AM online (The Sunrise Service will be postponed until next year)

HE IS RISEN

the Lord is risen indeed

Pines Family News





Congratulations to Ethan and Allie Hunt on the birth of baby girl Elizabeth! Elizabeth (Lizzy) Marie Hunt was born on February 29th, at 10:42 PM weighing 6 pounds, 9 ounces, another leap year baby! Welcome to the Pines family sweet girl!



Congratulations to parents Patrick and Shelley Johnson and grandparents Phil and Linda Johnson on the birth of baby boy Isaac! Isaac Lee Johnson was born on March 14th, at 1:33 PM weighing 6 pounds, 7 ounces. Welcome to the Pines family sweet boy!

Do you have a son or daughter graduating from High School or College this year?

Be sure and let Cindy know in the church office so she can include them in the graduates bulletin!



What's everyone doing at home? Send us your photos!

We've been thinking of new opportunities to bring the Pines family together during this challenging time. As we've been spending our days differently, we would love to see photos of projects taking place at home -- Perhaps a gardening project, your pets, family, art or sharing your practice of meditation and prayer. All photos will be

produced as a slideshow and shared on our website and social media (based on your permission to do so). Email your photos to our communications coordinator, Micah: micah@pinespc.org.



Prayers for the family of Bill Devaney.

Bill passed away on March 20th. Bill joined Pines in 1981 with his wife Jean, who died several years back. Bill was 94 years old, was a very kind man and will be missed by many. No service has been planned at this time.

Please keep Ken Lloyd, former member of Pines, in your prayers. His wife Robin passed away on March 7th. The Lloyd's were friends of many at Pines and were missed when they moved to Florida. For those wanting to send a card, please contact Cindy in the church office to get Ken's address.

The CE Committee... Parents Night Out, originally planned for April 3, has been postponed. We will reschedule for a later day when we can again gather together safely.

Columbarium Committee – If you are interested in serving on the Columbarium Committee, please contact Connie Sipp at cbsipper@gmail.com. This is a one-year commitment and the business/discussions are conducted via e-mail when appropriate. If an in-person meeting is necessary, it is held after church on a Sunday and does not last more than 30 minutes.

Please mark your calendars with the NEWSLETTER DUE DATES:

April 17 (for May 2020 issue)

Pastor's Page

Grace and peace to you in the name of Christ,

Well, normally I would be sitting here trying to prepare some wonderfully versed message about the blooming of spring and the new life we have in the empty tomb of Easter. Both are true statements, but for me, and I believe many of you, it doesn't really feel that way right now. As we sit sequestered in our homes, away from the people with whom we normally interact, there is an overwhelming sense of isolation and loneliness. Our normal patterns have been disrupted and many folks are at a loss for what to do with their newly found sabbath.

We are definitely experiencing a time of unknown, but we are not the first. There has always been fear in the unknown. Scriptures remind us there have been many who have experienced fear of the unknown. A few weeks ago, we read scripture that told of Abram who heard God's voice telling him to leave all he knew and, "Go." Abram was supposed to leave everything he knew, everything that was comfortable to him, and go and make a great nation. I'm sure there was fear of the unknown. We can also read the story of Moses who led the Hebrew people out of Egypt. Do you think there was fear of the unknown? You bet there was. The list can go on and on, but what was the one thing that got them through their fears of the unknown? It was hope. There was hope and confidence in the God who created them. There was hope and confidence in the covenantal God that promised to always be with them no matter how difficult the struggle.

Friends, we believe in a God who offers us hope every day. I know that because the stone has been rolled away and the tomb is empty. We have faith in a resurrecting God who is able to pour light into any dark situation, even a global pandemic. We are an Easter people! We proclaim hope because of the resurrection of the one whom we call our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ is the one who said, "Do not fear I will be with you always.". Christ is the one who broke the chains of death. Christ is the one who offers you and me new life.

Dear friends, hear this very good news, Easter is coming and so is the end of COVID-19. When this pandemic is over, we will celebrate restored relationships and the new life we've been given through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Until that day, have hope and faith in the One who left the tomb empty... the Christ of Easter morning.

Your humble servant,

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How to Pray without Ceasing by Kelly O'Dell Stanley

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, ESV).

Impossible, right? Maybe in the olden days, when every task directly affected your family's survival—of course they prayed, because if the crop died, they'd starve. If someone got sick there was no medicine to help. Life was dangerous and fragile, and people weren't distracted by social media and cell phones. But today? Who could be expected to keep their mind on God at all times? Surely God wouldn't expect that of us, because He knows more than anyone how flawed we are, and how short our attention spans are. Except that nowhere in the Bible is there an asterisk after that verse that says, "**unless you're really busy." Here's the good news.

Not only is it possible to pray without ceasing, but it's possible to do so without making any significant changes to your schedule or time commitments. It's all about shifting your thought process and turning everyday moments into prayer. My friend Lisa gave me the best explanation I've ever heard: it's like keeping the radio playing in the background. Keep that connection open and talk to God as you go through your day.

Here are nine ways to pray without ceasing:

1. Begin with gratitude.

Psalm 100:4 says "enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name." In other words, start by telling God what you're thankful for. Prayer doesn't have to be asking for something; it can simply be thanking Him from your heart for what He has already done.

2. Get real.

If prayer had to be a stiff, formal language—"our most holy and mighty God, we beseech ye..."—first of all, we'd be bored and feel out of our element most of the time. And secondly, we would find it hard to keep that up for an extended period of time. But prayer is simply a conversation. Talk to Him the way you would talk to a friend. Sit down with a cup of coffee and just let the words pour out, casually, simply. Just be real.

3. Incorporate prayer into everyday chores.

Let your everyday tasks become acts of worship by turning them into times of prayer. As you fold laundry, pray for each family member—and then if your laundry piles are as high as mine, and you're done praying but not done folding, branch out from there. Pray for your child's soccer teammates, for the teachers standing in front of your children's classrooms, for the partner who works hard to pay the bills, for health to stay active, for the workplaces where the clothes are worn. Or simply give thanks for the warmth of the home where you relax in those pajamas.

4. Tell Him what He already knows.

When my first child was in kindergarten, I realized that although I had a pretty good idea what she did at school, I didn't need to know the details. But when she told me about how she and Jacob played at recess, or laughed as she tried to tell me the story her teacher read that day, it deepened my connection with my daughter. I got to see her life through her eyes and I reveled in her unique perspective. Of course, God already knows what's in our hearts—but when we offer our thoughts to him, it turns what might be a solitary life into a richer, more meaningful relationship. And I think God delights in this.

5. Pray while you wait.

Most of us waste a lot of time while we wait for our daily grande nonfat mochas—or whatever. A quick online search reports that we each average two years of our lives waiting in line, and the average commuter spends 38 hours a year in traffic. Turn your car into a prayer closet, or let your mind take you someplace else while the person in line ahead of you buys her drink using four nearly-empty gift cards and then empties her coin purse of pennies.

Transform that "wasted" time into something meaningful—pray for the people you expect to encounter that day or the tasks you need to accomplish. Give thanks for your day, for the job paying for your favorite caffeinated beverage, for the young man working as a cashier to pay his college tuition, for the extravagant blessing of a giant store stocked with more products than we need. Count your blessings—because they're everywhere—and make those minutes count.

6. Sing a song of praise.

"Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise" (James 5:13).

Often, we think of prayer as what to do when we need God to fix something or when we're unhappy. But the Bible encourages us to pray at *all* times. Remember the idea of prayer being like a radio playing in the background all the time? Make that literal by listening to worship music. As you sing along, offer it to God as your prayer. Or, better yet, make up your own song along the way. Nobody is listening but Him, so don't worry if you're out of tune.

7. When you mess up, admit it.

I don't know about you, but I could spend most of my praying-without-ceasing time simply confessing a litany of my sins and failings: I just yelled at my kids; I'm jealous of the perfect little family one my friends posts about daily on Facebook; so-and-so is a real jerk and I don't like him... and so on. Luckily, when we confess, God forgives us, so we don't need to dwell there. That in itself is another reason to praise Him.

8. Give up worrying.

Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." We're not meant to worry, and we waste too many minutes doing just that. Next time something weighs heavy on your heart, envision yourself extending it up to God and letting Him hold it for you. Ask Him what your role is and if there is something you need to do; if so, do it. But don't take back the weight of the worry. Then start thanking God for who He is and what He has already done for you, and you'll feel the weight lifting off your shoulders as the words come.

9. Stop talking once in awhile. Instead, just listen.

"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words" (Matthew 6:7). The number (or quality) of words you use in prayer doesn't matter, because prayer is about God, not about us. Allow yourself to contemplate the nearness of God. Trust that He is your constant companion. Don't monopolize the dialogue, but spend some of your time just being, simply sitting and resting in His presence. And keep in mind that the best conversations are two-sided, but you won't hear anything if you never stop to listen.

Youth Happenings

Stay up to date on virtual youth ministry through our Instagram!

Follow us @pinespcyouth for up to the minute updates

on our virtual youth ministry programs, including Bible Study every Tuesday and Thursday at noon. So far, we have hosted video chat Pictionary and a movie night through Netflix Party! So make sure to follow us to stay updated on all of our online ministry activities!

Children's Ministry



The Music Department

Greetings from the Music Department!

As we approach the Easter season, let's look at the most beloved of all Easter hymns, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today." This hymn was written in the 14th century. The unknown author was probably Bohemian based on manuscripts found in Munich and Breslau. It originally had just three verses. Charles Wesley added the fourth verse in 1740. The outstanding feature of this hymn is the refrain "Alleluia" after every line. The hymn tune is a work from *Lyra Davidica* entitled "Easter Hymn." Let us all sing it with great gusto this Easter season!

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia! Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia! Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia! Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia! Unto Christ our heavenly King, Alleluia! Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia! Sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

But the pains which He endured, Alleluia! Our salvation have procured; Alleluia! Now above the sky He's King, Alleluia! Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia! Praise eternal as God's love; Alleluia! Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

Keep a song in your heart! Christ is Risen! Christ is risen, indeed! Tim

Dear Prayer Partners,

Many of you are faithful to pray the weekly prayer list. That is one of the underlying strengths of Pines Presbyterian Church. Prayer ranks among the most important things any of us do. You are appreciated! Something special is added when we pray together in person, sharing that bond of prayer and caring, that peaceful and refreshing time. Would you like to join us for the praying of the weekly list, plus any other concerns or praises mentioned? The in-person weekly prayer team currently meets at 9:00 am on Tuesdays in room C-10, although during this time, in-person meetings have been postponed. It also coincides with the start time for Pines Preschool, for anyone who brings a child to the school. The exact day and time could be negotiable if that would enable someone to participate.

Contact Bethel Strawser by email BethelStrawser5@earthlink.net for further discussion. Bethel Strawser

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Beginning April 1st, Pines will have a new custodian.

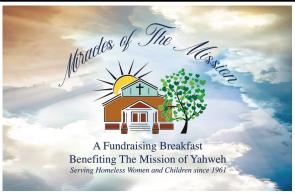
Welcome to Patrick Peña! Patrick is the father of 3. He has two boys and one girl. He also has 7 grand-

children! Patrick enjoys working and helping friends in his spare time and playing board and video games. He was born in Houston and has lived here all his life. Please give Patrick a hearty "WELCOME" when you see him in the halls!

Missions and Current Events



The next Restoration Team Workday will be on April 18th. We will be working on a home that was damaged due to Harvey. If you can help, please contact Margaret Schafer for more details. Hope to see you there! Note: as with all events at the current time, this could be cancelled. Watch your emails for further updates to come later.



A Fundraising Breakfast Benefiting The Mission Thursday, April 23, 2020

The Junior League of Houston - 1811 Briar Oaks Lane, Houston, TX

7:00am registration, Juice, Coffee - 7:30-9:00am Breakfast Program

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Come hear the Impossible True Story that inspired The Movie "BREAKTHROUGH". Also hear the miracles that are happening at the Mission of Yahweh.

Contact Kari Work at kwork@mgcinc.net for additional information.

Reply online at www.missionofyahweh.org or let Kari know you would like to attend.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

DELIVER FOOD to Homebound Members and Neighbors:

Many congregations are canvassing their church family to see who needs groceries and/or prescriptions delivered to them. Additionally, members can also canvass their streets to see if they have neighbors in need. Your volunteers can then pick up and deliver, making sure to maintain a safe distance. You may find that even if those individuals/families don't need food, they might like someone to provide compassionate care (to be a listening ear and a calming voice in this chaotic time).

CROWD SOURCE RESCUE:

This is a <u>FREE food delivery service</u> of the Houston Food Bank for those who are elderly or homebound. Those in need can go to <u>www.CrowdSourceRescue.com</u> to register for a free delivery of groceries.

VOLUNTEERS can go to the same site to register to make home food deliveries. Once they are authorized, they can start picking up prepackaged food from a Houston Food Bank Pantry and deliver it to the pre-approved recipient.

April Agape

The April Agape will be monetary donations for supplies needed for LifeCamp 2020. (Formerly VBS)

Donations are needed for snacks, art supplies, decorations, etc. Please watch for the donation board in the Fellowship Hall hallway beginning April 5-26.

There will be a box available by the information board to leave your donations or you may drop them in the offering plate with "LifeCamp" on the memo line.

Your generous donations from \$5 and beyond will help make LifeCamp 2020 a huge success for our Pines kids and our local community. THANK YOU!

LifeCamp is June 22-25 from 9-11:30. Please register on the Pines website!

Questions? Ann Guerra

Dear PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (EY017),

The Kroger Co. Family of Stores is committed to bringing hope and help to the local neighborhoods we call home. Our stores are on a mission to not just part of, but to help create a stronger community. We recognize that every community has unique causes that need support. Thank you for being such an important organization in our community.

We encourage you to ask your supporters to link their rewards card to your organization. Community Rewards is easy to use, The more your supporters shop with us, the more money your organization will earn!

We are committed to carefully protecting our customer's personal information. In order to meet their expectation of privacy, we have adopted a simple policy to never share a customer's personal information. Our privacy policy applies to Community Rewards participation as well.

Thank you for being such an important organization in our community,

Community Rewards Staff

27-Nov-2019 to 26-Feb-2020

24
Households

\$ 75.05

Total Donations

Tips for Children's Activities While Out of School

taken from the Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services website.

While many of us are nervous about the current crisis, we are also grateful for our health and for quality time with the children in our care. We are able to spend time connecting with them and building our relationships. Here are some additional ways to connect with your children during this time:

- Family Lego Challenge
- Family Coloring Challenge
- Girls In-door Spa Day
- Nerf Gun Fights
- Board games
- Learn a new skill (YouTube has great "how to" videos)
- Do some spring cleaning and organizing around the home
- Cook a family meal together
- · Have the kids prepare their favorite dessert
- Schedule a time to be outdoors every day. Go for a walk, ride a bike and enjoy nature.



- 1) Join a committee
- 2) Sign up to get on the list to answer phones in the church office when Genny, our receptionist, is on vacation
- 3) Volunteer to work on straightening out the keys in the office supply room
- 4) Make phone calls for the church office to verify door keys
- 5) Pick a cabinet or closet in the church to clean out
- 6) Straighten the Library, put returned books back on the shelves
- 7) Volunteer to Usher
- 8) Volunteer to serve Coffee Fellowship one Sunday
- 9) Volunteer to cook a casserole to freeze for those in our congregation that are ill or homebound
- 10) Join the Bell or Chancel Choir
- 11) Join the Prayer Team
- 12) Volunteer to teach Sunday School or teach during Children's Time

Below I'm sharing a prayer, recently published in <u>The Presbyterian Outlook</u>, by Jeffrey Myers, a Presbyterian pastor currently serving in Frankfurt, Germany. Phil Wetz.

God our Creator, who calls the stars by name and sets the fireflies dancing, who makes the mountains burst into song and emboldens the purple crocus pushing up through the snow, we pause to give deep thanks for the beauty which surrounds us always and for the promise that life goes on. Set in our hearts a hope more resilient than the coronavirus, and assure us of your power to bring good even out of the most formidable diseases.

God of healing and hope, we pray that you would cool the fevered brow of the sick and speak of love stronger than death to those who lay dying. Give healing compassion to all who care for the sick, and encourage those facing isolation with your peace-giving presence. We pray that coronavirus would move us to reflect upon our responsibility, individually and together, in caring for creation. Let your righteous anger spur us to make the long-overdue changes, so that all of creation might have room to breathe.

Rein in fear, we pray, before it becomes contagious, and nurture trust to form the basis of our dealings with one another. Let the tireless efforts of those on the frontiers of research lead to new and effective treatments, and guide those in positions of power by principles of truth and integrity.

God of tender mercies, we ask humbly that the painful awareness of our own vulnerability lead not to greater fear, but to deeper faith - a faith that nothing in all of creation can separate us from your love - neither today, nor tomorrow. Amen



Dear Friends,

This morning I spoke with a women who was in a panic. She works 100% by commission and has had no customers for two days. Her rent and car payments are due soon. She told me that she has never asked for help. "I often help feed the homeless, but I just realized that if I can't find work and pay my bills, I'm going to become homeless myself."

MAM was formed nearly 40 years ago and we are facing another unprecedented situation and MAM is still here to help. Today, our staff continues to be hard at work helping others from their home offices. Though we have modified our delivery method, MAM continues to provide critical services, and is ramping up to support the many families who will be impacted by the COVID-19 situation.

Our Client Navigator Bernie is the initial point of contact for the families needing assistance, whether affected by the Watson explosion, COVID-19 or other personal crisis. He is checking voicemail messages, triaging to the appropriate home-based staff and providing some forms of emergency financial assistance. We expect to hear from many people, who no longer have jobs and rent payments are looming on the first of the month. We don't yet know the extent unemployment and other assistance that may be available to displaced workers, but we will be there to help.





We have many clients currently working with employment and financial coaches. Volunteers and staff are setting up virtual and telephone meetings with their clients, and new clients can enroll through an online intake form. One client is working on creating a resume and his job coach has been crucial in helping him identify his strengths because setbacks have caused him to doubt his abilities. When this crisis is over, he will be ready to present himself to potential employers with confidence.

Our Immigration Legal Services and Mental Health Teams are conducting telephone meetings, like Eddie Molina, pictured, doing a teletherapy session from home.

As most of you know, MAM Resale Store contributes nearly 40% of revenue to operate programs and services at MAM. The Resale staff have packed up donations to take home and price so we can build an online sales program until we can reopen our store. Stephanie is home pricing Vera Bradley bags!

It has been inspiring to see the amount of energy and innovation that our staff and volunteers have invested to ensure MAM doesn't miss a beat! Please know that MAM as an organization is committed to supporting our entire community during this uncertain time.



Our hearts and prayers go out to each of you as you deal with this crisis of unknown duration. We will keep working hard to help the families that are so important to you. We wish continued good health and safety for each of you and look forward to greeting you with handshakes and hugs in the future.

Peace and Grace to you all,

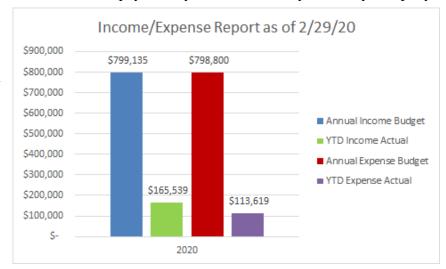
Stewardship



1. Thank you for helping our church continue operations, by keeping your pledge current, even while not being able to gather for worship in person due to the COVID-19 virus. The easiest way to do that is to make Pines Presbyterian Church a payee in your bank's online bill payment system, much like your utility company

or credit card company payments. The bank will send the check for you on the date that you indicate. There is a place to indicate the purpose of your payment in the memo line in this system too. You can also mail your handwritten check to the church office or pay online via the Donate button on the Pines web site. If you have questions about your payments or whether they have been received, please contact Alexis Graham, alexis@pinespc.org.

2. If you are interested in serving on the Stewardship committee, please contact Linda Johnson or Karen Macallister.



Session Meeting Notes

The Session met via videoconference on March 23. Here are highlights of the discussion:

- Agreed that the current suspension of church activities should continue until public health authorities declare it safe to resume public gatherings.
- Discussed current and planned activities to enable the church to stay connected during the current situation.
- Discussed the need for more shepherds to replace those no longer filling the role. (Contact Karen Davis if interested)
- Discussed the need for members to continue their giving during the shutdown.

Dan Schafer, Clerk of Session

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW! We have several members in need of meals for various reasons. Some of our members are ill, some are injured, and some are recovering. If you can bake a small meal and bring it to the church, please call Shirley Bollich. Shirley could really use some help with this ministry. Pines has always had a caring heart and assisted their church family. Let's all pull behind Shirley and help her provide these meals to our members. If you need Shirley's phone number, please call the church office. Thank you!!

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Caring Ministries Committee—among the many things the Caring Committee is responsible for on an ongoing basis, this month we are highlighting the welcome table. The Welcome Table is available on Sunday mornings to receive visitors and help greet them warmly. The Welcome Table has Pines information bags and homemade cookies for first time visitors. Of course, until we are back gathering together for Worship, this has been postponed.

Christian Education Committee—For our Children and Youth, the CE Committee and Staff are currently working on preparing ways to stay in touch with our families through the Covid-19 pandemic. Confirmation Class continues for our 4 Confirmands virtually. The Adult programs, Alpha, Sunday School and Wednesday Bible Study are postponed until we can all gather again. CE stands ready to assist as needed.

Columbarium Committee—Meet with parishioners and/or family members regarding the purchase of a niche when needed. Handles contract documentation and payment arrangements. Works closely with the pastor on scheduling the inurnment services. Handles paperwork for purchase of pavers. Arrange any maintenance needed for the columbarium.

Congregational Fellowship Committee—had to cancel the Easter breakfast due to Covid-19. Looking forward to planning an event after we are able to gather back together again.

Missions Committee—The Missions Committee has MAM as it's Agape Offering recipient for the month of March (cleaning supplies, personal hygiene items, etc.), and the Agape Offering in April will benefit LifeCamp, our VBS for 2020 (more details to follow). Our next work day with The Restoration Team will be Saturday, April 18, so SAVE that DATE! Due to Covid-19, we will confirm the next work day once we have updated information.

Preschool Committee—The Preschool is opening registration for Camp Pines, 3 4-day sessions of summer camps packed with hands-on activities, daily art projects, and special events every week beginning June 1. Registration is for potty-trained students 3 years and older, with priority consideration given to Pines' members' kids! Preschool students will also be partnering with the Church for the Sherwood Elementary food drive, sorting food into bags in April.

Property Committee—Have done: We have hired a replacement custodial staff member, Patrick N, and look forward to him starting on April first.

Planning: We are currently getting quotes for replacing sections of church lighting with LED lights. We are also investigating a remodel option in the youth common area.

Staff Committee—has been coordinating with Session and the Vision & Planning Committee to begin a search for new staff we will need to help meet recently adopted ministry objectives.

Vision & Planning Committee—The Vision and Planning Committee coordinated and led the Yearly Congregational Meeting and lunch on February 23rd. An update was presented to the Pines family on potential 2020 goals and planning. Feedback from the congregation was captured to be shared with Session. Vision and Planning also led the annual Session retreat March 6th and 7th looking to finalize 2020 goals. Staffing and volunteer resources to accomplish these goals were discussed.

Worship Committee—Preparations continue for Eastertide. Please join us **online** for the Maundy Thursday service at 7 p.m. on April 9th, and our Easter Sunday service at 10:45 a.m.