



PINES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Pines Press December 2025 / 12751 Kimberley Lane 77024 / 713-467-2234 / www.pinespc.org

Advent @PINES

Through December 21: Christmas Joy Gift Collection

December 9:

“Blue Christmas”

A Service of Wholeness and Healing | 12:30pm

Followed by Fellowship Lunch

December 14:

Christmas Cantata | “Born a Savior, Born a King” | 10:45am

Followed by Christmas Luncheon | 12:00noon

December 21:

Children’s Christmas Play | “Why Christmas?” | 10:45am

December 24:

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship | 5:00 & 7:00pm

Holy Communion at Both Services

December 25:

Worship on Christmas Day | 10:45am

Pines Family News & Current Events



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! Well, almost. It's time for our annual sign-ups for **Poinsettias** that we will be ordering from Brookwood Community to decorate our Sanctuary for the Christmas Season. The cost is \$12.00. You can either sign up in the hallway outside of Fellowship Hall before the service on Sunday mornings through December 7th OR you can email or call Linda Aldred or Melissa Gravett with your information. Please designate whether the **Poinsettias** are "In Honor Of" or "In Memory Of" when you make your selection and you may order as many as you like. The **Poinsettias** may be taken home after the last service on Christmas Eve, December 24th.

Corny joke of the month...

What do you call 2 guys hanging out above a window??.....*Curt and Rod*
What did one Christmas tree say to the other Christmas tree?.....*Lighten Up!*



Important Info...

Our final results this year depend on each of us. In order to be recorded on your charitable giving report from Pines for 2025, gifts (including stock donations) must be postmarked or received via Zelle by December 31, or received in the church office no later than noon on Wednesday, December 31. If you have questions, please contact Alexis Graham at alexis@pinespc.org.

Alternative Gift Market is back! —Dec. 7 & 14. The Missions Committee is offering you an 'easy out' if you want to send a gift but can't think of something suitable. You can donate to your choice of four mission partners: Brookwood, Feed My Starving Children, The Mission of Yahweh, and Raise Up Families.

Most of us have more than enough things and knickknacks, so a gift like this is usually welcome since we don't have to find a place for it! Tables for the mission partners will be in the Fellowship Hall hallway December 7 & 14.

If you can't wait that long contact Margaret Schafer or Roger Mowell.

SAVE THE DATE!

Plan to attend our Pines annual Christmas Cantata with Christmas luncheon following the service on Sunday, December 14th! Invite family and friends!

Come join the Christmas birds for a holiday lunch at Pines!

When: Sunday December 14th following the Cantata worship service.

What: Traditional ham dinner with all the trimmings and a dessert buffet.

Who: Invite family and friends to join us as we enjoy delicious food and warm friendships!

Second Sunday Lunch Bunch...

December *2nd Sunday Lunch* has been cancelled due to the All Church Luncheon we have scheduled. Please be sure to mark your calendars to come have lunch on that day after church!!

Pastor's Page

Grace and peace to you this Advent season,

As the old song says, this is the most wonderful time of year! I couldn't agree more. I love Advent with all its excitement and joy as we anxiously anticipate Christmas day and the great celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior! This is the season where, often times, love abounds as we think about gifts we can give to loved ones and as we think about spending time with family and friends.

As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth, God coming to earth as a baby, I wonder if we actually think about how incredible this act really is. Think about it for a moment. God came to live among us, to walk with us, to work with us, to pray with us and to cry with us. God cares enough about you and me, and the rest of creation, that God came to show us what love really looks like and how it's lived out in this world. Thinking about this radical form of love got me thinking about a scripture we read during worship back in November. The scripture was Isaiah 65:17, *For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.* Even in Isaiah, God was telling the people something new was about to happen. Little did Isaiah's listeners realize that new thing was going to happen several hundred years later in a barn stall when Jesus was born. Jesus' birth represents that new thing Isaiah was talking about. Jesus represents the new heaven and the new earth. This new thing is what we celebrate every December 25th! We celebrate God doing a new thing and breaking into this world to reform our old way of living and to give us a new way that shows and shares love and mercy.

Doing a new thing is difficult, though, we're used to the old way. We're comfortable with how we've been living, how we've been working and how we've been treating God's children. I bet that's what the people of Jesus' time on earth were thinking too, "We don't need a new thing, we're fine just the way things are." My question is, if we're fine with the way things are, then why do we celebrate Christmas? Christmas is all about doing something new, even if that new thing is difficult and may make you, and maybe others, feel uncomfortable. Let's you and I really celebrate Christmas this year and do something new. Let's break with the way we've always done something and allow the fullness of Christ Jesus to enter into our hearts, lives, families and even our traditional celebrations. Let's shake up the world and truly celebrate the *New Thing* God is doing. Let's celebrate Emmanuel, God with us!

Merry Christmas!



Andy



Dave Coles represented Pines Presbyterian at the recent Spring Branch ISD “Good Neighbor” recognition for its work with Sherwood Elementary School leaders, teachers, students, and families.



Join us on December 21st for the children's Christmas play during Worship at 10:45am

Why Christmas?, by Elinor Brown

An adult, puzzled about Christianity and the purpose of Christmas, sets out to learn about it by looking in on four different families. . .all of whom call themselves Christians. The play stresses the influence our actions each day may have over the lives of others, as well as the real meaning of Christmas. New lyrics to three traditional carols, “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”, and “O Little Town of Bethlehem”, help bring home the message.

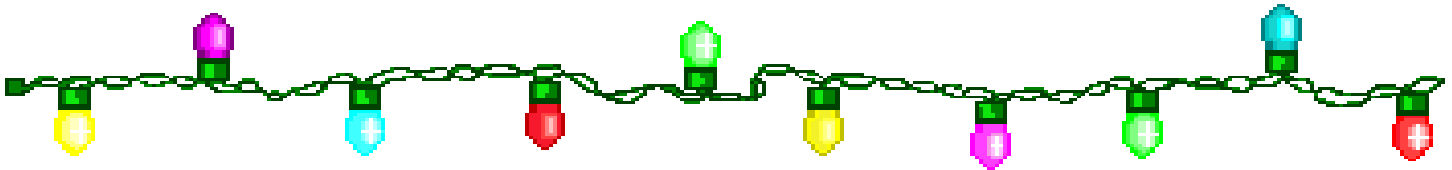
This is a play you are sure to enjoy!





The church office is looking for volunteers to answer phones:

Monday through Thursday. We have a couple of volunteers currently, but we **need** more and we also want to create a list of substitutes. No experience necessary. We will train you. Bring a book or something to work on while sitting at the front desk. If you can help, please give Cindy a call at 713-467-2234 x110.



Brown Bag Book Club

Questions linger about Theo, a pleasant but mysterious stranger, after his arrival in Golden, Georgia. Who is he and why is he here? **Mark your calendars for Thursday, February 5, 2026 (12:00 noon) in room C3**, as we discuss the book, Theo of Golden, by Allen Levi. This is a story of a generous and humble man who brings joy to a community through selfless acts and gifts of anonymous kindness. Questions? Contact Shirley Bollich.

Contact Us

Sanctuary flowers: Melissa Gravett or Linda Aldred

Make a donation: Alexis Graham at alexis@pinespc.org or donate on our website at pinespc.org

Add a name to the prayer list: Bethel Strawser at prayer@pinespc.org

Request a bulletin announcement: Laurie Conner at laurie@pinespc.org

Request a newsletter announcement: Cindy Houlihan at cindy@pinespc.org

Request an announcement for This Week at Pines: Dan Schafer at communication@pinespc.org

Update contact info in our database: Cindy Houlihan at cindy@pinespc.org

Plan a wedding: Linda Aldred

Add something to our calendar: Cindy Houlihan at cindy@pinespc.org

Question about our kitchen: Ann Guerra

Question on the Preschool: Connie Pike at connie@pinespc.org

Anything else? Just give the office a call at 713-467-2234 x110





Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

THE SOURCE OF ALL COMFORT

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

The words in these verses remind us that God is the source of all comfort during challenging times in our lives. However, the scripture also reminds us to share this precious gift with others and, in so doing, enrich their lives.

While Advent is a season with joy-filled opportunities to celebrate and give thanks, it can also be a very difficult time for those who are grieving a loss in their lives. It can be any type of loss – the death of a loved one; an estranged relationship; a challenging medical diagnosis; or the loss of hope. With that in mind, I want to remind you of two opportunities which are available for you to receive comfort from God and from those who have received such comfort from our Lord.

One opportunity will be the Service for Healing and Wholeness which will occur on **Tuesday, December 9 at 12:30pm in the sanctuary** and will be followed by a complimentary lunch at Café Express. This worship service and luncheon are open to all so feel free to invite friends!

For those who might be searching for a longer-term experience, please contact either Ann Guerra or Phil Wetz to have a **confidential** discussion about the possibility of working with a Stephen Minister. Stephen Ministers acknowledge that God is the source of all comfort but commit themselves to walking with others to help discover and accept that precious gift.

Phil Wetz



This is a photo of the Stephen Minister gathering recently at Cafe Express after our tour of Amazing Place West. We also took time to have an early celebration of Ann Guerra's birthday.

Thanks be to God for the gift of Christian fellowship.



Mission Partner	Activity	Date	Location	Contact (for phone numbers contact Church Office)
The Restoration Team	Assist with storm recovery efforts and other community assistance	Ongoing	TBD	www.therestorationteam.org
Taco and A Prayer	Make tacos for and share prayers with neighbors	1 st Fridays- (anytime between 6:30-7:30am)	Pines	Margaret Schafer
Sherwood Elementary	Deliver Monthly Food Bags (requires lifting 20 lb. bags)	Fall/Spring	Pines to Sherwood	Cindy Coles
	Reading Buddies	Fall/Spring	Sherwood	Cindy & Dave Coles
	Bulletin Board Team	Fall/Spring	Sherwood	Cindy Coles
Montrose Street Reach	Shop for and deliver food to street ministry	Every other month Thursday evening	Pines to Montrose location	Kathy Ropshaw
Church Office	Answer phones	1 day/week	Pines	Cindy Houlihan cindy@pinespc.org
Youth Hand on Hand Apartment Outreach	Assist with preparing food and other activities	Monthly	Pines/nearby apartment complex	Contact Shirley Bollich for details
Mission of Yahweh	Assist with leading Sunday evening Children's Church (2-11 yrs old)	Sundays 6:30-8:30 (seeking 1 Sunday/mo. commitment)	Mission of Yahweh	Janet Gay (Mission of Yahweh volunteer) Janetolson.gay@missionofyahweh.com

Calling all Taco Makers and Prayer Warriors!

Come join our Taco and a Prayer Team and see first-hand what a fun, rewarding, and precious ministry this is. Join us for our next TAAP on December 5th! For more information contact Margaret Schafer or the church office.



and a



Sherwood Christmas



Come help wrap presents!

December 6 | 9:00am | Fellowship Hall

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF CHRIST PINES IS AT WORK IN OUR COMMUNITY – JOIN US!

Pines Monthly Agape Offering

What is the AGAPE Offering? The Greek word Agape (ag-ah-pay) is used in the New Testament to refer to a kind of love that is not necessarily a feeling but a motivation for action, a sacrificial love that voluntarily gives without expecting anything in return. We are called to Agape love through Christ's example.

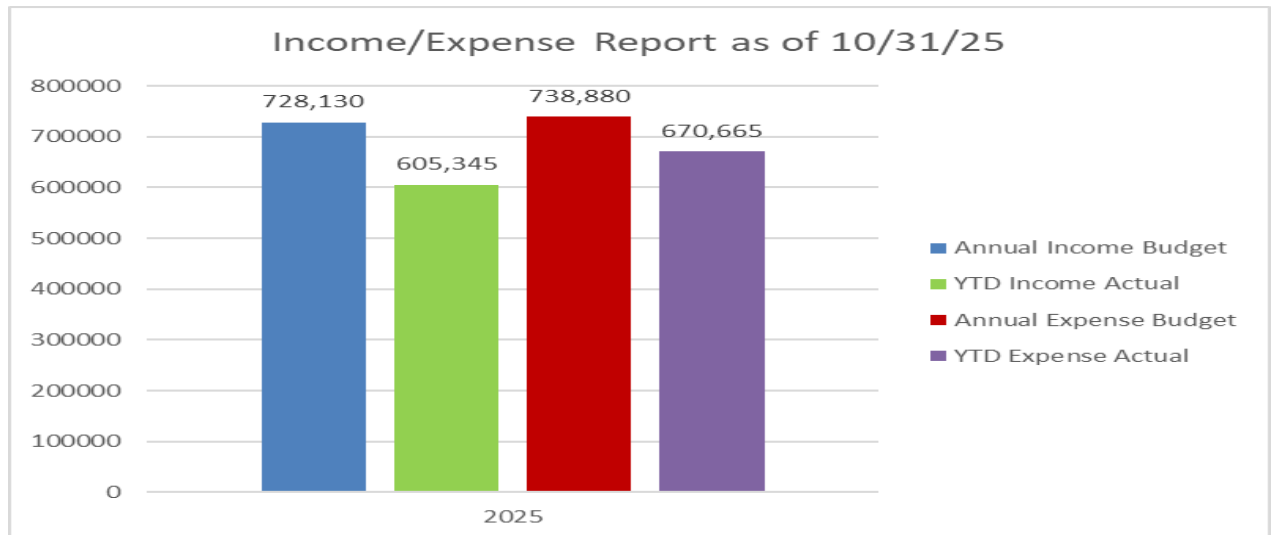
To bring greater awareness of and participation in Pines' "outside our walls" ministry projects throughout the year, the **Agape Offering** of small, tangible goods or financial donations are scheduled each month. Families are encouraged to participate together in selecting items to donate and bring to the donation bin. Watch the monthly fliers in the bulletin, newsletter, and This Week at Pines email for more information.

Together, we are the hands and feet of Christ!

Thank you! Your Pines Missions Committee







Stewardship



STEWARDSHIP NOTES:

1. Total income received through October 31 was \$605,345 (83% of budget, on target.) Pledge income was \$468,323 (4pp ahead of target) and unpledged income was \$68,480 (23pp behind target). Interest income was \$15,242 (2pp ahead of target).
2. Overall expenses were at \$670,665 (8pp over target).
3. Net income through August was (-\$65,320).

**You're invited to a
Life Line Screening event!**

Where: Pines Presbyterian Church
When: January 13, 2026

Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in **Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings.**
Trusted by over 11 million customers.

Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection.

Who should attend:

Anyone **age of 40+**

Special Pricing for \$129

- ♥ Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- ♥ Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- ♥ Peripheral Artery Disease Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

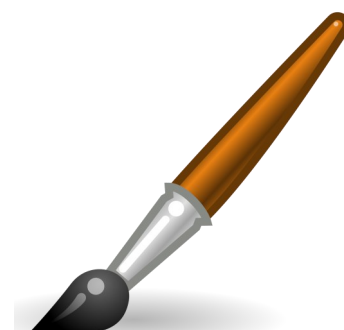
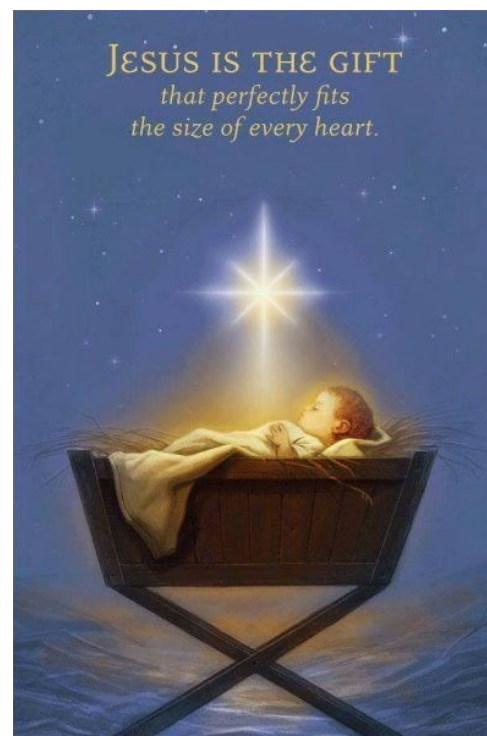
Call **800-324-9458** and use
promo code **HABC001**

Visit  **LLSA.SOCIAL/HABC**



Text the word **"circle"**
to **216-279-1607**

These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease. Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they understand the risk and benefits of any additional testing or procedures.



Advent Art with Kezzie each Wednesday of Advent from 6pm – 7pm. All ages are welcome to come and learn to paint from the master artist herself as she helps us create beautiful pieces of art that you can gift to friends and family. A light dinner will be served from 5:30-6:00pm. If you're interested, and to make sure we have enough supplies for you, please contact Pastor Andy. andy@pinespc.org

The church office is open Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. On Fridays, the office staff work from home. If you need assistance on Fridays, call Cindy at 832-489-5989.



MAM's Annual Christmas Share Program brings holiday joy to hundreds of children in our community each year. Many of the families we assist face difficulties in affording basic necessities. With your help, we provide toys, and gift cards to help brighten their holiday season.



TOY DONATIONS





Your Toy Donations + Parents Shopping = Holiday Joy for Children!

Ways to Help

- Donate New Toys
- Make a Monetary Donation
- Host a Toy Drive

To make a donation or view our gift wish list, scan:



mamhouston.org/christmasshare

Deliver Gifts or Donations to:

MAM Christmas Share - 1625 Blalock Rd., Houston, TX 77080
 December 1 — December 9 | Monday through Friday, 9:00 am—4:00 pm
 Please clearly mark your donation "Christmas Share"

For more info or to get involved, contact Kim Williams
KWilliams@MAMHouston.org

Merry Christmas!



Want to learn to play Mahjong, or are you already a seasoned player? Suzy Wolfe has begun a Mahjong group in the café, near the receptionist desk each month at 7pm. The next night is December 11th. If you would be interested, please email Suzy.



BINGO...

January 15th, 2026 at 6:30 pm **SAVE THE DATE!**
 Come join us to celebrate the New Year with dinner and a fun game of Bingo. Bring your friends and family. Be sure to let Linda Aldred know you are coming so she can have plenty of food ready!

Session

The Session of Pines Presbyterian Church met for its regular Stated meeting on December 1st, 2025. The highlights from this meeting will be included in the January newsletter.

Please mark your calendars with the NEWSLETTER DUE DATE: December 19th (for the January 2026 issue)

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS TRAVEL SERVICES LIMITED

Footsteps of Faith Through Scotland and the Reformation

11 Days: September 1-11, 2026

Visiting

Edinburgh • Stirling • Inverness • Loch Ness • Oban
Isle of Skye • Iona • Glencoe • Loch Lomond • Pitlochry

Hosted By:
Rev. Andy Gans

\$5,585 from Houston



The Christmas Birds Have Landed
Join the Pines Flock for Lunch!

Fellowship Hall - December 14th
Following the Christmas Cantata

*Traditional
Ham Dinner
with all the trimmings
Dessert Buffet*

**Provided at no cost by the
Congregational Fellowship Committee**



Missions Response to MAM Request:

Due to increased need and the loss of a major contributor, MAM has issued an urgent request for assistance with its Christmas Share program this year. The Missions Committee has approved \$500 from its budget in response. If anyone is interested in donating toys to help supplement the program, contact Margaret Schafer for all the details. Thank you!

Want to share a favorite recipe? Send Cindy an email and she will publish it in the next newsletter. This one was sent in by Marsha Deison. Bon Appetit!

ORANGE CRANBERRY BREAD

Ingredients:

2 C Flour
1 C Sugar
1 1/2 tsp Baking powder
1/2 tsp. Baking Soda
1/4 C Butter (room temp)
1 C Orange juice
1 Tbsp Orange Zest
1 Egg
2 C fresh cranberries, cut in half
1/2 C Walnuts(or whatever nut you prefer) (optional)



Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Line 9" bread pan with parchment paper. Spray entire pan with cooking spray and set aside.

In a bowl combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda.

Add butter and mix until mixture is crumbly.

Using mixer slowly add orange juice, a little at a time until batter is smooth and creamy.

Add zest and egg and blend well.

Fold in cranberries and nuts

Pour mixture into prepared loaf pan and bake for 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes--or until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean.

Let cool for 10 minutes, then remove from pan.

If you have a recipe you would like to share, please send it to cindy@pinespc.org.
We love publishing your recipes!

Do you get our weekly prayer list? If not, please call Cindy in the church office at 713-467-2234 x110 to get on the list. If you would prefer to send an email for prayer, you may send it to Bethel at prayer@pinespc.org. Cindy can also help you sign up to receive our monthly newsletter "The Pines Press" or our weekly publication "This Week at Pines".
So give us a call, we would love to get you connected to what is happening at Pines!

